

Series: Side by Side
Message Title: **Prayer Pursues Abundance**
Date: Sunday, May 20, 2018
Scripture: Philippians 1:9-11
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

I think the most common word associated with prayer is the word, *ble*ss. Have you ever prayed, "Lord ble

ss..."
What does that mean? Have you ever prayed, "Lord ble

ss this food to the nourishment of our bodies"?
Prayer is a request for God's grace, goodness, strength and supply in places of weakness, need and care for us.

Paul provides both example and instruction in the book of Philippians regarding prayer.

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now... And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge

and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:3-5, 9-11 ESV).

Paul prayed for this church out of a deep desire for God’s blessing—which Paul identified as spiritual stability and maturity. In Philippians 1, Paul gives us his outline or “prayer list” for this church.

Here Paul offers his practice and perspective on what they need through prayer, and he presents what he hopes they will experience beyond his prayer. What does he specifically pray for? Notice it is not a small generic prayer; it is a prayer for abundance—that you may abound!

I pray that you may abound in...

- **Spiritual Devotion**—“abound in love” (not the emotion of love, but love evidenced in action).

- **Spiritual Discernment**—abound in knowledge and all discernment (not sentimental love, but a life that is marked by judgment). “approve what is excellent” vs. worthless—a life quality that is distinct and different from the mediocre, run-of-the-mill humanity.

- **Spiritual Development**—v. 10b-11. A life that reflects faith in God and the faithfulness of God (“be filled with fruit of righteousness”), a life that bears the fruit of obedience to God (by fruit you know them).

All prayer is to this end (even the model prayer): “to the glory and praise of God.”

Prayer is to be a primary activity and ministry of our church to one another and within our community. One of the ways we agree together in the Lord is in prayer!

In 2013, I stood in front of you and expressed some things on my personal prayer list for you and me. I have seen some remarkable answers to those prayers since then, but today, I feel compelled to stand and share this prayer list with you again. I believe in the value of specific and focused prayer.



My Prayer and Desire for Warren is to Abound as...

We Have Faith in a Big God (huge) Who Still Does Big Things!

Due to the increase of ignorance of God and resistance to our faith, it is easy for us to downsize God. Paul reminded them that God was working.

“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6 ESV).

Many of you may be aware of the name, Helen Keller. Certainly those with an interest in history will know the name. Helen was the first deaf and blind person to receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree. She received a Presidential Medal of Freedom (one of US highest civilian honors). She was an author, teacher, and activist. It is said that in her lifetime, Helen Keller, “altered our perception of the disabled and remapped the boundaries of sight and sense.”

Helen learned how to take extreme limitations and move her life beyond those limits. She once said, “The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight, but has no vision.” —Helen Keller

Paul, the man whose prayer we are examining here, is actually praying for this church to be bold and visionary—not to see themselves as limited and inhibited, but to embrace perspective on who God is, what God does, and how God moves among His people.

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6 ESV).

This verse is both perspective and promise. It is time to “upscale faith”—God does big things with little people (David vs. Goliath).

We Personalize the Gospel Mandate to Evangelize

“It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you

are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel... I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (Philippians 1:7, 12 ESV).

If love truly abounds in us, then love for the lost will be evident in us. God's love is a redeeming love.

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 ESV).

Yearn to see the waters of baptism stirred as we give witness to the mighty power of God to save!

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27 ESV).

Paul was consumed with the gospel! More than an organizational mandate, a word we define, it becomes something personal we

hear and express. God's mandate for the church is not organization, but personal.

**We Pray as Though Everything
Depends on God and Work as Though
Everything Depends on Us**
(St. Augustine)

If I resigned today, what would your response and the response of the leadership of the church be? It would be a call for the church to prayer. Seek the Lord. What about our future? But if God should see fit to give us another season of life and ministry together, will you pray in earnest that we may abound more and approve what is excellent?

**Comfort is Extended to All Who Hurt,
But Being Comfortable is Never Indulged
for Any to Hide**

There is a need for us to provide a place where grace and love abounds for those who hurt, and to approve what is excellent—the opposite of complacency and mediocrity.

Our Budget is FUN-Raising

Gratitude. Generosity. Grace. When we start figuring finances, we may start seeing ourselves as limited. And the truth is, we are. But when we look to God and embrace and depend on Him, we can do things we never imagined.

You are limited, but God is unlimited.

Our budget should be *fun*raising because we are partnering together and sharing in God's work.

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19 ESV).

It is all about generosity in the church and the joy of seeing God provide.

**We rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, rejoice.** (Philippians 4:4)

Remember Euodia and Syntyche? They needed to get in agreement. I'm not presently or personally aware of any internal schisms in our church, but I know they can be present at times.

Our greatest vulnerability in growth is disunity. See Acts 6.

We Resolve Our Message will be Biblical and Our Ministry will Produce Disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20 ESV).

Scripture, not culture, defines who we are and what we do. Context allows us to see and share things that we have not known and need to pursue in this day.

We Have a Membership that is Interracial, a Fellowship that is Inter-Generational, and an Influence that is Global

I think this says it all. We need to look like our community because we reach the people of our community. We enjoy generational diversity because we are not a church based on one type of people. Ultimately, we believe

God has called us and we are answering this call to be a global mission church—partners in faith and in life.

**Scriptural Offices are Honored,
Spiritual Gifts are Used and the
Total Body Functions for the
Glory of Christ**

There should be no “King of the Mountain” mentality, but an understanding of our mutual stewardship—not everyone doing what they want. Everything is coordinated—study is blended and each personality becomes a prism of light refraction as God uses each of us.

I am grateful that later this year, God willing, I will celebrate a decade with you as your pastor. It has been a wonderful, enjoyable and incredible ride. But there will come a day when this will end (not soon), but some day. When this happens, I don't want the focus to be on me stepping down, but on you stepping up and stepping on for the glory of God.

I want to know I have served you well—not toward dependence on a minister, but toward passion for a mission.

“And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13 ESV).

... “filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:11 ESV).

We Invest in Future Generations and Focus on Eternal Rewards

What I have shared today is a very personal perspective of ministry at Warren based upon the blessing of years of service and the ever increase desire for the years to matter for many years yet to come.

“O God, from my youth You have taught me, and I still proclaim Your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim Your might to another generation, Your power to all those to come” (Psalm 71:17-18 ESV).

In the first temptation, Satan said to Eve, "Take and eat" and you will have your eyes opened and you will be like God. Jesus said, "Take and eat," and you will be delivered from darkness and given the light and life. It is not the elements, but the essence of Christ who transforms lives.

(Lord's Supper)