

## Urged to Intercession (15:30)

15:30 *Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me...*

### The Authority of Jesus

- Because Paul is doing everything to further God's global salvation plan in Christ (Genesis 12:3//Galatians 3:8), he is living in “*the fullness of the blessing of Christ*” (Romans 15:30). In light of this, the Romans should be praying with him.

### The Love of the Spirit

- We've seen this connection between God the Holy Spirit and how He brings the love of God to us: “*...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us*” (5:5).<sup>1</sup> This love of the Spirit is not experienced in isolation from one another, but should result in our loving each other (Galatians 5:22; Colossians 1:8). We are the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> If He is the One through Whom we experience the love of God, and He dwells in us as a body, this should be a community of divine love which should pray for missions.
- What else has Paul's letter to the Romans told us about the Holy Spirit?
  - The Holy Spirit was active in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1:4; 8:11), and, since the Holy Spirit dwells in us, He “*will also give life to your mortal bodies.*” He is the Personal and

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<sup>1</sup> See also 1 John 4, where “*we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit*” (4:13) and “*God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in Him*” (4:16). Our abiding in the God-Who-is-love and His abiding in us occur by the given Holy Spirit in us.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19,20 (all the pronouns “*you*” are plural, not singular!); 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5.

divine power that will conquer our sickness, aging, and death forever.

- We are God's people not by any outward mark (like circumcision under the old covenant), but by the Spirit's changing our hearts (2:29; see also Deuteronomy 30:6; Philippians 3:3).
- Since Jesus has taken our penalty for violating God's Law (Romans 8:1,3), we are now free to live in accordance with God's will by the power of the Holy Spirit (8:2,4-13).
- The Holy Spirit enables us live as God's children and to call on Him as our Father (8:14-16). The Spirit helps us to pray in our weakness (8:26,27).
- Being a citizen of the Kingdom of God is not about our self-efforts at obedience, but about the Holy Spirit's working “*righteousness and peace and joy*” in our lives (14:17).
- The Holy Spirit helps us to grow in our hope in Christ (15:13).
- Our efforts in evangelism, missions, and discipleship are only made acceptable and holy as acts of worship to God by the work of the Holy Spirit (15:16). He is the power of evangelism and missions (15:19).
- What else should we remember about the Holy Spirit?
  - He is a Person, not an impersonal force or power.<sup>3</sup>
  - He is fully God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11), has wisdom/knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:10,11), has power (Ephesians 3:16), guides (John 16:13), speaks (Acts 13:2; 21:11; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:7; 10:15), comforts (Acts 9:31), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31,32).

<sup>4</sup> Peter says Ananias lied “*to the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 5:3), that is, he “*lied...to God*” (5:4). Passages which are the words of the LORD in the O.T. are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the N.T.

- The American Church popularly speaks of “asking Jesus into your heart.” The N.T. teaches us that the Son is ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father.<sup>5</sup> It is the Spirit Who indwells all believers, and connects us inseparably and forever with the Son.<sup>6</sup> We relate to the Father and Son both entirely through the Holy Spirit in us.

### Striving in Prayer

- This image should remind us of Jacob’s wrestling in Genesis 32:24-32. That night of striving left him with a limp the rest of his life. Where is that desperation in our prayers, especially in our prayers for others?

## Prayer Request (15:31,32)

### Rescue (15:31a)

15:31a...*that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea...*

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(Psalm 95:7-11//Hebrews 3:7-9; Isaiah 6:9,10//Acts 28:25-27). He is represented as equal with the Father and Son in N.T. trinitarian passages (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2).

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55,56; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22.

<sup>6</sup> This is why the New Testament speaks of the Holy Spirit as “*the Spirit of Christ*” (Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11), “*the Spirit of Jesus*” (Acts 16:7), and “*the Spirit of Jesus Christ*” (Philippians 1:19). This also is why “*the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy*” (Revelation 19:10, Geneva Bible). The Holy Spirit, Who dwells within us, is the One Who brings to us the blessings of the Father and Son: “*He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you*” (John 16:14,15).

- Unbelieving Jews were the greatest persecutors of the Church in that first generation.<sup>7</sup>
- When Paul finally arrived in Jerusalem, he was assaulted and nearly killed in the temple (Acts 21:26-36). While he was imprisoned there a Jewish plot to kill him was foiled (Acts 23:12-35). The only way he ended up in Rome was that he appealed to Caesar to escape the Jewish legal system (Acts 25:10-12).

### Accepted Service (15:31b)

15:31b...*and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints...*

- Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles was a source of tension in the mostly-Jewish Church in Jerusalem – mostly because of the pressures on them from the Jewish culture in Jerusalem.

## Rest and Peace (15:32,33)

15:32...*so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.* 15:33*Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

### Prayer and a Sovereign God

- How do “wrestling prayers” fit together with “*the will of God*”?
- God uses our praying to accomplish His will. In prayer, we are humbled before Him, relying on Him fully; when He answers prayer, He receives glory and we grow in our relationship with Him.

### God of Peace

- Paul has already prayed that “*the God of hope fill*” the Roman Christians “*with all joy and peace in believing*” (5:13).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 9:23,29; 13:45,50; 14:2,5,19; 17:5-9,13; 18:12-17; 19:9; 20:3.

<sup>8</sup> See also Romans 5:1; 16:20; Ephesians 2:14,15,17; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20.