

Words of Truth

Hebrews 13:18-19

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"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner" (Hebrews 13:18-19). In several letters, we see prayer requests. Paul wrote: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me"* (Romans 15:30). Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus wrote: *"Brethren, pray for us... Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith"* (I Thessalonians 5:25 and II Thessalonians 3:1-2). Paul wrote this to Philemon: *"But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you"* (Philemon 1:22). When Peter was in prison, we read: *"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him"* (Acts 12:5). Peter was later set free from prison by an angel (Acts 12:6-17). We know things such as that are not happening today. It did then, by prayer.

We have to understand something about these requests. The Apostles were men directly guided by the Holy Spirit (John 16:4-13). That does not happen today. Notice what direct guidance looked like: *"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days"* (Acts 16:1-12).

The request in our text of study for prayer was “that I may be restored to you the sooner.” Where men guided by the Spirit were sent was as the Lord saw fit. For example, notice what was written to the Corinthians: *“But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power... For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do”* (I Corinthians 4:19 and I Corinthians 16:7-10). Paul went where he was sent. In another example, notice: *“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus”* (Acts 18:21).

Earlier in this letter we are studying we saw that they needed to be taught further and move beyond the first principles (Hebrews 5:10-6:2). Notice what was said in direct connection to that: *“And this will we do, if God permit”* (Hebrews 6:3). So, the penmen of this letter knew that God can be influenced by the requests of the faithful (i.e. Genesis 18:22-33, Exodus 32:1-14, Deuteronomy 9:18-29, and I Timothy 2:1-5). If they are to come to see these brethren, it will be by the will of the Lord. So, these saints needed to let the Lord know how much they desired to have these brethren come to them.

We also learn in the text we are looking at in this study that the men writing this letter, *“have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.”* A good conscience is required of faithful Christians (I Peter 3:8-16). The defiled and unbelievers are those who suffer from defiled consciences (Titus 1:15). Having said that, the conscience of a man is not a dependable guide. Some can have a good conscience while committing sin at the same time.

Before Paul [aka Saul of Tarsus] was converted to Christ, he did much harm to faithful Christians (Acts 7:51-8:3, Acts 22:1-20, I Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13-14, and I Timothy 1:12-16). Yet, he had a good conscience (Acts 23:1). How, you might ask. Consider what Jesus said: *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me”* (John 16:1-3).

It is also required of Christians by our Lord that we all live honestly (Romans 13:13). That honesty is not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men (II Corinthians 8:21). As was written to the saints in Rome: *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men”* (Romans 12:17). When we do live in such a manner, those that speak evil of us will be shown liars by our good works (I Peter 2:12). Such will not be hard for faithful Christians because at our core we are people of truth and light (Ephesians 4:17-5:11).