

“The MEFC 2025 Vision, Part 1”:

Prayer

Sermon Notes

➤ **By God’s grace, for the sake of our mission, we will cultivate dependence upon Christ through prayer**

1. Pray that we would continue to enjoy the gospel ourselves (v.2)

2. Pray that we would begin to entrust the gospel to others (v.3-4)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of March 13th - 19th

Getting Started

1. Do you have a 'List of 5'?¹ If so, who's on it these days? If you don't have one, how come? Make sure that everyone gets a chance to share.

Digging Deeper

2. Over the last month or two, how often have you prayed for the folks on your list? Honesty is always the best policy here, so let's be candid. Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Not at all?

Open your Bible to Romans 10:1...

3. In Romans 10:1, the Apostle Paul: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." Glorious, isn't it? According to this verse, what drove Paul's prayer for his unregenerate kinsmen according to the flesh²? How deeply held does a conviction have to be in order to genuinely say that it's your "heart's desire"? Would you say that it's your *heart's desire* that the people on your 'List of 5' be saved? Does your prayer for them reflect it? Explain.
4. When we pray for the unbelievers in our life, we are asking God to do what only he can do. Three prayers in particular are mission-critical: we want to be praying that the Holy Spirit will convict them concerning their sin (John 16:8-9), that the Father would be drawing them to Christ (John 6:44, 65), and for God to open doors for the gospel in their lives (Colossians 4:3). Do you often pray for these specific requests? Take some time right now to pray for these things for those on your lists in your group.
5. Sadly (but truly) one of the most tragic barriers to evangelism is our lack of interest in the lives of lost people. Due perhaps to our own busyness, lack of missional imagination, or love for others, we often fail to press into meaningful relationships with unbelievers because we're just not very curious about them and their story. But we can begin to address this in prayer. For example, how might we turn texts like Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:5-8; and Psalm 139:13-14 into meaningful supplication before the Father first for ourselves and then on behalf of those who are far from him?

¹ For those who may be new to the concept, a 'List of 5' is a list of five people who don't know the Lord in your immediate sphere of influence that you are looking to impact for the sake of the gospel. They may be family members, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, or any other folks that you see on a regular basis. Though you are always welcome to have a list longer than five, for them to truly qualify for the top five you should be thinking about people who live within a reasonable distance from our church.

² This is the phrase that Paul uses to speak of unbelieving Jews within his web of relationships (see Romans 9:1-3).

6. Another common roadblock to getting the gospel out is our fear of man. In Romans 1:15-16, Paul puts on a clinic in how to crush evangelistic anxiety in our hearts. In Romans 1:15, Paul says that he is *eager* to preach the gospel. Isn't that marvelous? Have you ever been eager to share the gospel with someone? Explain.

According to the next verse (1:16a), what is driving Paul's eagerness to preach the gospel? Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? Why or why not?

Finally, according to Romans 1:16b, what specific reason does Paul give in order to explain why he is *not* ashamed of the gospel? Would you say that you experience the power of the gospel in your life on a regular basis? If yes, how so? If not, why not? Might this be a contributing factor to the amount of fear you experience when it comes to evangelism? Think back over the flow of Paul's thought in Romans 1:15-16. How does this serve to help you put sinful fear and anxiety to death as you think about our mission?

7. Other New Testament categories for prayer as we seek to be faithful with the gospel in the lives of unbelievers include praying for clarity (Colossians 4:4), preparedness (1 Peter 3:15), as well as gentle (1 Peter 3:15), respectful (1 Peter 3:15), wise (Colossians 4:5), gracious (Colossians 4:6), and bold (Ephesians 6:18-19) speech. There are seven prayer requests here. Which one(s) are most important for you given your evangelistic track record with unbelievers?
8. At the end of the day, when it comes to outreach, we are simply planting and watering the seeds of the gospel in people's lives - and then trusting God for the growth (1 Cor. 3:6). How does reframing our role in evangelism this way bring increased encouragement to our efforts? How do we plant such seeds? What can we do to water them? What's involved in trusting God for the growth?