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Faith Bible Church
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Bible Study-93
Galatians 4:16 – It really is all about Truth.1
(Excursus: God’s timelessness, His will, and our prayers.1)

Galatians 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I communicate to you Truth?
(ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;).

In our previous study of this passage, I noted in some concluding thoughts how much of a blessing it is for me to see believers of FBC love God’s truth so much. This was manifested to me again last evening in our study of prayer and the timelessness of God by the questions, the discussions during and after Bible class, and then at the Masseys. To see your amazement about awesomeness of God’s timelessness and how He invites us to share with Him in His concurrent activity in history is very encouraging. It also gives me a green light to develop this a bit more in conjunction with some of our other studies;-).

As far as the verse above, make no mistake about the fact that Paul is talking about grace and not concurrentism or prayer or predestination. However, note the issue is Truth! Truth matters! Not what feels good! Not what is easy! Not what agrees with our views! Not just practical stuff! Each believer must learn to make Truth as such the issue. Moreover, anytime you evaluate a pastor you should first orient to whether what he is teaching is truth, not to what makes you feels good or what you deem pragmatic. If you make truth the issue, all kinds of practical effects will flow. The truth always brings freedom! Even if it is tough, at times, to get your head around it.

In connection with our studies on the human will as it relates to prayer and God’s eternal will, last evening I mentioned that if you do not have the proper metaphysical framework, you will not be able to grasp many truths in the Word of God. Most certainly, you will not be able to hold on to them for very long. Furthermore, if you cannot grasp truth or hold on to it, you will by necessity default to irrationality, absurdity, nonsensical views of God, and fideism. I would like to illustrate this point with the passage I touched on last evening:

Luke 11:1-4 And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." 2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Without metaphysics to grasp and hold the truths in this verse, how in the world can you not fall into nonsense and fideism? Consider a few questions regarding the prayer for the millennium (kingdom) to come:

- 1) Has God not already determined when the millennium will come? (Read Isaiah 2 and Revelation 21).

- 2) If God has already determined the time for the millennium, then what is the point of praying for it?
- 3) Does it even make sense to ask for something that is certain to come (after all, we have God's recorded Word on it!) whether we ask for it or not?
- 4) If the pat answer in Christianity is accepted, namely that prayer is all about fellowship with God, is that not an admission that the *petition itself* for the kingdom to come in the prayer is inefficacious, and thus has no meaning, i.e. *pointless*?
- 5) Does God want us to be involved in meaningless and pointless activity? Is that not what is wrong with "religion" in the first place? going around with *meaningless* ritual!
- 6) When certain Christians, like Fideists, say that we are to abandon logic because true godliness is all about making *irrational* leaps of faith into God, are they not promoting an absurd or insane view of God and His commands? What kind of God determines when the millennium will come and then turns around and commands that we pray for it? An irrational God? Blasphemous!
- 7) If we cannot understand Christ's mandate, does that mean that we can just ignore His teachings about the Father and prayer? Or should we press on to discover the truth?
- 8) Do we really want to ignore what Christ teaches about God and prayer because it is too hard to figure out?
- 9) Do we really want to charge Christ with absurdity?
- 10) Dare we reject the law of non-contradiction and jump into Fideism? "Just believe it, man!" Or as some have said, "I believe it because it is absurd."
- 11) Do we really want to be like ignorant pagans about God and the ways of God?
- 12) Is it not worth the effort to learn the metaphysics needed to do the heavy lifting required to understand in a very *logical* manner how prayer works in light of God's sovereign plan? Though no one will ever *fully* or *comprehensively* understand God, every believer must continue to advance in a rational and coherent view of God and His ways. Failure to fully understand is to be expected, to embrace nonsensical views of God or prayer is blasphemous and against the very notion of Truth and the God of Truth.

I will be developing the concepts of the timelessness of God as it relates to time-bound man and prayer over the next several Bible classes so that we will not be guilty of nonsensical views of God or prayer.

Last evening I struggled, and even stumbled a bit, with examples in my attempt to convey the timelessness of God with regard to how our prayers actually precede the actual events that are prayed for. The whole idea of praying over the past may be a bit weird. But there is absolutely nothing irrational about praying for something that has already taken place in light of God's timelessness. Not that it would change what happened, but what did happen is actually effected by the prayer. I am not saying that we should go around praying for the past; my point is that such prayers would actually be considered before the events and therefore part of what actually happens in the past.

As I was thinking about it more, attempting to come up with better illustrations/images for the concepts, I discovered that I have instinctively prayed over the past on more than one occasion. You probably have too. Consider a common occurrence: many people, while waiting for the doctor to come in and give news on the lab results, have found themselves praying in the waiting

room with something like “God please let the results be good.” While the patient anxiously sits for the doctor in the waiting room, the results have already been in for a while. Moreover, they are what they are. Her praying for good results is not going to change history once the results were made. The medical chart does not magically change as she prays. She cannot change the past! However, as she sits in the waiting room praying to God that the results would be good, our timeless God is presently with her every moment of her life from her beginning as a child and throughout every single moment of her life. Timelessness of God means that He is with her every moment of her life, all at the same time. God can be closer to her than anyone because He is with her every instant and moment of her life. And He is with all of her life all at once. Now that is real intimacy!

Her prayer in the waiting room is before Him in the same instant as all of her life, from when she was a cute and perhaps willful two-year old to her later years. Her prayer in the waiting room was considered before she even realized there was a health issue. In fact, God has already acted on her past health through her prayer in the waiting room. This is what I mean about prayers effecting the past. God’s timelessness does not refer to endless duration. He literally sees *everything* in one present moment and invites all believers to share with Him in His activities in creation. More later...

James 4:2 ... You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don