

Pray for us

- West Wing - portrayal of Ged Bartlett as President, and all his assistants round him
 - when he says "next", its time to move on, whether you've won or lost the preceding argument
 - Bartlett's mind is on to the next thing...
- Paul is not quite there:
 - in fact, next week's section on laziness is rooted in his teaching about the Lord's return, and responding to their imbalance on it...
 - but his mind is turning on towards the next thing
 - he's coming to the end of focusing on their concerns, and turning to the bigger picture...
 - of God's work in the world, and how he and they are part of that
- So he asks them to *pray...*

Pray for (rapid) spread

- Gospel progress
 - most important news, river of life...
- In depressing times do we have the confidence to do this?
 - and it not come out sounding either an unreal hope, or a misguided, deluded hope...
 - but a confidence in a God who is still able... a *rapid spread*?

Pray for honoured welcome

- Honoured - more than just acknowledged, but given its proper place - first place
 - this is really saying "accepted"
 - the "*as it was with you*" clarifies that this is what Paul was on about...
- If someone honours your home with their presence... you turn everything upside down - physically, and routine - so that they are welcome

Pray for delivery from evil

- Spiritual battle - we forget this so easily!
- What does delivered mean?
 - easy life? NO!
 - saved so that able to achieve purpose...
 - in other words Paul wants them to pray for him that he not be thwarted in sharing the gospel
- Note how the gospel, though God's message, is carried by people
 - he chooses to use us, to limit himself to our communication
 - he could (literally) paint the sky red, flashing text in the clouds... he's God!!
 - but he chooses to present the message in human words and actions - **our** human words and action
 - so its *pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith...*

Confidence

- Introduction to confidence:
 - Dundee Trusted Traders scheme...
 - Radio 1's "In New Music We Trust", but promoting themselves as reliable source of inspiration...
 - brands, reliability, reputation...

- What is our confidence in, that we can pray such prayers?

Our confidence is in the Lord's faithfulness

- What we know about God:
 - he is faithful (and able)
 - he can give strength
 - he can protect (same sense as delivered above)
- Who do you turn to in times of trouble - someone you trust, because you have confidence in their ability to help
 - perhaps someone you have seen come through in similar situations in the past
 - perhaps someone who comes well recommended, by people you trust...
- *This is basically the picture Paul is painting of God, only more so!!*

Our confidence is his work in you

- We know and have seen evidence of his work:
 - Paul had in the Thessalonians, and was getting reports of more
 - what reports are being passed on about Fintry...?
 - just of what we are doing - that would be disappointing!
 - about how we are progressing in our likeness to the Lord? About his work in our midst? About how he is bring people to faith in our midst? About how we are learning to trust him more and more?
 - those would be good reports...!
- Such reports would give confidence and hope for the future:
 - that God's work of changing lives is on-going here...

Our confidence is in his direction

- And going forward, our confidence is that he will guide us:
 - again, not just at the level of events or initiatives - Summer Focus, Just 10, CAT, GB weekend away, whatever...
 - but more character...
- What does "into God's love" imply?
 - knowing, experiencing, passing on, focusing on God's love - first in our hearts
 - where is the central focus, Scripturally, of God's love - the Cross
 - so his direction will focus on the Cross, and the grace shown there
 - and will reflect that grace in the attitudes and choices taken on...
- What does "Christ's perseverance" imply?
 - what kind of perseverance did Christ show?
 - perseverance in holiness and faithful obedience, right to death
 - perseverance in the face of rejection and misunderstanding, right to death
 - perseverance in purpose, in reaching out with the love of God to those who need a Saviour, right to death...
- *That's to be our heartbeat - his love, and his perseverance*