

## **A Reasons to give thanks and pray in the letter to the Philippians:**

### **❖ Reasons to be thankful (Philippians 1:3-8)**

- Paul begins his letter by thanking God for the believers in Philippi (Phil. 1:3), whom he dearly loved (Phil. 1:8).
- Just as the high priest wore on his breastplate, next to his heart, the names of the tribes of Israel engraved on gems when he stood before God, Paul carried “in his heart” each member of the church when he stood before God in prayer to intercede for them (Phil. 1:7).
- His gratitude included the fact that the Philippians remained faithful to the gospel, and that God was perfecting them every day (Phil. 1:5-6).
- The third reason for gratitude was that the Philippians shared with him “in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel” (Phil. 1:7).

### **❖ Prayer requests (Philippians 1:9-11)**

- We can consider Paul's prayer motivation as a "chained reason" (Phil. 1:9-11 NIV):
  - (1) May love abound in you
  - (2) It will make you wiser
  - (3) You will discern the best
  - (4) You will be pure and upright
  - (5) You will bear fruit through Jesus Christ
  - (6) This will result in glory and praise for God
- How can our love “abound still more and more”? Why is that so important for the Christian life?

## **B Giving thanks and praying in difficult times (Philippians 1:12-18)**

- ❖ When the Philippians learned that Paul was imprisoned in Rome, they were greatly distressed, and they sent Epaphroditus with help for the apostle (Phil. 4:18).
- ❖ Far from being distressed, Paul gave thanks to God for his imprisonment. Why give thanks? Because in this way he was able to preach to who, otherwise, he could never have reached (Phil. 1:13).
- ❖ Furthermore, seeing the apostle's attitude, other faithful brothers were encouraged, and began to preach the gospel regardless of the difficulties involved (Phil. 1:14).
- ❖ Others, thinking that speaking openly about the gospel would bring difficulties for Paul, also helped – unintentionally– to spread it (Phil. 1:15-18).

## **C Reasons to give thanks and pray in the letter to the Colossians:**

### **❖ Reasons to be thankful (Colossians 1:3-8)**

- Echoing the words of 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul thanks God because the Colossians have these three Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love (Col. 1:4-5).
- These virtues arise “in Christ Jesus”, affect our relationships with “all the saints”, and have been transmitted to us through “the true word of the gospel”.
- Paul emphasizes that this gospel has not been preached only to the Colossians, but “Throughout the whole world” (Col. 1: 6)... and in just 30 years!
- The power of God, which is transmitted through the gospel by the work of the Holy Spirit, makes the Bible “the word of life” (Phil. 2:16). This means that, by accepting the gospel, we have eternal life and an inheritance “stored up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5).

### **❖ Prayer requests (Colossians 1:9-12)**

- Paul's prayer request includes many good things for the Colossians (Col. 1:9-11):
  - (1) May they receive the knowledge of God, which will give them wisdom and spiritual understanding
  - (2) Live as children of God, pleasing him in every way
  - (3) May they bear fruit and grow in knowledge
  - (4) May they be strengthened with God's power so that they may be patient
- This prayer is made “giving joyful thanks to the Father” (Col. 1:12).
- There are four channels through which God acts to make Paul's prayer a reality in us:
  - (1) The Bible (Psalm 119:105)
  - (2) The spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10), manifested through Ellen G. White
  - (3) God's providential guidance (Col. 4:3)
  - (4) The Holy Spirit (Is. 30:21)