Pray: For Whom?

Intro: Prayer is an important part of the Christian life. Our Lord, the perfect example, was often found in prayer to the Father, sometimes spending all night in prayer. Some often wonder and some have asked what they could have prayed for during that time. Thus, let us consider some of the Bible’s teachings as to for what the Christian is to pray. In this lesson, I want us just to consider those individuals for whom we can pray.

I. For One Another—Other Christians
   A. In speaking of his brethren; in their behalf; Eph. 3:14 "14For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;"
   B. For all saints (Christians); Eph. 6:18 "18Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"
   C. Phi. 1:4, 9 "4Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,...9And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and"
   D. Jam. 5:16 "16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

II. For The Sick And Poor
   A. Gal. 2:10 "10Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."
      1. Remember how?
      2. In the definitions of remember is “give careful consideration to...care for, be concerned about,” and another says, “the process of recall involves doing something about the needed.”
      3. It is in meeting their needs and possibly praying in their behalf.
   B. Jam. 5:14-15 "14Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."
      1. Roman Catholic church calls upon this for their false doctrine of Extreme Unction.
         a. It does not say call for the priest, but elders.
         b. It does not say to call for the priest so you can prepare them for death, but so you can bring him back to his health.
         c. Therefore, it is the opposite of the Extreme Unction idea.
      2. Let them anoint him with oil.
         a. Things oil was used for:
            (1) Ceremoniously
               (a) Pouring oil on the head of the priest, prophets, and kings setting them apart for their work.
               (b) Not used this way here.
            (2) Cooking—not used this way here.
            (3) Burning
               (a) Especially to light a house.
               (b) Not used this way here.
(4) Medicinally
   (a) It is used that way with the Good Samaritan; Luke 10:34
   “And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”
   (b) It is probably used this way here.
   b. The elders are to anoint the sick with oil in connection with prayer.

3. The prayer of faith shall heal the sick.
   a. God’s promises or laws in application to man are always conditional—certain things being applicable on the part of man and the standard of nature.
   b. This is true in the case of the sick also.
   c. When James wrote, elders had miraculous ability which probably was the case here.

III. FOR GOSPEL PREACHERS AND TEACHERS
   A. While several passages are speaking about the apostles, it is in their preaching and teaching of God’s Word.
   B. Acts 4:29
   “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,”
   C. Eph. 6:18-20
   “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”
   D. Col. 4:2-3
   “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:”
   E. 2 The. 3:1-2
   “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.”
   1. Let the word be preached boldly
   2. Let there be doors open to us that we might have freedom in proclaiming the word.

IV. FOR OUR ENEMIES
   A. Love, bless, and pray for them:
   1. Mat. 5:43-44
   “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”
   “Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”
   B. Luke 23:34
   Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”
   1. We are to forgive as Christforgives; Col 3:13
   “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”
   2. We forgive based upon their repentance; Luke 17:3
   “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”
   C. Acts 7:60
   “And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”
   1. Stephen followed Christ’s example.
   2. They were not forgiven but Stephen had an attitude toward forgiveness (cf. Saul not forgiven till he repented).
   D. 2 Tim. 4:16
   “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.”
1. Paul is speaking of his first imprisonment in Rome.
2. All is generic.

E. Pray for enemies
1. Not that God would forgive them in opposition to what He teaches in His Word.
2. Pray that they might and would have the opportunity to be saved.

V. FOR RULERS
A. Ezra 6:10 “That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.”
B. 1 Tim. 2:1-2, 4 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 5For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty....’Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
1. We pray for a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness so all men might be saved—God’s Word might have free course.
2. Too often our prayers along this line is for our own comforts.

VI. FOR SINNERS
A. Mat. 9:36-39 “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”
1. This would also apply to praying for preachers.
2. We are to pray that the Gospel might be brought to the lost.
3. This is often misapplied:
   a. The harvest plentiful, but the laborers are few.
   b. The harvest is ready to be gathered and we are to pray that laborers to into that area where the harvest is ready.
   c. It is not teaching us to go into all the world, but the area of the world that is ready for harvesting.
B. Rom. 10:1 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”
1. Paul had a desire for Israel’s salvation and did everything he could to bring it about.
2. Their salvation was conditional upon their hearing, believing, and obeying the Gospel.
C. Christian sinners; 1 John 5:16 “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”

VII. FOR ALL MEN
A. 1 Tim. 2:1 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”
B. Men
1. It is from the Greek ἄθρωπος (anthropos).
2. It is a generic term for mankind; including those good and evil, Christian and non-Christian, friend or enemy.

Conclusion: Let us continue to pray and pray according to God’s Will and for all people.