



LESSON SIXTEEN - PRAYER

Text: Luke 11: 1 – 13

Following are some quotations about prayer to give us some things to think about:

- A preacher not praying is playing. A church not praying is straying. (Paul Davis)
- The man who would speak to men for God must first learn to speak to God for men.
- The kind of Christian that a church needs is a Christian that can reach heaven on his knees.
- A childish soul not inoculated with compulsory prayer is open to any religious infection (Alexander Cockburn)
- Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden (Corrie Ten Boom)
- A family altar can alter a family
- A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing
- He who kneels before God can stand before anyone
- The church needs to be “prayer conditioned”

Notice that the disciples did not ask – “teach us to be soul winners” or “teach us how to preach”. Instead they asked, “Lord, teach us to pray as did John’s disciples”. The Lord by his strong example and in several notable ways taught them the necessity of prayer. You will find in many examples that the Lord preceded his miracles and ministry with nights of prayer. The Lord did not even begin his ministry until he spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness praying and fasting.

Next to obeying the gospel (that is repenting, being baptized in Jesus name and being filled with God’s Holy Spirit), the most important element of a Christian life is prayer. Prayer is more im-

portant than tithing. Prayers is more important than going to church. Prayer is more important than dressing holy. Why is it more important than these things and all other responsibilities of the Christian life? Because everything we do as a Christian has to be based upon a relationship with God first. All the religious things that we do without a relationship with God is merely religion.

All these other things can be done without any kind of spirituality or relationship with God. People go to church without God every Sunday. People tithe, give, and even do their religious sacrifices to God – but that doesn’t mean they have God in their life. Some folks give to the preacher, give to the church, give to the need (and these can be good) – but if it is not unto God, in the presence of God, and for the pleasure of God – then it is “religion” *not* relationship with God; there is a difference

The Purposes of Prayer

Prayer & Praise will bring you into God’s presence, and hence into relationship with Him.

Prayer has to do with your direct relationship with God. You don’t pray to your brother or sister, preacher, priest, or counselor. There can be no relationship with God without two essential elements of communication - Prayer and Praise. Both of these are the primary ways we commune with God. Meditation is a form of prayer, but it is not all there is to prayer.

Prayer and Praise are the ways into the holy place or presence of God. What good is it to go to church and only attend an empty building? If the presence of God is not there – if God isn’t at church, then what good is it for us to be there?

Psalms 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise



Isaiah 60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. (praise is the gate into the presence of God)

Psalms 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (David had a relationship with God that was built on prayer and worship)

We must pray because we are in spiritual warfare.
(Ephesians 6: 11 – 18)

The Bible tells us what our armour is: the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel on our feet, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit

BUT – what good if a soldier not strong enough to wield the sword, hold up the shield, make the march, or lift the armour? The armour is the outward elements of our Christian life – but prayer is what gives us the strength to lift them, hold them, carry them, and use them.

Jesus admonished us to watch and pray as a defense against the enemy, and as a defense against temptation:

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luke 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Luke 22:46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Prayer is our way of gaining strength for spiritual warfare and for daily living. Is is the source of our spiritual power because “praying in the spirit” is what builds our faith:

Jude 1:20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Fervent Prayer is one of those times when our heart, body, soul, and mind are being given to God, and some victories and request will be withheld from us unless we pray

James 4:1-3 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

James 5:16 Confess 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.*



Hindrances to Prayer

If we prayed 1 hour per day, we would only be giving 4% of our time to the Lord in prayer. Very few people that I know actually spend this much time in prayer. Most of us are guilty of “prayer sharing” – that is we are sharing our prayer time with our work or other activities. Although it is good that we do this in that it is good to have the Lord on our mind while we work – the Lord actually intended us to find time to “devote” our prayers and worship to God. That is one reason why he said that his house should be called a “house of prayer” for all nations. A church needs to be instructed in prayer, and regularly admonished to pray; there needs to be prayer focus in the church. ***Prayer must become a priority in church and in the home.***

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

But prayer is a spiritual activity – and because it is so important, for some reason there are more hindrances to prayer than there are to going to church. We fight the flesh and circumstances to be faithful to church and Bible study – but Christians will experience a greater fight when it comes to ***separating*** yourself for prayer.

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Although we come together for prayer – the power to pray as a community comes from learning how to pray in a place where you and God have “per-

sonal communion” alone and together. A husband and wife develop intimacy in private (or they should), and the love is then shared openly in a different way. Christians should not avoid intimate times with God.

However, there are a couple of major hindrances that affect our willingness to pray, and also answered prayer in our life:

Sin is a hindrance to prayer

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Jeremiah 5:25 Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

We will look at the “Prayer Clock” in a few minutes – but suffice it to say that one of the first orders of business (at the very beginning of our prayer) – we much make sure that we have done all necessary confessing and repentance so that we can be assured that God will hear us. He said “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us.” But this is an essential part of our prayer life.

Mistreating your wife or others

One of the greatest hindrances to prayer being answered is a heart that is holding a grudge, holding on to bitterness, not being forgiving or merciful – and for a man, mistreating his wife:

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to



knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Matthew 5:22 - 24 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

How To Pray

Using ACTS as an acronym – here are four steps to prayer. Do them in order. We must first begin our prayer with Praise (Adoration). Always start your prayer in worship – praising Him. Confession is next because he won't hear our prayers if we have our sins blocking the way. Then we need to thank him for what he has given before we ask for more.

Adoration - Spend time praising the Lord and adoring Him for who he is (Matt. 6:9). Use Scripture to praise Him (see Pss. 103, 145, 150; Rev. 4:8; 5:12-14). Love and cherish His presence and allow Him to work in and through your life (see Matt. 22:32-34). Be still before Him and enjoy His presence (see Ps. 46:10). Use this time to allow God to speak to you through His Word and Spirit (see Pss. 40:1-3; 90:12-17). Praise the Lord by praying scripture or hymns back to Him (see Ps. 84; Rev. 4:8; 5:9-10, 12-13 and "Great is Thy Faithfulness").

Confession - Confession should be a part of your continual walk with Christ (see Matt. 6:9-13). Spend time asking Christ to search your heart for areas that displease Him (see Ps. 139:23-24). Allow God to cleanse your heart of any unconfessed sin (see Ps. 51:10-13). Be sure to spend time confessing and repenting of (turning away from) specific sins (see 1 John 1:9). Accept His forgiveness and cleansing (see Jer. 31:34).

Thanksgiving - Giving thanks for all things should be a part of our everyday lives as God's people (see Phil. 4:6-7). This includes thanking God for specific things such as blessings, people, open doors, guidance, etc. Also give thanks for His salvation and the privilege to serve such a wonderful Savior. Thank Him for his goodness, loving-kindness, and faithfulness (see Ps. 100:4-6).

Supplication - We are called as believers to intercessory prayer (see Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). Thus, we are to come before God on behalf of others (see Heb. 10:19-25; Rev. 1:4-6). Spend time praying for specific people, events, states, countries, missionaries, etc. (see Acts 12:5; Rom. 10:1). In addition, spend time praying for personal needs (see Matt. 6:11-13). Make prayer lists for your time of supplication. Be sure to include a place for answers to be recorded. Recorded answers can become items for praise and thanksgiving.