



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “A Better Way to Pray”

Speaker: Ps Mike Gowans

Series: Jesus Is Better

Scripture: Hebrews 8

Main Idea

Prayer isn't about saying the right words—it's about drawing near to God.

Because Jesus is our better High Priest, we no longer approach God through a place or a system. We come boldly to the Father through Jesus.

The Old Testament Tabernacle was never the destination. It was a picture pointing us to Christ and a pattern that teaches us how to enter God's presence.

Jesus Is Our Better High Priest

Hebrews 8

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that the earthly Tabernacle was only a copy and shadow of the heavenly reality.

Under the New Covenant, we don't have to travel to a temple to meet with God.

Key Thought: Jesus is our better way to God.

Because of Him:

- We have direct access to the Father.
- Our sins are fully forgiven.
- God's law is written on our hearts.
- We can boldly enter His presence every day.

Prayer is no longer about ritual.

It is about relationship.

A Better Pattern for Prayer

The Tabernacle provides a practical framework that helps us intentionally spend time with God.

1. Enter Through the Gate

Thanksgiving & Praise

Psalm 100:4

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise."

Prayer begins by shifting our focus away from ourselves and onto God.

Thankfulness remembers what God has done.

Praise celebrates who God is.

Key Thought:

Don't begin your prayers with your problems. Begin with God's goodness.

Gratitude builds faith. Praise changes perspective.

2. Remember the Cross

The Brazen Altar

The altar reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice.

Here we remember:

- **We are forgiven.**
- **We are redeemed.**
- **We are secure in Christ.**
- **Our salvation has already been won.**

Key Thought:

Never lose the joy of your salvation.

Jesus paid once and for all what we could never pay ourselves.

The cross is where guilt gives way to grace.

3. Wash at the Laver

The priests washed before entering God's presence.

Interestingly, the laver was made from bronze mirrors.

Before they were cleansed...

They first saw themselves.

Key Thought:

God doesn't expose our sin to shame us.

He reveals it so He can cleanse us.

Confession restores fellowship.

Repentance reminds us that we are forgiven, loved, and made new in Christ.

4. Depend on the Holy Spirit

The Golden Lampstand

The lampstand represents the continual work of the Holy Spirit.

We were never meant to live the Christian life in our own strength.

Key Thought:

Stay filled with the Holy Spirit. Invite Him daily to give you:

- **Wisdom**
- **Understanding**
- **Strength**
- **Discernment**
- **Power**

The Christian life isn't sustained by willpower.

It's sustained by the Spirit's power.

5. Feed on God's Word

The Table of Showbread

God's Word nourishes our hearts and strengthens our faith.

Reading Scripture isn't simply gaining information.

It's receiving spiritual nourishment.

Key Thought:

Faith grows when God's Word fills your heart.

Speak His promises. Meditate on Scripture.

Allow His truth to shape your thinking before the world does.

6. Intercede for Others

The Altar of Incense

Throughout Scripture, incense symbolizes the prayers of God's people rising before Him.

After spending time thanking God, remembering the cross, confessing sin, depending on the Spirit, and feeding on His Word, our hearts are prepared to pray for others.

Pray for:

- Your family
- Your church
- Your pastors
- Your city
- Your nation
- Those who don't yet know Jesus

Key Thought: Strong personal prayer always leads to selfless intercession.

Better Promises

Because Jesus established a better covenant, we no longer live under condemnation.

Hebrews 8 reminds us that God promises to:

- Write His law on our hearts.
- Be our God.
- Forgive our sins.
- Remember our sins no more.

Key Thought:

The New Covenant gives us confidence to approach God every single day.

You don't have to earn His presence. Jesus already made the way.

Final Challenge

Prayer isn't about checking a religious box.

It is about building a relationship with your Heavenly Father.

This week, intentionally walk through the Tabernacle prayer pattern:

- Begin with thanksgiving.
- Remember the cross.
- Confess and receive cleansing.
- Depend on the Holy Spirit.
- Feed on God's Word.
- Pray for others.

Key Thought: Consistent prayer changes us before it changes our circumstances.

Discussion Questions

1. Ps Mike shared that the Tabernacle was never the destination—it was a pattern pointing us to Jesus. How does viewing prayer as a relationship instead of a routine change the way you approach God?
2. Which step of the Tabernacle prayer pattern (thanksgiving, the cross, confession, the Holy Spirit, God's Word, or intercession) comes most naturally to you? Which one do you tend to neglect?
3. Why is it important to begin prayer with thanksgiving and praise instead of immediately focusing on our needs? How have gratitude and worship changed your perspective

during difficult seasons?

4. Ps Mike said that the laver reminds us not only to recognize our need for cleansing but also to remember who we are in Christ. Why is it important to hold both of those truths together?
5. What is one practical change you can make this week to develop a more intentional prayer life? How can this group encourage you as you grow in that commitment?