

SERIES: CHRIST - CULTURE - CHURCH
SERMON: A PEOPLE DEVOTED TO PRAYER
11-10-24

OPENER:

Mark 11:15-17 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹⁶ And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. ¹⁷ Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

**JESUS ISSUES HIS COMMAND TO HIS CHURCH - MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED
A HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLE.
WE ARE TO BE KNOWN AS A PEOPLE WHO PRAY.**

F.B. Meyer said, "The great tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but un-offered prayer."

Instead of prayer being something we do everyday, like breathing, eating and walking and talking, it seems to have become like that glass covered box on the wall that says, "break in case of emergency." It is true that so very often we associate prayer with crises in our life.

Prayer is, for the most part, an untapped resource, an unexplored continent where untold treasure remains to be unearthed. It is talked about more than anything else, and practiced less than anything else. And yet, it remains one of the greatest gifts our Lord has given us outside of salvation.

**YOU CAN BE A DISCIPLE AND NOT PRAY, JUST LIKE YOU CAN BE MARRIED
AND NOT TALK TO YOUR WIFE
OR YOUR HUSBAND.
BUT IN BOTH CIRCUMSTANCES YOU WILL BE MISERABLE.**

**PRAYER IS THE PIPELINE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.**

Paul said this to the church in Colossi.....

Colossians 4: 2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

1. WE ARE TO BE DEDICATED TO PRAYER

The Greek word translated, "*continue earnestly*" here is one word in the original language. It can be translated, "persist in, adhere firmly to, or remain devoted to or to give unremitting care to."

It carries with it the idea of dedication.

Of the ten times this word is used in the New Testament, four of them have to do with being devoted to prayer. It is a very powerful word and in this verse is given as a command. In other words, persistence in prayer is not an option for the Christian it is a commandment from the Lord.

**IF WE ARE DEDICATED TO GOD THEN WE ARE
DEDICATED TO PRAYER.**

**SHOW ME SOMEONE WHO IS TRULY DEVOTED TO THE
LORD BUT NEVER SPEAKS WITH HIM.**

Two of the most instructive parables that Jesus ever told on prayer are in Luke 18 and the other in Luke 11, both have to do with being persistent and not giving up in prayer.....

Luke 18:1-8 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

⁶ Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Luke 11: 5-9 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? ⁸ I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

vs. 9... "ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you."

Each of those verbs(ask, seek, knock) in the Greek are in the present tense, active voice and could be translated, ***"keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking."***

Jesus does not want us to give up in prayer, He instructs us to be persistent. To continue in it. Even though it is difficult, or there are too many distractions, or it is a fight to find time to pray. Jesus does not want us to give up praying. Prayer is to be a habitual daily thing in our lives. It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up prayer when our enjoyment is gone, or our desire is gone to pray.

Colossians 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

to be vigilant is: to be watchful over it... to protect that time that you have with the Lord. To guard it....

**THE TRUTH IS THAT IN ORDER FOR US TO HAVE A DESIRE TO PRAY WE MUST
CONTINUE PRAYING.**

THE LESS WE PRAY - THE LESS WE DESIRE TO PRAY.

WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE PERSISTENT IN PRAYER.

2. WE ARE TO BE THANKFUL IN PRAYER

Paul never fails to mention giving thanks to God.....

> Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

> Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

> 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you

Expressing gratitude does several things:

- It articulates dependence
- It demonstrates relationship
- It communicates a proper attitudes
- It generates humility

3.FIVE THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN WE PRAY:

1. Prayer internalizes the burden

It deepens our ownership of the burden and our partnership with God. As we pray we begin to become aware of how God might use to answer the prayer, how He might involve us in ways we had not theretofore foreseen.

2. Prayer forces us to wait

Part of prayer is always waiting for God. God has three answers to prayers: Yes, no and wait. Yes and no are no-brainers. But wait, that is tough. John MacArthur says: "There is a tension between boldness and waiting on God's will. That tension is resolved by being persistent, yet accepting God's answer when it finally comes." Instead of getting frustrated that God is not on our schedule, prayer forces us to be on God's timetable.

3. Prayer opens our spiritual eyes

It enables us to get in touch with what God is doing and how He is doing it.

In II Kings 6 the Army of Israel was surrounded by their enemies and Elijah's servant got nervous.....

2 Kings 15-17 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

¹⁶ So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

**PRAYER OPENS OUR EYES TO WHAT GOD IS DOING.
TO SEE THINGS WE ARE BLINDED TO WITHOUT PRAYER.
WE SPEAK TO GOD - GOD ANSWERS US AND SHOWS US.**

4. It aligns our heart with God's heart

Adjustment, alignment, setting our thoughts, emotions, actions.

Communication is always a form on connection. It is a tool of unity. So, as we talk to God and seek His presence we are united with Him.

5. Prayer enables us to move forward

Prayer engages God, enables God's people, and enlarges His kingdom. Jesus said, "without Me, you can do nothing." Once we have prayed we are ready to do anything, until we have prayed we can do nothing, but once we have prayed we can accomplish anything.

**I SAID THIS LAST WEEK....
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE DARKNESS OF OUR TIMES**

**MOVES US TO SEEK GOD.
VOICED FIRST NOT IN A PULPIT, A BLOG, ON SOCIALS,
BUT IN A CLOSET.**

**OUR NEED IS TOO GREAT AND OUR GOD IS FAR TOO WORTHY TO SETTLE FOR
ANYTHING LESS.**

FOR THE NEXT 10 DAYS LET'S COMMIT TO DAILY PRAYER WITH GOD

Starting Monday, 11-11 thru Wednesday, 11-20

PRACTICAL STEPS TO ESTABLISH DAILY PRAYER

1. SCHEDULE IT

*Psalm 5:3 (NASB) In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice;
In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch*

Schedule your prayer time like an appointment with God. Choose a specific time every day that you stop and seek His face. We make sure to schedule the times we eat. We stop everything to eat. So why do we not stop everything to pray and receive our daily bread and nourishment at His feet?

2. CHOOSE A MEETING PLACE

Matthew 6:6 (ESV) But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Choose a place apart from everything and everyone to meet with God. That place needs to be a place that provides isolation and solitude with Him.. Our soul was made for times of isolation and solitude and to have a healthy soul we must practice that. Where is that for you? Is it outside taking in nature? Or maybe taking a walk, or a secluded room in your home? Or sitting alone in front of your fireplace or near a window. You choose the place that you can get away with the Lord!

3. TAKE YOUR BIBLE

*Ephesians 5:26 just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

Read your Bible as part of your prayer time to let the Word wash over you. Let the Word quiet you and bring you peace. Let the Spirit Words bring rest to your mind and remove any anxiety and worry.

4. BEGIN WITH PRAISE

Psalm 100:4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

In my prayer time I follow the example that Jesus gave us of The Lord's Prayer.....

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

So, my personal prayer guideline is 4 steps:

First: Praise

Second: Speak, "Let Your will be done"

Third: Humble yourself in submission and repentance

Fourth: Pour out your needs and requests

Other things you can do to help enhance your time with God.....

- **Write down your prayers in a prayer journal**
- **Choose a passage and pray the Word**
 - Pray the Psalms**
 - Pray the promises of God. Insert your name.**
- **Have a prayer partner and keep each other accountable**
- **Pray in the Spirit**