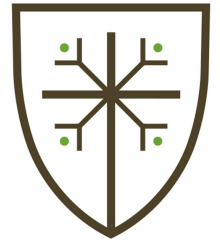


SERMON NOTES



The Lord's Prayer *Fall Sermon Series*

September 10, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

How Not to Pray

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Genesis 3:1-6

Ephesians 1:15-20

Matthew 6:5-13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you see in your own life that pulls you away, distracts you, from intimacy with God?
2. In a busy world such as we live in, where/how do we find "the hidden places" in which to meet God?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim began a new series in conjunction with our capital campaign, on The Lord's Prayer. And he began with three reasons why we are turning our attention to prayer at this time. First, as a church with an endeavor such as the capital campaign before us, we must first turn to God in prayer before anything else. Second, as a culture, we don't know how to pray. And, third, we are starved for prayer. This week, we looked at how not to pray and the two errors Jesus addresses before he gives the Lord's Prayer: pretending and babbling.

Pretending

In our gospel text, Jesus begins with an example of those who pray in a manner exactly opposite of what he is teaching – those who pray publicly and they love it. Their goal is to be seen by others. Prayer is just a religious mask and what motivates them isn't God but other people. Time and time again we have seen religious leaders in our own day and age fall because of this. Publicity and fame distract us from the true, deep, relationship with our Father that begins in the quiet, hidden places.

Babbling

The second error Jesus refers to is people repeating words and phrases and sounds as if they, in themselves, had magical power. The pagan gods were often impersonal, existing up in the heavens and when they did interact with the mortals below, it was in a vengeful or angry way. Words, prayers, were a way to wear them down – to talk at them until they gave you what you wanted. This is not the way with our Heavenly Father. But so often, we are distorted in our relationship with God and seek to prove ourselves in hopes that he will give us what we want. And our relationships with others mirrors this distortion, thinking we need to prove ourselves with others. This mistrust of God, continually striving to prove ourselves, is a seed sown into our collective humanity by Satan himself... "did God really say...?" But we do not have to babble ourselves to death with God. He is a loving Father who gives without cost, who asks only that we come to him.

A Different Way

Jesus way of praying is different. He tells us to go into the storeroom with just yourself and God. The storeroom of a house was the heart of the home – if your storeroom was empty, your home was in trouble. The storeroom of your self is the soul. We are told to go and engage with God alone in our soul – away from distraction, away from the eyes of other men. Tim Keller defined prayer as "experiencing awe and intimacy with God." Jesus, before his death, went to a lonely place and prayed to his Father.