

The Bible 20/20 Week 27: “Prayer and Purpose” (7-12-20)

Last 2 weeks: Isaiah & Ephesians 6 - “Withstand” with the Armor of God

Today: Prayer & Purpose (Jeremiah & Ephesians 6:18)

Introduction: Jeremiah (known as the weeping prophet): Pre-exile and some during the Exile

- He prophesied after Isaiah from King Josiah into Captivity.
- Assyria (leading power) then over taken by Babylon who came after Judah (what was left of Israel).
- Judah’s king was advise to turn to Egypt for help.
- Jeremiah spoke against this unholy alliance - your only hope is turning fully to the Lord.
- He accurately predicted 70 years of captivity at the hands of Babylon

Jeremiah called for a specific purpose . . .

Jeremiah 1:4-8 (ESV)

(4) Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (5) “Before I formed you in the womb **I knew you**, and before you were born I **consecrated** you; I **appointed** you a prophet to the nations.” (6) Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” (7) But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, **you shall go**, and whatever I command you, **you shall speak**. (8) Do not be afraid of them, for **I am with you to deliver you**, declares the LORD.”

Note: Jeremiah - known and appointed by God (his Maker).

- Don’t worry about inadequacy, don’t fear others.
- You have a purpose, you have a voice.
- I am with you and will take care of you.

We need to see the specific connection between Prayer & Purpose . . .

- They go hand-in-hand or you aren’t doing it right!
- **Prayer is essential business!**

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints

Note: Pray at all times, with all kinds of prayer, stay alert, stay at it, keep your fellow believer in mind!

We need to live with our eyes open - ultimately having our eyes fixed on the Lord, but in light of what’s happening in my life and the life of others around me!

Let’s spend some time looking at each of these - Prayer & Purpose, and how we can live this out!

1) Prayer

Jeremiah 29 - a word to the faithful in exile and a warning to those who speak falsely on behalf of the Lord.

a) The Foundation of Prayer

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Note: This is the basis and foundation of prayer!

God knows, and His plan is for my good, even in the midst of difficulty, he has a future and a hope for me!

b) The Value of Prayer

Jeremiah 29:12-13 (ESV)

(12) Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. (13) You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

Note: Prayer is **not futile** - He hears! He is found! Prayer is **not passive** - I pursue!

c) The Goal of Prayer

Jeremiah 29:14 (ESV)

I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Note: This is a specific promise - return from exile, but ultimately this is what all prayer is - **a return to home!**

So start where you are . . .

Jeremiah 33:1-3 (ESV)

(1) The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: (2) "Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: (3) Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Note: Call from where you are, it doesn't have to be complicated. He responds. Pray, listen, and watch!

Remember: Ephesians 6:18 - pray always - keep alert with perseverance!

Example: Study time lunch break - Friend's Instagram: Rick Warren quote along with Isa. 29:11-12

Rick Warren - "The more you pray, the more you're going to understand God's plan"

Hearing God is often about paying attention, and then acknowledging Him when I hear!

d) Paying attention in Prayer

Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV)

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Note: Eyes up - looking around, where you are! Even in difficulty, even when you aren't where you want to be!

Example: Neighbors health, noticing their yard, and a lending a helping hand!

Now we move into the 2nd key point today . . . Prayer is meant to be connected with Purpose

2) Purpose

If we are doing it right, Prayer leads to Kingdom Action! **Consider . . .**

During this strange and difficult time - are you **checking out**?

Or are you keeping your eyes open to how the Lord might be **re-directing** you?

We are called to live with Kingdom Focus & Purpose in this place at this time!

Jeremiah 20:9 (ESV)

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Note: Purpose & Passion - it's not just about doing something exciting that I love. Often it means difficulty and it'll prove costly in my life!

Maya Moore example . . .

- **Star WNBA player, follower of Jesus, walks away from immense in her prime!**
- **She feels called to ministry - but it has a specific focus.**
- **The case of Jonathan Irons (it's the story that found her - during vacation Senior Year)**

Jonathan Irons - After over 20 years in prison (robbery, assault), falsely convicted at 16, he was released a few days ago!

Largely due to the time & financial resource Maya Moore poured into his case!

Maya Moore

"I have just been trying to take it one season at a time, one day at a time. This is a real-life situation. It's not a cause to me as much as it is a real person's story. I definitely see myself having purpose in this criminal justice space because, unfortunately, there's so much work to be done."

Listen - There are many important issues deserving of our time & attention, but out can be overwhelming.

Pray, watch, and then live out what God puts in front of you!

a) Purpose in Prayer - **fulfills kingdom purpose in me!**

Jeremiah 17:5-10 (ESV)

(5) Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. (6) He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. (7) “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. (8) He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” (9) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (10) “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Note: Purposeful prayer will challenge me to grow, and opens up my heart to change!

b) Purpose in Prayer - **fulfills kingdom purpose in this world!**

Jeremiah 1:9-10 (ESV)

(9) Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. (10) See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Note: Purposeful prayer will cause me to engage in the tearing down and building up that is essential to fulfill Kingdom purposes!

Conclusion: Prayer is essential - and if I'm are doing it right, it will lead to purposeful action. In my life and in the world around me!

Let's Pray!