

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**April 21, 2024. "Simple Prayers of a Commoner: WOW!"**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### **II Recap.**

This entire series is a look at simple prayers we can utter, not having to have a fancy theology or understanding in place. And these prayers will connect us to God in a way that opens something up inside of us, and allows God to reveal larger truths to us. The first week we unpacked the prayer "Help". Last week we asked one of the most common and heartfelt of all questions. "Why?" And this week we talk about experiencing the awe and wonder in the prayer of "WOW!"

### **III Sunday.**

Okay, let's just face the elephant in the room. Is "WOW!" really a real prayer? It seems something you would say at a fireworks show, or a great play in sports. It sounds like more of an expression of amazement, or your interaction with something that had a really profound effect on you, rather than what we think of as a prayer. But when you begin to put words to define and explain what "WOW!" could actually mean, it feels like it gets closer to what a prayer should actually sound like. A prayer that is built on amazement, something that takes your breath away, has a profound effect on you, is at the heart of what we want prayer to be. So, let's start with what "WOW!" means to you.

**What makes you "WOW!"?**

**What kind of effect does a "WOW!" moment have on you?**

The scripture for Sunday was Psalm 8. I want to give you just a bit of context (because how it's used and where it's placed matters) before we read it. Psalm 8 is a stand alone psalm between Psalms 3-7 in which David talks about how everyone around him is after him. And Psalms 9-13 that talk about how the weak and powerless are at the mercy of the strong and powerful. So, figuratively and literally, Psalm 8 is an anchor, a set apart place, right in the middle of all sorts of turmoil. In order to find peace and experience something bigger than all we're wrestling with. So, read **Psalm 8** and answer these.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**What in this psalm spoke to you about experiencing "WOW!" in your life?**

**And we're going to talk about this, but how would praying "WOW!" move you to action?**

Praying and living into “WOW!” is an act of resistance. But we have to acknowledge and claim some things before we can live into this life God wants for us. And that is understanding what it takes to live the “WOW!” life. This passage spells some of these truths pretty well.

**1. “WOW!” is born out of a recognition of our limited power.** Whether babbling babies, or lowly humans, God LOVES to choose the weak. All through scripture God shows favoritism for those who society pushes to the side. **Abraham, David, Israelites, Mary, people Jesus hung out with.** God uses the weak, the lower, us regular people, to build a fortress against the strong and powerful. Not to become the strong and powerful. Because once we claim power, then God historically will side with those the powerful oppresses. “WOW!” reminds us we are not as strong and powerful as we want or hope to be. The world reminds us of that everyday. Think about the visual message of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. How does Jesus enter the city? On a donkey, in the back entrance, being honored by the poor and lowly. It’s not on a mighty steed, sword in hand, hacking and whacking. Being able to “WOW!” well comes from acknowledging and claiming our limited power.

**2. “WOW!” begins with opening yourself up, and positioning yourself for awe and wonder.** Being able to understand and live in the turmoil of life begins with the first “WOW!”. That is us slowing down, taking a deep breath, and allowing ourselves to be drawn into the source of our “WOW!” “WOW!” is finding your unique way to praise and recognize something bigger than yourself. Find something that can direct your attention to something bigger than everything you see around you. We call this bigger thing God. Things like the wonder of creation, stars at night, change of seasons, little children, science. It’s positioning your life and attention to be open to be awed. **What makes you experience something that makes you go “WOW!”?** Build these moments regularly into your life.

**3. “WOW!” calls us to work side by side with the creator.** “WOW!” is more than just watching the show. Being only amazed and then that’s it. “WOW!” calls us into action. We often get stuck in the vertical, thinking that’s enough. *“Me and God are GOOD!”* We can become *“Ho hum”* bored with everything around us. It’s just another sunset, clear night, cool worship, etc. Real praise, real recognition of who God is, calls us into taking on the authority (not just responsibility) God has given us. And to be about doing God’s work. It’s through doing “WOW!” well. Understanding what it means to “WOW!” and to fully enter into a prayer of “WOW!” we can find our place and purpose in the world. The “WOW!” work of recognizing who we are in God, creating moments to experience beauty, grows within us the passion and desire to make our lives count. To find contentment and peace. That’s why praying “WOW!” well is important. It brings meaning to life.

#### **IV Challenge.**

The prayer of “WOW!” is what people like us, who feel powerless and beaten down, life is kicking our butt, reminds us that God can be trusted. God wants to do his work through the weak and powerless. “WOW!” is a call to never give up. Never let a more powerful world win. Not to make ourselves the powerful ones. That’s the temptation in the garden. “WOW!” call us from a place of weakness, and powerlessness to keep showing up. Keep going. You are making a difference. What feels like a little bit of good you may be doing is actually making a big difference. In your own personal life. And in your world around you. But what gives us strength. Hope. resilience. And all we need is to regularly work into our everyday routine are real moments of “WOW!” Keep praying “WOW!”