

The Find & Follow Experiment: Pray for the Entire World (4)

GOOD MORNING: My name is Frank Valenzano and I have the great joy of serving as the Campus Pastor at our Olive Branch location. My family and I moved to the area in May and have served over the last twenty years in multiple capacities in churches in both North & South Louisiana.

Picture - Anne (married 19 years), Abigail/16, Ethan/13, & Deacon/9 (serving)

Let me just say hello and thank you on behalf of our Olive Branch Campus. We kicked off public services on Easter of this year & God is moving in hearts and lives of people in Eastern Desoto County.

OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS: We began a new series to cast vision for 2022 and that drives us back to our long-term vision as a church. **Colonial Hills Church exists to bring hope to the world by helping people FIND & FOLLOW JESUS.** Our desire was to give some practical handles for how we can join together wholeheartedly to walk out the vision God has given to our church. The series is called the Find & Follow Experiment because we know everyone is at a different place and point in both their walk with Jesus and their commitment level to Colonial Hills Church.

In 2022, we are asking each person to join us in the following six commitments:

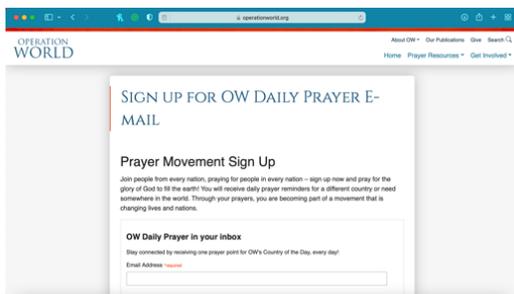
1. Commit to Explore and Know the Entire New Testament
2. Commit to Create and Live in Biblical Community
3. Commit to Reduce Personal Spending to Increase Eternal Investment.
4. Commit to Pray for the Entire World
5. Commit to Spend 2% of my Time in a Missional Context.
6. Commit to Help One Person Find Jesus.

TODAY: I am tasked with sharing about the “small” commitment to Pray for the Entire World.
LET ME GIVE YOU THE WHAT AND THEN FINISH WITH THE MORE IMPORTANT WHY!!

1) WHAT TOOL WILL WE USE TO PRAY FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD?



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App

TRANSITION: NOW THAT WE KNOW THE TOOL WE WILL USE LET'S LOOK AT THE WHY:

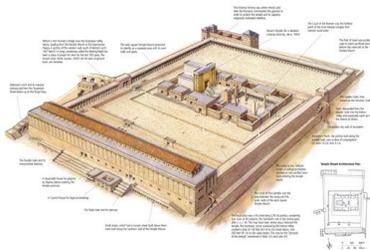
TO FIND THE WHY LET'S TURN TO A PASSAGE THAT IS REALLY INTRIGUING.

READ MARK 11:11-24

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve. ¹² The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it. ¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" ¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹ When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city. ²⁰ In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹ Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" ²² "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. ²³ "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

IN THIS PASSAGE:

- We see Jesus enter into Jerusalem and get to the temple late in the evening (Palm Sunday)
- Mark 11:11 Jesus sees everything & he sees the leaders turning the temple into a place of business
- He returns the next day and clears out the people
- Jesus is upset because the Court of the Gentiles (a place of prayer) is being used for a place of business and a pass through



- This is possibly the second time this scene has happened
- In John 2 early in Jesus' ministry he made a whip and cleared the temple

THE CONTEXT OF THIS PASSAGE IS PRAYER:

JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS & BELIEVING THAT GOD IS THE REWARDER OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM IN PRAYER

- MOUNTAIN MOVING GOD (BELIEVE & RECEIVE)
 - it will be done
 - it will be yours

TRANSITION: THIS LEADS US TO OUR SECOND QUESTION FOR THE DAY:

2) WHY PRAYER? (WHY ADD A PRAYER COMPONENT INTO THE F&F EXPERIMENT?)

A) Jesus Prays

- I try not making assumptions in my life & I don't want to make any assumptions here this morning
- Jesus was and is a prayer - Jesus went out to solitary places and prayed, he taught the disciples how to pray, in the most intense moment of his life before the crucifixion he prayed, today Romans 8:34 says he is at the right hand of the father interceding for us
- if Jesus had to pray to keep connected with his father & they have the same character how much more do we need it when our character is failing and flawed.

B) Prayer Connects Us Relationally to God

QUOTE: Richard J. Foster says this about prayer:

“The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son.”

- Look at that quote and see the Trinity (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit) alive and relational
- Prayer gives the believer life not dead faith or religion but an active and relational religion
- A relational religion connects us to those in need - James 1:27 (orphans & widows - any in need)

AS WE GROW IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, WE BEGIN TO ASK GOD THINGS THAT MATTER TO HIM & ARE NOT JUST ABOUT OUR OWN INTERESTS.

PRAYER IS INTEGRAL TO OUR MISSION OF HELPING PEOPLE FIND & FOLLOW JESUS.

QUOTE: Rick Warren says this about prayer,

“Prayer is the most important tool for your mission in the world. People may refuse our love, or reject our message, but they are defenseless against our prayers. You can aim a prayer at a person's heart whether you're ten feet or 10,000 miles away.”

TRANSITION: THIS QUOTE CONNECTS THE QUESTION OF WHY PRAYER TO OUR SECOND QUESTION:

2) WHY ARE WE PRAYING FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD? (ALL NATIONS)

A) God's Mission Has Always Been About All Nations.

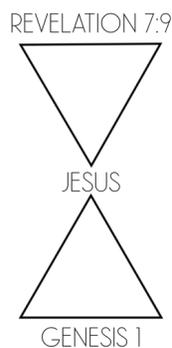
- AMAZING HE WOULD EVEN INCLUDE A COURT OF THE GENTILES
- HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS (FROM ISAIAH 56)

READ ISAIAH 56:1-8

¹This is what the Lord says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. ²Blessed is the one who does this— the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.” ³Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.” ⁴For this is what the Lord says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant— ⁵to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an

everlasting name that will endure forever. ⁶ And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant — ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ⁸ The Sovereign Lord declares— he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”

- This graphic is an oversimplification but it will give us clarity for God’s Mission for All Nations



- Genesis 12 - All Nations will be Blessed through Abraham
- Joshua 4:24 - Jordan River crossing so All Nations will know God
- Book of Jonah - God relents and the Ninevites believe
- God is building the Israelite people to get to Jesus (Exile & Back)
- Jesus primarily preaches to the Israelites (lost sheep of the house of Israel)
- Matthew 28:18-20 - Jesus commands
- Revelation 7:9 - Gathering in Heaven of Every Tribe, Tongue, & Nation

B) God Has Commanded Us To Go To All Nations.

- I have only been in three countries in my life (United States, Nicaragua, Ethiopia)
- I & we may not be able to physically go to those countries but we can send our prayer to all nations and God can do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by the power of his Holy Spirit.

- GOD IS STILL IN THE BUSINESS OF GATHERING THE OTHERS
- Foreigners & Eunuchs have a place in the kingdom of God.
 - Those who weren't born as Israelites
 - Those who were unable bear their own children (outcasts - chosen by God)

THOSE UNABLE TO HAVE KIDS - HAVE SPIRITUAL KIDS & TRUST GOD THROUGH PRAYER

I think of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8 & the joy he had as he realized that the gospel was for all nations and all people.



**WILL YOU JOIN US IN JANUARY BY COMMITTING TO PRAYING FOR ALL NATIONS?
DON'T WAIT? START NOW!!**

QUOTE: Dr. A.J. Gordon:

“You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”

PRAY