

**A family Altar will alter a Family
Starts at Home
January 16, 2022**

Review:

Week 1—Joshua 24:15 as for me and my house

Week 2-- Bethel – the House of God!!! Genesis 28

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I think we need to be reminded that the word IMPOSSIBLE is not in God’s vocabulary!

So---- If it’s not in God’s vocabulary— take it out of yours!

BUT....

- Pastor, my marriage is failing...
- Pastor, my kids are wayward...
- Pastor, my job is forcing me to do things I don’t want to do...
- Pastor, my diagnosis is serious...
- Pastor, my situation seems impossible....

NOTHING is impossible with God!

You see, with God all things are possible

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

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Matthew 6:5-8 And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ 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.

⁷“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Prayer is:

Not for Show

Matthew 6:5 And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Context:

“Prayer was not normally practiced *at the street corners*, but in this day, they had 3 distinct hours of prayer and one could go to the street corner to be seen during this time (9:00am, noon, 3:00pm)

So...one who strictly observed the 3-hours of prayer could deliberately time his movements to bring him to the most public place at the appropriate time.

Thus, showing all who came by how “spiritual” or how “reverent” they were

Jesus is saying STOP IT

What is a Hypocrite?

Actors

Fakes

Putting on a mask to portray themselves as something that they really aren't

Hypocrites love to pray for things, but then they never practice it

-“I want to share the gospel more” but then the opportunity comes and they don't do it

-I want to be a better person at my job

-I want to give more

-I want to serve more

i. "In older Greek a *hypocrites* ('hypocrite') was an actor, but by the first century the term came to be used for those who play roles and see the world as their stage." (Carson)

So, these people saw the world as their stage to put on a show as if they knew God as their Savior....

PAUSE-----OH ME-----

Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

..... Back to the text.....

"That they may be seen by men":

- Remember, these hypocrites prayed not to be heard by God, but to **be seen by men**.

This is a common fault in public prayer today, when people pray to impress instead of genuinely pouring out their hearts before God.

"They have their reward":

Again, those praying to be seen by men **have their reward**, and they should enjoy it in full – because that is all they will receive.

There is no reward in heaven for such prayers.

- BEATING THE SAME DRUM— *[Eternal Perspective]*

Allow me to remind us again, this world is not our home

I understand that it is difficult to avoid getting caught up in the here and now, but Jesus so often reminds us that our greatest days on earth are not even comparable to Heaven

Our ultimate reward is not here

-It doesn't matter how beautiful our homes are

-It doesn't matter how great our 403B is

-It doesn't even matter if our team got really lucky and won the National Championship

All of this is nothing in comparison to Heaven!!!

"One of the most precious things that we have on earth is Gold, in Heaven it's pavement"

Helps you Know

Matthew 6:6 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.

REVIEW: The specific Greek word "room" was used for a storeroom where treasures were kept.

I love this historical picture here....

- there are treasures waiting for us in our prayer closet

Why don't we get alone with God?

Because we're too busy!!

So many times we want to do things on our own, we're too busy to take the time to sit and listen to the One who can help us the most

Illustration... DERMATOLOGIST

I've had these random spots come up on my face now for about 9 months

So, what have I done?

Because I'm too busy to go to the doctor--- I became my own doctor

Wash my face 2 times a day

Get a special face wash

But what happened?

It didn't help, the problem kept coming back

So, I finally took the time to schedule an appt with a Dermatologist

It wasn't until I got alone with them in the room that I found out the real problem

I have Rosacea

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So here is what Jesus is getting at:

When you pray, go to your place where you can FOCUS

Go to the place where you can "Be Still"

Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth!"

Go to the place where you can have the least distractions and get alone with Him and listen

If you do this, your REWARD will be in heaven and not on this earth!

Makes you Grow

Matthew 6:7-8 ⁷ "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

■ Vain Reps:

Matthew 6:7-8 NIV And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:7NKJV ⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Jesus says that the Pharisees are offering vain repetitions

- The NIV translates the phrase **vain repetitions** as “keep on babbling.”

This is from the Greek word *battalogo*, which sounds like “babbling” and has the sense of “blah-blah-blah.”

So, the Pharisees just keep on babbling but nothing good is coming out

Prayer shouldn't be weird. It becomes weird when we see people praying like the Gentiles/ pharisees who heap up empty praises. Then we think prayer is something that it isn't

- Listen, PRAYER is not about LENGTH or eloquence

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

When Paul said to “pray without ceasing” he didn't mean that you start a prayer in the morning and you continue the same long, babbling prayer until bed time

NO!

He says that we are to be in a spirit of prayer throughout the day

- Listen, a person can pray for half the day and it can be worthless!!

Pastor, where do you get that?

Remember the story of Elijah Calling Down FIRE>>>>

1 Kings 18:26 And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from **morning until noon**, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made.

The ONE true God isn't impressed by the *length* or *eloquence* of our prayers, but the heart.

“Prayer requires more of the *heart* than of the *tongue*.”

It's not about length, it's about repetition and the pattern of your life

The length is not the key, the heart and mind is

- "Christians' prayers are measured by weight, and not by length. Many of the most prevailing prayers have been as short as they were strong." (Spurgeon)

So, let's make sure that our repetitions are done from a heart and a Spirit of dependence on God, not just to check off our to-do list....

WALK AWAY

THIS IS IT!!!

THIS IS THE KEY TO THE WHOLE MESSAGE---

- We need to learn how to pray desperately in an un-desperate world

Prayer becomes REAL when we are dependent on Him

THE older we get, we tend to lose the child-like wonder of who God is and then our prayers reflect this

- When we are children we say "Jesus I need you" when we are adults we say, "Jesus, I got this". It's about dependence upon Jesus

--What are we communicating to our family?

--Are we dependent upon Jesus or upon Daddy's job?

WE need to figure out a way to pray desperately when we aren't desperate

Dependency

Practice what you pray

--WE pray because it increases our dependency on God, not because He needs us to ask him or that he is surprised when we ask him

- Don't make it weird at home. Just pray!!!