



Praying the Word Series Week 2

March 17th, 2024 - Pastor Jason Carter

Our Palm Sunday/Easter week sermon will be **today** since we have a guest next week.

Today we will use scriptures to pray in **2 tracks**: PERSONAL and the LOST in preparation for EASTER. **We have invites for Easter and we want you praying for people to get saved and invite them to join us this Easter season**

1. Personal track: Following Jesus' example of everyday surrender and obeying God, even when it costs something. We will use scripture to help us pray and learn to handle the difficulties of life in a Christlike manner with Jesus as our model. Learning to surrender. Leaning into God when making the right decision will cost us something in the short term. Denying our flesh or our sin nature (and not just give into to sin). Loving people when we want to be selfish, or they are unlovable.

2. Easter track: We want Jesus to receive His inheritance of the lost coming to Him and accepting His salvation that was made available to us through His death. We are thankful for what God has done in our life and the sacrifice He has made. We want heaven's perspective as we pray for the lost. Think of a ransom note that is paid and hostages are released. Jesus did this for us, for all.

- Ephesians 1:16-19 NIV , ¹⁶" I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[E] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe."

Review from last week: Prayer is like breathing. It is part of communication and relationship we have with God. It is a privilege. We believe that sacrifice is a privilege. We will sacrifice at times through obedient prayers.

Praying through Scripture:

Personal and Easter Tracks:

1. The Cup - in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-56, Mark 14:32-52, Luke 22:39-53, John 18:1-11

Personal Track:

The word Gethsemane is derived from 2 Hebrew words which mean a place for pressing and meaning oil. During Jesus's time, heavy stone slabs were lowered on to olives that had **already been crushed** in an Olive Crusher. The slabs' weight squeezed the olive oil out of the pulp to collect it.

This is a picture of Jesus in prayer in agony over the crushing or pressing that was to come in His crucifixion.

There is much symbolism in the act of Jesus submitting His will to the Father.

- What do you think of as you read about the symbolism of Jesus praying through such agony in Gethsemane?
- What does it speak to you and situations in your life as you reflect on Jesus' journey for us?

Luke 22:39 NIV ³⁹ "And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him."

Jesus had created a consistent prayer plan (including a spot). Jesus knew what this place represented and knew He was destined for this time.

- Where is your spot?
- Have you ever felt that what you were going through had bigger purpose than just in the moment? How did that affect your prayers? Or should have?

Matthew 26:39 NIV ³⁹ "Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

The cup represents what we KNOW God wants and what we need to obey. We are called to obey God, to surrender our rights, to be a representative of Him on the earth.

There are some days I do want to obey. I want to do whatever I want. It feels like it would be easier if I just gave in to sin, or quit, or stopped caring. Eventually we will find ourselves in trial, difficulty, in the valley of decision, or in a place where we know God wants us to obey, and we do not want to.

- Have you ever felt this way?

There is the sin of commission (those things we do) and the sin of omission (the things we know we are supposed to do, but do not). The cup for us is about submitting our will to His will.

You may be a Leader/Pastor/Parent/Caregiver/Spouse/Friend/Colleague/Child/Teenager/Co-worker and God asks you to challenge someone in truth or invite someone in. If we don't obey, it is a sin (of omission). We are called to share our faith, invite to church, to care about their soul.

- Who cared for your soul? Who shared their faith with you? We must surrender our will and do the same for others.

The Cup is surrender, obedience, dying to self and self-will and we cannot bypass this. **The price of character is adversity.** If we want to be known as a man or woman of God, we must represent His character and that will require us to experience hard things. **When God wants to do deep things in us, He leads us through deep things.**

- How have you seen this to be true? What has God produced in you through your surrendered will, even in the hard things?

Luke 22:42-44 ESV ⁴²saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Jesus was bleeding through His sweat. Every situation in our life that we will encounter, Jesus bled for. **There is a cost to being obedient.** Jesus experienced it Himself: it will affect our emotions, our mental state, and possibly our physical state.

We must learn to bear the weight of the privilege to be sons and daughters of God. We are called to act differently. We may find ourselves standing alone. There is a cost to not giving in to our flesh, our desires. There is a cost to not cheapening who Jesus has called us to be.

- What does this practically look like?

We must learn to bear the weight of the *privilege* to be sons and daughters of God. We are called to *act differently*.

There is a promise that goes with the Cup, the trial, the difficulty:

“And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.” Luke 22:43
ESV

Three times Jesus prayed, **“Nevertheless, not my will but Yours.”** We need to pray this too. “Teach me Lord to receive help from heaven as I surrender my will to yours.”

- How difficult is this to pray? How has God met you when you have prayed it?

It may be an issue that needs extended prayer so we can learn to pray through. And it may come up again and I have to go back to the Lord to pray God help me.

Easter track:

Next, we enter Passion week, the week honoring the suffering of Jesus. It may be that God begins to impress on you the need to share your faith with someone. **And your initial response is no.** I don't want to. **But, for the many** who carry the weight of sin and pain and do not know the love of Jesus, His grace, His compassion, we intercede for them. We pray they would know the story of Jesus and come to know Him as Savior.

The Cup represents anytime we don't want to obey and sacrifice like Jesus. May our prayer be “Nevertheless, not my will but Yours be done.”

- How difficult or easy is this for you?

- Is God asking you to invite, share your story, pray with, etc someone but your flesh says “I don't want to”- What are you going to do?

2. Father forgive them (Jesus is on the cross when He prays this)

Personal Track:

This is one of the most challenging commands in the Bible. Yet we see the example of Jesus to forgive. If we are commanded to forgive, we will certainly be wronged at some point. Otherwise there would be no need for the command to forgive.

Little boy's prayer in Up Kids: "Hi God, it's me ___ again. Things have been going good so far and I feel like I don't know what to say. I keep trying to make peace with a kid at school named Liam, **but I just can't.**"

Forgiveness is a command and a gift.

- Explain this.

This is not easy. There are terrible stories of abuse and abandonment. Forgiveness often comes in stages and over time. You may have to work through forgiveness to release the person or situation that harmed you.

Luke 23:34 NIV a ³⁴ "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'"

There is an incredible tension here because we see the worst of humanity. We see betrayal by someone Jesus loved and invested in (Judas). We see Him abandoned by those who said they loved Him. We see envy as humanity turns on Jesus. We see the callous and primal nature of mankind as they beat and execute Jesus. We see the vindictiveness in the religious leaders where in the name of God they crucify God and then justify it.

And yet we see the response of God. Father forgive them. Forgiveness is a natural decision but requires supernatural help. Often this takes time, persistence and healing for us to forgive

There have been times I have received nasty letters. My flesh, the desire to act outside of God's will and His Word (forgive), wants to make to make my words weapons. But God speaks to me, "What they have done to you is no worse than what you have done to Me."

God calls us to forgive for our benefit. If unforgiveness were a cancer, we would want it removed because cancer can affect or takeover the body. **Unforgiveness is worse.** It becomes a prison and a cancer and separates part of us from God.

- How so?

Forgiveness releases you from carrying what has happened to you and the person as well. You can't heal and focus on both. **It is not releasing them from responsibility.** You are not to become a doormat. **You choose to lay down your right at this moment and give it to the Rightful Judge.** You choose to release this person. As I release the guilty person, I position myself to receive. You may have to pray "I release them to your justice."

- Story of the rattlesnake: a man gets bitten. He can chase the snake, or he can run and get help. What is the better choice?

Story of the German physical therapist: holding the man down in his pain while she works to release the hand for its own healing. There was pain that took him to healing.

- How can you relate to these examples?

We need to follow Jesus' example and pray: "I release my right for retribution. I ask for healing and grace instead."

Easter Track:

Pray for all to find the forgiveness of Jesus, that they would be transformed through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, would experience a new birth, and would be freed from their prison of sin and find freedom and forgiveness only found in Christ.

3. It is finished. This is a prayer that turns to praise. ("Tetelestai" in Greek)

Personal Track:

This is a prayer for when we feel condemned or like we don't measure up or don't think you will ever get it right or you want to quit and you are entertaining lies from the enemy. **It is a reminder that God will never withhold anything from us and he has finished the work of forgiveness and redemption.**

John 19:28-30 NIV ²⁸"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" ²⁹Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. ³⁰So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Every requirement for perfection. Done. Every requirement for sin. Accomplished. Every detail for righteousness won. No need ever for a sacrifice for sin. No more separation from God for those who trust Jesus for salvation. No more condemnation or isolation. No more distant relationship with God. No more being a slave to fear. No more earning grace or jumping through religious hoops.

We are sons and daughters, perfectly loved, all the time, and perfectly forgiven when we ask God to forgive us. Therefore, it is finished. Our prayer becomes praise and our praise a weapon.

Easter Track:

God, we want people to know it is finished. So, I surrender and die to myself. I will do whatever you ask of me because I want You, Jesus, to receive Your inheritance. I pray for those who do not know Jesus.

- What might God be trying to build in you to be more like Jesus?

- What might God be trying to bring through you?

- What or whom do you need to let go and forgive?

- Have I become a doormat in my "forgiveness"?

- What do you need to remember "is finished"?

- What needs to change in how you live if you believe this is truth?

3 boxes for both tracks to pray into this week:

Each point could have its own place in a check-in prayer, a devotional setting, or an extended prayer setting depending on the issue:

1. Cup: surrender to his will/die to self.

PERSONAL:

- God, I surrender my will to Your will. May Your will be done.
 - o Nevertheless Lord
 - o Lord, make me a willing vessel
- You never leave me nor forsake me
 - o Don't give up on me God
- I need to take the higher ground
- Lord, I release my right for retribution (revenge)
 - o Help me, help me, help me
- God teach me to trust you with the difficult "yes"
- Lord help me to mourn well
- Thank you, Jesus for your life, for your example
 - o God in the area I don't want to drink the cup, strengthen me through Heaven's power. Fill me, lead me, strengthen me, guide me
- Don't waste my suffering Lord
 - o Teach me to pour myself out and not hold back

EASTER (OTHERS):

- You are the God who goes after "lost" people
 - o Luke 15
- Pray for those who are lost and have nowhere to turn
- Pray for the ones who have turned their back on You, mocked You
- Pray for the ones who have been misused by religion
- Pray that You would give spiritual eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to receive Your truth and love
- Pray for those who are dying in their sins, shame, addiction, and pride- that they would call on You
- Thank you Jesus that you died for _____.
- I pray for the confused, the seeker and the agnostic who are open to knowing You
- Send someone to share the Gospel. Send me.
- Show me the opportunities all around me
 - o (people)

2. Forgive: Father forgive them (even while they misunderstand me and crucify me).

PERSONAL:

- Lord I am angry
- Lord, they betrayed me and did it intentionally. Help me not to hold it against them
- With the same forgiveness I have received, help me to forgive
- God open the prison door of hate and unforgiveness in my heart and mind.
- I need your strength, Your grace, Your power
- Help me to walk in forgiveness and help me to release them to you
- Set my heart free Lord
- I release this person into Your hands of justice.
 - o I am no longer responsible

EASTER (OTHERS):

- You prayed for the lost and gave your life at the cross
- Pray for the one suffocating in unforgiveness and bitterness
- Move heaven and earth for them Lord
 - o Everyone matters.
- Pray for the ones who have never known perfect forgiveness Lord
- God reveal Yourself to them
- Show them Your grace, mercy and love

- Call to them and position them to experience Your perfect forgiveness
- Pray for every soul who has never experienced the love of You our perfect Father
- Give them no rest and no way of escape until they surrender to your love

3. It is finished: Everything required has been accomplished by You.

PERSONAL:

- Jesus, You became the perfect sacrifice for sin
- I am no longer separated, but I always have access to you through Jesus
- I will no longer live in condemnation or under the shadow of sin. You have removed my sin from me
- You are not a distant God but a God who draws near
- I will no longer be a slave to fear or regret
- I no longer have to earn love or grace. I don't have to jump through hoops for you. You meet me where I am and walk with me through everything
- It is finished. I am forgiven. I am loved. I am able.

EASTER (OTHERS):

- I Pray they would know and trust You.
- I Pray that You would open their spiritual eyes and unlock their hardened hearts
- I Pray they would see that You are the only way to salvation
- May your power be released in the life of _____
- Give me boldness to share my faith and invite people to know You
- I Pray that you receive Your inheritance through the salvation of souls.
 - o Ephesians 1 reminder