

“God’s Invitation to Pray” Matt.6:5-9 5.3.15

intro

Subject: God’s invitation to pray

Object: Intimate communication with God

A. God has invited you to pray [5-9]

In this manner therefore, pray [9]: He presumes we will pray, because we have been invited by God to pray. **3x** in prior 4 verses – **when:** not if, you pray [v.5,6,7]

1. Prayer is a normal Christian attitude and behavior not only prayer warriors, super spiritual

a. prayer is intimate communication with God

i. Jesus contrasts the prayers of religious leaders and His model for prayer

2. Pray for God’s approval [5-6]: Cf. prayers of religious leaders sought approval from men.

3. Prayer shall be rewarded [v.5]: *misthos* e.g. wages, payment for service. Refers to physical/secular, re approval of men. v.6 *apodidomi* to give away, restore, spiritual

a. What are some rewards of prayer? 1. If we pray per His will we receive our requests 2. Life transformed by intimacy with God.

4. Since God knows our needs before we ask [v.8] why ask?

a. Affirms our dependence: recognize Father as God & He is the source of blessing

b. Blesses God to hear His kids ask: e.g. earthly parents; Robt. Boyd Munger, “My Heart Christ’s Home” prayer is not only for our growth, but to bless God, He wants to be with us.

c. We’ve been invited to pray: God removed the veil to grant access [Mt.27:51] Veil torn from top to bottom. One of the great mysteries of heaven is that men have been invited by God to pray and we neglect the invitation. [cf. alter of incense - proximity]

B. Who are you praying to?

? How do you think most people relate to God? Father, friend, impersonal force, “genie”

1. Relationship: how should we relate to God as a person? [9]

a. Your Father: 5x [Matt.6:5-15] JC assures we are praying to **our Father**

i. Speaks of an ideal person(al) relationship [cf. religion/ritual]

- ii. Jesus referred to God as (My) *Father* or *Abba* [Aramaic: papa][intimacy]
- iii. No evidence of anyone before Jesus addressing God as Father.
- iv. Only by Jesus can we relate to God as Father or Papa
- v. Comfort knowing God is a personal and caring Father: a person can love, care, hear, respond and reason. God is not an impersonal spiritual force, higher power, or the force
- vi. Cf. imperfect earthly father, God relates as a perfect father.
- vii. Cf. kingdom theme [10,13] but we don't relate to God as king but as Father
- viii. Relate to God as Dad & Friend [Abraham 2 Ch.20:7; Jesus & disciples Jn. 15:15]

2. Residence: where do we address our prayers?

a. Prayer is the means to connect heaven and earth [6,9] *secret place* not hiding from us, but heaven. It is good to realize that God is above our circumstances.

- i. God is in heaven but important to know that He is not far away

b. Ps.115:3 "God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases"

God is omnipresent: inhabits heaven & earth, and is Sovereign – He can do as He pleases

- ii. God assures us when we pray per His will, He will answer our prayers

* DaVinci's The Last Supper horizon is where heaven + earth meet framed by window/JC

3. Respect: what should our attitude be? Respect without fear

a. Approach the Holy God with a balance of boldness and respect

i. Hallowed be Your name: God is holy. His name is His nature. Treat God with reverent respect [esteem/honor for, or a sense of the worth or excellence]

2Sam. 6 David, Uzza and the ark: we must approach God on His terms

Heb.10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. [Therefore, no need to be afraid]

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

b. We have access because of Jesus' sacrifice: not because of who we are, what we have done, or even the greatness of the need.

c. Heaven demonstrates respect for God [Rev. 4:8-11; Is.6] angels constantly declaring God is holy; 24 elders, fall before Him

* Asia, children are taught to give objects to their parents/elders w/2 hands, considered impolite to use only one hand to give a business card.

Communion: intimacy with God

Intro.

Almost everyone prays to some degree to some perceived god, but few find fulfillment, satisfaction or transformation. The problem: approach prayer as means to get something good or avoid something bad, rather than to develop relationship with God. What would happen if no one prayed? Would the world be different? Would events and circumstances be changed? Would the hearts of people be impacted? Our answers reflect our attitude about the effectiveness of prayer.

Jesus' prayers are intimate communication with God. Who wouldn't want to speak with God as Jesus did? Disciples ask JC to teach them to pray. Disciples were devout men versed in the prayers of the Hebrews, but exp. with Jesus made them want to go deeper in their communication and relationship with God. Don't *you* want to experience life transformation through intimate communication with God?

Discussion Qs

- 1. What are some rewards of prayer?**
- 2. Since God knows our needs before we ask [8] why ask?**
- 3. How do you think most people relate to God?**
- 4. What should our attitudes be in prayer?**

Note: spend time as a group praying.