

Remnant Life Church

May 19, 2013

## Prayer – What It Is and What It Isn't

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

**(Ephesians 6:18)**

- Everybody, including those who have never set foot in a church knows what a prayer is – (Common speech – “don’t have a prayer”; “on a wing and a prayer”; “you had better pray you don’t...”)
- Understanding the importance and necessity of prayer is a challenge for many Christians
  - Many of us grow up praying
    - At meals
    - Before bedtime (kneeling next to the bed as a boy)
    - In trouble or want to stay out of trouble

*(The Morning Prayer – Dear Lord - So far today, dear Jesus, I have done all right. I haven't been unkind, spoken against anyone in anger, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over-indulgent. And I am very thankful for that... However, in just a few minutes, I'm going to get out of bed. And from that point on, I'm going to need a lot more help. Amen.)*

- As we grow we begin to understand the deeper meaning and significance of prayer
- (HOTM) When prayer becomes an intricate, natural part of our daily lives we then walk in a place of personal relationship and communion with God that will impact our lives every day.
- “What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear? What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

Joseph M. Scriven, *What A Friend We Have In Jesus* (1855).

- We start young with prayer
  - Children's prayers list (page 6)
  - *Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Prov. 22:6)*
  
- Prayer does not come easily to everyone
  - What do I say to God?
  - Especially praying out loud in public (next week)

## What prayer is and what it is not

1. IS – Speaking directly with God
  - a. When Jesus died the need for a priest to mediate between God and me was removed – (temple veil torn in two)
    - i. The tabernacle God told the Israelites to build in the desert at Mt. Sinai was the forerunner of the temple (*Ex. 25-27*)
    - ii. The tabernacle remained even after they entered Canaan (the promised land) until King Solomon
      1. The temple itself was a 90' x 30' building surrounded by a walled courtyard
      2. Completely destroyed twice
        - a. Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (*2 Kings 25*)
        - b. Romans in 70 AD
    - iii. Within the temple were 3 distinct areas (*I Kings 7*)
      1. Great outer court allowed the people to come and bring their sacrifices – where Jesus would have driven out the money changers
      2. The upper or inner court held the huge altar for the people's sacrifices to God
      3. Building itself held the porch where the priest would prepare himself to enter

4. The Holy Place – contained the golden lamp stand, altar of incense and the tables of show bread as well as other items
5. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies
  - a. The Ark of the Covenant – (originally held)
    - i. 10 commandments
    - ii. Aaron’s staff that budded
    - iii. Jar of manna
  - iv. Only the priests could enter the holy place
  - v. Even the high priest could not enter the holy of holies except once a year on the Day of Atonement
  - vi. The veil was separating Holy God from a sinful people
  - vii. **When Jesus died the penalty of being separated from God was paid**
- b. *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, (I Tim. 2:5)*
- c. Many of us need to “unlearn” what we have thought about prayer from the past – special times; only in church; etc...
- d. Prayer is anytime, anyplace, any circumstance, any length of time about anything.

## 2. IS NOT – A Bargaining Session

- a. Many try to make deals with God through prayer
  - i. To bargain means to offer something to another person who does not have what you do in exchange for something you want
  - ii. What does God not have?
- b. How many of you have done this?
- c. *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. (Deut. 7:9)*
- d. “Faithful” original (Pistos) – shown to be worthy of trust

### 3. IS – A Powerful Weapon For Every Aspect of Your Life

- a. *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41)*
- b. *Be always on the watch, and **pray** that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)*
- c. *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:13-14)*
- d. We are speaking to the omnipotent, all-powerful God of the universe maker of heaven of earth!

### 4. IS NOT – A Celestial Vending Machine

- a. Prayer is not dropping in a spiritual coin to receive our desired answer
- b. We are to bring the concerns, desires and content of our lives to Him
- c. *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (I Peter 5:7)*
- d. How do we bring them to Him? – in prayer
- e. The condition of our heart is what aligns our prayers to His will – do we want only what He wants?

### 5. IS – A Christian's Lifeline

- a. When do I pray?
  - i. Isaac prayed and asked God to allow his wife Rebekah to conceive a child (**Gen. 25:21**)
    1. We bring the desires of our heart to God
  - ii. Moses prayed while in confrontation with Pharaoh (**Gen. 8:30; 10:18**)
    1. We pray to God as our source of strength

iii. David prayed for God to cleanse his heart (**Psalms 51:10**)

1. We pray to ask forgiveness for our sins

iv. Daniel prayed to God three times a day (**Dan. 6:10**)

1. We pray to give thanks to God for the blessings of our lives

v. Jonah prayed to God from inside the belly of the fish (**Jonah 2:1**)

1. We pray in times of distress and trouble

vi. Jesus goes off to pray and is recorded as praying more than anyone else (**Luke 5:16**)

1. Jesus, the perfect example of life, knew that only through prayer could He fulfill His Father's will for His life

2. How much more than should we?

b. How do I pray?

i. With a pure heart

1. Tell God what I desire but trust Him for what happens and know that it is best for my life

2. Am I willing to not get what I want when I want it?

3. Will I abide by the answer I receive?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Not Yet