

Teach Us to Pray (Part 2)

February 21, 2010

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Luke 11:5-13

I. Introduction

A. Prayer - Part 1

1. This morning, if things go well we will finish last week's sermon. I'll do my best and I know you will do your best to stay with me.
2. Unfortunately, when it comes to prayer, most of us fall into one of three categories.
 - a) *We don't pray at all or*
 - b) *We don't pray very often or*
 - c) *We don't pray very well.*
3. Fortunately, we sit this morning with the disciples in Luke 11 when they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Whatever category you might see yourself in, stop beating yourself up. I believe Jesus' teaching on prayer will encourage you, enable you and excite you to pray well by praying like him.

B. Pray simply

1. Last week we looked at verses 1 through 4 where Jesus taught us to "**pray simply**." This abbreviated version of the Lord's Prayer helps us to pray intimately to our Heavenly Father seeking a right relationship with him by submitting ourselves fully to his will and his work in our lives.
2. If we learn nothing else in the next 6 weeks as we study prayer, let it be that prayer is always ***alining your will with God's will, setting your heart to seek God's heart, putting your life completely into God's hands.***

C. Tim and the President

1. Big men in dark suits started talking frantically into their wrists as the blond, skinny 10 year old boy walked boldly down the center aisle of the cathedral style church. The parents had no idea he had even left his seat.
2. My younger brother Tim, had one goal in mind. He wanted to shake the hand of the most powerful man in the world, the President of the United States and, as most 10 year olds would believe, the president was anxious to meet him too.

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3. By the time my parents realized what Tim was doing, he was already standing in front of President Jimmy Carter with his right hand outstretched. The big men in dark suits who were talking into their wrists determined that the toe headed kid posed no danger to the president and let him finish his mission.
4. Jimmy Carter graciously shook my brother's hand and said, "How are you, son." Tim didn't say a thing shook the president's hand, smiled and then walked back to his seat. Mission accomplished.
5. That short, bold encounter with the president is a lasting memory for Tim for his entire life. Now, consider the awesome privilege it is for you to enter into the presence of God Almighty, creator of the universe whenever you pray.

II. Pray Shamelessly.

1. The second point Jesus made to his disciples about prayer was to **pray shamelessly**.

B. Please turn again your Bibles to Luke 11:5-8.

1. Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'
2. "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's **boldness** he will get up and give him as much as he needs.
3. The translation for the word "**boldness**" is also "**shamelessness**." For the people listening to this parable for the first time, the shame of not feeding a midnight visitor was a far worse shame than the shame of waking up a sleeping neighbor and his family.
4. I think we would all be sympathetic to the sleepy neighbor. Every parent who has ever finally gotten their kids to sleep, especially when you live in a one room house, does not want to wake them up by rummaging around for bread in the middle of the night.
5. Don't be confused thinking Jesus is teaching us that God is a sleepy, reluctant neighbor who must be pressured and begged for help. And will finally give in to the request to stop the nagging. No, No, No!

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C. Contrast

1. Jesus is using a teaching technique of contrasting two different realities. In this case the contrast between the natural reaction of an annoyed neighbor being asked for bread in the middle of the night and the reaction of your loving Heavenly Father when you come to him in prayer!
 - a) *The friend was asleep.*
 - (1) But your Heavenly Father is always awake, wide awake!
 - b) *The friend was reluctant but finally gave in to the shameless request.*
 - (1) But your Heavenly Father is never inconvenienced and welcomes bold, shameless prayer.
 - c) *The friend wanted to say, no.*
 - (1) But your Heavenly Father is anxious to say, yes.
 - d) *The friend was more concerned about waking up his family than protecting his friend from the shame of not having bread.*
 - (1) But your Heavenly Father will never send you away from his presence. And how much more he will respond because you are seeking help to do the right thing.

D. Ask, seek, knock

1. Luke 11:9-10
 - a) *So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*
2. Imagine this, we are invited to approach God, creator of the universe who sits on the throne of heaven with the same boldness and confidence of a 10 year old boy who would dare approach the President of the United States to shake his hand.
 - a) *We go to God in prayer because we believe truly that God wants to meet with us even more than we want to meet with him.*
3. Jesus teaches us to pray with boldness and even shameless confidence before our Heavenly Father.
4. The first lesson Jesus teaches on prayer is to Pray Simply. The Second, Pray Shamelessly. The third, Pray Persistently.

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III. Pray Persistently

A. Good parenting

1. You have to picture Jesus telling this next parable with a smile on his face.
2. Luke 11:11-13
 - a) *"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*
3. The contrasts continue. Certainly, even bad dad's know how to give good gifts to their children. How much more will our loving Heavenly Father only give good gifts to his children.
4. Jesus promises the one good gift that will never be withheld from God's children is the presence of His own Holy Spirit.
5. Can you imagine. Jesus implores us to pray persistently.

IV. Video: Persistent Football player (4 minutes)

I) Pray without ceasing

1. The first lesson Jesus teaches on prayer is to Pray Simply. The Second, Pray Shamelessly. The third, Pray Persistently.

II) Sunflower Review

- 1) There is so much in this great text to think about and try to remember. So in closing, I'd like to leave you with a picture in your mind that I hope will encourage you to pray and pray well.
 - (a) *When you pray, expect God to be there just as sure as the sun rises every morning.*
 - (b) *Pray with full attention and orientation of your heart and mind facing God.*
 - (c) *Move out of the way of the shadows of doubt that get in the way from being fully engulfed in the truth of God's light.*
 - (d) *When you perceive that God is moving, bend your will to move with him.*
 - (e) *Don't be tempted to look down or to the side because all your needs will be taken care of. Not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed as beautifully as the flowers of the field. Rather, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else will be added on.*
 - (f) *When the storms of life come and you can't see or hear God, keep looking to the place where you know he said he would be. God is there, you just can't see him. The storms will eventually clear.*

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- (g) *Pray knowing that God sees and hears the deepest desires and needs of your heart. The more intently you look to God the more his desires become your desires.*
 - (h) *When you pray remember God does not bend to your will, you must bend to his. You can no more manipulate God to do your bidding any more than a little sunflower can push the sun across the sky.*
 - (i) *Pray with joy and thankfulness for the magnificent colors and textures God paints just for you in life.*
 - (j) *Don't be frightened by the night. God is faithful. Even the nighttime of the soul is a time to get prepared for the sunrise that is sure to come.*
2. The first lesson Jesus teaches on prayer is to Pray Simply. The Second, Pray Shamelessly. The third, Pray Persistently.

III) Conclusion

A) *Imagine*

- 1) I want to invite you to set the orientation of your heart and mind to fully face toward God.
- 2) Imagine yourself looking straight east into the sunrise of God in your life.
- 3) Enjoy him, glory in the true light that gives you life and strength and hope.
- 4) Picture yourself as a courageous 10 year old on a mission to shake the hand of God. As I say a prayer, I am going to pray in 1st person, using words like "I" and "me" rather than "us" and "we." Let my words be your words as we pray.

B) **Prayer**

- 1) Heavenly Father, I am so glad that you welcome my prayers no matter how simple or clumsy they might be. Whether I never pray at all or don't pray often or don't pray very well, it takes all the pressure off. So, I am going to do what Jesus said to do in prayer knowing that you won't send me away because I don't know all the right words to say.
- 2) The truth is that there are things going on in my life where I need your help. Some of those things are really deep but I'm going to trust that you will somehow give me what I need, even if it is different from what I ask for.
- 3) I am humbled to be able to talk to you and am blown away to know that you love to talk with me. Maybe you could help me make a habit of this. I think that would be a really good thing for me. So, I'm hanging up now but I'm glad to know that you never hang up on me.

3. And all God's children said, Amen.

V. **Song: I Give You My Heart**

VI. **Benediction**

1. **Pray well** - in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.