

Standing in the Gap

March 21, 2010

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I) John 17:6-26

II) Introduction

A) *Children's prayer*

- 1) Kids know how to pray for other people. Their logic and theology may be a little screwed up but at least they are honest.
- 2) Dear God: This is my prayer. Could you please give my brother some brains. So far he doesn't have any. Angela, 8
- 3) Dear God, Please send Dennis Clark to a different summer camp this year. Peter
- 4) Little Barry ended his evening prayer with these words: "And please, dear God, make Paris the capital of England! Amen." "Barry!" said his mother, "Why did you say such a thing?" Barry explained: "Because that's what I wrote on my test today!"
- 5) How about this prayer from the mouths of babes!

B) **Video: The Lord's Prayer**

C) **Question**

- 1) The questions we ask our text today from John 17 are, How should we pray for other people?
 - (a) *What is different about intercessory prayer than a prayer for yourself?*
 - (b) *Who of us is worthy besides Jesus to stand in the gap and be the bridge for people in whatever circumstances they find themselves to the grace and perfect will of God?*

D) **Old Testament**

- 1) In Exodus 17 we read that the Children of Israel were engulfed in a great battle with the Amalekites, a fierce and ruthless people. Joshua and his army of former slaves were little match for the Amalekite warriors but they fought bravely.
- 2) High on a hill overlooking the battle scene, Moses saw that things were not going well. As he prayed, he raised his staff with both hands above his head. God used this as an outward sign of the role and responsibility of the person who engages in intercessory prayer.
- 3) When his staff was raised, the Children of Israel advanced. When he lowered it, the Amalekites overpowered the Israelites. But the battle was long and Moses could not hold up the staff on his own so two others, Aaron and Hur rushed to his side and did their part by holding up Moses' arms - another example of intercessory prayer.
- 4) When you intercede in prayer for others you are like a bridge. You willingly take a stand between God and other people. When you do this you can expect **to be walked on**.
 - (a) *You must be willing to take on the burden of prayer for others as they journey to God.*
 - (b) *Think about it. When praying for the sick, you carry the weight of their anxiety and fear.*

(c) *Praying for your children you accept that you will be trampled upon as they mature in faith.*

(d) *Praying for the lonely, you become a present friend.*

- 5) Interceding in prayer for others means that you are a bridge like Moses was that day holding up his staff.

E) Holy Spirit's role

- 1) When you pray for others, expect the Holy Spirit to take an active role.

(a) *There will be times when God prompts you to pray for something other than what was obvious.*

- 2) Sometimes the spirit will prompt you to ask questions and probe deeper into the situation.
- 3) Sometimes God leaves the nature of his divine work a secret.

F) Moses' intercession

- 1) Moses held up the staff all day with the help of Aaron and Hur and Israel won what was humanly, an impossible battle. But God intervened because Moses stood in the gap.

G) Three keys of intercessory prayer

- 1) This morning you will be given the opportunity to pray an intercessory prayer for someone, to stand in the gap. Think about this for a minute, who do you want to pray for? A family member, a friend in need, a group of people like missionaries or rescue workers. Whoever God lays on your heart right now, picture them in your mind and even write their name at the top of the page with the 3 keys.
- 2) These are three keys to effective intercessory prayer based on the remarkable prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17. As we go through the keys, you might want to write some things to pray about that person or people.

III) Key #1: Protect Them

A) John 17:11,15

- 1) Jesus said in verse 11, "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world and I am coming to you. Holy Father, **protect them** by the power of your name..."
- 2) Verse 15, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you **protect them** from the evil one."

B) When Jesus prayed for protection for the disciples he was fully aware of the danger that they were in.

- 1) When you pray for others be keenly aware that the person you pray for is a target for attack by the kingdom of darkness.
- 2) Jesus first word of intercession is to reclaim a hedge of protection.
 - (a) *Parents, pray everyday for the spiritual protection of your children. Pray that there would be a spiritual covering around your child and that no attack of Satan would reach your child unless allowed by God. Pray this by the power of the blood of Jesus!*

(b) *Pray the same protection for your spouse, loved ones, friends, pastors and anyone God lays on your heart. Pray in Jesus name, the one who intercedes on your behalf.*

- 3) The attacks of the evil will come, you can count on it.
- 4) When you pray for the person or people God has laid on your heart, pray for God to protect them.

IV) Key #2: Unite them

A) **John 17:11b,23**

- 1) Again in verse 11, **“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”**
- 2) Verse 23, **“I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.”**
- 3) Yes, God cares about our individual soul. But God has chosen the church to be the instrument through which Christ will be revealed to the world. For the church to be successful in its mission **there must be unity!**
- 4) Unity is established because we love each other in Christ. We are brothers and sisters in the Lord.
 - (a) *When you hurt, we all hurt.*
 - (b) *When you celebrate, we all celebrate.*
 - (c) *When you're afraid, we're there to strengthen you.*
 - (d) *When you're under attack, we're there to defend.*
 - (e) *When you sin, we're there to help in your recovery.*
 - (f) *When you grieve, we grieve with you.*
- 5) For we are united by Christ.
 - (a) *We are united to worship and glorify God.*
 - (b) *We are united to teach, challenge and hold each other accountable.*
 - (c) *We are united to do good and make a difference in the world; Good that we could never do on our own.*
- 6) Pray for the person or people you have chosen to pray for this morning that they would not be alone but would be united with other believers in their journey of faith.

B) Jesus' first key of intercessory prayer is, “protect them” the second, “Unite them” and the third, “set them apart.”

V) Key #3: Set Them Apart

A) **John 17:17**

- 1) **“Sanctify them (in other words, set them apart), by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. **For I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**”**
- 2) To be sanctified means that we are set apart to be made clean; to be holy as God is holy.

B) Jesus prayed that we would be set apart, with clean hearts so that the world would know who we belong to – so that we would be freed to do God's divine work while we walk the earth.

- 1) Jesus demonstrated sanctification when he washed the disciple's feet in John 13. He said, "unless I wash your feet, you have no part with me... Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."
- 2) Pray for your person or people to be set apart, to be sanctified to do the will and purpose of God.

c) *The three Keys of intercessory prayer are;*

- 1) Key #1: Protect them
- 2) Key #2: Unite them
- 3) Key #3: Set them apart
- 4) In an effort to give you a vivid picture of the important role of a person who intentionally prays for other people and inspire to you to vigorously pray. I give you, The Parable of the Firefighters.

vi) The Parable of the Firefighters

vii) Intercessory prayer today

- 1) Earlier you identified someone that you would pray for. I want to give you an opportunity now to pray. Pray the three Keys of intercessory prayer.
 - (a) *Pray that God would protect them.*
 - (b) *Pray that God would unite them.*
 - (c) *Pray that God would set them apart.*
- 2) You may be here this morning with are need someone to pray with you. We have Prayer Companions who will be standing at both walls to pray for you. Please feel free during this time of prayer while the music plays to come up and receive prayer.
- 3) We are going to take sometime now to pray. Be a intercessory firefighter of prayer for the person or people God has laid on your heart. Let's pray.

B) Congregation prayers (4 minutes)

viii) Prayer

- 1) Heavenly Father, we hold up our arms in spiritual battle for the people you have laid on our hearts. We pray that you would protect them from the attacks and deceit of the evil one. We pray that you would unite them in with other believers who seek to walk in your way. We pray that you would set them apart to walk faithfully and obediently with you.
- 2) Lord increase our faith to seek your will for this person. We give you thanks and honor and glory for what you are already doing and will do in their life. We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

ix) Benediction

- 1) As you have received the blessing of God the Father Almighty, now go and be a blessing to the world in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.