

- Today, we are going to do things differently from what we normally do. We are going to take a topic in scripture and see if we can unravel and properly explain it.
 - What makes it so different for us is that we are going to do so without going through the Bible verse by verse, only dealing with it when we get to that topic as we encounter it when teaching whatever book of the Bible we are in at that time.
 - And yes, I know what you guys are thinking.
 - What in the world, Pastor Greg, is teaching a topical message?
 - Look to the east – cause Jesus must be coming back, and who knows maybe He is!
 - But seriously, today I am going to take the topic of prayer and expound on it.
 - Our teaching is going to continue for a couple of weeks, but never fear and rest assured, once we are done, we will return to our regularly scheduled programming as I decide what Book or letter to start next!
- Today, we are going to begin a deep dive into the topic of prayer, and in doing so, I hope I can clarify a question I am often asked: What is the purpose of prayer?
 - Which is one of the most basic (but important) disciplines in all the scriptures!
- Now, before I start down this path, I would like to read from Acts 17:10-11, where Paul and Silas arrive in a place known as Berea
 - Upon their arrival, we learn something very specific about this group of people, a people known as the Bereans. And what is it that we learn?
 - First, we learn a vital truth about our Christian Walk.
 - Which is, we must never take anyone’s word for anything (scripturally speaking) and then just run with it. Instead, we must do as the Bereans do.
 - What was it they did? Well, let’s read and discover it for ourselves.

Acts 17:10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Acts 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.*

- Real quick, why do you think I am beginning today’s teaching with Acts 17:10-11?
 - Because when I finish our teaching on prayer this morning, I don’t want any of you to walk out of here and say, “Well, Brother Greg said, therefore it must be true!”
 - Also, I don’t want those of you who disagree with me (if there are any) to walk out of here mad!
 - Instead, I want you to listen, take notes, and either way, go study for yourself to find that these things might be true.
 - Dr. Chuck Missler calls the process the “Berean Way”

- The only reason I bring this up is because I in fact might say something that bothers someone, and to be honest, I kind of hope it does because that means you're listening!
- Having said that, instead of getting mad, I would hope you would go study for yourself to discover if what I said is either true or not true!
 - So, if you study it and you think I am wrong, then that's okay.
 - Simply gather your scriptural proof and let me know, because who knows, I might be wrong, and if I am, I want to know it!
 - So, call me and let's talk about it.
- And by the way, it's okay for Christians to disagree. Just in case you didn't know that!
- Remember, Paul and Barnabas split up at one point, and they did so over whether they should take John Mark with them on their second missionary journey.
 - You can read about their disagreement in Acts 15:39.
 - Paul did not want to include John Mark on the journey because he had previously abandoned them during their first missionary journey.
 - But Barnabas didn't care what he had done; he wanted John Mark to go with them.
 - Just as a side note, John Mark was Barnabas's cousin, just an FYI for context purposes.
 - So, they split up over the issue, but eventually, the scriptures strongly suggest they in fact settled their differences and reunited.
 - So, it's okay if we don't all agree all the time!
 - The key is that we must all stick together and simply agree to disagree!
- Moving on and back to the matter at hand, "Prayer." Repeatedly, I run into this question: Why, or what's the purpose of prayer?
 - And the answer is, well, it depends on who you ask!
 - If you ask the "Charismatic Hyper Evangelical" crowd, they will say, "to yield the outcome we desire."
 - By the way, I am painting with a broad stroke here when I say this.
 - I am not saying that it is what every single Charismatic believes, but rather I am giving you the predominant belief of the Charismatics, not all of them per se.
 - But certainly, the institution as a whole!
- Now, if you ask the less Charismatic but still evangelical crowd (evangelical means the denomination or people group whose sole focus is fixed on evangelizing), and they do so, forsaking all else!
 - Meaning, they operate as if evangelizing is all that matters, and it shows because that is their primary focus.
 - Having said that, they are not necessarily what I call the "name it and claim it people!"

- Name it and claim it, meaning, if you desire something, all you must do is name it in prayer, and you shall receive it.
 - They believe that prayer changes things, but not necessarily that God is like a genie in a bottle, waiting to grant our every wish, but they still have a skewed view of prayer!
- Next are the Hyper Calvinists. Not all, but many of them believe that there is really no need for prayer, at least in the way the traditional American Church thinks of it.
 - Because after all, God knows all, and the scriptures even testify to this very fact, just listen to:

Matt. 6:7 “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

Matt. 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

- And so, if God knows what we need before we ask Him, then what’s the point of praying?
 - Next, we have (what I call) the “tweener” people. And they aren’t sure what to believe, as they are hung up in the middle!
 - This group is interesting because they possess just enough Bible knowledge and insight to see prayer from all sides, but that leaves them in a state of confusion.
 - In a place of “paralysis by analysis,” not really knowing what side to land on!
- And then finally, we have those who have studied this topic in depth and understand it through the complete lens of the entirety of the scriptures.
 - These folks are not confused!
 - This is where I hope you will be once we finish our study of this all-important topic!
 - So, there it is, a high-level understanding of prayer from a 4-group perspective.
- So, this morning, my question is, which category do you fall into when it comes to the purpose and intent of prayer?
 - If you don’t know, then that’s okay. My hope (as I said) is that after today or next week, we can clear things up for you no matter what side you find yourself on.
 - Because, this topic (among others), but certainly this topic is critical to your Christian Walk!
- Anyways, first I want to begin by giving you some scriptures where prayer appears.
 - We are not going to study all the places in the Bible where prayer is mentioned or where it is alluded to, because if we did, that would require us to study roughly 375 scriptures or scripture references.
 - Rather, I want us to go through a sample size (if you will).
 - But before I do, I want to begin by reading Genesis 1:1, and here is what Moses wrote:

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- Once again, Dr. Chuck Missler says, when you read Genesis 1:1 you believe it, the rest of the Bible is easy to believe!
 - So, remember that when reading scripture, especially scripture that may seem a little too hard to grasp. When you encounter those types of passages, just reflect on Genesis 1:1.
 - Because if you believe that in the beginning God created the Heavens and earth, then everything else you read in scripture becomes a whole lot easier to swallow.
 - Keep that top of mind as we go through today's lesson!
- Back to the topic at hand – prayer. Beginning with some scriptures that may cause some confusion (depending on which side of the aisle you fall on).
 - Now, before I begin, let me say, a few weeks ago, someone gave me a letter containing a list of prayers, and I told them I was going to do a study on prayer.
 - Specifically, God's purpose and intent for prayer.
 - And so, I am going to use that person's list and the categories that they placed those scriptures in, and then expound on some of them this morning, beginning with the category of:
- **Conditions For Proper Prayer:**

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1 Thess. 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

James 1:6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

James 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

James 4:15 Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

- Category of Right Relationships With Others:

Matt. 6:14 For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matt. 6:15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Mark 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Mark 11:26 [“But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.”]

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;

Matt. 6:7 “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

Matt. 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

- Category of How to Pray:

Luke 11:8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

Eph. 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,
Eph. 6:19 and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,
Eph. 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

1 Thess. 5:17 pray without ceasing

- Category of God's Promises to Answer Prayer:

John 14:13 “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Matt. 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Matt. 7:8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Matt. 7:9 “Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?

Matt. 7:10 “Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

Matt. 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Matt. 18:19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

Matt. 18:20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am

there in their midst.”

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.

Matt. 21:22 “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Luke 11:9 So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Luke 11:10 “For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

- The person who handed me this letter wrote the following at the end of this list: they said, “This sounds fairly positive, however, the traditional pulpit approach to God answering prayer is sometimes YES, sometimes NO, and quite often WAIT”
 - Let me expound on that statement for just a second. I have heard this same thing said throughout the years, and although it may be true at times, true that God says Yes or No or Wait in the way He responds, to be honest that statement is more often than not (in my opinion) a way of giving a non-answer when whatever a person prays for doesn’t happen!
 - Which is fine, but I would say that there is more to it than that, and we will try to flesh that out as we do a deep dive into this topic of prayer!
- The final category is “The role of the Holy Spirit”

Matt. 6:7 “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

Matt. 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Rom. 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;

Rom. 8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

- Now, before we begin our journey of prayer this morning, let me make two statements.
 - First, many more scriptures mention prayer, or as I said, many scriptures allude to prayer in some way. I am just taking a few, but regardless of how many there are, we should see consistency in the ones we are studying.
 - Which tells us that no matter which scriptures we are dealing with concerning

prayer, when we see the consistency, it means that we can apply that same consistency to all scripture across the board.

- Second, I want you to remember what my mentor and close friend Stephen Armstrong used to say: “When the plain sense makes common sense, we seek no other sense, and when it doesn’t, we must dig deeper.”
 - That simply means that when we read something that makes sense and lines up with the consistency of scripture, we go with what it says, but when it doesn’t, we must dig deeper, because I assure you that there is no inconsistency in God’s Word!
- Now, when studying the topic of prayer, I am often asked, “Can we, through our prayers, change God’s mind?”
 - In other words, if God is intent on allowing or causing something to happen to someone, can we pray and change His mind?
 - An example being death. If someone is sick and dying, can we pray and ask God to heal them, even though God intends for them to pass away?
 - First, let’s try answering our question by establishing a logical but fundamental truth of scripture, and not only scripture but of life as well!
 - It is impossible for the creator of anything to be surprised by his or her own creation. In other words, a painter has never created a painting and then stepped back and said, “Lookie there, my word, it’s a picture of mountains.”
 - Or a sculpture says, “Look, I can’t believe it, I was just sculpting away, with no idea of what I was sculpting, and voila, an eagle appeared.”
 - The Creator of anything obviously knows what they are creating before they start.
- So, the answer to whether God changes His mind really makes no sense, logically speaking, because that theory would have to assume that God the Creator could learn something new inside of His own creation.
 - Which would mean, as He was headed in one direction, for one reason, he suddenly learned something new, and because of that new information, He then changed His mind!
 - If that’s the case, then we are all in trouble because we are no longer serving an all-knowing, omnipotent God!
- Next, using logic once more, we must know and understand something else as believers. God has purpose and intent in everything He does!
 - Meaning, when He created this world, He did so with a timeline in mind, and we know this to be true because we see it throughout the scriptures.
 - The Bible clearly tells us; things will happen at certain appointed times.
 - Which means, this creation we live in is on a timer, a countdown.
 - We also know this from the pages of scripture:

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

**And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

- So, our birth was clearly an appointment. But what about our death?
 - Let’s see what Hebrews 9:27-28 says about this:

Hebrews 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

Hebrews 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

- These verses establish something, and that is that things are progressing along a specific timeline.
 - Certain events (like life and death) take place at very specific appointed times, and God uses us, Christian men and women, to bring many of those events into fruition!
 - Therefore, for God to change His mind, He would also have to change His will.
 - His purpose and intent for His creation!
 - And that is simply not going to happen.
- This is so important for us to grasp, because if you don’t understand these last two concepts, then you can never begin to truly understand the purpose and intent of prayer!
 - Because your understanding is established with the wrong foundation in mind!
 - Also, let me say that the scriptures themselves confirm what I am saying!
 - Let me read a few places in the scripture where we get confirmation of this very thing.
 - Turn with me if you will to Malachi 3:6, and here is what Malachi had to say on the matter of God changing His mind:

Malachi 3:5 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:6 “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;

**Has He said, and will He not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**

- The concept here is simple: God is not us. He is not a man and therefore, He does not act or respond the way we do.
 - Meaning, where we might change course in our decisions, God does not!
 - Praise be to God for that, because who wants to serve a wavering God?

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

Psalms 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,
“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

1 Samuel 15:29 Also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor change His mind; for He is not a man, that He would change His mind.”

- Now, if I am being completely honest with you, at the core of the confusion surrounding prayer lies a fundamental misunderstanding concerning our place and position inside God’s creation.
 - Meaning, when you begin with a thought process that says, “God is doing what He is doing because of us,” then you automatically begin heading down the wrong path, because in God’s dichotomy, we are not the center of the universe. God is!
 - And if that’s true, and I assure you it is, then when we pray, we don’t pray with ourselves and our desires in mind. We pray with God’s will in mind!
 - And that statement takes me to the Lord’s prayer. The Lord’s prayer is critical if we are ever going to properly understand the whole concept of prayer.
- So, turn with me if you will to Matthew 6, where we pick up with Jesus as He is doing a little teaching with His disciples on the topic of prayer, and let’s see what He has to say concerning this issue.

Matthew 6:1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 6:2 “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:3 “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

Matthew 6:4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:5 “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:7 “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

Matthew 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Matthew 6:10 ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:11 ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

Matthew 6:12 ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

- First, let me say that Jesus is not mandating the words to pray, as in the exact words we are to pray!
 - And we know this to be the case because prayer should never be grope or repetitious, and the Lord’s prayer tells us this very thing.
 - Instead, it should be personal. Having said that, the Lord’s prayer does give us a framework for prayer.
 - Meaning, it gives us the structure or format and intent of how we should pray.
 - I want you to notice who is in view in this prayer.
 - Meaning, who is the focus of this prayer framework?
 - It’s God, not man!
 - Which means our prayers must line up with God’s will.
 - We know this is true because that is exactly what James and 1 John tell us.
 - Our prayers must contain one essential element, and that is God’s will be done!
- Now, today’s message is what I call a setup day. Today’s lesson is about establishing a fundamental and baseline understanding of God and His Sovereignty over His Creation!
 - And once we garner that understanding, it will ground us and keep us on the right track as we dig deeper into some of those confusing and sometimes controversial scriptures!
 - I would like to say one more thing before we finish this morning.
 - Something that sometimes makes people a little uncomfortable. It shouldn’t make them uncomfortable, but it does.

- And that is that we can all agree that God is doing something inside of His Creation.
- We can also all agree that God knows exactly what He is doing.
- If we are to understand any topic of scripture that is controversial or confusing, especially prayer and its purpose, we must also understand my next point.
- Although God knows what He is doing, we in fact do not know what He is doing.
 - Meaning, we are never explicitly told in scripture, 100% why God created this whole thing in the first place.
 - We do get a few hints and glimpses of the benefits we receive through His creation.
 - We are told in places like Revelation and Colossians that we were created by Him and for Him.
 - Specifically for His good pleasure!
 - But there is more to it than that, and we will be exploring that more in-depth the next time we study this topic.
 - For now, know this: God is doing something, and we are not privy to all that He is doing.
 - God didn't establish this creation because He needed a buddy or a friend.
 - If He did, then why the fall in the Garden?
 - And why Sin?
 - Did He want His buddies to suffer?
 - That makes no sense. There is more going on here, and we are not told what it is.
- So, by faith we believe in God, we trust Him, and we obey, and when He says to pray, then we pray.
 - When he says give, we give
 - And when He says to love thy neighbor as thyself, so we do it.
 - Obedience is the key here, folks.
 - So, we don't need to know why He tells us to do it, we just do it!
 - Amen – Amen!

- When we last left off, we were in (what was my first time in 15 years), teaching a topical message series (if you can call it that)
 - That *topical message* addresses a very important topic: prayer!
 - The last time we were together, I spent a lot of time setting things up, and today we are going to do more of the same.
 - Having said that, we will be getting into a little more of “the meat” of the topic, but it’s still going to be (what I call) a setup Sunday.
 - To understand any topic (whether it be a scriptural one or a non-scriptural one), you must first have a baseline understanding of how most people in America view prayer and, more importantly, how most people in America view God!
 - Once we establish that understanding, then we can begin to venture into the actual categories/purpose and intent of prayer.
- You see, throughout my ministry, people have often inquired about prayer.
 - Primarily, they have asked whether I believe prayer changes things, or maybe even the harder question: Does prayer change God’s mind?
 - The answer to both those questions may confuse you because they both run congruent with one another.
 - Meaning, these questions are virtually the same in a sense, and therefore, you would think the answer would have to be the same for both questions.
 - That would be true for the most part, or maybe not!
 - You see, it really depends on what “Camp” you’re in.
 - Which is what leads you to believe what you believe about this topic in the first place.
 - In other words, it’s all about your paradigm regarding prayer: the lens through which you view prayer.
 - Another way to say it is that it’s all about your outlook, or maybe better said, your understanding of prayer.
- There are really two distinct groups or camps on the topic of prayer.
 - One camp says, we must pray if we want to change things in our lives or in the lives of others.
 - This camp often believes (either consciously or subconsciously) that whatever you pray for, you should receive.
 - Therefore, they would answer yes to both questions!
 - But if you don’t believe that, then the answer to the first question would be yes, and the answer to the second question would be no.
- Once again, the first question was: Does prayer change things?
 - And as I said, the answer for the first camp would be a resounding yes.
 - They would say, Absolutely, prayer changes things. I mean, why else pray?
- And then, as far as the second question goes, relating to God changing His mind through

prayer, the first camp would also say yes to that as well. At a minimum, they might say, well, yes, kind of, sort of, but not really.

- Often, they would say, I wouldn't go as far as saying we can change God's mind, but I do think we can have an impact on what happens, or maybe on the way it happens.
- This group, many times, will quote Scripture like:

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

John 14:13 “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.”

- Now, the problem with grabbing one off scriptures to reinforce your belief, especially as it relates to the purpose and intent of prayer, is that it does not consider “Context.”
 - As we know, context is essential.
 - Let me correct that statement. It's not just essential; you simply cannot interpret scripture any other way unless you stay 100 % in context.
 - And let me explain what I mean quickly. You see, if you don't stay in context with the entirety of the scriptures, the whole counsel of God (as the Apostle Paul called it), then you might as well quit studying your Bible.
 - As you try to study, you will often end your time in a particular letter or book with more questions than you have answers!
 - You also run the risk of becoming disheartened, disenfranchised, and some have even abandoned their faith!
- And why is that? Because without context, coupled with a complete understanding of God and His Sovereignty, meaning, a complete understanding of what it means to be the Creator of something, many times (not always), you will find yourself confused.
 - Primarily because it will appear the scriptures conflict with themselves.
 - But as we know, that is not true, because the Bible does not contradict itself!
- The Bible is a supernatural work of God, and our Lord weaved it together like a tapestry of sorts. It's all interwoven.
 - 66 books.
 - 44 authors (depending on who you ask).
 - An integrated message system of sorts, and it screams the same story over and over again, just in different ways.
 - It's the story of the Creator (Our God) who created all things. The universe, the earth, and everything in it (which obviously includes all people).
 - And we let me say, we are not 100 percent sure why God created the creation we all live in.

- All we know is that He created it. We are in it, and if we are believers, we are commanded to live and do certain things.
 - And guess what?
- Prayer is one of the things all believers are commanded to do, but there is a problem regarding this command.
 - Our modern society has hijacked this all-important tenet.
 - Meaning, we have Americanized it, and it's not just America, but America is certainly the leading proponent of this hijacking process.
- Now, what do I mean when I say Americanized prayer? What I mean is that just like with other things in America, we have taken prayer and made its intent and purpose our own.
 - We have done so with little to no regard for what the scriptures say concerning this topic.
 - Prayer in America, among other places, has become nothing more than a footnote. Something to say to people in hard times!
 - And the meaning and intent behind that footnote says, God will give us what we want.
 - He will answer our prayers, and all we must do is ask.
 - And then poof, just like "I Dream of Genie," our wish is His command!
 - But the question is: Is that how the scriptures portray prayer?
 - No, not at all.
 - We are going to get more into that real soon, but before we do, let's go back to the 2 questions I posed earlier.
- Does prayer change things? And does prayer change God's mind?
 - Earlier, I said the answer to the question depends on what camp you're in.
 - If you are in the first camp, the one that believes that God will answer our prayers, He's just waiting on us.
 - As if He's on go, ready, willing, and able to answer us in the affirmative, and all we must do is ask and pray diligently, and we will receive what we ask for.
 - If that's you, then the answer would be yes!
 - And of course, that same camp would say yes to the second question as well.
 - That we can change God's mind through prayer.
 - But what about the second camp? The ones who believe and understand the "Sovereignty of God."
 - Those who have studied and understand their position in this creation and who know and understand that this creation is not all about us, but rather it's all about God.
 - That our purpose and intent and existence on this earth is to serve and glorify Him in all we do.
 - That we are not the center of the universe, but rather God is!

- I am talking about those who work hard to emulate what Paul wrote in

2 Timothy 5:14 Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers.

2 Timothy 5:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

- For this camp, they would answer the first question with a resounding yes. Prayer is effectual and has an impact, but that answer comes with a caveat.
 - The caveat is that if we pray, we should pray in accordance with His Will, and then, at that point, our prayers will be answered.
 - And then on the second question: Do our prayers change God's mind?
 - The second camp would answer absolutely not!
 - And two weeks ago, we did a review of that question using logic as our baseline.
 - Logic, as we know, is a rule of Hermeneutics.
 - Hermeneutics are the rules we use to interpret any ancient document of antiquity, which includes Scripture.
- And logically speaking, we can easily ascertain that for the Creator to change His mind, He would need to learn something new.
 - Obtain some new knowledge that would make Him pause and think and say to Himself, "I never thought about that, so maybe I do need to change my mind."
 - As if the creator might say, "Okay, stop with all the praying, and I will change my mind.
 - I'll make it work, and you can have what you want, and I will try and make it work, relating to things I want.
 - You see, the problem with this thinking lies in that last statement, My statement about our Americanized prayer!
- The reason I say modern society has Americanized prayer is that this type of prayer life assumes God treats our prayers the same way our mother or father would treat any of our requests or petitions.
 - You know, where we beg, and beg, and beg until finally our parents relent.
 - The problem is that yes, our parents might relent, but they do so, knowing that our request might not be what's best for us.
 - And why do they do that? Well, for two reasons.
 - First, they relent because they want us to be happy in that moment. Therefore, as a means of instant gratification, coupled with keeping the peace (in a sense), our mother or fathers says yes.
 - And then second, they relent because even though they know our request is not what's best for us, per se, they think in the back of their mind, well, maybe it will all

work out.

- They lean in on that hope, hoping it will all work out, because obviously, parents do not know the future.
 - So, they employ the use of two reasoning tools, or maybe better said, the use of two twisted tools of logic to rationalize their decision.
- There are two types of logic in our world, and one of them is good, and the other is bad.
 - The first type of logic is a logic that uses worldly reasoning or pragmatism to arrive at a conclusion.
 - An example is the use of science to explain our creation.
 - Science (according to scientists) is empirical. Meaning, you can verify it through observation, and many times you can even touch it.
 - Another example is a logic that uses a “Law” to confirm whatever it is that the person says they believe.
 - Newton’s 3rd Law of Motion, which says, “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.”
 - You see, for scientists, if they can touch something or use physics or mathematics to figure something out, they can then choose to believe in it.
- Simply put, this type of logic says that science and mathematics are proven facts, and therefore, you can trust them. Everything else is just *hoping* and wishing and guessing with no hard proof to back it up!
 - And of course, front and center of this debate is Scripture because believing in Scripture requires faith, and by definition, faith cannot be touched or held or calculated using some mathematical equation.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

- Another way to say it is: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
 - Faith requires believing in something that cannot necessarily be proven or held or touched.
 - Now, before we blow right by this text, let’s look at verses 1&2 one more time.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

- There are two things I want you to see in these verses.
 - First, yes, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, but the Scripture also says it is

the conviction of things not seen.

- Meaning, even though you may not know if something is 100 % true simply because you cannot touch it or do a mathematical equation to prove it, the fact that you are convicted about it (a conviction by the way, is administered by the Holy Spirit) that conviction provides empirical & hard data.
 - And therefore, you can trust it to be true!
- But there is something else I want you to notice about these verses before we press on, and it shows up in verse 2 when it says, “For by it the men of old gained approval. So, what does that mean?
 - Well, first, who are these “Old Men?”
 - They are those who are referenced in the rest of Hebrews 11 as this section of scripture is often referred to as the “Hall of Faith”
 - Men like Abraham, Moses, Enoch, Noah, Issac, Jacob, and even Sarah. Yes, Sarah is on this list even though she is not a man, and to clear up any confusion surrounding these verses, when you read verse 2 in the Greek, it doesn’t say “Men of Old”.
 - It says: “In this for were commended the ancients”
 - The translators simply translated the verses into “Men of Old”
 - But obviously, it’s not just referring to men, as it clearly mentions women as well.
 - The use of the word men can also mean humanity, as in mankind, so don’t get too upset about the translation issue.
- Anyways, faith by definition, is opposite to something empirical (hard and or touchable). Which means it’s certainly the opposite of science and or mathematics.
 - Faith is different. It is supernatural. It’s “Spiritual” and it’s that thing that gives people the ability to believe in something they cannot see, hear, or touch!
 - Both Ephesians and Romans testify to this very thing.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this *is* not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

Ephesians 2:9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- But here’s the question: Is everyone born with faith, with the innate ability to believe, and if so, or if not, then how do we obtain it?
 - Well, here is the truth: we are not sure, and let me explain what I mean.
 - There are places in the scriptures that lean in both directions concerning the topic of faith. For example:

Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

Romans 3:10 as it is written:

“THERE IS NO RIGHTEOUS PERSON, NOT EVEN ONE;

**Romans 3:11 THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS OUT GOD;**

- These verses have been used as a proof text in an effort to prove that people are not naturally born with faith.
 - But upon further examination of the text itself, and if we stay in context, then it's clear that faith is not the focus of this text.
 - Rather, the focus is on the fact that no one is born righteous.
 - Righteousness is a synonym for perfection.
 - Which is what's required if you want to enter Heaven's gates!
- And so, if that is the case (and I assure you it is), then what is required for a man, woman, or child to become Righteous (Perfect and or Holy)?
 - Belief in Jesus, specifically, His sacrifice for our sins on the Cross of Calvary!
 - That is the only thing that will impute righteousness upon an individual.
- So, I wouldn't agree that Romans 3 would be a good proof text in which to prove or disprove someone being born automatically with faith.
 - But are there any other texts that testify (clarifying for us) that people are either A: born with Faith or B: born without it?
 - The answer is NO
 - Faith is mentioned many times throughout the scripture, and the Bible certainly emphasizes its importance.
 - But scripture never explicitly says humans are born with it or without it!

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brothers *and sisters*, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Romans 12:4 For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body's parts do not have the same function,

Romans 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another.

- In these verses, we are introduced to the concept of a believer being given a measure of faith, but once again, this is not in reference to salvation.
 - We know this to be the case because Paul is clearly writing to believers, not unbelievers.
 - As the letter of Romans was written to the church at Rome, not the Roman Church, but the church at Rome, there's a difference.
 - Hence, why he calls them brothers and sisters!
- We also know these verses have nothing to do with salvation, because the point of the text revolves around pride, haughtiness of them thinking more highly of themselves than they should.
 - The actual point of the text revolves around the concept of every believer being given gifts and how no one gift is greater than any other!
 - And for further confirmation of this, let's read on.

Romans 12:6 However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to use them properly*: if prophecy, in proportion to *one's* faith;

Romans 12:7 if service, in the *act of* serving; or the one who teaches, in the *act of* teaching;

Romans 12:8 or the one who exhorts, in the *work of* exhortation; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who is in leadership, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- Now, let me explain where I fall on this faith thing.
 - I believe that, based on the testimony of scripture, faith manifests itself when something specific happens.
 - Do you wonder what that thing is that causes faith to emerge or not emerge?
 - Well, Romans 10:14-17 gives some insight into this process as well, when it says the following:

Romans 10:14 How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:15 But how are they to preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

Romans 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

Romans 10:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- According to Paul, faith is activated through the hearing of the Word of Christ!
 - So, guess what? God's Word is the catalyst for faith.
 - It's like a two-part epoxy.
 - When God's Word is taught, spoken, and or studied, faith will (not always), but if God is dealing with that individual at that time, it will activate.
 - It may not be that person's time yet, but if it is their time, then God's Word is what activates their faith!
 - It's kind of like faith is lying dormant inside the future believer, and one day, when God is ready, that individual hears the Word of God, and that's when the supernatural occurs!
- Now, why do I say that God's Word will, but will not always activate faith!
 - Because we have many places in the scriptures where someone heard God's Word, they heard Jesus Himself speaking, but walked away in disbelief!
 - That doesn't mean one day they might hear and suddenly have their faith activated, we don't know that for sure,
 - All we know is that God's Word is the catalyst for activating faith!
 - I've gotten a little off track here this morning, but not really, because understanding what I am trying to convey is foundational if you are going to understand the purpose and intent of prayer.
- Now, one more thing relating to the use of logic and faith, as I touched on earlier, there are two types of logic: The World's Logic and Spiritual Logic
 - Romans says that we, in our natural state, do not possess the ability to believe in something we cannot touch or feel unless we have the faith to do so!
 - This is why the theory of Evolution is so attractive to those who do not have the faith to believe in Christ.
 - The Theory of Evolution says that creation evolved over time
 - One thing led to the next, and that seems plausible as scientists and proponents of this theory use their own logic to explain how evolution works.
 - Example – If you want to know how old the Earth is, simply take a trip to the Grand Canyon (head to the bottom of it) and look at the different layers of crustation that supposedly formed over time.
 - Scientists say that as the Earth aged, those layers evolved over time, and therefore, if you want to know the age of the Earth, simply count the layers.
 - The problem is that scientists had to come up with a process that validated the age of each layer of crustation.
 - Same thing when dealing with the age of a tree.
 - When you cut a tree down, you can see the growth rings on top of the stump, and therefore, if you want to know the age of a tree, just count the rings!
 - But there is one problem with this process. Both methods have now been called into question.

- In some of the scientific camps, this process has been refuted and debunked (at least to a point).
- Which means there is no way to know for sure if their dating methods actually work.
 - Matter of fact, many scientists reject some of the dating methods that have been used in the past.
 - Methods like Carbon Dating, which is now believed by many scientists (even those who are atheists), are not 100 % reliable.
- The problem with many of the dating methods is their inability to actually test (Whatever it is a person is trying to test) because we cannot take that substance from its inception and observe it over time.
 - For example, with a rock, there is absolutely no way to know for sure how old it is. Meaning, the only true method would be to take a rock from its inception and follow it from there.
 - The same holds true with rings of a tree; it has been proven that the region a tree grows in matters. Hotter climate –or colder climate, etc.
- Also, a tree’s rate of growth changes depending on the type of tree it is, as some trees grow faster than others.
- Regardless of what you believe, what you can know is this: A certain measure of faith is required to believe in anything, including science.
 - We cannot know with 100% certainty that one method is 100% correct over another.
 - And one more thing, it takes a whole lot of faith to believe in evolution. I mean, seriously, what is harder to believe: that Rocks formed from nothing, or that we live in a creation and therefore there must be a Creator!
- But what about Spiritual Logic? Spiritual Logic comes from above, through the Holy Spirit
 - It’s the only way for a believer to reconcile and find peace as they live out their lives on this earth.
 - Follow me here for just a moment.
 - For example, when Genesis says that God created the Heavens and the earth in 6 days.
 - If I have peace in God and His Word, then I find no internal conflict with that verse, and therefore I am good with it.
 - I mean, if God is the creator, then obviously the creator can do whatever He pleases, and nothing is beyond His capabilities or reach! Makes sense.
 - So Spiritual Logic comes from above, from God, and you cannot arrive at it any other way!
- So, this morning we talked about a lot. What we haven’t done is answer the two questions from scripture, which are:
 - Does prayer change things, or can it change things?
 - Does prayer change God’s mind, or does it change the course of things?

- Well, as we close, I want to answer the second question first, and I want to do so by asking a question.
- Is there any place in scripture where God appears to change His mind?
 - The answer is..... YES!
- Turn with me if you will to 2 Kings 20:1-6 and then to Isaiah 38:1-8
 - Beginning with 2 Kings 20:1-7

2 Kings 20:1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”

2 Kings 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2 Kings 20:3 “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2 Kings 20:4 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

2 Kings 20:5 “Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 20:6 “I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.””

2 Kings 20:7 Then Isaiah said, “Take a cake of figs.” And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

- So, after reading 2 Kings 20, it appears God changed His mind, as Hezekiah was a dead man, and He cried out to God. He reminded the Lord of all that he had done. He said in verse 3:

2 Kings 20:3 “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

- So, to come to the right conclusion concerning this verse, you must begin by asking yourself a question.
 - First off, did God learn anything new about Hezekiah?
 - In other words, did God forget how Hezekiah lived his life?
 - That he walked in truth with his whole heart?
 - No, of course, not.

- If He did, we are all in trouble because that means we are not serving an all-knowing God.
 - Once again, the use of Spiritual Logic is very important here.
- So, God did not learn anything new, as He already knew everything there was to know about King Hezekiah.
 - The second question is, does God always have a purpose and intent behind everything He does?
 - Yes, He does!
 - And we know this from the testimony of the Scriptures.
- God always has intent and purpose behind everything He does, and therefore, if God always operates with purposes and intent, and He knew how Hezekiah lived his life, then why did He appear to change His mind?
 - Well, because He was doing something.
 - We know this is the case because we have already established that foundation from the testimony of Scripture.
- So, He was doing something with Hezekiah, and you can be assured that something had everything to do with God's Glory.
 - So, do you wonder what He was doing with Hezekiah in this moment?
 - I don't know, maybe teaching Him something.
 - Maybe teaching about reliance on God.
 - Maybe teaching Him about God's own Sovereignty.
 - How God is in control of all things.
 - How even death is under His subjection.
 - It could be a myriad of things.
- Whatever it is, one thing is for sure: he saved Hezekiah's life for His purposes and His Glory. Not so that Hezekiah could live 15 more years on this earth.
 - You see, Hezekiah wanted to live for the same reasons we all want to live. We do not understand what waits for us on the other side.
 - Therefore, we worry about death from a totally selfish standpoint. We begin to think about our loved ones, the life we won't get to live, etc.
 - But is that why God extended King Hezekiah's life?
 - So, he could experience more of this wonderful life?
 - Listen closely to what happened one more time

2 Kings 20:1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

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2 Kings 20:7 Then Isaiah said, “Take a cake of figs.” And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

- Before I break this apart for you, let me establish another fundamental truth of scripture.
 - The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:27 that it is appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgment.
 - Which means that our death is an established point in time.
 - Which means, Hezekiah was never appointed to die in that moment, even though God spoke to Isaiah the prophet and told him to tell Hezekiah this very thing.
 - So, what gives? Well, the answer lies in verse 6:

2 Kings 20:6 “I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.””

- The key here lies in the words, “for My own sake.”
 - God did what He did for His own sake, not for Hezekiah’s
 - Was there something in it for the King?
 - Yes, learning and knowledge of who God is, and as I said, how He is Sovereign over all things. Even death.
 - But ultimately, it was all for God’s purposes and intent.
 - But what about other places in scripture where God appears to change His mind?
 - Well, I am going to leave you with some homework this morning.
 - I want you to read Exodus 32:14, Jonah 3:10, and Genesis 6:6-7.
 - I want you to apply this same Spiritual Logic to these verses and see if you can come up with the correct conclusion.

- And we are going to rightly divide them next week!
- Amen Amen

- Today, we are going to pick back up on the topic of prayer.
 - As I said last week, prayer is essential in the life of the believer, and therefore, it's imperative that we have the correct view regarding this topic.
 - That view must not come from some popular belief system or from someone's opinion, but rather, we must form our view of prayer (and any other topic of scripture) from God's Holy Manuscript.
 - Any other view outside God's Word will simply lead the believer into a place of confusion, bewilderment, and discouragement.
- And let me say this, the whole concept of Prayer is interesting, and it's an essential tenet of God!
 - And it has become a generic go-to move (for lack of better words)
 - Meaning, when we get stressed, desperate, or when things get bad, or even appear to be getting bad, prayer is something we all turn to.
 - What's interesting is that it's not only something the church turns to (as obviously it should), but it's also something the world turns to, which has led to even more confusion surrounding this topic.
 - And why do I say that the world has caused even more confusion surrounding the topic of prayer?
- Because, as I said last week, Biblical prayer has been Americanized. Meaning, prayer was specifically designed for God's children, which means it has nothing to do with the world and everything to do with God Himself!
 - And so much in the same way that God has become cliché in our modern society, so has Prayer!
 - What I mean is that God and prayer have been hijacked (sort to speak). When someone who obviously has no interest in the things of God, when they have something good happen to them, when they:
 - A – Score a touchdown
 - B – Do something that gains them national recognition of some sort.
 - C – When something bad happens to them (many times)
 - The world will recognize God by saying that we don't know what we are going to do, so we are just going to pray and trust God!
 - Even though the people who say this are far away from God.
 - You see, the world loves the Americanized Jesus at times.
 - They love to bring Him out in desperate situations and parade Him around (verbally), giving the appearance that they really love the Lord and that they are, in fact, Christ followers.
 - But nothing could be further from the truth.
- Just to give you an example of what I mean, last week there was a nationally televised music event where two artists were doing a duet together. One of them was a Christian artist, and the other was not.

- And man, did they turn the stage into a modern-day Mega church service!
- Complete with smoke, screens, sound, lights, cameras, a gospel choir, and even a hologram Cross projected into the air.
 - And so, these two artists turned that song (in that moment) into what seemed to be a church service.
 - As a matter of fact, the artist even said, I feel God in this place tonight, you are welcome here Lord (As if God needs permission to be anywhere)
- Regardless, that's neither here nor there; I just thought I'd throw that in there to further prove my point.
- So, these two artists had everyone “*razzed*” up, and to be honest with you, if you didn't know better or were just a typical everyday Americanized Christian (One with little to no background on the God of the Bible), you would think they were having some type of Super Spiritual Moment.
 - And as I watched the performance, and as it continued toward the crescendo of the song, in what appeared to be some kind of super spiritual move of God, someone in the room I was sitting in told me something unsettling about one of the artists.
 - And the thing that they told me robbed any semblance of spirituality in that moment. It went right out the door.
 - It was very disturbing, as I thought to myself, how in the world could you act like you are praising God on one hand, but in fact be living your life in a way that was and is opposite of anything God would approve of!
- Now, you might be sitting here today or listening online and saying to yourself, You don't know where this man is in his walk with God.
 - And I would say, I do know, because God gave all believers a way to know, and I will show you. Matthew 7:15-20 – listen to what Matthew wrote concerning this topic:

Matt. 7:15 “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Matt. 7:16 “You will know them by their fruits.

- And then in the second half of this same verse, Matthew gives us guidance on how we can know when someone is declaring to (not only to know God) but also declaring themselves to be a prophet of God. How can we (as believers) identify who these people are?
 - One more time in verse 16:

Matt. 7:16 “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they?

Matt. 7:17 “So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

Matt. 7:18 “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Matt. 7:19 “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matt. 7:20 “So then, you will know them by their fruits.

- Now, before moving forward this morning with our teaching, let me say something concerning these verses.
 - The point of Matthew 7 had nothing to do with a perfected life being lived out for Christ, but it has everything to do with saying one thing and openly and blatantly doing the opposite in their life.
 - And doing so with no apparent appearance of conviction present
 - Guys, it’s the absence of conviction that makes all the difference because, as we know, we are all going to stumble and fall and mess up.
 - But the question is, are you bothered by your sin?
 - Are you convicted about it?
 - Or are you good with it?
 - Anyways, we can get insight into someone’s walk with God when we read Matthew 7, and it all revolves around actions moved by conviction.
 - And let me say something about all of this, honestly, this thing is so simple, and God has dumbed it down for us sheep.
- If you study Matthew 7 more in-depth, God is saying, just look at a tree, and if you don’t know what type of tree it is (by looking at its bark or leaves), then all you have to do is wait until the tree bears fruit.
 - Then you will know exactly what kind of tree it truly is!
 - Remember this: a hawk and a dove don’t light on the same line.
 - Light and darkness don’t inhabit the same place. Good and evil don’t coexist in harmony!
 - Meaning, they don’t live together. It’s either one or the other.
- So, when someone openly engages in something opposite to God, His Character, His Commands, and His Will, but then says, “It doesn’t really matter what we do, regardless of the life we live, we praise you, Lord.”
 - Just know you are looking at the person, Matthew 7 is describing.
 - Just like the world uses God as some sort of sidebar when convenient, the world does the same thing with prayer.
 - And when believers see it, many times (not always) but many times, they assume that the world’s so-called prayer is what prayer looks like.
 - And why?
 - Because of the lack of Biblical training (and not just concerning the topic of prayer BTW)
 - Biblical training (concerning all topics of a scriptural nature)

- You see, when believers engage with the world without knowing it, they do so, not knowing (in that moment) that they are shaping their own paradigm concerning our Lord, as they see the world calling on God as if they know Him.
 - In an Americanized format
 - Americanized meaning: praying to God as if He were a genie in a bottle.
- Moving on, last week I posed two questions concerning prayer. One was, does prayer change things?
 - And I answered that question by saying it differently. Instead of saying Does prayer change things, I said the question is not whether prayers change things, but does effectual prayer change things.
 - The answer is yes.
 - What I mean is that if we pray correctly, which is when we pray in accordance with God's Will and not our own will, that's what an "effectual prayer" looks like.
 - That statement is the testimony put forth in scripture!
 - Just think about the Lord's prayer.
 - "Our father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name,
 - Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"
 - You get the point!
- The second question that I posed is, can we (through our prayers) change God's mind?
 - And the answer I gave to that question was absolutely not!
 - And this is not my opinion; this is exactly what the scriptures tell us in places like Numbers 23:19

**Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"**

- The word repent here also means comfort, change mind, sorry, repent, changed mind, comforters.
 - In the context of this verse, God used the disobedient prophet's own mouth to confirm to the prophet himself that he could not have his way with God, even though the prophet had continually asked God through prayer for the opportunity to curse Israel.
 - Regardless of his prayer, the answer always came back "no".
 - God's will must be done, and God will not change His mind concerning what is good and necessary. No amount of pleading will lead God to do our will over His own will.
 - Another verse that confirms this statement shows up in:

1 Samuel 15:29 “Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”

- So, either God changes His Mind or He does not, and I am going with He does not!
- Let me explain what is going on in this section of scripture.
 - Samuel told King Saul he had forfeited his throne to David, and as you might imagine, Saul is not too happy about this outcome, so he pressed God to change His mind.
 - And in response to Saul’s repeated request, the prophet Samuel informed King Saul that God cannot change His mind.
 - And why can He not change his mind?
 - Because God is not a man!
 - Once again, in Hebrew, the words “change His mind” are actually the word "relent".
 - And upon further examination, coupled with a study of that word, you will find the word “relent” here has the same meaning as the word “relent” in Numbers 23:19.
- And one more thing regarding God that I want you to remember, God is immutable. Meaning, He is unable to change.
 - Which means, God is unchanging in His character, His will, and His purpose.
 - And just as I said last week regarding this point, praise the Lord that we serve an immutable God.
 - I would hate to know that we were serving a God who was ever changing and wavering and flailing about in the wind, changing course, placating to every individual’s request!
 - That would not be a God I would want to serve!
 - Instead, we serve a God of absolutes, of certainty, who is totally in control of all things, even the bad things!
- Also, remember, for God to change His mind, He would only do so if somehow, He obtained or learned some new piece of information that would cause Him to change His Will.
 - And logically speaking (in and of itself), that is simply not possible, as God knows all things, as He is omnipotent.
 - What about the verses that clearly seem to indicate God did change His mind, such as the one we studied last week in 2 Kings 20:1-7, where King Hezekiah spoke to the Lord after the prophet Isaiah told him to set his house in order, because he was about to die.
 - Let’s re-read what happened one more time.
 - The Prophet Jeremiah wrote the following:

2 Kings 20:1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your

house in order, for you shall die and not live.”

2 Kings 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2 Kings 20:3 “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.”
And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2 Kings 20:4 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

2 Kings 20:5 “Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 20:6 “I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.””

2 Kings 20:7 Then Isaiah said, “Take a cake of figs.” And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

- So, King Hezekiah, upon hearing the news of his soon-to-be death through the prophet Isaiah, did something, and what was it that he did?
 - One more time, verses 2 & 3 of 2 Kings 20

2 Kings 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2 Kings 20:3 “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.”
And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

- The scripture says, after hearing Hezekiah’s prayer, God spoke to the prophet Isaiah and told him to tell the King that He was extending His life by 15 more years.
 - Now, let me say something about this verse, something I did not point out last week, and I want you to notice how King Hezekiah did not actually ask God to change His mind.
 - As a matter of fact, He didn’t ask God for anything!
 - He didn’t say, O Lord, hear my cry, you know I have been faithful and true.
 - Therefore, please let me live.
 - Instead, the scripture simply says Hezekiah prayed (But I must be honest), his prayer doesn’t look anything like any prayer I have ever heard someone pray, especially in desperate times.
- Let me say it differently, it doesn’t look like a prayer that most modern-day Christians would pray, does it?
 - I mean, think about it, if God sent a prophet to speak to you this afternoon, and the prophet said, Tom, Sally, Suzie, put your house in order because you are going to

die.

- Upon hearing this, you decided to ask God to save you, wouldn't you say, God, please heal me. You know I have been faithful, and you know how I have tried hard to walk in your truth.
 - Please spare my life, because I am not ready to go yet!
- Isn't that how we would pray, and isn't that how we have all seen prayer modeled throughout our modern church history?
 - Yes, it is, but that's not what happens here.
 - Hezekiah makes no requests. Instead, he makes a statement. One more time, listen to it in verse 3.

2 Kings 20:3 “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

- There it is. There is an example of one type of prayer modeled for us in scripture.
 - No request. No wish list. Just a simple statement
 - (Beseech meaning – Urgently Request)
 - The word bitterly here in Hebrew means: Aloud, mighty, more, much, noble, proud thing.
- Now, what's interesting about these verses is how this text of scripture has been used repeatedly as a proof text, testifying to the fact that God changes His mind. Yet, Hezekiah never makes any request of God in His prayer.
 - Certainly not for God to change His mind about His death
 - As a matter of fact, Hezekiah didn't ask God to do anything.
 - He simply lamented the fact that he was dying.
 - But having said that, it's inferred from the context of the verses that God heard his cry and changed His mind, but we know from the rest of the chapter that God didn't change his mind.
 - Once again, Hezekiah never asked God to do anything. There was no wish list, but rather He extended Hezekiah's life of His own accord.
 - For His own Glory, without request.
 - He did so for His own purposes, and not so that Hezekiah could live out the rest of his life on this earth for his own purposes and pleasure.
 - No, once again, it's all about God, His purposes, and His Glory.
- Now, having said all of this, it is true, it does appear (from the text of scripture) that there was something about to happen to Hezekiah and that God shifted from allowing Hezekiah to die to allowing him to live an additional 15 years.
 - But even still, Hezekiah never asked God to do anything.

- One more thing, does the scripture say anything about the timing of when King Hezekiah was going to die?
 - It doesn't. It simply says that He was mortally ill, and he was going to die!
- What about other places in scripture, where God appears to change His mind?
- Well, last week I gave you some homework (some scriptures) to study concerning this topic, and those scriptures were: Exodus 32:14, Jonah 3:10, and Genesis 6:6-7.
 - I would like to turn to each one of these verses and look at them, and we will begin with Exodus 32:14.
- Let me set the scene for you. God has just delivered the Israelites out of 430 years of slavery, and He did so in miraculous fashion.
 - He saved them, freed them, and at the same time defeated Pharaoh's army.
 - He used Moses to do it, and after Moses led the children of God out of Egypt and into the wilderness (far away from Pharaoh's reach), He told the Israelites to stay put as He and Aaron (Moses' brother) went up on Mount Sinai to speak with the Lord.
 - And while they are gone, the Israelites get restless.
 - They get nervous, fearing God had delivered them from the hands of the Egyptians only to lead them into the wilderness to die.
 - Basically, God through Moses had abandoned them.
 - So, they do what spiritually immature people do all the time, and they take matters into their own hands.
 - They decided to build for themselves another God to worship, and so they built a Golden Calf.
 - As a result, because of their lack of trust, God gets angry with them, and here is what we read in:

Exodus 32:7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*.

Exodus 32:8 "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'"

Exodus 32:9 The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.

Exodus 32:10 "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

- So, in verses 7-10, we are told what the Israelites did, and we are also told how God felt about the situation.
 - He was very angry, and next, we have Moses' response to God and His anger.

Exodus 32:11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said, “LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

Exodus 32:12 Why should the Egyptians talk, saying, ‘With evil *motives* He brought them out, to kill them on the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and relent of *doing* harm to Your people.

Exodus 32:13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.’”

Exodus 32:14 So the LORD relented of the harm which He said He would do to His people.

- In these verses, we are introduced once again to the word relented.
 - And verse 14 clearly says that the Lord relented of the harm which He said He would do to His people.
 - So, based on the word “relented,” it would appear that God changed His mind, right?
 - I mean the word “relent”, that word in and of itself seems to indicate that God was going to do one thing, and now He is not, and so what gives?
- Well, I assure you God did not change His mind, and to understand these verses correctly, you must first understand the difference between a conditional and an unconditional declaration of God.
 - An example of a conditional declaration would be when God said in the book of Jonah, “I will destroy Nineveh in forty days.”
 - He was speaking conditionally, based on the Assyrians’ response to His request for them to repent, and we know this to be the case because the Assyrians repented, and God did not destroy them.
 - Meaning, God didn’t change His mind here; He simply issued a warning, and that warning was meant to invoke repentance, which it did.
 - An example of an unconditional declaration of God would be the Lord’s promise to David.
 - Where there was no qualification expressed or implied in the declaration
 - Which meant that no matter what David did or did not do, the word of the Lord would come to pass, and as we know, it did and always does!
- As we close this morning, I want you to remember something. The things that confuse everyone concerning prayer are that we keep trying to humanize it as if God were us.
 - God is not human.
 - He is the creator of the universe.
 - He is immutable. He never changes.

- And this is fleshed out in Isaiah when the prophet says the following:

Isaiah 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.

Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:10 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth
And making it produce and sprout,

And providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

Isaiah 55:11 So will My word be which goes out of My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding *in the purpose* for which I sent it.

- If we quit trying to humanize God, we will not struggle with understanding prayer.
 - The problem is that when we go to the Lord in prayer, we do so as if He is on the same plane as we are.
 - Meaning, we do so as if He and I are on the same level.
 - Having the same thought process as if God and I have the same goals.
 - And the truth is, we don’t because we are not omnipotent (all knowing)
 - When we do this, all we really do is set ourselves up for disappointment.
 - God is doing something inside His Creation.
 - Did you notice I said His Creation, not our Creation, but His!
 - We do not know what He is doing, and therefore, all we can do is pray in this manner.
 - Lord, here is my prayer. My request is this, but Your will be done, not mine!
 - And honestly, there may be no better scripture to testify to this fact than that of Proverbs 16:9, which says:

Proverbs 16:9 “The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps”

- Our confusion surrounding prayer comes from our presuppositions concerning God.
 - Meaning that when we try to understand God, we do so from a worldly perspective by humanizing Him!
 - As if He is one of us, which He is not.
- If we want to emerge from all the confusion, then we must erase the erroneous perception we have of God in our minds and replace it with the reality of who He truly is

based on the testimony of scripture!

- And if we do that, we will never struggle with the purpose and intent of prayer or any other topic of scripture!
- Next week, we are going to continue our journey on this topic as we dig deeper into some of the other categories of prayer, and eventually (after doing more of a deep dive), we are going to address the intent behind this all-important tenet of God.
 - And one more time, I want to give you some homework, but this time I also want to engage you in a critical thinking exercise.
 - The homework revolves around negotiations with God, and it shows up in Genesis 18:16-33.
 - You may remember the scene where God informs Abraham, He is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham begins negotiating with God, trying to change His mind.
 - Primarily because Abraham's nephew Lot and His family lived in that city!
 - I want you to study that section of scripture, and we are going to talk about it next week.
 - Also, I want to do a little critical thinking exercise with you, and you can do that by asking yourself a simple yet profound question.
- If prayer wasn't a thing and God didn't command it, what would your Christian life and walk look like?
 - Meaning, what would you do in times of stress, conflict, sickness, pain, depression, worry, and confusion!
 - How would we commune with God?
 - What would it be like if we couldn't petition the Lord in prayer?
- I want you to think about what that might look like, and next week we will talk about that as well, as we continue our study on the topic of prayer!
 - AMEN – AMEN

- This morning, we are going to pick backup on our teaching series regarding the topic of prayer.
- Now, let me say this before moving forward. My goal in this teaching series is to help clear up any confusion surrounding this all-important topic.
 - And I don't just want to clear it up; I want to clear it up from the pages of scripture, which requires us to approach this topic without any preconceived notions or ideas.
 - Or maybe better said, without any presupposition regarding this topic,
 - If we are going to do that, we will probably have to erase everything in our minds regarding our understanding of prayer, and that is very difficult to do!
 - As a matter of fact, it can seem almost impossible to do, because it requires us to erase our experiences and traditions.
 - Experiences and traditions that have shaped our view and the lens through which we understand and see prayer.
 - It requires a reset, if you will.
 - A reset on what we have been taught, which ultimately means that we will be internally challenged regarding everything we say we believe.
 - Which is why (as I said), it is so hard to do, but that is what's required if we truly want to understand this topic from the pages of scripture.
- Now, the problem with this lies in the fact that there are scriptures regarding prayer that appear to say one thing in one place and then turn around and say something opposite in another place.
 - Which obviously creates an issue, especially if you don't have a firm grasp and foundation regarding what you believe about God and, more specifically, His Word.
 - Meaning, if you don't understand (for example) that God's Word does not conflict, which means, when you come across (what appears to be conflicting texts of scripture), it can, and often will, create confusion in the mind of the believer.
 - And when someone is confused, they tend to do one of two things,
 - They either A –say, oh well, I don't know, I'll just go with it.
 - And to be honest, most people fall into this camp.
 - They don't worry about scriptural issues too much, at least until they are forced to deal with them.
 - Which usually shows up when trial and or tragedy strikes their life. It's at that point they start experiencing an internal conflict, and as I said, in many cases (especially regarding the topic of prayer) this causes the individual to become disheartened and or disenfranchised. At which point, they usually end up getting mad at God!
 - Then there's B: they say to themselves, "Well, brother such and such told me this or that regarding prayer, and even though there is an apparent conflict with a verse, I'm just going to go with what brother such and such told me!
- Now, in a few cases (and I mean very few cases), someone will come across these

(supposedly) conflicting verses of scripture and then dig in and get down to the truth. But it is rare!

- And once again, to get to the truth, you must have a foundation on which to build (the Word).
 - And when I say “foundation,” what I mean is, you must have some empirical hard truths of scripture that you can stand on.
- If not, you will encounter conflict with whoever you may be having a discussion and or debate with.
- Let me give you an example of what I mean, and I’ll give you an example using a topic we should all be able to agree on, other than the purpose and intent of prayer!
 - Let’s use Jesus as our example. If I went around the room here today and asked every person sitting here 2 questions.
- If I said, do you believe Jesus is the Son of God?
- And Do you believe He is the Messiah?
 - If everyone said yes to both of those questions, at that point it would be easy for us to move forward with a discussion concerning Jesus, specifically speaking about His purpose & intent.
- Because at that point, we would both be approaching the question from a place where we both have the same “Theological Foundation” because that foundation was established on an empirical hard truth of scripture (one that we both agree on).
- On the other hand, if someone in here said no, I don’t believe Jesus is the Son of God, and no, I don’t believe He is the Messiah!
- Then at that point, there would be absolutely no reason for us to talk about Jesus, specifically His purpose and intent.
 - And as such, there would be no way for us to move forward in the discussion, or for that matter, any other Biblical conversation or debate, other than maybe backing up and having a discussion and debate regarding Jesus and His Lordship.
- Simply put, if we can’t agree on who Jesus is, then there is no way to discuss Jesus, His purpose, and intent.
- And I see this all the time by the way, especially with talk shows, when a talk show host has a panel of people on it, and those people have different views and different backgrounds, experiences, and philosophies, especially those of a “Spiritual Nature”, and the scene in it is always the same.
 - Where the show brings people together of varying backgrounds and beliefs, and the host tries to get everyone to agree (in some sense) regarding some topic, but ultimately, the host knows that the question being asked is going to create contention and controversy within the group.
 - Larry King would do this a lot on his show “Larry King Live”.
 - Where he would have a Christian Pastor on the show alongside an atheist or agnostic believing person, or a “Life philosopher” on the panel.
 - A man like Deepak Chopra.

- And King would often ask some controversial questions. Questions like: who is Jesus?
 - And the Pastor would say that He is the Son of God, the Messiah of the world.
 - Deepak would say, and I quote – “I believe Jesus is someone who achieved the highest level of knowledge that leads to ultimate human fulfillment, and we can all do the same.” He went on to say, “So, because Jesus achieved this highest level of knowledge, that would make Him a guru, but not God. And so, because we too can all achieve the same type of high-level knowledge regarding humanity, then if you say Jesus is God, you are also saying we are all God!”
- That’s his rational proof, if you will. Refuting why Jesus is not God, nor is He the Messiah of the world!
- So, based on what I just told you, it would be an absolute waste of time to engage Deepak in a discussion regarding creation, moral relativity, or anything else about matters of creation or humanity.
 - Because you simply would not have the same foundation to begin with when it comes to the basics, and the same is true when studying any topic of Scripture.
- If we all agree that God is the Creator, and if we all agree that the Bible is the “inherent” and “infallible” Word of God, then we can all move forward and discuss whatever topic of scripture we may face.
 - And so today, as we move through our study of prayer, we must establish some empirical hard truths of scripture.
 - And I have previously done so in summary form at a high level in the prior 3 teachings, but I want to do it one more time, more in a checklist or point format.
 - Anytime you study a topic of scripture, especially one that extends over several sessions, you must always refer to an established baseline of truth in scripture.
 - Especially when the topic requires a series of teachings to flesh it all out!
 - If you don’t, you run the risk of drifting off track!
- And so, with all that said, here are some hard truths we all should agree on:
 - 1 – God is immutable. He never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.
 - Webster's dictionary defines the word immutable as not capable of, or susceptible to change. It implies a quality of unchangeableness, where something cannot be altered or modified.
 - The definition from the Oxford language is that immutable means unchanging over time; unable to be changed
 - So that is what it means when something is immutable, it is unchanging, and I say, praise the Lord for that, as that perfectly describes the God we serve
 - 2 – God is the Creator, and we are His creations, and we were created for good works, and Ephesians 2:10 tells us exactly that!
 - 3 – God created this creation for a reason, and we are not 100 percent sure why He created it (because we are simply not told).

- 4 – God is Sovereign, totally in control of His Creation.
 - 5 – Everything God does, He does for His Glory.
 - 6 – God is omnipotent (all-knowing).
 - 7 – God is omnipresent (in all places at all times), where Satan and his demons are not.
 - 8 – God is not human; He is not a man.
 - 9 – The Bible is the inherent and infallible word of God, without error.
 - 10 – God is intentional in everything He does, and therefore His creation is intentional.
 - 11- God’s Will is going to be accomplished, meaning, whatever God decrees will come to pass, and our will does not supersede His.
 - 12 – and finally, even though God is Sovereign, God created us with a Freewill, which gave us the capability of making choices and decisions as God Himself incorporated Freewill into His creative plan for humanity.
- Now we often run into a problem with that last statement when we try to harmonize point 12 with the previous 11 points.
 - As it causes an apparent conflict (at least as we might see it in our limited and or finite minds)
 - So, as such, it makes things hard for us to reconcile, especially regarding God’s Sovereignty vs. man's responsibility!
 - All I can say about this is that the very best thing to do is to stay away from trying to harmonize two.
 - And why? Because “It is a mystery of God!”, and both are 100 percent true!
 - The problem with trying to harmonize these two together is that you run the risk of diminishing one or the other, causing a believer to end up in one camp or another. (taking sides if you will)
 - Which ultimately is what causes believers to end up in conflict, which by the way is the opposite of unity!
 - Back to the matter at hand. So, if we don’t agree on these empirical truths of scripture, then it is almost impossible to begin to move forward with any discussion of any scriptural significance (especially regarding the topic of prayer).
 - Also, when we say we do agree with these basic truths of scripture, we must be careful not to come to a section of scripture that we don’t care for and then say, “Yeah, but”
 - Because the minute you start into the “Yeah, but”, the discussion will take a turn, and we are no longer operating from a place of common agreed spiritual ground, but instead from a place of emotion!
 - When someone says, “Yes, I believe that, but I also believe that God is also this way or that way!”
 - If that happens, most of the time (not always), you might as well stop the discussions, because to be honest with you, you are probably never going to

agree.

- Primarily because the “Yeah Butts” almost always lead you right back where you started at the onset of the discussion.
 - Which means you just end up spinning your wheels!
 - In other words, the “Yeah butts” generally end up running the discussion in circles!
- But let me say this about my statement, it’s okay to say, “Yeah, but”. Just know that you and or whoever you are talking to most likely will not come to a resolution concerning the matter at hand.
- So, once again, when two people are debating and or discussing a topic, especially of a scriptural nature, they must establish some hard empirical truths & baselines in which they agree!
 - If they do, they will have their very best chance of moving forward, which could lead to some sort of productive dialogue and ultimate resolution!
- Moving on. So last week I made a statement, and I want to clarify that statement.
 - The statement I made was one concerning King Hezekiah and the pronouncement of his death by the prophet Isaiah.
 - I said that when I re-read the account of King Hezekiah’s pronouncement of death the previous week, I said that I missed something about the text.
 - I explained how it was that when the Lord added 15 more years to King Hezekiah’s life, that scripture had been used (as a proof text), as a way of validating that God does in fact “Change His Mind”.

**Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”**

1 Samuel 15:29 “Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”

- What I said was that King Hezekiah never actually made any petition to God concerning his life or death.
 - As a matter of fact, he never made any request or petition regarding anything at all. Instead, he simply lamented the fact that he was going to die.
 - And then after he lamented, God told Isaiah to return to the King and tell him He was going to add 15 years to his life.
 - I also said that I agree there was inference in the text.
 - Inference is a rule of Hermeneutics by the way
 - And hermeneutics is a set of rules or guidelines we use when interpreting any

ancient document of antiquity, especially that of Scripture.

- Meaning, it is inferred that God knew the king's heart, and as such, He added 15 more years to his life.
 - But my point was that the King never actually made that request!
 - I just wanted to clear that up in case of any confusion!
 - Anyways, back to prayer, specifically its purpose and intent.
- First, let me say that as I have continued doing an exhaustive study on this topic, I have discovered something.
 - I discovered that prayers are not just petitions or requests to God, but prayers show up in many different forms and or categories (if you will).
 - And certainly, petitioning God is one of those forms, but what's interesting is how prayers of petition are only the second most recorded type of prayer in the New Testament, as they appear roughly 40 times
 - The number 1 most recorded prayer in the New Testament is the Greek word "Proseuche" (Pro-sue-k), which translates into the word "prayer".
 - It emphasizes the act of prayer in the form of worship and communication with God, and it shows up roughly 127 times in the NT alone.
 - And it's different from simply a prayer of petition.
 - This word is derived from a compound of two Greek words, Pros & Euche (U-hay).
 - Pros is a preposition that can mean "towards" or "for", and almost everywhere this word is used in the Bible, it is used to convey a close, up-front, and intimate contact with someone.
 - Euche (U-hay) means a wish, desire, prayer, or vow. It was originally used to depict a person who made some kind of vow to God because of some need or desire in his or her life. This individual would vow to give something of great value to God in exchange for a favorable answer to prayer.
 - So, the word Pro-sue-k tells us something very important regarding prayer.
 - First, it tells us that prayer should bring us face-to-face and into close contact with God. Meaning, prayer is more than just some sort of mechanical act or formula to follow; it is a vehicle to bring us to a place whereby we may enjoy *a close & intimate relationship with God*.
 - The idea of *sacrifice* is also closely associated with this word for "prayer."
 - It portrays an individual who desires to see his prayer answered so desperately that he was willing to surrender everything he owned in exchange for answered prayer. Clearly, this describes an altar of sacrifice and consecration in prayer whereby a believer's life is yielded entirely to God.
- Now, depending on how deep you want to go, you can break prayer down into several categories, but I am going to limit our study to a baseline minimum of 7 types of prayers.
 - This morning, we are only going to get to 4 of them, and as we read these prayers, I want us to go through them slowly, meditating on what is truly being said here.
 - 1. Adoration

- The first of these seven types of prayer is adoration.
- Adoration is simply praising God for who He is.
- He is the Lord of all and as such, He is worthy of all our praise!
- Psalm 99:5 encourages us to exalt the Lord because He is holy. Recognizing the Lord's power, mercy, and love.
- Here are 3 examples of prayers of adoration:

Psalm 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty,

Psalm 104:2 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.

Psalm 104:3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind;

Psalm 104:4 He makes the winds His messengers, Flaming fire His ministers.

1 Kings 8:22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven.

1 Kings 8:23 He said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and *showing* lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart,

1 Kings 8:24 who have kept with Your servant, my father David, that which You have promised him; indeed, You have spoken with Your mouth and have fulfilled it with Your hand as it is this day.

Nehemiah 9:5b "Arise, bless the LORD your God forever and ever! O may Thy glorious name be blessed And exalted above all blessing and praise!

Nehemiah 9:6 "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.

- Next is a prayer of lamenting. 2. Lament
 - God wants us to bring our fears, doubts, and despair to Him.
 - As a matter of fact, in 1 Peter 5:7, we are told to cast all our anxieties on Him because He cares for us.
 - And we see countless examples of lamenting in the Bible, where faithful followers of God wrestled with doubts, difficulties, and even depression.
 - Lamenting through prayer is important. It's so important that we have an entire book of the Bible named after it, it's called Lamentations!

Psalm 88:1 O LORD, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You.

Psalm 88:2 Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry!

Psalm 88:3 For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol.

Psalm 88:4 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength,

Psalm 88:5 Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand.

Psalm 88:6 You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths.

Psalm 88:7 Your wrath has rested upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah.

Lamentations 5:1 Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; Look, and see our reproach!

Lamentations 5:2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, Our houses to aliens.

Lamentations 5:3 We have become orphans without a father, Our mothers are like widows.

Lamentations 5:4 We have to pay for our drinking water, Our wood comes to us at a price.

Lamentations 5:5 Our pursuers are at our necks; We are worn out, there is no rest for us.

Psalm 13:2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

Psalm 13:3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

- 3. Thanksgiving
 - Much like adoration, thanksgiving is praising God for what He has done.
 - God has done so much for each of us, the least of which was sending Christ to save us from our sins.
 - Remember when you pray, to think about God's movement in your life and recognize Him for that, by giving thanks.
 - And when we do this, it helps us build an attitude of gratitude in our daily lives.

Daniel 2:20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him.

Daniel 2:21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and

establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.

Daniel 2:22 “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.

Daniel 2:23 “To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king’s matter.”

Luke 1:46 And Mary said: “My soul exalts the Lord,

Luke 1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

Luke 1:48 “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

Luke 1:49 “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.

Luke 1:50 “AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

Luke 1:51 “He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.

Luke 1:52 “He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.

Luke 1:53 “HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed.

Luke 1:54 “He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,

Luke 1:55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.”

1 Samuel 2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said, “My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

1 Samuel 2:2 “There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

1 Samuel 2:3 “Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.

1 Samuel 2:4 “The bows of the mighty are shattered, But the feeble gird on strength.

1 Samuel 2:5 “Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, But those who were hungry cease to hunger. Even the barren gives birth to seven, But she who has many children languishes.

1 Samuel 2:6 “The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

1 Samuel 2:7 “The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.

1 Samuel 2:8 “He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash

heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them.

1 Samuel 2:9 “He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a man prevail.

1 Samuel 2:10 “Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed.”

- 4. Petition The fourth type of prayer is petition.
 - A petition is what many people imagine when they think about prayer.
 - It means asking God for something, whether for yourself or someone else, and God certainly wants us to do this!
 - Philippians 4:6 tells us to let our requests be known to God.
 - But prayer is not just about asking God to do things for us; it's just one of the many ways that He wants us to communicate with Him.

Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
Ephesians 3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
Ephesians 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.
Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
Ephesians 3:21 to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,
1 Timothy 2:2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
1 Timothy 2:3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- In Genesis 18 is one of my favorite scenes in scripture, primarily because it sounds exactly like something I would do. Try to negotiate with God as if maybe He forgot

something and all He needed was for someone like me to help Him remember!

Gen. 18:22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD.

Gen. 18:23 Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

Gen. 18:24 “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep *it* away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?”

Gen. 18:25 “Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are *treated* alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

Gen. 18:26 So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.”

Gen. 18:27 And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes.

Gen. 18:28 “Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there.”

Gen. 18:29 He spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose forty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do *it* on account of the forty.”

Gen. 18:30 Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do *it* if I find thirty there.”

Gen. 18:31 And he said, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the twenty.”

Gen. 18:32 Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten.”

Gen. 18:33 As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

- Now for application – In Mark 10:51, Jesus asked a blind man, “What do you want me to do for you?” God knows our every need and the desire of our hearts, yet He wants us to have communion with Him through conversation. He also wants us to ask Him for the things we need specifically, things of substance.
 - We are going to pause here this morning with our study prayer, and as we do, I want you to think about the examples of prayer we studied here today!
 - You should be able to see a pattern emerging
 - And that pattern is really 2-fold:
 - First, we must remember that God must be the center of our prayers.

- As He is the one in view, He is the star of the show!
- Which tells us that we must remove ourselves from the spotlight, and instead place the spotlight squarely where it belongs, which is, on Him!
- Last week, I left you with a question, a thought, if you will. I said, ‘Imagine what it would be like if prayer weren’t a thing.’
 - If God didn’t give us prayer, what would that be like?
 - Well, that leads me to an all-important statement: a statement regarding the patterns that we should see emerging within the prayers we just studied.
 - And so, what is my statement?
- My statement is: Yes, God should be at the center of our prayers, and yes, He should be our focus!
 - But secondly, remember that God established prayer so that we could commune with Him (communicate with Him).
 - He loves us and very much desires a relationship with us.
 - And prayer is what gives us the ability to have that relationship.
 - Prayer is also the means by which God accomplishes His ends!
 - So, I hope you can see that prayer is much more than a wish list!
- It’s the means by which we enter a relationship with God, all while we live out whatever remaining days we have left on this planet!
 - So, to say prayer is important would be like saying Oxygen is important.
 - Prayer isn’t just something we do so we can receive something; prayer transcends that concept.
 - It is our lifeline.
 - And God expects every believer to use it!
- Next week, we will pick back up with our final 3 types of prayer! And those prayers will be Deliverance, Contrition, & Guidance
 - Amen – Amen!

- This morning, we are going to return to our study on the topic of prayer, and when we were last together, I broke prayer down into 7 categories, or maybe better said, 7 different types of prayer.
 - Now, as I have studied this topic in a much more in-depth way, I have discovered (depending on how far you want to go) that you can break prayer down into more than 7 categories.
 - But for our study here this morning, I have kept it to 7.
 - And these 7 really encompass all the other types of prayer combined; they simply do so at a much higher level!
- Last week, I talked about how the word prayer is a noun, which means it's a person, place, or thing.
 - The "act" of praying is a verb (an action), and I bring that up because I think people automatically assume the word prayer is an action, but it's not.
 - The word prayer is a thing, and it's something we are commanded to do to put into action.
 - And so, I want to pause here for a moment and make a comment on that statement.
 - If prayer is an action, and we are commanded to do it, then that tells us it is not a suggestion.
 - It also means it's not optional!
 - But wonder why that's the case? Wonder why God commanded us to pray in the first place?
 - Because it's essential and it's imperative that we communicate with our Father.
 - As that is the primary way we stay grounded and connected to GOD!
 - Paul said this about prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1 Thess. 5:16 Rejoice always;

1 Thess. 5:17 pray without ceasing;

1 Thess. 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- And then Paul reiterates this same theme by stating the following:

Eph. 6:18 With all prayer and petition (pray at all times) in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, Eph. 6:19 and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, Eph. 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- And then again in Philipians we read:

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Phil. 4:5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- These are just a few places in scripture where we are commanded to pray.
 - There are many more; these are just a few examples.
 - And so, I think it's obvious that prayer is an essential and key element in our walk with God.
 - Having said that, before we blow right by Philippians 4, I want to look at it one more time, specifically one important aspect of these verses and it shows up in verse 5.

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Phil. 4:5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- And so, one of the primary keys (if not “the” key to these verses) shows up at the end of verse 5, where it says: Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.
 - That statement, “The Lord is near,” is comprised of 4 words that I would like to hone in on quickly, because inside those 4 words lies the power to change your life!
 - Especially your prayer life!
 - But to harness that power, you must slowly and methodically move through those words, taking your time to understand and rightly divide the deep spiritual truth.
- Why do I say the end of verse 5 is so important? Because it captures (what is) the essence, purpose, and intent of prayer.
 - This is for us to commune with God.
 - Dialogue with Him & Connect with Him.
 - This also includes, as a by-product, God giving us a way to participate in the work He is doing.
 - I heard a great example of this given one time.
- When my former mentor, Bible teacher, and friend, Pastor Stephen Armstrong, said the following:
 - Prayer is much like a father who decides to work on his car in the garage, and he extends an invitation to His child to help.

- If the Child shows no interest in helping, then he or she loses the chance to learn from their father.
 - Ultimately, it's the child's choice.
 - They can decide whether to join in.
- Regardless of the child's decision that if the parent asks their child to participate and the child isn't interested, the father is still going to press on and go ahead and work on the vehicle.
- Because ultimately, the work must get done.
 - What the child doesn't realize is how they are going to miss out on the opportunity to experience the joy of learning and working with their father.
 - On the other hand:
- If the child seizes the moment and instead engages their father in the work, he or she will be blessed.
- Many times, they won't realize it until they begin working hand in hand, side by side with their father.
 - Because it's through that process of repairing the vehicle that the relationship between the father and the child is strengthened, and knowledge is shared.
- And one more thing, when the parent asks their child to participate, the parent is prepared for the job to take longer than normal, because the child is involved, as the parent anticipates mistakes being made.
 - An example is when the parent asks for a wrench, and the child selects a screwdriver.
 - It makes no difference to the parent, because the parent loves their child and therefore tolerates the difficulty, because the relationship matters more than the task at hand!
 - If you think about it, it makes no logical sense for the parent to include the child in the process of fixing a car if the parent's only goal is fixing the car.
 - But it makes perfect sense if the parents' goal is to train the child for something far greater.
- Our Heavenly Father does the same thing with us when He asks us to commune with Him through prayer. For us to make our request known to Him, but we are to do so with one thing at the front and center of our minds.
 - And what is it?
 - It shows up in the Lord's Prayer:
 - "Our Father who art in Heaven / Hallowed be thy name, / Thy Kingdom Come / "THY WILL BE DONE" / On Earth as it is in Heaven!
 - "Thy will" be done, that is the key to an effective petition or request of God.
 - Our prayers must have as their goal FOR GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE!
- Now back to verse 5 in Philippians 4, we are given an in-depth insight into the purpose, intent, and benefit of prayer in our lives. When it said,

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Phil. 4:5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Let me say it one more time – “The Lord is near to you!”
 - As a matter of fact, He is beside you, all around you, encompassing you by and through His Spirit that resides inside you.
 - God is near you, and if you allow Him, He will wrap His arms around you and bring you comfort and peace in your most dire times in your life!
 - And this is a biblical foundational truth that you can depend on, even though you can’t see Him.
 - Moving on, in Matthew 6:6, we are given a little more insight into how we are to enter into prayer.

Matt. 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

- So, to help ensure we experience God in the way we should, Matthew says that we must go to our secret place.
 - This secret place spoken of by Jesus is a reference back to Isaiah 25:20 and 2 Kings 4:33.
 - Both scriptures allude to a secret place, being that of a “bedroom”.
 - Regardless of where it is, this secret place is simply a place of “quiet solitude”.
 - And as you enter that place, you must be careful to do so with the proper state of mind.
 - Having a desire to be alone with God with the intent of listening.
- In this moment, I want you to think of meditation, being calm and still.
 - And if you do, you will feel His presence!
 - One more time, Matt. 6:6 tells us:

Matt. 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

- Matt. 6:6 comes right before the Lord’s Prayer.

- Jesus is instructing His disciples on what not to do when it comes to prayer.
- Specifically, how they (should not) pray in public like the Pharisees do.
 - Which was for all to see.
 - And by telling them what not to do, He paints for us a picture of what we should do.
- Once again, listen to Matthew 6

Matt. 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

- So, Matt says to pray this way, especially in times of heightened anxiety. In times when you don’t know what to do.
 - And in those times, the writings of Paul in Philippians 4 re-enter my mind.

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

- And if we do this, verse 7 says,

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- The verse I just read to you came from my New American Standard Version (NASB) of the Bible, and it makes a definite statement.
 - The Greek says it this way - “And the peace of God surpassing all understanding will guard the hearts of you and the minds of you in Christ Jesus.”
 - By now, we should be garnering a better understanding of the purpose and intent of prayer.
 - And to be honest, the reason most Christians don’t understand it is because of our skewed view of this all-important tenet of God.
 - And when I say *skewed*, what I mean is how we have been taught to *view* the purpose and or intent of prayer.
- For most of us (not all), but for most of us, whether consciously or subconsciously, we have all been taught that prayer is about making requests.
 - Although that is partially true, requests or petitions are just one type of prayer.
 - And as I stated last week, prayer as a petition is the second most recorded type of prayer in the scriptures, appearing about 40 times in the NT!
 - And prayers of petition are very important as we are told by God to bring them

to Him,

- What is the most recorded type of prayer in the New Testament?
 - It is a prayer that shows up in the form of the generic Greek word “Proseuche” (Pro-sue-k) – which simply translates into the word “prayer” itself.
 - It emphasizes the act of prayer in the form of worship and communication with God, and it shows up roughly 127 times in the New Testament alone.
 - It’s different from a prayer of petition, as the word itself is derived from a compound of two Greek words, Pros & Euche (U-hay)
 - Pros is a preposition that can mean “towards” or “for”
 - And almost everywhere this word is used in the Bible, it is used to convey a close, up-front, and intimate contact with someone.
 - Euche (U-hay) – it means a wish, desire, prayer, or vow
 - It was originally used to depict a person who made some kind of vow to God because of some need or desire in his or her life.
 - This individual would vow to give something of great value to God in exchange for a favorable answer to prayer.
- So, once again, the word Pro-sue-k tells us something very important regarding prayer.
 - It tells us that prayer should bring us face-to-face and into close contact with God. Meaning, prayer is more than just some sort of mechanical act or formula to follow; it is a vehicle to bring us to a place whereby we may enjoy a close & intimate relationship with God.
 - The word (Pro-sue-k) is closely associated with *sacrifice*, and it portrays an individual who is desperate to see his or her prayers answered. So much so that he or she is willing to surrender everything they own. This describes an altar of sacrifice and consecration in prayer whereby a believer’s life is yielded entirely to God.
- Last week, we studied 4 of the 7 categories of prayer, and I want to do a recap of those 4 before we move into the final 3.
 - And we will begin with a prayer of adoration
 - 1. Adoration
 - Adoration is simply praising God for who He is.
 - And who is He?
 - He is the Lord of all and as such, He is worthy of all of our praise!
 - Psalm 99:5 encourages us to exalt the Lord because He is holy. Recognizing the Lord’s power, mercy, and love.
 - Next was the prayer of lamentation. 2. Lamenting
 - Lamenting is when we cast all our fears, doubts, and despair on our Father who is in Heaven, and God wants us to do this.
 - 1 Peter 5:7 tells us exactly that – cast all our anxieties on Him because He cares for us.

- And we see countless examples of lamenting in the Bible, where faithful followers of God wrestled with doubts, difficulties, and even depression.
 - Lamenting through prayer is important. It's so important that we have an entire book of the Bible named after it called Lamentations!
- Then we had 3. Thanksgiving
 - Much like adoration, thanksgiving is praising God for what He has done.
 - As obviously God has done so much for each of us, (least of which) was sending Christ to save us from our sins.
 - Remember when you pray, to think about God's movement in your life and recognize Him for that, by giving thanks.
 - And when we do this, it helps us build an attitude of gratitude in our daily life.
- And then finally – last week we ended with 4. Petition
 - A petition is what many people imagine when they think about prayer.
 - It means asking God for something, whether for yourself or someone else and God certainly wants us to do this!
 - Philippians 4:6 tells us to let our requests be known to God.
 - But prayer is not just about asking God to do things for us – it's just one of the many ways that He wants us to communicate with Him.
- Next up is the prayer of 5. Deliverance
 - Prayers of deliverance are similar to prayers of petition.
 - They are requests made to God to save us or others from challenging or dangerous situations.
 - But they also acknowledge that we can do nothing apart from God and that *He has* the power to save.
 - These prayers are all over the Bible, especially in King David's Psalms.
- Just listen to King David:

Psalm 3:1 O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.

Psalm 3:2 Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah.

Psalm 3:3 But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.

Psalm 3:4 I was crying to the LORD with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.

Psalm 3:5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.

Psalm 3:6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me round about.

Psalm 3:7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies

on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked.

Psalm 3:8 Salvation belongs to the LORD; Your blessing be upon Your people!
Selah.

Luke 22:39 And He came out and went, as was His habit, to the Mount of Olives;
and the disciples also followed Him.

Luke 22:40 Now when He arrived at the place, He said to them, “Pray that you do
not come into temptation.”

Luke 22:41 And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down
and began to pray,

Luke 22:42 saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My
will, but Yours be done.”

Jonah 2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,

Jonah 2:2 and he said,

“I called out of my distress to the LORD,

And He answered me.

I called for help from the depth of Sheol;

You heard my voice.

Jonah 2:3 “For You threw me into the deep,

Into the heart of the seas,

And the current flowed around me.

All Your breakers and waves passed over me.

Jonah 2:4 “So I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight.

Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’

Jonah 2:5 “Water encompassed me to the point of death.

The deep flowed around me,

Seaweed was wrapped around my head.

Jonah 2:6 “I descended to the base of the mountains.

The earth *with* its bars *was* around me forever,

But You have brought up my life from the pit, LORD my God.

Jonah 2:7 “While I was fainting away,

I remembered the LORD,

And my prayer came to You,

Into Your holy temple.

Jonah 2:8 “Those who are followers of worthless idols

Abandon their faithfulness,

Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You

With a voice of thanksgiving.

That which I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation is from the LORD.”

Jonah 2:10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the

dry land.

- 6. Contrition
 - Contrition is the feeling of remorse and the desire to repent of sin. You are probably familiar with prayers like this, which ask God for forgiveness for things we have done.
 - They are essential prayers that allow us to confess our wrongdoing and reconnect with our forgiving Heavenly Father.
 - Psalm 51 tells us that when we mess up, God desires “a broken and contrite heart” from us: A Contrite Sinner’s Prayer for Pardon.

**Psalm 51:1 Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithfulness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion, wipe out my wrongdoings.**

**Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my guilt
And cleanse me from my sin.**

**Psalm 51:3 For I know my wrongdoings,
And my sin is constantly before me.**

**Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.**

**Luke 18:9 Now He also told this parable to some people who trusted in
themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:**

**Luke 18:10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the
other a tax collector.**

**Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and *began* praying this in regard to himself: ‘God, I
thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, crooked, adulterers,
or even like this tax collector.**

Luke 18:12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’

**Luke 18:13 But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was
even unwilling to raise his eyes toward heaven, but was beating his chest,
saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’**

**Luke 18:14 “I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other;
for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself
will be exalted.”**

**Psalm 32:1 How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!**

**Psalm 32:2 How blessed is a person whose guilt the LORD does not
take into account,**

And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

Psalm 32:3 When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away

Through my groaning all day long.

Psalm 32:4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

My vitality failed *as with the dry heat of summer*. Selah

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You,

And I did not hide my guilt;

I said, “I will confess my wrongdoings to the LORD”;

And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

- And then, finally, last on the list is a prayer of 7. Guidance
 - Like prayers for deliverance, these conversations with God allow us to acknowledge God’s sovereignty.
 - As we express that He knows best and that we trust him to direct our lives when we ask Him for guidance.
 - Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us that we should not lean on our own understanding, but instead trust in the Lord with all our heart.

1 Kings 3:4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, because that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, “Ask what *you wish* Me to give you.”

1 Kings 3:6 Then Solomon said, “You have shown great faithfulness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great faithfulness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

1 Kings 3:7 And now, LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am *like* a little boy; I do not know how to go out or come in.

1 Kings 3:8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.

1 Kings 3:9 So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil. For who is capable of judging this great people of Yours?”

Psalm 25:4 Make me know Your ways, LORD;

Teach me Your paths.

Psalm 25:5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You are the God of my salvation;

For You I wait all the day.

Jeremiah 10:23 I know, LORD, that a person's way is not in himself,
Nor is it in a person who walks to direct his steps.

Jeremiah 10:24 Correct me, LORD, but with justice;
Not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing.

- The bottom line is this, guys, prayer is a tenet of God, and it is essential as we work to live out our Christian life.
 - Does prayer change things?
 - The Bible says it does.
 - That's if we have a proper understanding of its purpose and intent.
- Next week, I am going to bring all this together in a summary format, and we are going to touch on a couple of other things that I would like to talk to you concerning this topic as well!
 - Just remember: Prayer is our lifeline.
 - It's your connection to God.
 - It's not only important that you do it, it's even more important that you understand it, because if you don't understand it, then you can never fully harness the power that lies within it!
 - Amen – Amen!

- I hope everyone had a great week. And if you didn't, then I hope God showed you something through what you experienced or went through, whatever it was, and if you don't like that statement, then maybe after today's teaching, you might feel a little bit differently about what I just said.
 - Because when you do have a stressful day, or week, or month, or (some might say) a stressful year, my prayer is that you look at those moments through the correct lenses.
 - Which begins by knowing and understanding that God is doing something with your circumstances, and that something has but one purpose and or goal (if you are a believer).
 - And that is, "Your "Spiritual Development"
 - Your "Spiritual Development" for God's Glory!
- Throughout the years, when people experience different hardships of any kind, it could be death, stress, anxiety, and or fear, other people will often say, "Well, I'm sorry you are going through all that, but remember all of this has happened for a reason!"
 - We just don't know what it is.
 - But one day it will all make sense.
 - When someone would say that many times, I would often think to myself, Does that statement actually make someone feel better?
 - Because if I am being truthful, I really don't think it does
 - As a matter of fact, in many cases, I think it might make them feel worse!
- I mean, seriously, think about what I am saying. When someone is going through a really difficult time and we say – "Well, I'm sorry you are going through this, but God has a reason, or you know, everything happens for a reason", most of the time, I can feel that person saying to themselves, Oh yeah, what good reason would God possibly have for my husband dying or my wife dying or my child dying!
 - Especially if the person you are talking to is a quieter, less vocal person.
 - When hearing that statement, they may slightly smile and say, "Yeah, I know", but more times than not, they are still thinking to themselves, "Okay, whatever. I have no idea why you would say such a thing because I personally see no good reason or benefit when a person passes away."
 - The same applies to sickness, cancer, or whatever it may be.
 - Ultimately, that person's response is often the same (Maybe not externally, but certainly internally!)
 - Please tell me what purpose, meaning, or benefit has come from me or my loved one's sickness!
 - Which, logically speaking, makes sense.
 - What meaning is there in chemotherapy, in radiation, or whatever other invasive treatments the medical community has come up with?
- Unfortunately, that statement, "Everything happens for a reason", many times, is often the only thing most believers can think of to stay in the moment.

- The thing is that there are at least two problems with those words.
- First, everyone hearing it knows the person saying it can't think of anything else to say (whether they *really can* or can't)
 - Therefore, they know the person saying it doesn't really believe what they are saying, regardless of whether the person saying it truly does believe it or not.
- Second, as believers, we should know better because the scriptures clearly paint for us a picture of hardship, beatings, beheadings, scourging, fear, anxiety, and, of course, finally, the most important tragedy of all.
 - "Crucifixion"
 - Which our Savior endured!
- And by the way, crucifixion was the most horrific form of death ever invented up until that point in history.
- If I am being truly honest, it is probably still the most horrific form of death ever invented.
- And so, in each one of those situations, the purpose and intent of their hardship/tragedy is clear.
 - They served to ultimately increase or magnify "The Glory of God".
- Now, obviously, I am mainly speaking about believers, but that same statement could also apply to non-believers as well, as God uses men of any kind to accomplish His Will.
 - We can clearly see that displayed in Old Testament, where the Lord used an unbelieving King or Pharaoh to punish His own people.
 - Which served to (once again), "To bring honor and Glory to God!"
- But hold on, just a minute, preacher. Do you mean to tell me that my mother's death brought God Glory, or my wife? Or my husband's death brought God Glory? Or my child's sickness brought God Glory?
 - Guys, as disturbing as that may seem, let me be clear: *"I am not making this news; I am simply reporting it."*
 - And that news comes squarely from the pages of God's Holy Manuscript.
 - It is absolutely true.
 - Many times, God will bring glory to Himself through tragedy.
 - Another way to say it is that God will often push men back towards Himself through the pain.
 - Which means, God develops us through grief. Paul said it this way:

2 Cor. 4:13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, **2 Cor. 4:14** knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. **2 Cor. 4:15** For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to

more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

2 Cor. 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

2 Cor. 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which (are seen) are temporal, but the things which (are not seen) are eternal.

- The concept that Paul is putting forth here in 2 Corinthians 4 is a simple one to understand. Yet it is a very hard one to comprehend!
 - Now, let me explain it in a way that might help you to understand better.
 - Today is July 20th, 2025, and I am 52 years old.
 - According to the CDC, the average male life expectancy is 77.5 years and the average female is 81.
 - So, what that means is that if the Lord sees fit for me to tarry until age 77.5, I have (roughly) 25.5 years left on this planet.
 - That's if I don't get sick or die before then
 - And so, if I know this to be true, then guess what?
 - My life should reflect that very fact.
 - If it does, then it will manifest itself in the way I view the world around me, which is temporary at best.
 - But that takes me back to my previous statement, where I said that 2 Cor. 4:16-18 are a simple set of verses to understand, but hard to comprehend.
 - Listen to it one more time,

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

2 Cor. 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

2 Cor. 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which (are seen) are temporal, but the things which (are not) seen are eternal.

- So, Paul calls the hardships we experience in life a “Light Affliction”
 - Now you might say, light affliction! Are you kidding me!
 - You think having a stroke is a light affliction.
 - Cancer is a light affliction.

- Death and depression are light afflictions.
- If that's the case, then I would hate to see a hard affliction!
 - And to be honest, I agree, at least from the world's point of view (But not from a believer's point of view).
- Having said that, that is the way most Christians act!
- Seriously, they do.
- Believers often lose their minds when tragedy strikes, especially death!
 - And let me give you an example of what I mean:
 - I often hear Christians say, why did this happen or that happen?
 - More importantly, they say, why did it happen to me!
 - I mean, seriously, I love God. I go to church. I tithe. Why me, Lord?
 - The question isn't, Why me, Lord? It's why not me!
- Believers are not immune to trial and tribulation.
 - As a matter of fact, after learning what we've learned today, you can see why it's not only certain that believers will experience hardships of many kinds, but it's also imperative for our Spiritual Growth!
 - Now, the crux of 2 Cor. 4:13-18 can be summed up when you garner a complete understanding of verse 17.

2 Cor. 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

- Once again,

2 Cor. 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

- The Greek says it this way, *“The for momentary lightness – affliction of us, far surpassing to excessiveness an eternal weight of glory is producing for us”*
 - Translation – your affliction has purpose and meaning, and that purpose and meaning finds its focus squarely on Heaven!
 - In other words, all the pain and suffering that believers experience here on earth pales in comparison to the glory that will be revealed when we cross over from this life to the next!
 - One more time, because I don't want to blow right by this.
 - All the pain, all the suffering, the sickness, the death pales in comparison to the glory that awaits us in Heaven.
 - Another way to say it is, however bad it may get here on earth, the greatest of

Heaven will far outweigh it!

- Maybe better said, more pain here equals more Glory there!
- Now, today is the crescendo, ending our series on prayer. Therefore, you might be thinking, why am I hammering down on the topic of suffering?
 - What's that got to do with our study of prayer?
 - It has a lot to do with it, because obviously, suffering is what produces more prayers (in most people's lives) than anything else.
 - Suffering is also what produces the most confusion surrounding the topic of prayer
 - And why?
 - Primarily because we don't understand (from a scriptural standpoint) how the Bible views suffering.
 - Suffering is something God uses as an instrument.
 - Just like a carpenter uses a hammer.
 - Or a surgeon uses a scalpel.
 - Or a mechanic uses a wrench.
 - And not to mention, suffering is the result of a fallen world.
 - And we know all of this to be the case because of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16:

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

- Our outer man is represented by our flesh, and Paul says it's decaying, breaking down, slowly wasting away, and disintegrating.
 - Whereas our inner man, our spiritual man, is being renewed day by day.
 - As the outer man is decaying and breaking down, God is using suffering or the process of suffering to draw us closer to Him.
 - And that process is what causes our Spirit to be renewed.
 - It's "cause-and-effect" folks.
 - No suffering = no renewing & no eternal weight of Glory.
- So, when tragedy strikes and suffering ensues (and it will), and we enter into prayer, asking God, please prevent whatever it is from happening to us, or even asking Him to prevent it or remove it from someone else, and He doesn't do it, just know that it's okay because that suffering is doing something.
 - "It is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison"
 - Which means, if God doesn't prevent it or remove it, then He's chosen not to do so because the suffering you are going through has not finished its work in you, and the same applies for the person you might be praying for!

- And of course, I could not make that statement without referring to James 1:2-4, where James wrote the following:

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

James 1:4 And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- You want to talk about some powerful insight into the topic of suffering.
 - Which obviously parleys into prayer.
 - James gives it to us straight.
 - And so, for that reason, among others, we should never question God, and we certainly shouldn't become angry with Him when He doesn't answer our prayers the way we want Him to
 - Instead of being confused when someone is experiencing various trials of many kinds, and saying to that person, "Well, you know, everything happens for a reason!"
- From now on, when someone or someone they love is going through a really hard time, you know "The why" behind the statement, "Everything happens for a reason!"
 - The reason is that God is doing something with that person!
 - I'll digress on this topic.
 - I'm just bringing it up because of all the frustration, disheartenment, and confusion surrounding the topic.
 - All that confusion finds much of its origin in and through our prayer life.
- What I mean is, when we or our loved ones suffer, and we pray and ask God to remove that suffering, and He doesn't do it, we automatically become confused and bewildered, wondering why?
 - And so, even though everyone knows suffering is part of life, what they don't seem to know is why.
 - I've told you why. It's because we live in a fallen world
 - And God uses this fallen world to produce an eternal weight of Glory in us.
 - That's it. That's why!
 - And He does it the way He does it because He knows us better than we know ourselves, and He knows what it takes to produce the kind of result He desires from us, as we are His children.
 - And let me say this...Many times, people say, Why didn't God use some other instrument for our development?
 - The answer is – If there was another way, I assure you, He would do it!
 - My statement is also solidified in Jesus' own prayer when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, leading up to His own crucifixion.

Matt. 26:36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

Matt. 26:37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.

Matt. 26:38 Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.”

Matt. 26:39 And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”

- Many people throughout the ages have asked the question, why did Jesus pray such a prayer if He already knew what was going to happen and why it was happening?
 - It’s because, while He lived here on this earth, He was fully man and fully God.
 - Which meant that just like you and I He experienced and felt what we feel as humans.
 - Meaning, He experienced pain, suffering, anxiety, stress, and grief
 - And so, even though He knew what He had to do, even though He knew God ordained what was going to happen to Him, He had a momentary lapse of weakness in and through His humanity.
 - Which is what led Him to say, “My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me
 - Yet not as I will, but as You will.”
 - And by the way, just as I said that there was no other way, if there was, He would have chosen it!
 - And so, everyone must hear me loud and clear.
 - We are all going to pass away from something.
 - Which means that we must place this life and the next in their rightful position.
 - This life is temporary.
 - And the next one is permanent!
- Moving on, as we finish our teaching this morning, I would like to summarize what we’ve learned about prayer over the past several weeks.
 - Specifically, as it relates to the purpose and categories of prayer!
- First, we learned about a prayer of 1. Adoration
 - Adoration is simply praising God for who He is.
 - He is the Lord of all and as such, He is worthy of all our praise!
 - Psalm 99:5 encourages us to exalt the Lord because He is holy. Recognizing the Lord’s power, mercy, and love.
 - So, when we pray, let’s begin with praising God for who He is!

- Next on the list 2. Lamenting
 - God wants us to bring our fears, doubts, and despair and place them squarely on His shoulders,
 - As a matter of fact, in 1 Peter 5:7 we are told to cast all our anxieties on Him because He cares for us.
 - And we see countless examples of lamenting in the Bible, where faithful followers of God wrestled with doubts, difficulties, and even depression.
 - Lamenting through prayer is important, and as I told you over the past few weeks, it's so important that we have an entire book of the Bible named after it. it's called Lamentations!
- Next up is 3. Thanksgiving
 - Thanksgiving is the next type of prayer.
 - And much like adoration, thanksgiving is praising God for what He has done.
 - God has done so much for each of us, not the least of which was sending Christ to save us from our sins.
 - Remember when you pray, to think about God's movement in your life and recognize Him for that, by giving thanks.
 - And just an Fyi, when we do this, it helps us build an attitude of gratitude in our daily life.
- 4. Petition
 - A petition is what many people imagine when they think about prayer.
 - It means asking God for something, whether for yourself or someone else, and God certainly wants us to do this!
 - As a matter of fact, Philippians 4:6 tells us to let our requests be known to God.
 - But prayer is not just about asking God to do things for us – it's just one of many ways that He wants us to communicate with Him.
- Next is the prayer of 5. Deliverance
 - Prayers of deliverance are like prayers of petition.
 - As they are requests made to God to save us or others from challenging or dangerous situations.
 - They also acknowledge that we can do nothing apart from God and that *He has* the power to save.
 - These prayers are all over the Bible, especially in King David's Psalms.
- 6. Contrition
 - Contrition is the feeling of remorse and the desire to repent of sin. You are probably familiar with prayers like this, when we ask God for forgiveness for things we have done.
 - They are essential prayers that allow us to confess our wrongdoing and reconnect with our forgiving Heavenly Father.

- Psalm 51 tells us that when we mess up, God desires “a broken and contrite heart” from us. How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven.
- And then last on the list is a prayer of 7. Guidance
 - Like prayers for deliverance, these conversations with God allow us to acknowledge God’s sovereignty.
 - As we express and understand that He knows best and that we trust him to direct our lives when we ask Him for guidance.
 - Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us that we should not lean on our own understanding but instead trust in the Lord with all our heart.
- For a better understanding and insight into each type of prayer, please refer to the previous two weeks’ teachings.
 - As I go in depth into those teachings, giving you scriptural examples which back up each type of prayer I just mentioned.
 - And so there you have it, a first run attempt over the past 6 weeks, giving you better insight and understanding surrounding the topic of prayer
 - And so today, as we close and finish our study of prayer, I want to do something that I think would be fitting.
 - I want to give anyone who may desire the opportunity to either:
 - A – Come down front and allow me to pray with you
 - It could be for some need, or maybe concerning matters of salvation, or anything else you would like me to pray for you about.
 - Or B – You can simply come down front and pray on your own
 - Either one is fine. I think it would be kind of silly to do a series on prayer but not finish with a time of prayer.
 - You can also sit right where you are and pray in silence to yourself.