

- 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!