

- 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 Philippians 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!