

Sermon #13

Prayer

[The preacher kneels or stands at the front and says the "Disciple" lines, and another speaker is saying the "Jesus" lines. The preacher should give the congregation the sense that he is humbly conversing with and learning from Jesus.]

Disciple: Lord, teach me to pray. Where should I pray?

Jesus: "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." Matthew 6:5-15

Disciple: What about praying in the church and other public places?

Jesus: "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men."

Disciple: What is so bad about that?

Jesus: "I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full."

Disciple: Why should I pray in my room in secret?

Jesus: "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Disciple: Is there anything I shouldn't do when praying?

Jesus: "When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them."

Disciple: Why?

Jesus: "[Because] your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

Disciple: Lord, then how should I pray?

Jesus: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."

Disciple: But what if I haven't "forgiven my debtors"?

Jesus: "If you do not forgive men their sins,
your Father will not forgive your sins."

Disciple: So if I have forgiven my debtors. . . ?

Jesus: "If you forgive men when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Disciple: But, Lord, public prayer in church meetings is a
long-standing tradition, not just of this church,
but of nearly every other church!

Jesus: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of
God in order to observe your own traditions. . . thus you
nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have
handed down. And you do many things like that."

Disciple: Are you saying that we will be judged for this tradition?

Jesus: "As for the person who hears my words but does not
keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to
judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the
one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that
very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last
day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the
Father who sent me commanded me what to say and
how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal

life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:47-50

Disciple: Lord, this is a hard teaching. If I take You at Your word, and follow Your teaching on prayer rather than church traditions, I will be ostracized, criticized and accused of being irreligious!

Jesus: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46
"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Luke 9:23-26

Disciple: Not my will, but Thine be done, Lord.
Jesus: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:11

[Preacher speaks the rest of the sermon to the congregation].

Now that we know how Jesus said to pray,
let's find out what He has to say about the answer to prayer.

The Answer to Prayer

God is good and kind.
He loves us all to the extreme, and desires that each of us come to Him for eternal life.

God hears our prayers and is always responding to them.

He desires to fulfill each one of us in Him.

God is majestic and pure, holy and good.

His motives are true and good.

He loves to do us good, if we will only let Him.

When you pray, God answers, always.

So the question is, are you listening to Him for the answer?

Or, do you have your own idea of how it should be answered,
so you block out any possibility other than your own?

Prayer is asking seeking, knocking;

God's Holy Spirit is the answer.

When Jesus was visibly on earth, people could communicate with God
face-to-face, because Jesus was the Messiah, the perfect image and
likeness of God, the Son of God.

Jesus told His disciples that they would still be able to communicate
with Him and the Father even after He left to return to the Father.

Listen to what He said:

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My
name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance
all things that I said to you.”

John 14:25-26

²⁶“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the
Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will
testify of Me.”

John 15:26

⁷“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the
Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of
righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe
in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see
Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is

judged. ¹²I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.”

John 16:7-15

God answers our prayers, guides us, teaches us and helps us through His Spirit within us.

The Spirit of Truth is your personal connection to God and Christ.

He is the Counselor which Jesus said He would send to us, to guide us into all truth.

The Holy Spirit speaks God’s word to you.

He reminds you of everything that Jesus taught.

Listen to Him for the answer to all your prayers.

Prayer is incomplete unless you receive the answer;
the answer is what fulfills the prayer.

One-sided prayer is pointless.

Why pray if you won’t receive?

Considering that the Holy Spirit has the answer to your prayer,
it is easier to understand why Jesus instructed us not to pray aloud
in the churches and other public places.

The Spirit of God is a still, small voice that speaks silently to each
person from within, according to each person’s specific prayers
and needs.

Most church and public prayers are one-way generic petitions or
statements that allow no room for people to receive their answers
through the Voice of truth and love within them.

Since Jesus directly instructed His followers not to pray in the churches
and other public places, I will no longer be praying aloud in church
meetings, services or other public places.

And I urge each of you to go home, into your room, close the door
and pray to the Father.

If you love God and want to obey Him,
He will speak to you through the Spirit of Truth.

If you don't love God or want to obey Him,
you will probably hear nothing but your own thoughts.
This doesn't mean that God isn't answering;
it means that you are shutting out and rejecting His Voice.

And to those of you who think that there should be corporate prayer
in the schools:

Where did you get that idea?

It goes directly against what Jesus taught.

Do you arrogantly think that your idea and your way is
better than His?

If you choose not to pray as Jesus taught,
and if you choose not to receive answers through the
Holy Spirit of truth,
how will you know God and experience Him?

“I AM the Lord. I do good to all, regardless.

You are free to accept or reject My goodness.

Pray to Me and ask for what you need and desire.

Then listen for My answer. I will speak it clearly .

Do not pray aloud in your churches and other public places.

I AM within you; listen to Me.

I AM truth and love.

Whatever you hear outside of truth and love is your own vain thoughts.

Jesus, My Son, came to show you the way of truth and love.

My answers are always in line with His words and actions.

Have faith in Me. Listen to Me.

I always answer your prayer.

But will you be listening to Me when I do?”