

Lesson # 1 -- The Importance and Value of Prayer.

Introduction

- A. Prayer, in the Bible, is described as one of those distinguishing characteristics of what it means to be a Christian. When Saul, who was to become the Apostle Paul, was converted, the Lord simply said of him, ". . . Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11)
- B. No matter how one may approach this subject, there is surely no other activity, if related to the Scripture, that will produce more blessing, be more important in the believer's daily life, and of greater value, than the activity of prayer.
- C. The goal in this lesson is to describe the importance and value of prayer in a different way than that usually pursued. It may be helpful to recognize the relationships established by prayer or those things that accompany prayer.

I. In Prayer the Believer is Related to God.

LORD, I cry unto thee, make haste unto me, give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto Thee. Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Psalm 141:1,2

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

And when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. Matthew 6:5-8

Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you James 4:8

- A. In prayer the believer is confronted with the reality and the greatness of God.
- B. Prayer should cause us to reflect on what He has done for us.
- C. In prayer we must remember and anticipate what He wants to be to us, do for us and accomplish through us.
- D. Prayer is a personal meeting with God.

II. In Prayer the Believer is Related to the Will of God.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. I John 5:14

Ephraim, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Colossians 4:12

A. It is in prayer that the fullness of the will of God becomes possible for the believer.

B. Through prayer we can ask for and claim the will of God for ourselves and for others.

1. It is the will of God that we be delivered from the world, Galatians 1:4

2. It is the will of God that we be sanctified. I Thess. 4:3.

3. It is the will of God that we rejoice, pray, and give thanks. I Thess. 5:16-18.

4. It is the will of God that we have a good testimony, I Peter 2:15.

C. Many believers live a stunted, limited Christian life simply because they do not pray.

III. In Prayer the Believer is Related to the Mercy and Grace of God.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

A. God wants us to receive from Him when we pray.

B. In true prayer there is mercy for all the areas of our failure and grace for all those areas where we need divine enablement.

C. It was through prayer that Paul learned how God's grace was sufficient for him, (II Cor. 12:7-10).

IV. In Prayer the Believer is Related to the Reality of Faith.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord
James 1:5-7

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

James 5:15

- A. True Biblical faith, like love, is most clearly seen as an action.
- B. The action of faith becomes purified when the believer turns to God in prayer.
- C. Prayer is like a catalyst which enables the believer to mix the Word of God with faith (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:1-3) and enter into God's rest (Hebrews 4:1-13).

V. In Prayer the Believer is Related to God's Deliverance.

If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. II Chronicles 7:14

And call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. Psalm 50:15

And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Luke 18:1

Peter therefore was kept in prison but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. Acts 12:5

- A. It is through prayer that God's deliverance becomes a reality.
- B. God wants us to trust Him, this trust is best expressed in believing prayer.
- C. The solution to many of our problems is made possible only through humble, earnest prayer whereby we surrender ourselves to God and to the fulfillment of His will.

Conclusion: It is amazing and comforting to notice how many things are said to accompany prayer. The following is only a sample.

- A. Prayer is associated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18.
- B. Prayer is associated with fruitbearing, John 15:16.
- C. Prayer is associated with joy, John 16:23,24.
- D. Prayer is associated with pleasing God, Proverbs 15:8; Revelation 5:8; 8:3,4.
- E. Prayer is associated with peace, Philippians 4:6,7.
- F. Prayer is associated with thanksgiving, Philippians, 4:6,7.
- G. Prayer is associated with victory in temptation, Matthew 26:41.
- H. Prayer is associated with victory in persecution, Matthew 5:44.
- I. Prayer is associated with bringing help to others, Ephesians 6:18.
- J. Prayer is associated with confidence in God, I John 5:14,15.
- K. Prayer is associated with receiving good things from God, Matthew 7:7-11.

Comment: What person would choose to live without these important and valuable relationships and blessings? When we fail to pray - we are making that choice! The Scripture reminds us that we have not because we ask not, James 4:2.