

## **Gleanings from the Gospels**

### **Title – Standing in the Gap**

#### **Prayer**

#### **Purpose/Review**

**We have spent these past several months we have been reviewing Christian book knowledge....Christianity 101**

**Book knowledge can only take us so far...**

One can go to college and receive a degree in nursing  
Only to find that book knowledge only gets you so far

One can go to college and get a business degree  
Only to find out that book knowledge only gets you so far

**So it is with our Christian faith**

We can read the bible frontwards and backwards  
We can attend every bible study class offered

It is one thing to have bible knowledge  
It is an entirely different thing to put that knowledge into action

**This morning we will begin a new series...**

**Gleanings from the Gospels**

I've borrowed this title from a great theologian... A.W. Pink

What we will look at are the lessons offered by Jesus  
They went through what we would call today as... On the job training

For you and for me we have the luxury of hindsight  
We can see how those lesson would be used in real life

**What I want us to begin with is what's known as... Intercessory Prayer**

Most of us know exactly what that is  
Someone needs prayer... and we pray for them

**Someone is going to take a test and we lift them up in prayer**

Yes that is intercessory prayer...

**But I believe Jesus wants us to go deeper...**

**I believe Jesus wants us to Stand in the Gap**

**SERMON TITLE – Standing in the Gap**

**Our reading for this morning is found in the Book of Ezekiel**

## Reading

### **Ezekiel 22**

30 I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

## Doctrinal

**Now... hopefully you're asking yourself**

**How is a reading in Ezekiel associated with the Gospels...?**

### **NOTE-**

In order to find the answer to that question and how it relates to Jesus  
We must discover why God spoke these words through His prophet

**Let's discover some background that led up to God's statement...**

## **NOTE-**

Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon around 600 bc  
When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem  
And enslaved about 10,000 Jews

**It was while he was in captivity that he wrote the book that we now have in the bible**

His writings explain why the Jewish nation was taken into captivity...

Why these terrible events had taken place

**TURN IN YOUR BIBLES TO Ezekiel 22:6-8**

## **Ezekiel 22**

6 Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood. 7 They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you. 8 You have despised My holy things and profaned My sabbaths.

## **NOTE-**

So we can see that much of the nation had turned from serving God  
The politicians... the priests... the leaders... all had turned from God

And in doing so... some... not all... but some of the people followed their lead  
And they too turned from serving God

And since they had turned from God  
And since they were abusing their power

Through Ezekiel God gave them a warning

**Drop down to Ezekiel 22:20-21**

## **Ezekiel 22**

20 As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath and I will lay you there and melt you. 21 I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it.

### **Sounds pretty harsh...**

Through Ezekiel God had given them a warning  
Yet we know now that they ignored that warning

### **Notice what God then says through Ezekiel...**

And this is key for our lesson this morning...

## **Ezekiel 22**

30 I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

I searched for a man... just one man...  
Who would build up the wall by standing in the gap...

Just one man who would speak for the Jewish people  
But He did no one

This is not the first time for this type of event

We see this theme over and over in the bible

**TURN IN YOUR BIBLES TO Genesis 18:17-23**

## Genesis 22

17 The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and [r]mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? 19 For I have [s]chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” 20 And the Lord said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. 21 I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”

22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord. 23 Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

**Do you see what Abraham did.... He stood in the gap for Sodom...**

We would call this... Intercessory Prayer

We see this theme again with Moses

**TURN IN YOUR BIBLES TO Exodus 32:30-32**

Moses was an unparalleled intercessor  
He prayed even for those who opposed him

## Exodus 32

30 On the next day Moses said to the people, “You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the Lord, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” 31 Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, “Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. 32 But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!”

### **NOTE-**

Moses not only interceded for those who had offended God  
But offered himself as a living sacrifice to save them

**Intercede** - To act between parties with a view to reconcile differences; to make intercession; to beg or plead in behalf of another; to mediate

*Within the Gospels we see Jesus offer prayers of intercession...*

On the night that He would be arrested Jesus selflessly prayed for the disciples...

**Luke 22**

31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Some of the last words we have from Jesus... is a prayer of intercession...

**Luke 23**

34 But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Intercession is one of the most unselfish things that Christians do. No one knows, and no recognition is being given. Of all Christian disciplines it is, perhaps the most Christlike...**Don Jacobsen**

**QUIZ-**

How many of us pray every day...?

How many of us find something to complain about every day...?

Which do you do more...?

There is a simple formula to let your prayers increase and you complaining decrease...

Whenever your thoughts run to a complaint... offer up a prayer of intercession...

Has someone offended you.... Pray for them

Has a politician's action caused your blood to boil... Pray for them

**Why is this important...?**

**Because of all the Christian disciplines... intercessory prayer is the most Christlike**

**NOTE-**

It was the prayers of Abraham that saved Lot...

It was the prayers of Moses that saved the Jewish Nation...

It was the prayers of Jesus that saved you...

**Because of all the Christian disciplines... intercessory prayer is the most Christlike**

**Application**

How do we do it...?

The best place to look is to the Master Himself...

The greatest of all intercessory prayers is from Jesus Himself... John 17

**Developing an Intercessory Prayer Life**

- 1) Commitment
- 2) Deliverance
- 3) Salvation

## Developing an Intercessory Prayer Life

### 1) Commitment

#### **NOTE-**

John 17 is an intercessory prayer for Christians  
It is something that we should do often

**As I mentioned earlier... I would like us to do this morning is to go deeper**

We have a mission... Go into all the world and make disciples

And if we want to be faithful to this mission... we must include prayer

Selfless... Focused... Intercessory prayer....

#### **BACKGROUND-**

John chapter 17 takes place on the night Jesus would be arrested  
He knew what awaited Him... He knew the suffering that He would experience

Yet He selflessly prayed for the disciples... and by default He prayed for us...

#### **John 17**

9 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours.

#### **NOTE-**

Clearly Jesus is praying for the disciples  
And Jesus makes the distinction

That He is interceding for them and not the world  
And by default, He is interceding for us

**NOTE-**

Notice how Jesus begins... I ask on their behalf  
Clearly this is the founding principle of an Intercessory Prayer

Then Jesus asks us to go deeper...

**Luke 6**

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

And then... deeper still

**Luke 10**

2 And He was saying to them, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

**NOTE-**

Who is the harvest... the world  
The harvest is great... but the workers are few...

**NOTE-**

There is a shortage of those who are willing  
There is a shortage of those who are prepared  
There is a shortage of those who are ready to stand in the gap

**SETUP-**

We all see the challenges around us  
The simplest thing in the world to do is to stand on the sidelines and complain

We are called to stand in the gap  
We are called to offer up prayers  
So that those who are still in darkness... see the light of Christ

## Developing an Intercessory Prayer Life

1) Commitment

2) Deliverance

### John 17

15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one....

20 I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word

### NOTE-

Again... clearly Jesus is praying for the disciples and for us

But He is also praying for anyone who would come to believe in His Name

Through their words... their writings... the New Testament

And the desire is that the evil one would be kept from them

### 1 John 5

19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

We do not have to look for very long or for very hard to see evil

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing... **Edmund Burke**

Evil will triumph when there is no one to stand in the gap...

## Developing an Intercessory Prayer Life

1) Commitment

2) Deliverance

3) Salvation

## **John 17**

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory

### **NOTE-**

Jesus is expressing His desire to be with us for eternity  
For us to finally see His glory

### **NOTE-**

Should we not want the world to know Jesus  
For the world to understand the love of God

**Isn't that's God's desire for the world...**

## **1 Timothy 2**

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

**God desires for all men and women to be saved...**

Paul encourages us to... "imitate Christ"  
Should we not want all to be saved

**Should we not be willing to stand in the gap for Christ if He so desires...?**

## **Isaiah 6**

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?  
Then I said, Here am I. Send me!

**CLOSE**