

Gleanings from the Gospels

Title – Ask in My Name

Prayer

Purpose/Review

As we continue in drawing nuggets of truth out of the Gospels...

Let us take a short trip back to our last series... Christianity 101

Of the many topics that we discussed... one was prayer

The most basic definition of prayer is “talking to God.” Prayer is not meditation or passive reflection; it is direct address to God. It is the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul...GotQuestions.org

Prayer is simply talking with God...

And we can break this down into two basic categories...

Corporate Prayer and Personal Prayer...

1) Corporate prayer... or Congregational Prayer...

Is what we do at the beginning of our church service and at the closing of our service...

It is also when we lay hands on someone and pray over them...

There is a distinct beginning... and a distinct ending...

Good and Gracious Father.... In Jesus Name we pray... Amen

2) Personal Prayer on the other hand is much different...

Personal Prayer is also simply talking with God....

Yet it should not necessarily have a distinct beginning or ending

Except ... Good Morning Lord... Thank-you for another day

And as we lay our head on the pillow...

And close with gratitude... thanksgiving... and perhaps asking for forgiveness

The idea is to have a continued conversation throughout the day with the Lord...

NOTE-

It is not a structured time or moment

It is not a time set aside for meditation...

It is a continued conversation... all day... with the Lord

1 Thessalonians 5

17 pray without ceasing

Pray without ceasing... How does that ever work

How do we pray... and never stop praying

Is that even humanly possible

EXAMPLE-

Think about when you wake up at home and see your mom or dad for the first time

Good morning mom.... Good morning dad.... Good morning precious

Then as the morning progresses you simply speak to one another

Maybe it's asking for breakfast... maybe it's telling one to clean their rooms

You don't say good morning every time that you're going to say something new

EXAMPLE-

There was a movie from 2000 called Miss Congeniality

Sandra Bullock played an F.B.I. agent who went undercover
Posing as a contestant in a beauty pageant

In one of the scenes Miss Hawaii was getting into an argument with another
contestant.

In order to neutralized the argument Bullock poses a question to Miss Hawaii

In Hawaii don't they use aloha for hello and goodbye?

Miss Hawaii... Yeah, so?

So if you're on the phone with somebody and they won't stop talking

And you say, ok aloha

Don't they just start over again?

The point is that we have conversations that continue throughout the day...

Our conversation might be with family members

Maybe it's... I don't feel so good after eating all of those pancakes....

Or... have you studied for your test...

Then there are those times that you might ask for something...

Do you think that I can buy some new cloths for my graduation ceremony...

You know we really need to think about trading our car in and getting a new one...

Prayer should be just as simple when talking with God....

Lord... I am so troubled by the way my teachers are treating me....

Lord... I miss my daughter who is away at college....

Lord... would you please help me get.... "Fill in the Blank"

It is this last prayer that I want us to explore this morning...

How do we approach God in prayer when we are asking for something...

Reading

Matthew 21

22 And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

Doctrinal

NOTE-

This verse and others like it have been the source of much confusion
And has been the foundation for false gospels

Let us read this verse in context before unpacking our lesson...

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO Matthew 21:18-22

This story takes place the first day after Jesus enters Jerusalem for the final time

What I want to focus on are the last 2 verses

Matthew 21

18 Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. 19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?" 21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. 22 And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

If you have faith and do not doubt...

If you have faith... ask in prayer...

And believing... you will receive it...

Is Jesus asking us to have faith in our faith...?

The other way that this verse is twisted has given rise to false gospel...

Name it or Claim It Gospel.... Or the Prosperity Gospel

Proponents argue that God has promised these blessings
And that individuals must "claim" them

Believers can secure health, wealth, and success by declaring their desires with
unwavering faith

Mainstream Christian Scholars and I'm also in this camp believe this is unbiblical

These teachings distort the Scriptures
By treating God as a genie to be manipulated

All the while ignoring His sovereignty and His will

Then what are these verses teaching us...

Matthew 21

21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

Let's stop right there....

If I have faith... and believe in my faith... I can move mountains...?

Is Jesus telling us that we can throw mountains into the sea?

Why did he use such an expression...?

NOTE-

At the time of Jesus there was an idiom... a common expression that was used

It was applied to great teachers who possessed profound wisdom
And seemed to be able to do the impossible by solving complex problems

That idiom was “Rooter up of Mountains” or “Uprooter of Mountains”
It did not mean to physically move mountains

It described a teachers ability to overcome objections with sound judgement

If you have faith... faith in God... and do not doubt... it will happen

Jesus isn't teaching us to have faith in our faith

He is teaching us about the transformative power of faith

That any difficulty can be overcome by faith
When our faith is aligned with God's will

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO Philippians 4:11-14

Philippians 4

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

Paul had confidence in his relationship with God

He had confidence in his prayers

Application

Confidence in Prayer

1. According to His Will
2. With Humility
3. For the purpose of Glorifying God

Confidence in Prayer

1. According to His Will

John's gospel and his writings give us much insight into prayer...

1 John 5

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

NOTE-

According to God's will... we can approach Him with any request
And we know that He hears us

If we know that God hears me... then why are my prayers going unanswered...?

NOTE-

We can come away with 3 answers
No... Yes... Or not yet

While true... what if we changed our question...?

What about... Are my prayers according to God's will

This is what James teaches us...

James 4

2c... You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

NOTE-

What are my motives for this request
Which came first... the desire... or the prayer

STORY-

There was a church that was given a substantial amount of money
They were the benefactors of someone's will

The governing body of the church got together to figure out how to use this money
After much discussion they all agreed to build a new educational building

As the meeting closed... they all agreed to pray for success in their plans

Which came first... the desire or prayer

Our desire should be to please God first

1 John 3

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Our prayers must not be from a position of self... but of pleasing God

Confidence in Prayer

1. According to His Will
- 2. With Humility**

Prayer in and by itself is an act of humility

We are willingly and freely asking the Creator of the Universe for help

We must patiently wait for the One who knows the end from the beginning, the infinitely wise one, who knows the absolute perfect time to come riding in to rescue us or supply our need. He knows the perfect time to answer our prayers.... **Mark Altrogge**

1 Peter 5

5c... for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Confidence in Prayer

1. According to His Will
2. With Humility
- 3. For the purpose of Glorifying God**

John 14

13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

NOTE-

This is the ultimate purpose of answered prayer
The glorification of God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Will an answer to my prayer glorify God...

Do my prayer Alignment with God's Will...

Prayers that glorify God are those asked according to His will

Prayers that glorify God go beyond selfish desires

And instead seek outcomes that advance His kingdom and purposes.

John 15

8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

When God answers our prayers...He provides us with a testimony to share

Answered prayers can point others to His power and love

Answered prayers strengthen our faith and our relationship

With the One and Only True God

CLOSE