

Sermon for FBC Nov. 5th, 2017

Prayer Changes Things

James 5: 13-18 (Elders pray for sick, pray for each other)

Prayer as Nov. 01 was International Day of Prayer.

Prayer for Operation Shoebox as we collect and send the boxes.

Communion

****Give out prayer cards and devotionals!!**

Video of Shoebox ministry.

Good morning!

Today, the message is "Prayer Changes Things!" I hope you go away from this morning with a renewed spirit of prayer and desire to talk to God all the time. We will look at some examples of what happens when we pray and how Jesus prayed.

The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible gives us these thoughts on prayer:

Men and women were made to live in fellowship with God. In this 'sharing', prayer was the normal relationship through which God fulfilled His purposes...

Those who trust in God share their life with Him in prayer. We pour out our hearts before Him. We are open to God in confessing our sin. We ask things of God, confident that God answers prayer....

There is no particular pattern laid down for Christians to follow but Paul expects prayer to have a central place in the life of the Christian and the church. It will have a natural place in the restored relationship of God and His people...

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help Christians to pray, tuning their minds more and more to the mind of God. ¹

Quotes from people on prayer as found in Nelson's Book of Stories:

"It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last in the evening." Martin Luther

"Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth." Robert Law

"Daniel would rather spend a night with the lions than miss a day in prayer." Anonymous ²

We need to consider what we actually believe about prayer. Do the quotes I just read sound true to what you believe?

1 John 5:14-15 NIV

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

15 *And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

Luis Palau, in “Talking with God in Prayer” devotion” says:

“Read 1 John 5: 14-15 again.

If you are not sure a prayer request is according to God’s will, ask Him about it; He can tell you. And don’t worry about making mistakes when you pray. Do you think the sovereignty of God will be shattered because one of His children makes a mistake while praying? Isn’t it a bigger mistake not to pray at all? ³

James 5:13-18 NIV

13 *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.*

14 *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.*

15 *And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.*

16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

17 *Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.*

18 *Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

Do we pray believing? Do we ask the Elders to pray for us? Do we open ourselves to others for support through prayer? When is the last time you put a request on the prayer line?

Matthew 7: 7-11 NIV Ask, Seek, Knock (John 16:24; Mark 10: 46-52)

7 *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

8 *For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

9 *“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?*

10 *Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?*

11 *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*

Lawrence O. Richards, in The Reader’s Bible Companion, makes this comment on this passage:

“The imperatives ask, seek, and knock remind us that we are to pray actively and persistently. How much better to pray for others and not to judge them. How much better to pray God will remove our own faults and flaws than to hide them.”

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 NIV (Well-known prayer of Jabez)

9 *Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, “I gave birth to him in pain.”*

10 *Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.*

Just after giving the Ephesians the whole armor of God talk, Paul states this about prayer, which I encourage you to do and to do for me:

Ephesians 6: 18-20 NIV

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Now let us look at how Jesus prayed.

Luke 5:16 NIV

16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Matthew 14:23 NIV

23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

Luke 6:12-13 NIV

12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

Mark 8:6-8 NIV

6 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so.

7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them.

8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Luke 24:30-32 NIV

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Halley's Bible Handbook states: "In every recorded prayer Jesus addressed God as "Father." ⁴

Luke 23:33, 34a NIV

33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

John 11:41-44 NIV

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Matthew 26:39 NIV

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Finally, Matthew gives us the famous but most powerful example of how to pray to end this look at prayer and lead into Communion:

Matthew 6:5-13 NIV

5 "And 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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

May God lead you in your daily walk and may you talk to Him as you walk so that all you do is bathed in His love.

¹Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible, pg. 154

²Nelson's Book of Stories, pg. 622

³Discovery Series booklet, "God at the Center – Habits for Spiritual Growth", pg. 7

⁴Halley's Bible Handbook, pg. 509

Bibliography:

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Passeges on Prayer

Hebrews 4:16

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18

Psalms 143: 1

1 John 5:14

Colossians 4:2

Philippians 4: 6-7

Psalms 145:18

Psalms 18:6

Acts 1:14

Acts 6: 1-7 picking seven to look after widows and concentrate on prayer.

