

Sunday, March 10, 2024 am

COMMUNICATING WITH GOD (7)

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

As we continue our theme, “Communicating with God”, we are currently focusing on the subject of prayer. We have devoted several lessons to understanding God’s part in our prayers. We have established that God is available and able to answer our prayers. We have discussed how He can answer prayers today and the various ways He might answer our prayers.

Before we begin a study of how to pray, I would like to devote 3 lessons to noting the prayer life of some Bible characters. In examining these examples, it is my hope that we will see the importance of prayer as we strive to be faithful, as well as noticing some qualities associated with our prayers. The qualities will be elaborated upon later in our studies.

Today, I would like to begin with the greatest example of how to pray, Jesus. Considering Jesus and prayer is somewhat of a paradox. Jesus is the Son of God, greatest miracle worker and teacher. He came from heaven to better reveal God to us AND to die for our sins. Knowing who He was and what He was able to do, WHY did He pray as much as He did? Let’s look at His “prayer life” and teachings, and then we will try to answer that.

I. Prayer in the life of Jesus

- a. **Luke 11:1** – His disciples came to Him with the request., “Lord, teach us to pray...” it is clear by this request that His disciples knew that He prayed frequently. The text declares, “*He was praying in a certain place*”.
- b. **Luke 5:16** – Jesus prayed often (NKJV). He also went into the wilderness – a secluded place. Recall in His teachings about prayer in the sermon on the mount that He said, “*when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to Your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father, who sees in secret will reward you openly.*” We NEED a private place where we go regularly to pray. It is in such a place where we can fearlessly and boldly open our hearts to Him.
- c. **Luke 3:21**- after His baptism, only Luke records that Jesus prayed. Following this (Luke 4:1-13), He is immediately driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted 40 days and nights. Facing a challenging time, Jesus prayed.
- d. **Mark 1:35** – in the morning, arising before daylight, Jesus found a solitary place and prayed. Can you think of a better way to start your day? Right after you are rested, and before the busyness and distractions of the day begin, pause to thank God and petition Him.
- e. **Matthew 14:22-23**– Jesus is in Galilee at evening time (**John 6:15**). He sends His disciples away in a boat, goes up to a mountain by Himself to pray. As we approach the end of the day, it is a good time to pause, reflect and pray to God about the day. NOTE: This was also a time where Jesus was experiencing great popularity and a great following. While He may not have needed it, when we are facing success, it is time to pray in humility lest we be lifted up with pride. NOTE: Jesus was very busy as the gospels portray, but He FOUND TIME to pray!
- f. **Luke 6:12** – again He is on the mountain, and He prays ALL night! This was before the day He would choose His 12 apostles. Facing a decision that important, Jesus took time to FERVENTLY pray about it.

- g. **Luke 9:18, 28-29** - again, important events are unfolding in His life. Vs. 18 is where Jesus is determining who His apostles really believe He is (**cf. Matthew 16:13-21**); **Vss. 28-29** – as Jesus is on the mount of transfiguration, preparing to head toward Jerusalem to die. NOTE: Disciples were with Him on this occasion. Sometimes we need to pray with a small group of fellow saints.
- h. **Luke 10:21** – after the 70 return rejoicing at their success, Jesus prays to the Father on their behalf. We need to be praying when we are victorious. Our prayers express our gratitude to God for our spiritual strength.
- i. **John 11:41-42** – as He is about to raise Lazarus, He prays, thanking the Father for hearing Him. He prays publicly and for those who are with Him.
- j. **John 17:1, 9, 20-21** – I call this, “The Lord’s prayer”, as He heads toward the garden of Gethsemane, He utters a beautiful prayer in which He acknowledges He has completed His work, He prays for the apostles who would carry on the message and finally for all who would believe in Him through their teaching. This is also His great prayer for unity!
- k. **Luke 22:39-46** – as Jesus is about to face the human travesty of a corrupt trial following His execution, he prays to God in the garden. 3 times he prays, desiring another way for God to fulfill His plans, BUT if not He submits to His father’s will. We find here that in our prayers we must ALWAYS desire to submit to His will. Also, in vs. 46, Jesus finds His disciples sleeping from sorrow. He tells them to rise and pray lest they enter into temptation. Something we NEED to be praying for.
- l. **Luke 23:34** – as Jesus is being crucified, He prays, “*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.*” Even facing death, Jesus prays for His enemies. This demonstrates His love for mankind. NOTE: This was consistent with what He had taught His disciples - **Luke 6:27-28**, **Matthew 5:44**– He instructed men to pray for their enemies. Here He sets the example!

II. Jesus’ teaching about prayer

- a. Again **Luke 11:1**, recall the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray.” It is clear they saw how important prayer was to Jesus, and as His disciples they wanted to learn from Him about prayer. Jesus not only prayed, He also taught about HOW to pray.
- b. The model prayer of Jesus – **Luke 11:2-4**. Also Matthew 6:9-13 which is the more familiar version. In this prayer Jesus teaches things our prayers ought to include, beginning with addressing the Father reverently.
- c. The parable of the friend at midnight – **Luke 11:5-10**, after giving them the model prayer, Jesus taught a parable about persistence in prayer.
- d. The parable of the widow and unjust judge – **Luke 18:1-8**, again, Jesus emphasized that we ought to always pray “and not lose heart”. He followed this with another parable that demonstrated our need to pray often to God.
- e. The parable of the Pharisee and tax collector – **Luke 18:9-14**, He taught another parable on that same occasion about being humble when we pray.
- f. **Matthew 6:5-8** – pray in your room (closet) – as Jesus taught about the importance of prayer, He emphasized our need for sincerity (unhypocritical), being private in our prayers, and being thoughtful (avoiding ‘vain repetitions’).
- g. We will address some of these points in later lessons, but here we simply demonstrate how much Jesus prayed and how important His disciples saw that it was to Him. It ought to be important to us also.

III. Why did Jesus pray so much?

- a. The amount of time Jesus devoted to prayer demonstrated the greatness of His relationship with the Father. While we approach God as our heavenly Father, it is not to the same degree that Jesus did. He literally was “Immanuel” “God with us!” (Matthew 1:23). His time on earth was time AWAY from Him. As Jesus prayed on the night of His betrayal (John 17:3-5), His desire was to be restored to the glory He had with Him before the world was”
- b. We have to understand that for Him to be the sacrifice we needed Him to be, He had to become human – **Philippians 2:5-8**. That is what made His sacrifice so special.
- c. He also was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin – **Hebrews 4:14-16**. He experienced what we experience. Understand that for Jesus to be that sacrifice He had to be sinless. CONSTANT prayer with the Father helped Him to resist temptations and sins. I am fully convinced it was part of His ability to resist temptations.
- d. Therefore, He can be to us an example of how to overcome temptations (**1 Peter 2:21, Philippians 2:5**). This INCLUDES persistent prayer in our lives. Jesus gives us an example of how we ought to pray if we want to overcome the trials and temptations of this life.

Hebrews 5:7-8, *who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, **and was heard because of His godly fear**, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

In Jesus we learn the importance of prayer, lessons in how to pray AND the power that prayer can have in our lives. Consider, that if Jesus, the Son of God prayed as much as He did, what does that say about the rest of us? Let us learn to follow His example, even in this. Think about it!