

011119

- I. My Notes... WWC message 1/13
- II. Series: Let's Live
  - a. Title: "Not Enough" ...
  - b. Text: Matthew 6: 5-8
  - c. Quote: Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference. Max Lucado (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
  - a. I've been through all kinds of courses (funny, I first typed "curses") about how to preach and the proper method in preparing a sermon. There have been some good tools in this learning. And there have been some points to ponder. By saying this, I am already going against the "proper way" to begin a message. I am telling you these things because I am just jumping into the message.
  - b. How often to you set aside time to devote yourself to prayer? Be honest... I asked this question to several people and the initial response (from each person I asked) was, "not enough". That speaks volumes. I think that every believer, each Christ-follower, wants to find a way to develop a deeper and more intimate relationship with the Lord God. Loving another, developing a relationship, requires investment. Can you imagine knowing and loving someone and never (or rarely) talking to them? Prayer is a lot less complicated than we make it. Perhaps the issue has become that we are talking to someone we can't see. It is an issue of trust. Believing that God hears us when we call out for help and forgiveness is one thing... but asking for help and direction in day to day life becomes much more difficult.

- c. "George Mueller, the founder of a great Christian orphanage work in England in the 1800's, was a powerful man of prayer. He knew the importance of keeping at prayer even when the answer seemed delayed. When he was young he began praying that two of his friends might be saved. He prayed for them for more than sixty years. One of the men was converted shortly before his death at what was probably the last service Mueller held. The other was saved within a year of his death." (James Montgomery Boice. The Parables of Jesus. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. p. 158). Can you imagine what might have happened if Mr. Mueller had given up?
- d. So then, should we pray so that God can act on our behalf? Prayer itself is a privilege. If you will allow this description – prayer is the arena, the place, where we come to a more intimate knowledge of both God and self. Prayer is the place, in which, we can declare the importance of our connection with the One who gave all so that we would be able to have the opportunity to know Him. Know that part of Jesus coming was so that we could relate to Him. Imagine describing the color Red to someone who could not see. If we tried to describe life, the stresses and hurts, the confusion and separation, the questions to someone who had not had similar experiences it would be very difficult to relate – to have a bridge of trust and a foundation of similar understanding
- e. "Our prayer will be most like the prayer of Christ if we do not ask God to show us what is going to be, or to make any particular thing happen, but only pray that we may be faithful in whatever happens." (I don't know where this quote is from). We must learn – often thru trial and error – what prayer is and prayer isn't.

#### IV. Text

- a. Scripture records Jesus in prayer 25 times

- b. The Apostle Paul mentions prayer or praying about 41 times
- c. Prayer is essential to the life of a Believer... Martin Luther said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."
- d. It is imperative that we learn what it means to pray and develop this attitude throughout our daily walk
- e. Matthew 6:5-8 (NCV)

"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. They love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners and pray so people will see them. I tell you the truth, they already have their full reward. When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door and pray to your Father who cannot be seen. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you. And when you pray, don't be like those people who don't know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing, thinking that God will hear them because of their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.
- f. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about the practice of prayer. It isn't about drawing attention to the one praying, it's about the connection that is developing between the petitioner (that's you) and the Lord

## V. Places

- a. There isn't a "proper place" where pray should take place. Jesus prayed on a mountain (cf. Mt. 14:23), in a field (cf. Mark 1:35) – Peter prayed on a rooftop (cf. Acts 10:9) – and the Prophet Elijah went behind closed doors to pray (cf. 2 Kings 4:33).
- b. To pray is too communicate... and that can happen at any time, in any location

- c. Can I tell you there is nothing wrong with public prayer – if it is done with the proper motives and intentions
- d. During my late teens, I had several friends at the church I attended. Occasionally, after church, I was invited to a meal with one of the families of a friend. I remember going to a restaurant with a group one afternoon – one of the Dad's invited us to go along with them to Norm's Restaurant. As the food was being brought out (I'm avoiding sharing the name) the Father told us to pray. He led this prayer over a meal that started with being grateful, turned into a message about salvation, and continued with tongues and singing in the Spirit. All the while servers were standing around (respectfully) waiting to put the plates of food on the table. This prayer went on for a good 12 to 15 minutes. Truthfully, it was uncomfortable for most of the people around the table. And I don't ever remember having a meal with them after this occurrence.
- e. That is the wrong motive and application for public prayer
- f. I'll probably say this more than once, prayer (no matter where it takes place) is between the individual and the Lord God. Even if the person praying invites others in – it is still a dialogue between God and the person making the petition (appeal, request).
- g. Maybe it would be a good thing to become comfortable in one's private prayer life first. I'm not saying that public prayer doesn't have a place. It does. But if you are unable to pray in private then it would be difficult to pray properly in public
- h. In this passage of Scripture, the Pharisees had turned the act of prayer into a public performance. Drawing that kind of attention to yourself brings along its own reward
- i. It isn't about how many words you can use or how eloquent (you think) you speak

- j. In fact, Jesus condemned these kind of things
- k. Prayer in public is prayer that unites. It brings us together so that God-honoring worship takes place.
- l. The Bible nowhere condemns public prayer. It shows that God's people assembled regularly and each was expected to take part (1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:18-20; Hebrews 10:25). Complete Biblical Library Commentary - Matthew.
- m. Remember, Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20 CSB)
- n. Being together is important. Honoring God collectively is the goal. Jesus is there and He hears the conversation

## VI. That Quiet Place

- a. Our relationship with the Lord is an issue of heart
- b. Trusting Him means we are willing to invest, to grow to know Him
- c. The room, the closet, is a reference to that inner most place we all have. It is a room that isn't observable to the normal person
- d. Going in to our room means we are stepping in to that place where nothing is off limits to talk about
- e. It is a safe place – accessed by initiation only
- f. Remember what I have said about focus. Prayer in private is a focused conversation, our attention is toward the One we are talking to
- g. I don't' know about you but I find it very difficult to have an in-depth conversation when there are a lot of distractions

- h. And here's another thought. Praying in public can bring with it thoughts that you didn't do it correctly – that you misspoke or didn't use the right words.
- i. In your room, when you are alone with the Lord, the words aren't the issue – the heart of the matter is. The Lord already knows, and His desire is for us to develop this intimacy with Him
- j. Our prayers are not a call that puts Him into action. Our prayers demonstrate our trust and our desire to share everything with the Almighty Lord.

## VII. It isn't a Formula

- a. It is a shame that prayer is viewed as that magic piece that gets things in perspective and opens the door so that the Lord God can do what He should
- b. This just isn't the case.
- c. I used to have a plaque on my wall that said Prayer Changes Things
- d. It took me some time, but I realized the thing that prayer changed was me
- e. I have just reread what I've written... I have alluded to this but I want to make it clear.
- f. It isn't the words you say or the position you are in or the time that you are praying that causes anything to happen
- g. Prayer is about honoring the Lord God – it is about showing Him that you know He is who He says He is and that you believe His promises
- h. In this area of our walk, of our life as Christians, we should apply the Nike phrase – Just Do It

## VIII. Relationships

- a. I asked a relationship question earlier. Maybe another one is in order

- b. Is your relationship with the Lord worth you stepping out of your comfort zone and to a place of intimacy with Him?
- c. Have you ever had one of those relationships that when you got together or just spoke it was like picking up where you left off?
- d. It's that way with the Lord – He is approachable and isn't hung up on the things that didn't go right
- e. Growth, maturity, gets us to a place where viewpoints change – where priorities are reshaped – and where the meaningful matters
- f. There can be rocky places, bumps in the road, as you learn to grow in grace.
- g. But authentic communication is stress free.
- h. When I was young, I had done something to hurt my brother Ron. It was mean and intentional. Mom sent me to my room to await Dad's arrival. I knew I was in trouble and a punishment was in order. The moments seemed like hours and I would have sworn that a day had passed before Dad finally came to my room. I was expecting a spanking, restriction, added chores, and I don't know what else. Dad came in and sat me on the bed. He asked me what happened (even though he already knew, he wanted to hear from me). I spoke to him truthfully and answered every question. What happened next, I will never forget. Instead of punishing me in the way I thought, Dad talked to me about choices and actions. He explained how my actions not only reflected on me but on the whole family. Dad could have spanked me, I deserved it. He took a moment, gave me a life lesson, and revealed tremendous grace. It changed me from that moment on.
- i. That is what communication in relationships is about

## IX. Last Words

- a. Prayer is the link by AB Simpson (Theologian, Author)

Prayer is the link that connects us with God. It is the bridge that spans every gulf and bears us over every abyss of danger or of need. How significant is this picture of the New Testament church: Peter in prison, the Jews triumphant, Herod supreme, the arena of martyrdom awaiting the dawning of the morning. "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." And what is the sequel? The prison open, the apostle free, the Jews baffled, the wicked king divinely smitten, and the Word of God rolling on in greater victory. Do we know the power of our supernatural weapon? Do we dare to use it with the authority of a faith that commands as well as asks? God grant us holy audacity and divine confidence. He is not wanting great men, but He is wanting men that will dare to prove the greatness of their God.

b. Just to remind you... we aren't to be anxious or stress over our relationship with the Lord... over talking to Him

c. Philippians 4:6-7 (MSG)

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

d. Let's Pray

e. May you find that God is listening to you, always. May you discover that He loves talking to you. And may His Grace flood over you in the challenging moments that arise throughout each day.