

Prayer 07 Example From the Lord

by Alden Gannett

The life of Jesus Christ was a life of prayer, demonstrating His dependence on God and revealing Himself to His own.

Duration: 42:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:32-39, Luke 6:12-13, Luke 9:18-20, John 13:27

Topics: "Example Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the importance of prayer and the role it plays in the lives of believers. He encourages the congregation to use their extra time to engage in the ministry of prayer, both for their loved ones and for the Church. The speaker then introduces Dr. Gannett, the President of South-East Empire College, who leads the congregation in a prayer of worship and thanksgiving. The sermon emphasizes the need for dependence on God and the tendency of humans to be selfish and arrogant. The speaker also discusses the choosing of the twelve disciples by Jesus and the challenges they presented to him. The sermon concludes with a reflection on Jesus' prayer in John 17, where he prays for the glory of God and for his disciples.

Transcript

Thank you, ladies, very much. And now, Dr. Gannett, President of Southeastern Bible College. Let us bow together and pray.

Blessed Father, we rejoice in this Lord's Day, in the privilege of worshiping and praising Thee and Thy Son and Thy Holy Spirit, and we do honor Thee as the great Triune God today. We thank Thee for the revelation of Thyself and Thy Word, the revelation of Thy Son, our Savior. Show us Him this hour, as we continue to wait before Thee, as Thy Word speaks to our heart with blessing and profit.

Grant this, Lord, in the name of Christ. Amen. It is a fundamental law of God's economy that His creatures be dependent upon Him.

It does not take us long, upon looking in the mirror of the Word of God, upon looking in the mirror of the daily newspaper, upon looking in the mirror in our own bathroom, to see how selfish and arrogant people we are. For we have within us carnal, depraved natures that rebel against submission, that resent dependence upon another. We express this as youngsters.

Do you remember? I want to do this myself. We didn't want Dad or Mother to help. We have a gentleman in Birmingham, Alabama, now nearly 90 years of age, and he would walk along with great difficulty, and we would offer to help him.

No, I can do it all by myself. I don't need your arm. I don't need your hand.

No! We are put together this way. But when God created us, and created us very good, He created us as creatures dependent upon the Creator. And when He redeemed us by His precious blood, not only did He save us from the guilt and the power, and someday from the very presence of sin, but He redeemed us unto a life of holiness and righteousness, and one of dependence upon Him as our Heavenly Father.

And so we are instructed throughout the New Testament to walk in the Spirit, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, to live in dependence upon our Lord. I wonder if someone has come into our service today who has never been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. We would pause a moment to say to you, in the light of this vein, that God never intended you to save yourself.

The reason is very simple. You cannot. If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ has died in vain.

If you can be saved by your good works, if you can be saved by what you do, if you can be saved by your own ability, then Jesus Christ never needed to come and to die in our stead and bear our sins in His own body on the tree. And I would remind you today that salvation is by substitution, and that our response to the shed blood of Christ on the cross is one of dependence. It is one of faith.

The just shall live by faith. And when we are told in Romans 13 how to be saved, it tells us that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Only when we recognize our utter dependence upon another can we be saved, and that another is our blessed Lord who died for us and shed His blood on Calvary's cross to redeem us.

Now the whole work of the Lord is dependent upon this great principle. We have been saying all weekend the subject of prayer. Why does the Bible talk about prayer so much? Why from Genesis to Revelation do we find the men of God praying? One thinks immediately of Abraham.

One thinks immediately of David. One thinks immediately of Nehemiah. One thinks of the New Testament of Paul the Apostle.

Here great men of God were men of prayer. Do you think through church history? You think of an Adoniram Judson. You think of a praying Hyde.

You think of a George Mueller. And others, men who prayed. Why, as we've seen all weekend, prayer is God's appointed way of getting things.

This morning I want us to turn to the greatest of all examples of the spirit of dependence, of the spirit of prayer. And I turn not to the Apostle Paul. I turn to our blessed Lord Himself.

And the first thing that immediately startles us is the fact that Jesus Christ prayed. What? The Son of God, the Lord of glory, praying while our gospel accounts are filled with the records of His prayer. Why? He prayed not as God.

He prayed as the God of man. He prayed as a man among men. The one born of a virgin.

The one indeed, not only the Son of God but the Son of David. To what gospel shall we turn for most of these incidences, most of these events of our Lord's praying? We turn, of course, to the gospel of the Son of Man. The gospel according to Luke, though we shall see Him praying in others.

So let us look this morning at the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. First His life on earth, a life of prayer. Turn with me first to Luke chapter 3, verses 21 and 22.

And I try to trust your Bibles are handy today. We shall be turning to a number of passages of Scripture. In Luke chapter 3, we have recorded for us the baptism of our Lord.

We read verse 21, Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized and prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. It is Luke, the gospel of the Son of Man, who adds and prays.

For what was Jesus Christ praying on this occasion? Here He is beginning His public ministry. It is significant that as He begins His public ministry, He is found praying. Pray.

The context gives us the hint here in verse 22, The Holy Spirit descended. For you remember the prophecy of Isaiah, and quoted here in chapter 4 of Luke, that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. As a man He went in and out among men in His ministry, and as a man He prayed, as a man He depended upon His heavenly Father.

And here on this occasion, He prays for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and He goes out and is led into the temptation, and led out in His ministry, and performed His ministry in the power of another, the Holy Spirit of God who had come within Him. What an example before us today. The Lord Jesus Christ beginning His ministry, praying.

I turn secondly to the temptation in chapter 4 of Luke, verse 1 and verse 2. And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tested by the devil. Now, we are not told precisely here in these verses that our Lord prayed, but I infer this from the fact that He was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit. The fact that He was expressed such dependence upon the Holy Spirit leads me to believe that in these forty days in which He ate nothing and afterward was hungry, in these forty days He waited upon the Father as a man among men.

I turn next with me to Mark chapter 1, verses 32 through 39. Mark 1, 32 through 39. The context here is one of ministry, one of witnessing, one of preaching, one of healing.

And in the evening when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased and those who were possessed with demons, and all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were sick of diverse diseases, and cast out many demons, and permitted not the demons to speak, because they knew Him. I'm reading from the Newscofield.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All men seek for Thee.

And He said unto them, Let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also. For therefore came I forth. And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons.

Our Lord comes to the close of a day of ministry. And before He begins another day of ministry, going and preaching in other towns, a great while before day, He is alone. And if the Lord needs to do this, how much more do we? If the Son of God, the Lord of glory, needed to get alone with His Father in a time of renewal, of strength for the new ministry at hand, how much more do we? Turn next with me to Luke chapter 6, the context of our Lord's choosing His disciples.

Luke chapter 6, verses 12 and 13. And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles.

We are not told precisely the content of His prayer life in verse 12. We get a hint from the context. We have no other basis for knowing.

But in the context, immediately on the following day, He chooses twelve to be His disciples. And one of them was Judas, who would betray Him. Another was a tax collector, who would be one of ill repute in the community.

Another was Peter. There was only one Peter around. Always had to speak before he thought, not always, but so many times.

Always the spokesman in the crowd. Jump out of the boat and run to the Savior. If you were to choose twelve people today to gather about you for the work of the ministry, would you have chosen this crowd? Our Lord did.

I suggest that at least upon His heart that night, as He prayed all through the night, was this matter of the choosing of the twelve. You see, our Lord was a man, as well as God. A God's man, to be precise.

And our Lord knew what He would face in the next three and a half years. You know how people bother you. No doubt these twelve caused our Lord much consternation in the human.

To Peter, He had to announce that before the cocks would crow twice, He would deny Him thrice. He would have to say to Judas one day, this one to whom I deliver the sock is the one who shall betray me. What thou doest too quickly? And he got up and went out into the night and met Him next in the garden with our Lord praying.

Before this, one of His great decisions of His life in His earthly ministry, He spent all night in prayer. We turn next to Luke chapter 9, verses 18 to 20. And it came to pass, as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him, and He asked them, saying, Who say the people that I am? And the answering said, John the Baptist.

But some say Elijah, and others say that one of the old prophets is risen again. And He said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter, answering, said, The Christ of God. The text in Matthew is more familiar to us.

Our Lord had slipped away just at the Rehabiliipi, and there He gives this very examination to His disciples. But Matthew does not record that He was praying. Luke, the gospel of the Son of Man, does.

And what's the point of all this? Why did our Lord pray? We go on in Matthew to read, Peter, flesh and blood doth not reveal this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. We conclude from this that our

Lord was praying for a revelation of Himself to His own, and that here was a better understanding as to who Jesus Christ was, as a result of our Lord praying for His disciples. This is intimated, inferred from the context.

Chapter 9, verses 28 to 36, this same chapter of Luke, And it came to pass, when eight days after these things, that he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white, and glistening, this the transfiguration. And, behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory, and spoke of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, that Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said.

And while he thus spoke, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them, and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear him. I conclude that the same burden was upon our Lord's heart in prayer on this occasion, as a fuller revelation of himself is made to his disciples.

It is not one of the great needs of the hour today that men shall understand who Jesus Christ is, and that men shall understand the plan and purposes of our Lord. Here, his death is before them. He wants them to understand his impending death, and then his coming glory, when he shall be transfigured before them there in reality, when he comes a second time to rule and to reign.

And he wants his home to understand the person and work in order to accomplish this. He prayed. He prayed.

Let us turn next to John, chapter 14. We shall return to Luke shortly. John, chapter 14, verse 16.

The context is our Lord speaking to his own in that great upper room. And he says, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever. And we know from the context of these verses and the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul that the coming of the Holy Spirit was the birthday of the Church, that God was beginning a new thing on the day of Pentecost.

Again, his program is in view, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the baptizing of the individual believer into Christ and hence into the body of Christ. And so what is our Lord doing in essence here? He is praying for this new dispensation. This church age begun by the coming of the Holy Spirit is actually the answer to the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Think of it. Think of it. And then in chapter 17 of John, we shall not take time to read this great chapter, but herein is revealed the heart of our Savior.

And it thrilled me this morning as I was meditating anew upon this portion to realize its context. That here our Lord had been experiencing the days of that Passion Week. He had, Judas had left the scene in John 13 and had gone out into the night.

And then our Lord met with his own and gave him the glorious truths of the coming age. When the Holy Spirit would come, he who had been with them would now be in them. And that he himself would come

and make his abode with the believer along with the Father.

And the glorious truths and then the blessed hope of the coming, his return once again. These and other blessed truths of abiding in him and the bearing of much fruit in all this, our Lord slips alone and prays before going to heaven. What does he pray about in this chapter? He prays first for the glory of God.

Then he prays for his disciples that they be kept. And then he prays for those who would yet believe. He prayed for you.

He prayed for me in this upper room. In this time alone out in the garden, he prays for us. Prays for the glory of God to be revealed in us.

And the love that the Father had for the Son and the Son for the Father would be in us. And that we might manifest this to the world, meeting the Savior. He prays.

He's not all exercise in the sense of worried and frustrated over his impending death. He can quietly slip alone with the Father and pray. We turn back now to Luke chapter 22 verses 31 and 32.

The death of the Savior is now before him. He is concerned about Peter's relationship to him in his death. And we read the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sit you as wheat.

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthened by brethren. Here is a specific that no doubt was on the heart of our Lord as recorded in John chapter 17. He saw Peter.

He loved Peter. Peter had been with him for three years. Peter had left his nets, his fishing, his business, and followed the Savior.

And with all Peter's idiosyncrasies, with all Peter's quick temper, with all Peter's rash decisions and rash statements and actions, nevertheless, here was a great one in the heart of God. And one who someday would stand on the day of Pentecost and preach the word and Peter would be a great servant of the Most High. Oh, the Lord loved him.

Peter, I prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Peter, I anticipate your being there in the judgment hall. Peter, I anticipate you being there warming your hands by the fire.

Peter, I see that maid coming and say, aren't you one of those who were with him? Peter, I hear you denying me. Peter, I hear others coming and inquiring. Twice more I hear you say no.

I do not know him. Peter, I can hear that cock crowing, but Peter, I know your heart. I prayed for thee ahead of time, that your faith fail not.

And when thou art turned around, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren, and Peter does that very thing. Disreg Peter here is someday that one with a backbone on the day of Pentecost who denounces the betrayers and murderers of Jesus Christ. And God marvelously uses him.

Peter, I prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Turn to verse 39 of the same chapter of Luke 22. And he came out and went as he was accustomed to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him.

And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When he rose up from prayer and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.

He said to them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Here he is just before going to the cross. And what's he doing? Praying.

Why does he pray, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Why in the world does the Son of God ever pray like this? I'm not sure that we have all the answer to that question.

What I do understand, I believe, is that here is holiness, infinite holiness. Here is righteousness, infinite righteousness. Soon to have laid upon him the iniquity of us all.

And that holiness and that righteousness shuddered at the thought. He was not for one moment saying, Father, keep me from Calvary. Why, this had been settled before eternity, in eternity past.

But here was the natural response of infinite holiness and righteousness to his having laid upon him your sins. Our concern this morning is, as he faced the cross, he prayed. We next find him on the cross.

Luke 23, the next chapter, verse 34. Luke 23, 34. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

He prayed at his baptism. He prayed at his temptation. He prayed in the context of his ministry.

He prayed before choosing his disciples. He prayed for the revelation of himself to his own. He prayed for this new dispensation of grace.

He prayed as he faced Calvary. He prayed for his faltering, failing disciples. His life, his ministry begins and is climaxed at the cross with an utter dependence upon his heaven.

But it doesn't stop there. You know the text in Hebrews 7, verse 25. His life on earth was a life of prayer.

Now his life in heaven is a life of prayer. Therefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Our Lord ascended to the glory to accomplish a number of ministries.

He is indeed our Advocate, 1 John, chapter 2. That when the believer sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Risen. He is there as the living head of the church. He is there to bestow gifts upon the church.

He is there to enable the church to fulfill its ministry. He is there to guide and direct the church, his body. Another very blessed ministry is that before us this morning.

There at the right hand of the Father, he ever liveth to make intercession for you, for me. How blessed it has been in my own experience of late in sharing my heart with the Lord about the concerns which are

there, to be reminded of this glorious fact, that there is the God made in the glory, far more concerned about my burdens than I am. Far more concerned about my children than I am.

Far more concerned about Southeastern Bible College than I am. Far more concerned about the ministry he has entrusted to me than I am. Far more concerned about three and seven tenth billion people than I am.

He is praying. He ever liveth to pray. What does he pray about? Our failures, our weaknesses, our problems, our burdens, our needs.

Slip Peter back in here, will you? He is doing for you and me what he said he did for Peter. Peter, I prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. No wonder Peter can write in 1 Peter chapter 5, 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 5, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter knew about that. This was real to Peter. Many people come, as you know, and say that I believe a person can be saved and then lost again, and that is because he does not continue to believe.

He can stop believing, they argue. Peter is my classic illustration that our Lord ever lives to make intercession regarding this very problem. Had you and I stood in that judgment hall that night and witnessed Peter denying his Lord three times, you and I would have said, Peter has stopped believing.

Peter no longer has faith in Jesus Christ. He is denying his Lord. You and I need to get behind the scenes.

Peter, I prayed for thee in that very episode that thy faith fail not. Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart.

Peter's faith did not fail. You and I can go back to times when God gave us opportunities of witness, and we failed in our witness. We did not open our lips and confess the Lord Jesus Christ as we ought, but the Lord was praying for us.

Though we outwardly failed, our faith was still there. We are kept by the power of God. So I take great heart today in the fact that my Lord ever lives to make intercession.

At this point we make a deduction. We draw an inference. We have seen our Lord's life on earth.

We have just seen from Hebrews 7.25 that our Lord's life in heaven is a life of prayer. We deduce that our Lord's life within the believer is a life of prayer. Does that follow? We have seen this week that to me to live is Christ, and that not I but Christ liveth where? In me.

If you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, my friend, then the Savior whose life was characterized by prayer on earth and whose life is characterized by prayer in heaven, beloved, that same life is within you today. In spirit, has it changed? Is it different within us? Is it different within you? I conclude that his life within us, when truly given an opportunity of expression by faith, is a life characterized by a life of prayer. I trust our turning to these texts of scripture this morning has been an occasion for motivation to prayer as we have never known it.

I have to bow my head in shame today after reviewing the prayer life and ministry of my Lord. And I cannot stand before you today, nor would you stand before us today and say, My life has been characterized by prayer, but I see from the mirror of the Word today what it ought to be. If my Lord needed to pray like this, how much more let us then this morning, purposed by the grace of God, to allow that life of dependence

upon the Father to be lived through us, the life of the risen Son of God.

And hence let there be in greater measure at Park of the Palms, greater measure in your home and mine, greater measure in your life and mine, this ministry of intercession. Beloved, I turn to this subject this weekend for a number of reasons. For one reason, God has been speaking so much to me about it.

But another is I saw so many of you here at the park, so many of you with your children raised and away from you, so many of you without the daily responsibility of secular employment. You have more time than your children for a ministry such as this. What better way can there be to spend it than to have this blessed ministry of prayer, one for another? For those loved ones of yours for whom you pray, and then for the Church of Jesus Christ across the world, God's servants you know by name, upholding them in prayer, and then for the multitudes of earth who have yet to hear the gospel of Park of the Palms, it's on my heart for you this weekend.

You're in a special position to pray, and I know so many of you pray, and you pray faithfully, and I thank God for this. May there be a greater spirit, a greater ministry, a greater outreach of prayer, greater abundance of the rivers of living water flowing from this place because of a greater exercise of prevailing prayer. Our Father, we are humbled in Thy presence this morning, because in the word we have beheld Thy Son, whose life and ministry on earth and in the glory have been characterized by prayer.

When we think of times we could have prayed but didn't, when we tried to resolve our problems, carry our burdens all by ourselves, when we could have cast all our cares upon Thee for Thou carest for us. We think of the large problems we tried to resolve, all in the wisdom of man. We think of so much time spent in good things but could have been spent in better things.

Deal with us individually today, our Father. Lord, teach us to pray. May ever the ministry of this place be enlarged for the glory of God and the gospel, as Thy people give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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