

Prayer 03 Our Instructions 01

by Bob Clark

The sermon emphasizes the critical role of prayer in the life of Jesus and encourages believers to engage in persistent and heartfelt prayer for various needs and challenges.

Duration: 30:10

Scripture: Luke 10:2, Luke 11:1, Luke 11:3

Topics: "Prayer Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the challenges and frustrations that come with physical disabilities and limitations. He emphasizes the importance of watching and praying to de-exercise the soul and keep our spirits fresh and prepared for the Lord. The speaker also highlights the need for prayer in various aspects of life, including praying for laborers in God's harvest, praying for our enemies, and praying for our own needs. He encourages discipline in prayer and staying mindful to avoid distractions. The sermon references Luke 10 and 11, where Jesus instructs his disciples on the importance of prayer.

Transcript

for us to discuss the Word of God and I thought it might be appropriate that our thoughts would be directed to the place that prayer had in the life of our Lord Jesus and we would most all be familiar with the varying verses that we draw to our attention and that it might be nice if we felt free to take part. So I would like to read a few verses and then there might be an opportunity for us just to share a few thoughts from the verses themselves and make our own observations. So our thought is the place of prayer in the life of our Lord Jesus.

We'd like to turn to Luke's gospel. Luke's gospel in chapter six would be the first verse. The gospel of Luke gives us a great deal of information about our Lord Jesus and specifically in his prayer life.

The gospel of Luke is a major source of information about prayer. As mentioned, thirty times prayer in the gospel of Luke has compared, for example, to John's gospel where he mentions the Lord five times in reference to prayer. So, here the perfect man is praying and Luke seems to have a real specific interest in the concept of prayer and he developed it in his gospel in many different ways and I thought that we'd first like to look at the Lord Jesus giving exhortation to prayer and then, as time allows, receiving his instruction for prayer and demonstration of prayer in his own life.

But to start off just right now with a few short single verses concerning his exhortation to pray, and the first is in chapter six and verse 27. But I say unto you with fear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which disgracefully use you. So, the first thought we have is that the Lord, at the very outset of his public ministry, urges his own followers to pray for their enemies.

Pray for them which disgracefully use you. Now, that in itself is a statement. It's an exhortation on the part of our Lord for any of you that are going to hear his teaching that we should pray for our enemies.

Pray for those that are unkind toward us. Now, I'd like to ask a question, and I don't know how well this will come back over our audio system or those that are taping, but it might be more interesting for us. What does that suggest to you? What is it that the Lord is saying? We know that his specific statement is we should pray for those that disgracefully use us, but what's implied behind that? Do you see any kind of an attitude on the part of the Lord, or something that he is looking for in us? All right, a forgiving spirit should characterize us.

Does anyone think of, shortly, an individual or person that prayed for their enemy? The Apostle Paul, even at his sermon, won great and successful prayer by our Lord. Where was that? On the cross. Father, forgive them.

They know not what they do, and he's making intercession for the transgressors. What is the thought that the Lord is trying to cultivate in his followers? Pray for them that disgracefully use you. They may be your enemies, but they can't really be enemies.

All right, I think I perceive what you're saying. They're not actually our enemies. They may become the object of your affection.

All right, very good. Good thought. Anybody want to carry this further now? Loving them, caring for them, and expressing of a... what kind of spirit? Friendly and making use of a Christ-like spirit, right? To be Christ-like in ourselves, in our attitude or our disposition toward those even that are disgracefully using us.

Now, to return to chapter 10, the Lord gives another exhortation. And remember, these are only five or six exhortations for prayer. We'll come back as we make progress through the week.

If the Lord does not return for us, and we so have the opportunity, we'd like to develop this just the central theme of prayer all the way through the week. Now, in chapter 10 is something that I think is rather unusual, and it's a good thought for us. Chapter 10, verse 1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that you would send forth laborers into his harvest. Go your ways, behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Now, I read verse 3 only to show that the people to whom he is speaking are the ones that are to pray. Now, the Lord Jesus is sending out 70, and it is to the 70 he says, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest. It is to the workers that are sent out that he asks to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers.

What's your perception of that? Frequently, we have the missionary returns and invokes him quite appropriately. The apostle Paul urged the Thessalonians, Brethren pray for us, return to the Romans and ask for prayer. But here, this specific verse, it is that the workers are to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers.

What is your perception of that? Why does he ask the workers to pray for laborers? He needs more. All right, he needs more. And who better knows it than the worker himself? What else would you say? The worker knows the need.

That's the thing that comes to me, right? To encourage them themselves? What else? Very good. Be sure that the Lord has sent them. So, we're seeing that the Lord is the originator of the call to the original worker who was gone forth.

He sees the need. He knows it so much better than any others, and he turns to the same Lord of the harvest and the one who is going to commission those to go out and begins to intercede, asking for other workers to be raised up. He would then have knowledge of specific needs, wouldn't he? And relatively speaking, you might say in our little village, we have a certain need.

Your Lord would provide this for somebody in the larger metropolis of, let's say, Jerusalem or down in Gadara. They may have a greater need, and so they would ask or require or have needs for more. But they would have a more intelligent grip of the need.

They pray the Lord, acknowledging that it is the Lord that's going to provide the worker, and the Lord is going to be the one that's going to bless. But again, the Lord Jesus gave exhortation to pray. Tells us as his followers, if you're going to be part of my kingdom, you should indeed be those who are going to love your enemies and pray for them.

If you are serving and carrying on a ministry intense to need and see the need around you, then you lift your heart to the Lord and pray. Again, in chapter 11, Luke's Gospel, chapter 11, verses 9 and 10, specifically, it's following a parable, and the parable is a friend who had a neighbor come, and he asked for three loaves, and then he says in verse 9, And I say unto you, Heir, and it shall be given unto you, keep, and ye shall find, do not, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

Now, in these verses, he says we should pray for our enemies, we should pray for laborers, and here he expressly tells us we should pray for our needs. The need in the parable was a man had a friend coming, and he needed three loaves to meet the need of those persons that visited him. Specific needs, exercises of heart.

We should heir, keep, and knock. Correct. That's the only way I can remember that when I was a little boy, and I had to memorize it, and I figured that out myself, and I thought that was a real spiritual revelation.

Heir, keep, and knock. A-S-K. Very good, brother.

Now, what does that mean? Why doesn't he just say heir? Why does he persevere and say keep? Then why add to that knock? What's that imply to you? What do you see in that? Persistence. Very good. What else? Greater degree of urgency.

Okay, greater degree of urgency, an exercise of heart, persisting in this matter, and what it presuppose? That's right. You're going to make an effort, and what is going to happen? It. That's correct.

That's right. Did everybody get that lengthy description? The word was it. What we have asked for is going to happen.

We need greater confidence, don't we, in a childlike simplicity, just to be persistent and urgent, getting our hand on the throne of God, and speaking to him about our specific needs. The Lord is exhorting his followers to pray. Now, we go farther, and in chapter 21, there's another expression.

All right, good thought. In chapter 21, we go further now, and in verse 34, we read, Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that they come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Now, lifting it out of its context, we know that it has a definite application, or a primary interpretation, before the nation during a time of terrible persecution. But now, let's think of it as an application, and the thought being the Lord speaking to his followers in relationship to his coming.

Now, if we understand the scriptures are right, the Lord is coming for the church prior to the tribulation, and that the nation of Israel is going to go through this tribulation experience, and it is to those persons that this is expressly directed. But, for us who are anticipating the coming of the Lord, what is being said to us? Why are we to be praying? Why the exhortation for prayer here? What? All right, the time is short. That you might be accounted worthy means through our prayer time, it would make us more fit.

All right, in what sense are we going to be more fit for him that is coming through prayer? All right, we're praying in the spirit. What should prayer do to our own lives? What did it do, for example, for Hannah? More aware of his presence, more mindful of him, exercise the soul in our own heart, and it's meant to be preventative, isn't it? Does somebody remember what was said in John's epistle, in 1st John, concerning the return of the Lord? He that hath this hope, purifyeth himself. Notice the exhortation.

Take heed to yourself, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, the tears of this life, and you, as that day come upon you, unaware that we become too self-indulgent, and too self-occupied. We're surely going to have the distractions of this life preoccupying our mind, burdening our spirit. Now, for many of us living in this pleasant community, in the environment of Christian fellowship, and a give-and-take of exhortation, and the fellowship that we have together, we're not going to be just exactly occupied with the things or the charges that are laid to these persons.

But what can occupy us at this stage in our life, where we are now? What can occupy us if we take our mind off of intercessory prayer, fellowship with the Lord, and being prepared of soul to receive him when he comes? All right, practical, simple, daily matters. Weariness, worry, worry, that's right. Simple, very practical things that occupy our mind.

We begin to have more and more physical disability, and it preoccupies our soul and spirit, and then begins to make our own personal spirits heavier, and we're burdened by these limitations, and the frustrations. We're not able to do today what we were able to do not too long ago. When we look back

upon those times, we might have a little bit less of resentment brooding in our spirit.

And so, the Lord is saying, watch and pray. Be exercised of souls that are sure to be fresh and prepared for him and ready when he does come. And then, in chapter 22, there's another exhortation the Lord gives to his disciples, a very familiar one, and yet it's only Luke that mentions it in his gospel.

And that's in verse 40, and when he was at the place he said unto them, pray that you enter not into temptation, he withdrew from them about a stone's cast, kneel down and pray. And as he was speaking to the body, he returned and then says again in verse 46 to the disciples that he said unto them, why fleeing rise and pray that you enter into temptation. So, here's two exhortations here that they should pray.

In verse 40, he says to them that they should pray that they enter not into temptation, and then, why fleeing rise and pray lest you enter into temptation. The Lord is anticipating something to come upon his followers, and he is exhorting them once again. He has exhorted them that they should pray for their needs, for the laborers, to raise up other laborers, that they should pray for perseverance, that they should pray in the exercise of heart, anticipating his return, and now he says, pray lest you enter into temptation.

What does this convey to us? That temptation is always close. Answer from audience member. Temptation is always close.

Testing and trial of various kinds, and by an attitude of prayer, we're going to prepare ourselves for the difficulty that we encounter in our life. Really, I have no way of knowing what is going to befall me, and the best way to be prepared is to be mindful of him as his mind, and to be aware of him and include him in my life. I'll be sensitive to his leading and his direction, and also that I will be prepared as pure as my mind, focused upon the Lord.

I might be in a much better condition to meet the difficulty to the problem. Do you see anything else? This is a good choice. Very definitely.

Prayer will be in the weakness of our own flesh. Perhaps they feel strong and independent, aren't we? And yet, here they were. He exhorts them, and then he says, why are you asleep? So much more easy for me.

I'm sure that's not that way for you, but when I close my eyes and bow my head, there's a very definite tendency that goes off, and I need a discipline. Sometimes I pick it up and move around, and change my position. I am just not that whatever it is that's needed for a protracted period of deepening exercises.

So easy to my mind wanders, the weakness of the flesh. Be constantly mindful along this line for my own soul. Anyone see something else? All right, now.

So, in Luke's gospel, he gives us six exhortations to pray. Now, Luke's gospel has something unique to itself, and that is three illustrations of prayer, and they each teach a specific lesson. And we can go back to that again, if you would, and we need to go back to chapter 11 for the parable that the Lord spoke.

Now, I am sure that we find varying thoughts, but during the earthly ministry of our Lord, he gave illustrations as well as exhortations to pray. In chapter 11, after his disciples hearing him pray, he asked them, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples. Then the Lord gave what we think to be a very specific pattern prayer, a style or a way, a design, and then he developed it.

Verse 5, he said, and he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves? For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall enter and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut. My children are with me, and that I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. He just kept knocking at midnight. No, none of us particularly enjoy being roused in the middle of the night after we're settled in and quiet and relaxed, but he persevered.

What is he teaching us concerning prayer? One thing, certainly, is that prayer is never out of season. We never have to have a specific time. We can always move toward the Lord and the exercise of heart.

I am sure that many of us have had our sleep interrupted for pounds around in the middle of the night, and it's just not so easy to go back and doze off and relax and get the sleep or rest that we think we need. What do we do? Worry about tomorrow's problems? Fretting about what we should have done yesterday? Anticipating something? Or, we can do something. We can be exercised of heart, can we? Commune with him.

Some of these things are so simple and so extremely elementary, and yet it's important that I have an ongoing awareness that prayer is never out of season. It's remarkable the number of persons that I have the privilege of being exposed to from time to time who may have problems or difficulties and have never actually taken those exercises of soul and directly brought them before the Lord and spoken to God about them. Many born-again young people walking in some degree of fellowship with the Lord, as well as a young person is able, with all the pressures and difficulties of life, and yet have never actually taken those inner thoughts or feelings.

It has never occurred to them that they could actually keep those thoughts and feelings to God. I feel like it's out of season, but we should know much better. At this end of the path of life, it's never inappropriate to turn to the Lord in prayer.

What else? Besides being able to go at midnight, what else does this little parable tell us? Presumably, the friend wasn't very far distant. All right, good suggestion. Presumably, the friend not very far distant owes a hand, and, interestingly enough, who do you envision the friend to be? The Lord Himself.

The Lord is the One. He is the Resurrector, and who is the friend that has come to us to have need? The sinners? Who else? Ourselves? Pardon? Our brother, our brother or sister in the Lord. Many people that have need, and they're coming to us to meet their need, and we have to acknowledge, I have nothing to testify for them.

A valuable parable illustrating never out of season to pray, and we turn to God that He would provide us. Do we do that? Do we send our friends on to someone else? Someone whom you know is a counselor or a gifted person, or are you calling upon the Lord and asking God to give you that which is needed to be able to minister to others? Good exercises of soul for us to have, and the Lord is here giving us illustrations of prayer. Now, the second thing is actually right.

I throw your hand, you're going to... No, okay. Chapter 18. Another parable.

Another parable that is unique to the Gospel of Luke. And we take a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to think. Here, implicit reliance in God and God's goodness, prayer may require perseverance and patience.

There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded men, and there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him saying, Avenge me of mine adversary, and he would not for a while. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her. Lest by her continual comings she weary me.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said, And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, so he bear long with them? Many of us seem to go through great trials, do we not? Such an offense and such a burden for this poor woman, an unjust judge, that she perseveres and perseveres, and it seems to be such a deafened ear, and yet because of her importunity, because of her persistent exercise of heart for her reasonable, legitimate needs, she pours out her heart and there is that response. Now the Lord says, Shall not God avenge his own elect? There's little doubt in my mind that this, again, refers in its interpretation to a specific era in the nation of Israel's history, but it certainly has a valuable lesson for us that we should make these illustrations of prayer very real in our own life, that at any season we can come to ask that we have needs to meet others, and God will generously provide us. And then two, we have these concerns and burdens of heart, and God is looking for this persistence, this exercise of heart, this mental or spiritual discipline which owns the fact that God can meet our needs, and we demonstrate our assurance by that, by constantly going to him.

It is not presumption to repeat. I have heard persons feel that it's sufficient just to say once to the Lord and mention a prayer need. I don't feel that Scripture would exclude the idea in any way that we have freedom to come again and again and persist, particularly as our exercise deepens.

Now, if indeed, because of our prayer time, and the Lord begins to change our spirit or our thinking, and we feel as a result of our nearness to him and the exercise of words that this is something we should not be praying for, that's something altogether different, but he is looking for that care and concern and perseverance. Now, there's one more illustration of prayer, and that's a little bit later in this very same chapter, chapter 18 and verse 9, and he takes this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed just with himself, God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess, and the publican standing afar would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Prayer can be real or unreal. Prayer can be a very genuine exercise of our own heart, or it can be words, platitudes, expressions. What is the marked thing that grips you? Can you just freshly read a little narrative like that? What is the special lesson that we see in this for ourselves today? Sincerity.

Sincerity. Humility. Sincerity and humility are what? All right.

They're synonymous, and what realm do they move? Virtues. That's it. They're virtues, they are characteristics, Dante.

It's not the words, but it's that humility of soul, that modesty of spirit, that dependence upon God, that is a genuine pouring out of the heart. One of the shortest prayers I know of in the scripture was when Peter began to sing, and he certainly spoke with humility, modesty, and sincerity when he said what? Lord help me. Right.

Now, when we start springing out of our inner soul in such a fashion, just expressing to God our heart. But, unfortunately, this prayer was spoken of as parable, rather, to teach what lesson? According to verse nine, trust in our own self-righteousness. We do not approach the Lord in prayer, do we? As those that are fit or appropriate as the basis of our years of service are who we are, but rather character, inner exercise of soul.

So, we've covered two little arenas in the life of our Lord. Our thoughts are the place of prayer in the life of the Lord Jesus. He gave six exhortations to prayer, and he gave three illustrations of prayer.

If we allow, next morning we'll be coming back to this kind of a theme, and think a little bit further of the Lord in his prayer time. So, how does he commend it to the Lord in prayer?

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