

(Radical Jesus) 29 Radical Prayer

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual vigilance and the power of prayer, using Jesus as the perfect example of radical, selfless, and purposeful prayer.

Duration: 19:52

Scripture: Exodus 3:2, Ezekiel 12:2, Matthew 6:7-17, Luke 2:8-20, John 1:10-11

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, Glenn Meldrum emphasizes the importance of living out true faith without any room for regrets or indulging in worldly desires. He discusses the concept of having spiritual eyes to recognize God's presence in the world, contrasting it with the willful blindness of those who fail to see Jesus. Meldrum refers to Ezekiel's message about living among a rebellious people and encourages listeners to strive for a Spirit-filled life. He also gives admonishments for New Year's Eve, urging believers to only engage in activities that will bring them approval from Jesus and to abstain from substances that alter the mind and emotions.

Transcript

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Well, we have finally done it. We are now on Facebook. For years we resisted getting on Facebook because we were not interested in the new shoes people bought, what they wore to church, or what they ate for breakfast.

We are still not interested in any of that, and we'll avoid it like the plague. But after talking to a lot of people about how to promote the Radical Truth Podcast, they all said without exception, Facebook is the most powerful tool to do what you want to do. So Jessica and I finally decided to jump right in.

We are not wanting to promote the podcast so that I can be a supposed somebody, but because people need to hear the Radical Truth faithfully ministered out of God's Word. One of the primary purposes of the Radical Truth is to restore the whole truth of God's Word in a compromised church culture. So if you want to friend me on Facebook, the easiest way to do so is to look up IHP Ministries or Glenn Meldrum.

Please be patient with us as we learn to do the Facebook thing, and eventually we will do a bearable job. In these last days before the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we need to be spiritually vigilant so that we are not one of the casualties of the great falling away that the Word clearly prophesied about. We need to be lovers of God, lovers of the truth, and lovers of the Holy Spirit, so that we can walk near to the Lord and do the work of God through the power of God.

For this reason, it is truly our hope and prayer that you will be determined saints through the victorious grace of God to live the Spirit-filled life that Jesus purchased for us. Now concerning New Year's Eve, please let me just give a couple admonishments. For many of my listeners, what I'm going to say for the next minute or so is not an issue in their lives because they are striving to walk near to Jesus.

But there may be some of today's listeners that need to hear these admonishments and put them into practice. My first piece of advice is that whatever you do on New Year's Eve, and for the rest of your life as well, that you only do that which will cause you to hear well done from Jesus. Do not let your life be filled with regrets because you did not walk near to Christ.

To act foolishly for even one night a year can bring upon you the just consequences of sin because you did the very things that Jesus died and rose again to deliver you from. Next, I thoroughly believe that Christians should totally abstain from all forms of alcohol, pot, or anything else that alters the mind and emotions. A lot of people get angry at me for what I just said there, but that is only because I touched a sacred idol in their heart that they do not want to surrender to Jesus.

I'm not going to talk about the gross evils of alcohol today, though that would be a very good subject to teach about. What I want to do is briefly warn you of the very fact that any mind-altering drug, and that includes alcohol, can only feed the works of the flesh and our depraved, sinful nature. Jesus taught us a very important principle that a tree is known by its fruit, and this principle is true as it relates to people and the nature of things themselves, including alcohol.

All mind-altering substances can only produce what they are in nature. Just take a simple look at alcohol, and you will not find that it produces the fruit of the spirit, but only the fruit of the flesh. All these mind and emotion-altering drugs, like I said, it includes alcohol, are absolutely powerless to feed the fruit and works of the spirit, or to draw us near to God.

Since they feed the flesh, they are not agents of God, but agents of hell, and agents of self. So for this New Year's Eve, make it your wholehearted purpose to live out the true faith that will never leave any room for regrets or the feeding of the flesh life. Last week, we took a break from our continuing study on the radical Jesus to examine a Christmas topic on having spiritual eyes that can see spiritual realities.

Multitudes saw Jesus while never really seeing him. Since they were willfully blind to what God was doing in the world of men, they could not recognize God's coming to them. The Lord told Ezekiel in chapter 12, Though the vast majority of Israelites were blind to who Jesus was and what he came to do, there were some that were hungry for God, and as a result, they had eyes to see.

This very issue compelled Paul to pray for the church at Ephesus. Only the Lord can heal the spiritually blind, but for us to receive that healing, we must want to be healed of our blindness. The healing of blind Bartimaeus is a perfect case to illustrate my point.

Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, but he refused to let Jesus personally pass by him without Jesus coming to him. His persistent pleading for Jesus to have mercy on him paid off when he was finally brought to Jesus. Jesus asked Bart, The man was immediately healed of his blindness.

Our desire to want to have spiritual eyes that see is a very important part of obtaining healing from Jesus so that we can see. The primary reason that the Lord wants to heal our spiritual blindness is so that we may know him better. Jesus is truly a wonderful Savior.

Today we are beginning a new subject in our study on the radical Jesus, which is on radical prayer. I am not a proponent of New Year's resolutions because most of them have little or no spiritual value. Add to this that the majority of New Year's resolutions do not last beyond the first month or two, and at times they do not even make it past the first week or two.

Then you have further proof why I do not normally advocate them. But ending the year by studying the subject of prayer, and then beginning 2016 immersed in that same subject, I think that if you are determined to make a New Year's resolution, that prayer would be one of the best choices you could make. As we dig into the subject of prayer, we are once again going to use Jesus as a perfect example, as a role model.

Is there anyone that could be a better example of the prayer life than Jesus himself? I do not think so. The Word of God and church history is filled with many wonderful examples of saints that sat at Jesus' feet in the school of prayer so that they became powerful in prayer. But no one can be more powerful in prayer than the omnipotent Jesus.

If anyone knew what genuine prayer consisted of, and of its infinite power, it would have been Jesus who was the one that invented prayer in the first place. The Lord invented prayer for our benefit, not His. We are the ones in desperate need of God.

In Hebrews 4.16, Paul told us why we were given the gift of prayer. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need. What we need most in this life can only be found in the place of prayer.

This is why it is so vitally important that if we want to understand the power of prayer, then we must see that there is no greater authority on the subject than the one to whom all acceptable prayer is focused. Not just that, could there be a better source of knowledge of what makes prayer acceptable or unacceptable than Jesus, who perfectly knows why He accepts or rejects the prayer of people? If we want to learn effective, powerful prayer, then there is no greater authority than Christ Himself. Yet even as we look to Jesus as our faultless example, we run into some very great difficulties, because Jesus prayed as no mortal has ever prayed.

Why, you may ask, is Jesus' prayer different than ours? It all has to do with who Jesus is in comparison to who we are. Jesus is the creator God, and we are the created, and this relationship can never be altered, even when He walked this planet. As to Christ's divinity, He needs nothing outside of Himself to exist or to be who He is.

But when we look at His humanity, we find that He had physical needs like all of mankind, otherwise Jesus would not have been truly human. Yet even in this He was different from us in that He knew the Heavenly Father perfectly and so trusted Him perfectly. We pray out of our need as finite creatures that are always

in need of God's benevolence and care.

Jesus prayed to the Father out of a perfect love relationship that was the reality of perfect unity within the Godhead. Since we are selfish, we are prone to pray selfish prayers, but Jesus never prayed one selfish prayer. Now, I am not saying that we cannot pray selfless prayers, but selfless prayers come out of true spiritual maturity because we are not naturally selfless.

When we look at the recorded accounts when Jesus prayed, we see that they were alive, vibrant, filled with purposeful intent. Take, for example, what many call His high priestly prayer of John 17. He begins by saying, His prayer was purposeful because He knew who He was and what He came to do.

His prayers bear no resemblance to the lifeless, boring, selfish prayers that the Pharisees prayed. Nor does His prayer resemble most of the dead, lukewarm prayers that people who call themselves Christians offer up or of the dead prayer meetings that most churches have. Christ's prayers were always radical, always on fire, always alive, always selfless.

He never approached the Father with a selfish agenda because He was fully surrendered to the Father. His supplications were driven by disinterested love and divine compassion, not by greed, selfish ambition, pride, fear, or insecurities. Now, try to picture in your mind what it would have been like to hear Jesus pray.

Then try to imagine what the disciples would have experienced during those times of prayer with Jesus. Since Jesus was sinless, there was nothing that separated Him from the Father. The perfect holiness that Jesus inherently owned as God allowed immediate, unhindered communion within the triune Godhead.

When the Eternal Son poured out His heart to the Father, it was the heart of God communing with the heart of God. There was perfect mutual understanding, love, and unity of purpose. When the disciples experienced such moments, I think that they would have been undone in the awesome, tangible presence of God.

They may have experienced uncontrollable weeping when the holiness of God descended upon them. Or they may have been utterly speechless when the weight of divine glory engulfed them. Or they may have been filled with joy that is beyond what human language can explain when the love of God shook them to the very core of their being.

No matter what exactly happened during those times of prayer, we can rest assured that it was extraordinary, to say the least. I do not see anything in God's Word of a stoic Jesus like so many have betrayed Him in movies and books and sermons. They make Him out to be an unemotional person that never produced strong emotion in His disciples or listening audiences.

Such a view of Jesus is not only unbiblical, but is inconsistent with church history and the history of revival. Just a brief look at those times when the Lord revealed Himself in the throes of revival will demonstrate that God is not afraid of strong emotions, nor is He averse to using it to bring people to salvation and into the place of holiness. The disciples and apostles would have witnessed times of prayer where Jesus was in the agony of intercession.

Look at Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and you will see that He did not shrink from strong emotion in the place of prayer. Jesus had a perfect knowledge of eternity. He knew as a fact what we must strive to know by faith.

He also fully knew the reality of heaven and hell and what that meant for each and every soul. It is only reasonable to conclude that such knowledge would have compelled Him to agonize over the stubborn, unrepentant sinners who heard His preaching and saw His miracles, but refused to repent. Jesus knew He was the remedy to mankind's sin-laden lives, and He longed to deliver them from their bondage to sin and the consequences that their crimes against heaven demanded.

He also knew that the day was fast approaching where He would take upon Himself the sins of the world, where He would descend into hell and take the keys of death and hell from Satan and then rise as absolute victor. It was Jesus that spoke to Moses from the burning bush in Exodus chapter 3. I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

So at the right time the Lord Himself came down in flesh and blood to deliver mankind from their hellish taskmasters that enslaved the race of man due to their willful rebellion against the Lord. The disciples must have also heard Jesus talk to the Father when He was filled with unspeakable joy over every soul that repented and over every prodigal that came running home. This was the reason why Jesus came into the world, to seek and to save that which was lost.

And in like manner, when He experienced the unbounded joy when He spoke heaven and earth into existence, so He would be filled with joy as His mission of redemption was being fulfilled. I think one of the most moving expressions of prayer that the disciples ever experienced from Jesus must have been those times when He enjoyed the perfect love that defined the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus perfectly loved the Father and was perfectly loved by the Father.

This is love deeper than the human mind can even fathom. Yet when the disciples saw Jesus express such love to the Father with human words and expressions, they would have experienced that same love to a limited degree. Jesus was teaching His disciples the powerful principle of what it means to enjoy God.

And is that not why we were created? To glorify God in everything we say and do and to enjoy Him throughout eternity? It is in this life that we are offered the privilege to taste the awesome wonder of enjoying God. For those that long to taste the glorious wonder of His presence in this life, they will ache for the day when they will know its full, unbounded joy in the life to come. Those first disciples must have had some phenomenal experiences with Jesus in prayer.

Although we can read and study Christ's prayers that are recorded in the Gospels, we cannot experience the same Spirit-charged atmosphere that His praying would have produced. This does not mean that we cannot experience His tangible presence in the place of prayer or in the midst of genuine revival. He does make that available to His saints today.

It is just that what happened 2,000 years ago will never be repeated. When Jesus spoke, His words pulsed with the same infinite power He used to speak the worlds into existence. So it is reasonable to say that when the Creator God took upon Himself our humanity, He never once offered the Father stoic, lifeless prayers filled with vain repetition.

Since Jesus saw the truth and life when He walked this planet, His prayers were alive, vibrant, penetrating, soul-stirring, utterances that flowed out of the depths of His divine being. They were not formal lists, written litanies, or memorized prayers chanted according to a string of beads. Nor did He pray worthless prayers in vain repetition that are uttered day in and day out.

Such praying never came from the life and genius of Jesus, but are the byproduct of spiritually destitute souls that are dead in trespasses and sin. When Jesus spoke, heaven stood at attention. Their God and Commander-in-Chief was speaking, and they were thoroughly obligated to obey Him.

It is not with mundane servitude that angels and seraphim waited for Christ's commands, but with excited anticipation for the voice of Almighty God who is clothed in human flesh. It is their joy and pleasure to obey God, and His commands were life to them. But there is something more to this, something that is far deeper than all the hosts of heaven waiting in rapt expectation for the voice of Christ to speak.

When Jesus prayed, the Father listened. The perfect unity and love within the Triune Godhead assured Jesus that He had free, absolute access to the Father. There was not one word that escaped Christ's lips that the Father did not hear and joyfully respond to with all of His heart.

It was the Father's desire to hear and answer Jesus. Because of who Jesus is, the Father knew that Jesus could never offer up a single petition that was not absolutely pleasing to Him. We all know that true communication is a two-way relationship.

This means that when the Father spoke, the Son listened, and when the Son spoke, the Father listened. The Father and Son lived in absolute unbroken fellowship, which means that they had perfect reciprocal communication. We know that without communication there can be no authentic love, since the nature of love is that we must know each other.

The deeper the knowledge we have of a person, the deeper the love can grow. So this means that the communion within the Godhead is perfect and absolute, because the love within the Godhead is perfect and absolute. This may sound silly, but the Father and Son totally enjoy being with each other.

They love communing with each other. It is a sad fact that a lot of husbands and wives do not like each other, and at the core of their division is the breakdown in communication. When communication breaks down, then so does the relationship, because communication is an integral part of love.

This is a problem we sinful humans have, but it is not something that is a problem with God. Now I want to be careful not to reduce the unity, love, and fellowship that exists within the Godhead down to our low human level. All our relationships are tainted by our fallen nature.

It is a fact from which we cannot escape, and this includes our relationship with Jesus. The love and unity that exists within the Godhead is something that we cannot comprehend, because it is infinitely beyond our ability to fathom. On the other hand, we are creating His image so that we could, to a limited degree, experience fellowship with God like He experiences within the Godhead.

When we begin to comprehend the wonder of prayer, we can begin to understand that it is ultimately all about relationship. This is why Christ's likeness is so important, for it allows us to be like Jesus enough so that we can have genuine fellowship with Him. Whenever the aspect of fellowship with God is lost in the act of prayer, then the purpose of prayer is grossly altered as well.

Prayer is not all about a wish list that we present to God that is void of personal relationship. Effective, powerful prayer is that which begins in a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus. Prayerless people do not authentically love God because they do not communicate with Him, and the reason they do not communicate with Him is because they do not want to be with Him.

Prayerless people cannot be true followers of Jesus because the true Christian is all about relationship with God. For those that want to be bona fide disciples of Jesus, then prayer must be of extreme importance to us because it is the means by which we communicate to God and grow in love for Him. Through prayer we also begin to learn the voice of God so that we can follow Him more closely.

Let me add to this the necessity of regularly studying God's Word because it is the primary means by which He communicates with us. So we can see from this little monologue that no one understands prayer better than Jesus, which makes Him the ultimate authority on prayer. Not only did He fully know how to pray, but as God, He is also the one that hears and answers prayer.

This leads us to the simple conclusion that since Jesus is the one that answers prayer, He totally understands the type of prayer that gets answers and what causes prayer to go unanswered. So it would be very wise for all of us that want to see our prayers answered that we learn what pleases the Lord and what displeases Him. Let me close with a very important point about prayer that the Apostle John makes in his first epistle in the 5th chapter in the 14th verse.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

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