

Famous Prayers

by Russell DeLong

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in our lives, highlighting its significance as the center of religion and the central phenomenon of our relationship with God.

Scripture: Psalm 66:18, Matthew 6:9, John 15:7, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Spiritual Devotion"

Description

Russell DeLong emphasizes the significance of prayer as the essential connection between man and God, highlighting various perspectives on prayer from different theologians and historical figures. He delves into the power and importance of prayer in revealing one's true devotion and commitment to God's will, showcasing examples of heartfelt prayers from notable individuals throughout history. DeLong explores the profound impact of the Lord's Prayer, illustrating its timeless and universal relevance in encompassing all human needs and desires. He challenges the audience to reflect on their prayer life and poses thought-provoking questions to evaluate the sincerity and effectiveness of their prayers.

Transcript

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:9-14

Animals do not pray. Only man, created in God's own image, reaches out beyond himself

for a Being greater than himself to whom he can commit and upon whom he can rest his own self. Intercourse between man and man is called conversation, between man and God is called prayer, between God and man is called divine revelation.

Prayer is of supreme importance. Heiler says, "Prayer is the center of religion," ". . . is the

central phenomenon of religion, the very hearthstone of all piety." Schleiermacher said, "To be religious and to pray -- that is really one and the same thing." Deissmann declared, "Religion, wherever it is alive in man, is prayer." Tiele made a similar observation when he said, "Where prayer has wholly ceased, it is all over with religion itself." Stolz added, "Prayer is the blood and the circulation of the blood in the religious life." Thomas Aquinas declared, "Prayer is the practical proof of religion."

Gergensohn uttered a mighty truth when he said: "Prayer is a perfectly accurate instrument for grading the religious life of the soul. Did one only know how a man prays, and what he prays about, one would be able to see how much religion that man has. When a man without any witnesses speaks with God, the soul

stands unveiled before its Creator."

James Montgomery, the poet, wrote a classic:

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,

Unuttered or expressed;

The motion of a hidden fire

That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech

That infant lips can try;

Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach

The Majesty on high.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,

The Christian's native air,

His watchword at the gate of death;

He enters heaven with prayer.

Lord Tennyson asserted correctly, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Men in great moments -- in extreme crisis, in depths of sorrow -- have uttered sublime

prayers from the depths of their souls, revealing complete consecration and entire commitment to God's will.

George Whitefield, the famous evangelist, prayed, "O Lord, give me souls, or take my soul."

Henry Martyn, the great apostle to India, cried out, "Here let me burn out for God."

David Brainerd, missionary to the North American Indians, declared: "Lord, to Thee I

dedicate myself. Oh, accept me, and let me be Thine forever. Lord, I desire nothing else; I desire nothing more."

Thomas a Kempis offered one of the classic prayers: "Give what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Set it where Thou wilt and deal with me in all things as Thou wilt."

Dwight L. Moody, one of America's most famous evangelists, implored God as follows:

"Use me then, my Saviour, for whatever purpose and in whatever way Thou mayest require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel; fill it with Thy grace."

Martin Luther, the night before he appeared before the Diet of Worms, prayed: "Do Thou, my God, stand by against all the world's wisdom and reason. Oh, do it! Thou must do it. Stand by me, Thou true, eternal God!"

The greatest of all prayers, the classic utterance of all time, is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." It is the prayer Jesus taught His disciples. It is only sixty-five words long and yet it embodies every need the human heart has and every desire man craves from God. It is incomparable, matchless, classic, supreme, sublime.

Wellington said, "The Lord's Prayer contains the sum total of religion and morals."

Notice its comprehensive, universal, ethical, personal, and social scope. Jesus said,

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy

name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen. (Matt. 6: 9-14).

In conclusion permit me to ask these pertinent, personal questions:

1. Do you pray?
2. For what do you pray?
3. Is your life such that God will hear and answer your prayer?

Here are some of the criteria or yardsticks for effective praying.

First, Psalms 66: 18:

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Second, John 15: 7 --- Jesus said,

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Third, James 5: 16:

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The qualifying word for effectual prayer is righteous.

If St. James had said a wealthy man or an educated man or a powerful man, only a minority could have qualified. But he said "a righteous man." Here all can meet the requirement through Christ, who first will "cleanse us from all unrighteousness" and thus enable every man to come before the throne of grace and

utter the desire of his innermost being with assurance that God will hear and will respond.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/famous-prayers/>

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