

Make Sure That God is Hearing Your Prayers

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer as a conversation with God, likening it to making a phone call where we must ensure a clear connection by having faith that God is listening and removing any sin or wrong attitudes from our hearts. The speaker highlights the need for reconciliation with others before presenting our prayers to God, stressing the significance of maintaining open communication with Him through a clear conscience and faith in His responsiveness.

Scripture: Psalms 66:18, Matthew 5:23, James 5:16, Matthew 5:8, 1 John 1:9, Proverbs 15:29, 1 Peter 3:12, Isaiah 59:2, Hebrews 10:22

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Reconciliation with God and Others"

Description

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Transcript

I want to speak in a way that all the children here understand. So please listen carefully. Prayer is like speaking on a phone.

And you children have all seen your parents speaking on a phone. And if you see how they begin that conversation, they will click on a name or put a number there and then it will ring. And they don't start speaking.

They start speaking only when the other person has come online. That means you know the other person has come online. Then you start speaking.

So if there's an improper connection like maybe the internet connection is not there or your phone supplier's line is not clear there and it keeps on ringing. And then you don't speak. You don't speak until you're absolutely sure the other person is listening.

That is the most important thing in prayer. Please remember. There's one more thing and that is faith.

But this is the most important thing to know that God is listening. Because once you're sure that God is listening, you can be absolutely sure he's made a record of your prayer. And then you can be absolutely sure that he will answer, not perhaps in the way you expect, but in a better way.

God's own answers are always much better than what we ask for. So what are the things that will prevent God from picking up the phone and saying, yes, what do you want? So please listen carefully. Psalm 66.

These are rules I have followed. There are so many prayers of mine God has answered. And I know when I pray that God hears.

I ask God to speak to me and he speaks to me as well. Over a period of time you'll be able to hear God speaking to your heart. But you won't hear him speaking to your heart if you never talk to him.

And you don't have to talk to him only in a prayer meeting. As soon as you get up in the morning from bed, that means as soon as you wake up before you even get out of bed. I want to encourage all of you to say a little prayer to Jesus before you even get out of bed.

Thank you for this day, Lord Jesus. Help me not to sin, not to hurt anybody today. Help me to please you and all that I do.

Okay, Psalm 66 and verse 18. If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Very clear.

He will not. So it's not what you do. It's what you think in your heart.

In your heart, if you're thinking something bad about somebody else, or you're very critical of someone, it's none of your business. We have to be careful about people. And so if somebody is a bad person, you must know he's a bad person.

There's nothing wrong in knowing that. God doesn't say you must assume that all people are good because all people are not good. So if you know that somebody is a bad person or somebody in school is a bad person, okay, know that.

But don't wish any evil for that person. Even for the worst person in the world, we must not wish any evil. God will judge them.

So leave that to God. You don't have to interfere in that. Make sure that in your heart when you pray today and always, there is no wrong attitude towards anyone.

Because that'll break the line. Connection with God is gone. You can keep on praying.

It's like little children sometimes pick up a phone and keep on saying hello, hello and say a lot of things. Nobody is at the other end. A lot of believers when they pray, it's exactly like that.

I'm absolutely convinced. There's nobody at the other end. They keep on praying, praying, praying and they satisfy themselves.

I've said something. Nothing happens. Year after year, nothing happens in their lives, but they keep on doing it.

It's like children playing and speaking on the telephone now. We must grow up from that. So that's the first thing you need to do.

Not only now, but always whenever you pray, ask yourself, is there any wickedness in your heart? Is there any sin? Are you thinking evil about somebody? Then don't pray. Go to sleep. Much better.

Or go and read something or do something else. Go and play games. Don't pray.

I'm telling you don't pray because it's a waste of time. God's not listening. If you want to pray, make sure you don't allow any sin to be in your heart.

That's why I say as soon as you're aware of some sin in your heart, immediately confess it and cleanse it in the blood of Jesus. Doesn't take long. Not even one second.

Gone. Then you pray. I'll tell you from my experience of many, many years that most believers don't practice this.

In my entire life, I never heard one person preach on this verse and say this is a condition for prayer. That shows how little people talk about it. Have you ever heard a preacher tell you on the basis of this verse that God will not hear your prayer if you have sin in your heart? Well, I never heard it.

I never heard it in 60 years. I preach it all the time. Because I want God to listen to your prayer.

So if you've got sin or any wickedness in your heart, it's so easy to get rid of it now. Say, Lord, I've got this bad thought against someone. Please forgive me.

I want to get rid of it. I want to have some good thoughts about even about bad people. I'm not saying that we must think they are good.

They are bad. But what's that got to do with me? They are bad. That's between them and God.

I don't have any wrong attitude towards them. I don't wish them evil. God is their judge.

He'll deal with them. Even if people have done evil to you, leave it to God to judge them. You don't tackle that yourself.

God says, I will repay. You don't have to do it yourself. Never, never take revenge.

Never desire revenge. Never desire evil. If somebody has done something bad to you, don't wish that some evil will come to that person.

Don't be happy when some evil comes to that person. If you are like that, God will never hear your prayer. I believe a lot of prayers never go to heaven.

They go to the roof and just bounce off the roof and come. We don't want to be like that this evening or at any time in our life. If somebody had drilled that into my head when I was first born again, I wouldn't have wasted a lot of time praying useless prayers because I had things in my heart that were not right and I was still praying.

It was a waste of time. I've been to all night prayer meetings. Waste of time, but it's very blessed.

The early days in our home church in Bangalore, we used to have six hours of prayer and fasting. I always insisted that make sure there's no sin in your heart and clear your heart. There were people baptized in the Holy Spirit and all during that time.

It was very, very, very important. Okay, one more thing. Matthew chapter 5. I'm not going to make a list of many things, only two things.

One I told you already, if you regard any wickedness or sin in your heart. The second is here. Prayer is like making an offering to God.

I'm offering a prayer to God. So here it says how to make an offering. Matthew 5.23. When you're presenting your offering, that is your prayer now at God, in God's presence.

Those days it was an altar. And then now as you're about to pray, you remember that you did or said something to your brother or sister or your dad or mom or your child or your husband or your wife. And they have been offended.

Now, some people are offended even when we did nothing wrong. We can't bother about them. But when a person is hurt because you did something or said something to them or about them and they're offended, then it says, you got to be reconciled to your brother.

You got to go to that person and say, Hey, I'm sorry for what I did or said to you. Please forgive me. Sorry for having hurt you or whatever you did.

Then come. So that's being reconciled means, okay, you've told now whether he forgives you or not is none of your business. You have done your part.

Ask forgiveness. That's it. If he says I don't forgive you, you're not responsible.

You've already asked forgiveness. That's all. And then come and present your prayer.

Verse 24. That's another condition. Now what to do if you realize now that someone is like that? God will accept it.

Even if you say, Lord, at the first opportunity, I'm going to set it right with that person. I can't do it right now because I'm sitting here. But at the first opportunity I get after I leave this place, I will somehow get in touch with that person and ask forgiveness.

Very, very important. And you must live like that every day where you haven't, if you've hurt anyone and that can happen accidentally, purposely determined that you will ask forgiveness and settle the matter immediately so that your line of communication with God is open all the time. How careful we are to make sure that our phones are always connected to the phone companies lines.

You're disturbed because you may suddenly want to make a phone call and maybe you didn't pay your bill or something wrong with your phone. How eager we are. How many times we use our phone in a day and how disturbed you are if the lines not connected.

Must be like that in prayer. Lord, I want my lines to be open. I've sought to keep that in my own heart always.

For that you must be very careful about your speech. So often we say things which we should not have said. In future you say, Lord, help me to be more guarded in what I say so that I don't sin and I don't hurt people.

I want to be careful because a lot of the things, even if you don't say it, it would have been better if you never said something. We haven't gained anything by something we say. We say so many things from which we gain nothing.

So let's be careful in future to make sure that a line of communication with God is always clear. And like I said, the only other thing required is faith. Faith is to believe that when the line is clear, according to these conditions I just mentioned, God definitely picks up the phone.

And even though you can't see the person at the other end of the phone line, yes, you know he's listening. So God is listening. That's one of the most important things I want in my life, to know that every moment, not just every day, every moment of my life, the channel of communication with God is clear.

Because I don't know when I'll have a need to suddenly pray. Immediately, some emergency, I have to pray. Why does it say in James 5, you must know this verse, James 5, it's not a condition, it's just a statement.

It says in James 5 and verse 16, that the prayer of a righteous person can accomplish a tremendous lot. James 5, verse 16. The righteous person, you can be one of those righteous person, you children can be righteous people.

Your prayer can accomplish a tremendous lot. The righteous person is the person who's got nothing between him and God. Everything is clear.

What a lot. Elijah was one example like that. He prayed just for one minute.

You read that prayer in 1 Kings 18, one minute, fire came from heaven. So let's learn to pray with a clear conscience always.

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