

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 808-7777

Visit Our Website at:
MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

October 27, 2024

“What We Express In Prayer” Pt. 2

By Brian Meade

As we continue From last week on our subject of the expressions of our prayers, let us examine some more aspects of what prayer says about us.

Our main focus is to see how God looks at our prayers. Jesus gave us great insight into the heart of the Father in this regard, as He spoke often of prayer. Truly, His example speaks volumes!



III. Prayer Expresses The Desires Of Our Heart To God.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:12, *“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

God wants His people to come to Him in the avenue of prayer to express their desires (Psalm 37:4). This is generally what some think of when they consider praying to God. Sadly, prayer is often only looked at as something like a wish list of what we might like to have from God. Some view prayer as a means of gaining material prosperity from God in a selfish way.

James, the brother of Jesus, speaks to this misconception by saying, *“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”* (James 4:1-3).

James addresses the problem of praying without our desires being in tune with God’s desires. This way of praying causes strife and self-seeking only. This is not the way to properly pray to God.

We must pray only what is according to the will of the Father, as John writes, *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”* (1 John 5:14).

This is why it is important to study the Bible to have an understanding of what is the will of the Father (Ephesians 5:17; Matthew 7:21). A good understanding of God’s word can only help us in our prayers. It will keep us from being selfish and self-centered in our prayers, because that is not true behavior a Christian needs to have in the first place.

Jesus taught His disciples to “deny himself” (Matthew 16:24) in order to follow Him, and that absolutely includes how we pray. If we only think of ourselves in praying to God, we have more in common with the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.’”* We should avoid praying this way!

Praying, as it ought to be, is about expressing our needs, and not our greeds to God. It has everything to do with the attitude of those who pray. We should not think that God owes us anything we might demand of Him, or that prayer is about claiming what is our due rights from God.

But whenever we pray, it should be with the expression of the attitudes of humility, reverence, patience, and foremost— making sure it is according to God’s will. If we understand how God is turned away from arrogance and pride in praying to Him (James 4:6), we will seek to avoid such in our prayers.

But having said all of that, prayer is about what we desire from God that will benefit ourselves and others. Some will pray for their brethren (Colossians 1:3). Some will pray in times of desperation or emergency (1 Kings 19:1-28). Some will pray for the needs that others have, when they know what others are going through (1 Timothy 2:1). Some will pray for the faith of others (Luke 22:32). Some will pray that God will forgive others (James 5:16). Some will pray for a child to be born to them (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

All these are good desires that men and women of the Bible have prayed for in Scripture.

IV. Prayer Expresses That We Understand What We Need.

This goes right along with our last point about asking God for the desires of our heart. It goes without saying that we must know what to ask God for in our prayers. It could be that our prayers are always so brief and simple because we have never given careful consideration of our spiritual needs. Do we really know what we need or have we just gotten used to praying what others have prayed in our hearing?

Jesus teaches us, along this line of prayer, “.....For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Matthew 6:8). Someone might say something like, “If God knows I need it, then why doesn’t He just give it to me without my asking for it?”

That might seem logical to say that, but Jesus still taught His disciples to pray for their needs in the model prayer in Luke 11:1-4. They needed to eat everyday, and Jesus taught them to pray for their daily bread (Luke 11:3). They needed to pray for forgiveness, and forgiving others (Luke 11:4), and deliverance from the devil and temptation as well.

There may be other needs we may have, but do we have an understanding of our spiritual life to ask God to help us. If we take a spiritual inventory of self and our needs— we may see the need to engage in prayer in a deeper fashion.

The Bible tells us Jesus prayed “*all night*” before He chose His disciples in Luke 6:12. And some might say, “I could never pray all night to God, I just wouldn’t know what to say for that long.”

But if we really examine ourselves, and look at our weaknesses and our needs before God, we may see more need to pray than we previously thought. It is for our good to know what we need. James even tells us one of the reasons we fail to receive from the Lord is because we fail to ask. “...*You do not have because you do not ask.*” (James 4:2). We should not be oblivious to our spiritual needs!

Do we need wisdom? (James 1:5). Do we need forgiveness? (1 John 1:8-10). Do we need patience? Do we need humility? Do we need self-control? Do we need love for others like we should? Do we need more opportunities to lead others to Christ? Do we need more faith? Do we need perseverance? Only you can rightly know what you need to pray for in these matters.

But even then, we may not know everything in this regard, as Paul would say in Romans 8:26, “*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*”

But suffice it to say, let us do what we can for our prayers before God, and trust in Him when we need His help in knowing what to pray for. If we will do that, and take our prayers seriously, we will be on safe and sure ground as we approach our heavenly Father (Hebrews 4:16).



Memory Verse of the Week:

James 4:15 (NKJB)

“Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

Those Who Need Our Prayers & Encouragement:

Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, & Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Jamie Jones, Mary Ann Holley, LuAnne Parrish, Billy Grisham, Burt Ward, Wesley Trimble, Anita Harris, Fred Johnson, Bill Hall, George Hutto, Nathan Cox, Angela Warren (Lisa Busby's friend who has cancer), B.J. Graves, Danny Cottrell, Chandler McCain (Cancer), Randall Oliver (Lynlie's Dad), Michelle Hopper (Dan Cottrell's sister) has been diagnosed with cancer, And Anita Harris.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Blake Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "What It Means To Walk By Faith"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Fred Johnson
Hebrews
Author: Daniel H. King, Sr
Starting Page & Question: Page #101, Question #7

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Lee Busby
Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 3:14-16.
Song Leader: Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper: Paul Busby
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: "How The Church Supports The Truth"
Closing Prayer: Russell Briggs

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

October 30, 2024

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
Workbook: The Minor Prophets #2
Author: By Marc Gibson
Starting Page & Question: Page 32 Question #1
Invitation: Russell Briggs
Song Leader: Brian Meade
Closing Prayer: Blake Briggs

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And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.



“What It Means To Walk By Faith”

Lesson Text: **2 Corinthians 5:7.**

I. What Walking By Faith Requires.

- More Than Sight— Real Faith & Trust.
 - **2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Hebrews 11:1; 11:6.**

- God’s Word.
 - **Romans 10:17; John 30:30-31.**

- Our Conviction Of Spiritual Truths.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:1-8.**

- Faith That We Act On.
 - “By Faith Noah...”
Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6-7.

 - “By Faith Abraham....”
Hebrews 11:8-10; Genesis 12:1-4.

II. How We Walk By Faith.

- We Follow Jesus Everyday.
Luke 9:23-26; 1 Peter 2:21.
How Do You Follow Someone You Can’t See?

- We Prepare For The Judgment Day.
Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.
How Do You Prepare For A Day Not On Your Calendar? Schedule?

- We Avoid Hell At All Costs.
Mark 9:43-48; Colossians 3:5-6.
How Do You Avoid A Place So Terrible?

- We Strive To Enter The Joy Of Heaven.
Luke 13:24; 2 Peter 1:5-11.
How Do You Seek To Enter A Place So Wonderful?

- We Obey The Gospel.
2 Corinthians 5:17-20.
How Do We Know We Are A New Creation In Christ?

“How The Church Supports The Truth”

Lesson Text: **1 Timothy 3:14-16.**

I. God Chose The Church To Support The Truth.

- He Did Not Give This Charge To Angels: **Acts 8:26.**
- He Did Not Leave It Up To The Holy Spirit Alone: **John 16:8—Acts 2:36-37.**
 - The Holy Spirit Gave The Word To Peter By Inspiration, But Peter Had To Preach It.
- But He Gave It To The Church To Support The Truth.
 - **Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:14.**
- Examples Of The Early Church:
 - Preaching On Salvation Through Jesus: **Acts 4:10-12; 8:35-39.**
 - Preaching On The Resurrection Of Jesus: **Acts 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.**
 - The Impact Of Such Preaching: **Acts 5:28; Acts 8:4; Acts 17:6.**
 - They Did Not Cease Preaching Christ: **Acts 5:41-42.**

II. How We Carry On The Support Of Truth Today.

- By Every Member Doing Their Part. **Ephesians 4:14-16.**
- Growing In The Knowledge Of The Truth. **2 Peter 3:18; 2 Timothy 2:15.**
- Like The Early Church, Taking The Gospel With Us Everywhere!
 - Because We Still Believe In The Power Of The Gospel- **Romans 1:14-16.**
 - Inviting Others To Church Services Or Bible Studies.
- Support Bible Studies, Worship Services, & Gospel Meetings Of The Church.
 - Your Presence Supports The Truth— Empty Seats Do Not! **Hebrews 10:23-25.**
 - If We Invite Others, We Need To Be There Too!
- Encouraging Others In The Truth.
 - Bible Class Teachers/Preachers.
 - Why Did God Choose To Have Teachers, If Bible Study Is Unimportant?
Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 13:1.
 - Holding Up The Hands Of Such Brethren: **Exodus 17:10-13.**
- Financially Supporting The Truth: **Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:15; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.**
- Standing For The Defense Of The Truth: **Philippians 1:17; Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15.**
- Being A Good Example Of The Truth By Living It.
 - Being A Light To Others. **Philippians 2:14-16.**
 - Showing The Love, Mercy, Humility, Faith, & The Truth Of Jesus To Others.
 - Just Like Paul Did: **1 Corinthians 11:1; Galatians 2:20.**