

Ultimate Prayer

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Preacher: Rev. Clive Jennings

[0 : 00] Good morning everyone, good morning, good to see you, good to see you, welcome you if you're visiting especially. It's at the end of the sermon series, it's called The Ultimate Prayer and I remember many years ago being in a church where the vicar produced a stepladder and said in trust, is there anybody, a child here, who would like to climb up this stepladder and throw themselves into the hands of a parent or carer who they trust? It went reasonably well until the parent didn't catch the child. The thing is, I was going to replicate that this morning but with a 16-page risk assessment to fill out, but you get the gist. The thing about this ultimate prayer in our scripture this morning is about trust, is about trusting in God and maybe for those of us who have been blessed to have a break of some sort, join there. It's been a time and a great series to reflect during our prayer time on how we trust in God because I'm really encouraged by this morning's scripture as we come to that place where Jesus prays not once but three times. That really encourages me that he goes back again and asks and pleads and says, is there another way? Have you ever been in that place where you've prayed and you said, Lord, is there another way to this? If it is, would you show me?

Would you show me please? Lord, is there an easier way out, a more convenient way that suits me? Maybe, maybe something that you have faced and you or you're facing at the moment and as you pray, you're coming back again and again saying, Lord, is there another way? Please, would you show me?

And this is what Jesus does this morning and in this scripture, so often I've been diverted by the sleeping disciples. You know, like many of us here, I put a high value on friendship and loyalty and also to think there that I'm a bit diverted because I'm a bit angry at the disciples.

Couldn't you stay awake? Couldn't you just stay awake at this point when Jesus, who is clearly distressed, clearly wanting an answer from the Lord, clearly pressing in in prayer and you couldn't even stay with him? And then I suddenly reflected on that and I thought, how often is that me? How often don't I do that stickability with God when I stand with people in prayer? Something for us to think about. So here we is at this crucial time and so often here we've got here this third time that Jesus prays. If it's possible, would you take this cup away from me? If it's possible, would you do that?

Because I know what I'm facing. And then, and then on the third time, he gets this response and he says, yes, but not as I will, but as you will, Lord. What are we like at that? Trusting in God. Handing over as this ultimate prayer is to say it's about your will, God, not so much about mine.

[3 : 46] Your will be done. Your will be done in my life. May your will be done. And throw in there, he asks his disciples to watch and pray. That's an interesting one to throw in there. Watch and pray that you won't be led or fall into temptation. What's that temptation for the disciples? What's that temptation for us that we don't watch and pray? Probably tempted to abandon him? Which they did. Hide away? Which they did.

Are you tempted to deny him? Which they did? All of those things. Jesus is so perceptive in pointing out to his disciples the importance of watching and praying, of being present.

Now, there is this word called submit. Submitting to God's word and in his will. And often submission has got this connotation of something that's really painful. Now, I don't know, maybe you didn't have, yeah, maybe it was something to do in my secondary modern education, probably. But we had this thing in a playground that we did. I don't know whether you'd ever heard of it. It's called a Chinese burn.

You ever did that? Wasn't it cruel? And wasn't it painful? You know? And somebody, if you haven't heard of this, somebody would grab hold of your arm and they would move it in different directions until you shouted submit. And suddenly this idea of submission is taken on such a strange

connotation. Instead of what I sense scripture is saying to us, that actually sometimes there is a positivity in submitting to God's will. Because it's less of our own and more of him. You know? I don't know who invented that mind-numbing game, but no one, I'm so glad that kids have got their heads stuck in mobile phones now.

No, perhaps not. Is there something in your life where you have sensed God asking you to submit to his purposes? In this ultimate prayer that we talked about this morning, you know, asking you to do something, to give something, to share something, to sacrifice something that involves submitting to his will above your own. Have you experienced that? Are you asking for that? Is the Lord asking us something in that in this season? What are your initial thoughts to God's asks in your life?

[6 : 29] When God asks us to do something, what is our initial response? I guess it depends on what it is, really, but maybe it falls into several categories. One, Lord, this is too tough for me. One is, this is too big. Maybe it's too inconvenient at the moment for me. Or maybe it's just too much. Where do we draw the line in responding to God's will and matching him with what he is asking of us in the everyday, in this ultimate prayer? Where are we in asking? Do we jettison everything we know? Because after all, we know and believe in God's promises, that he will equip us, enable us, excite us, enthuse us, and empower us, that he is with us. He will never leave us or forsake us. So what is the reason? Why, why, why, why are we so reticent about when God asks us to do things, even if they seem too big? Do we trust in him? And I think that's the ultimate of where we're going. Jesus trusted in the Father. Yes, he went back.

Yes, he asked. That's what made Jesus real. That's what makes Jesus real for us. He went back. He asked again, Lord, is there another way? Is there another way? No, there's not. This is what I'm asking you to do.

As painful as it is, as painful as it is for me to watch you go through this, but I know that going through this, your redemptive power of the cross will give us life and will give others life. That's what I'm asking you to do. God makes some big asks of us at times. Jesus taught a few chapters earlier, the greatest commandment, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is like unto it, is love your neighbour as yourself. Big asks. The Lord makes big asks of us. And where are we? When do we stop trusting in God and his promises for us? Where have we stop trusting in God? Where are we? When do we trust and let go and trust in God's purposes?

Where are we? When do we trust in God? Where are we? When do we trust in God? Where are we with that? Maybe we fall into a scale of one to five. It depends on how we are at the time, you know?

[9 : 15] Always, Lord, anything you ask of me, Lord, I will do it. Maybe two? Well, sometimes, Lord, depends on what you're asking. Maybe it's three. Maybe, Lord, you've caught me on a good day. I've just come back from new wine or spring harvest.

I'm pretty good spiritually at the moment, so I'm pretty well up for it at the moment. Or is it four? Rarely. What's in it for me, Lord? What's in this for me?

Or is it five? You're asking me to do what? You must be joking. The thing is this thing about, I can think of numerous times when the Lord has asked me to do something and I have prayed and it's been somewhere on that scale of one to five.

But it all ends with, Lord, I trust in you. In this morning's scripture, we see Jesus trusting in the Father. Do we trust in the Lord with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength and all our soul? Let's pause because I think we need to know that Jesus in his prayer trusted the Father. He trusted the Father in everything, his purposes, even faced with the cross and the journey to the cross. As painful as that was in the asking and as painful as that was in the watching, he trusted the Father. He trusted.

I think it was on a Willow Creek podcast that I heard many years ago about being challenged and encouraged to make big asks of people because the Lord makes big asks of us. I think the Lord is making big asks of us, especially at this time. You know, we say yes because we trust in him as our saviour. We trust in him as our rescuer. We trust in him with all our hope, with my beginning, with my ending, with my life, my everything, my redeemer. He will not let us go. He will not let us fall.

[11 : 28] Even at my last breath, he will be there. In the film Despicable Me, I don't know whether you've seen the film, if Minions is on at the cinema at the moment, but in Despicable Me, Gru, who isn't really a great saint, but his heart has been changed by three young girls who has come into his

care, which is Margot, Edith and Agnes.

And in the point, they've been abducted by this evil villain called Vector, but in order to be rescued, they need to trust in Gru. They need to be rescued. The ultimate prayer. They have to trust.

Watch and listen for the line. I will catch you and I will never let you go again. I will catch you, but I will never let you go again.

Do we trust in him? The thing is, what I liked about that clip at the end of the day is that the Minions came down and maybe, although I wouldn't refer to the church as us as Minions because we are saints, but there is something about joining together in God's purposes, isn't there, in order to see people rescued and saved and be part of God's purposes. Do we trust in him? Jesus, what are you saying to me this morning in your scripture? What are you saying to me in this ultimate prayer that is about submitting, letting go, letting go, giving in to our preferences and resistance and hearing your asks in our lives and the lives of others around us? Do we trust in him? Do we trust in him when the economy is faltering, when fuel bills are rising? Do we trust in him with the big asks of whatever he may be asking us in responding to that? Do you trust in me with your life? Do you trust me with your ministry? Do you trust me with your family? Do you trust me in the illnesses? Do you trust me in the lives of your loved ones? Do you trust me in your finances, in your giving, in your time? And if you do, walk with me. However tough that might be, stay close to me because I will never let you go.

Speak with me. Share my hope with others. Let me comfort you. And when you pray and read the Bible, it's never about what we know, it's who we know. That's why we read the Bible.

[14 : 31] It's not about what we know in the Bible. We learn more about who we know, about a God that we trust. And I'll say we, I just sensed it's Jesus pleaded with his father and it's not wrong to do that.

Don't hear me. Don't hear me that I'm saying it's not wrong because a lot of my prayer life is pleading with him. And I'm sure yours as well. If we've stopped growing and crying out to him, then it's not real.

But I sensed this morning that there may be people here who have walked away from God because they felt that they have let him down. Trust him again. Trust him again. There may be people listening to this podcast who felt that God wasn't there for you and he left you. That's not true.

It's a lie. He is always there for you. Ask him. Watch. Pray. Jump back and allow him to hold you.

Jesus has a call on each of our lives. Do you know what that is? Do you want to know what that is?

[15 : 42] If you're not sure, ask him, knowing that you can trust in him and he will never let you down. Amen.

Amen. Amen.