

What Prayer is and What it Isn't Week 2

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[0:00] The Lord be with you. And also with you. Let us pray. O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment,¹ and light rises up in darkness for the godly, grant us in all our doubts and uncertainties the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the spirit of wisdom may save us from all wrong choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Mary Ellen's going to pray extemporaneously. If you haven't figured this out yet, we're giving you both. Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you for this evening.

We thank you for bringing us here together tonight. Lord, open our ears to your word. Help us to hear you speak. Help Dave and I speak only what you want us to say.

And help everyone in here hear the words that you want them to hear. And we pray all this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Amen. So I mentioned to you last week that we were going to have testimony time. And so now Caleb understands testimony time.

[1:30] Because he grew up in the Appalachians where you didn't have the worship service without having testimony time. Sure enough. The question I asked last week and asked you to think through this week.

When did you catch Jesus in action this past week? So did anybody catch Jesus in action? Oops. That's alright.

I don't think that was Jesus in action. I know Anglicans are not real good when it comes to testimonies.

But just, what was Jesus doing in your life or with those you encountered this week? Anybody want to share? Yes ma'am.

Go ahead, Stephanie. Stephanie what? He took me out of a stressful job. Right. Exactly. And congratulations. So what Stephanie said, that he took her out of a stressful job and has given her a new one.

[2:41] That's great. Anybody else? I have one. You have? Yeah. Okay. I was, we've been praying for Sarah and Matt for a larger car.

Because they have this big, huge seating system for Amelia now. And it won't fit in either of their cars. So they needed something larger.

They found a minivan on sale. It was priced at a price that they could afford. So they went down to look at it.

And the morning they went to look at it. They were told that the car had already been sold the night before. And she texted me and said, the car sold the night before.

The interesting thing is that as soon as I heard that, I thought, well, I'll bet the financing's going to fall through on that.

[3:42] And I never think that. And I never do. I don't know why that came to my head. But I just said, I'll bet the financing's going to go fall through.

And a few minutes later, as they were leaving the dealership, she texted me again and said, the sales manager came out and told us that there was a 75% to 80% chance that the sale of that car was not going to go through because the person had bad credit.

And sure enough, the dealership called them and said, the car will be back in Syracuse Monday. So they went Monday at lunchtime, test drove it, loved it, and bought it.

And it was affordable. So that was the most important. But that was an answer, a real answer to prayer for us. Thank you.

Anyone else catch Jesus in action this week? Yeah, we were at work, some reconciliation. I was struggling for a few days. And I was asking God.

[4:53] And today, I was able to reconcile. Oh, great. Praise God. That is so great. Thank you. Yes, ma'am. I can't hear her. Okay. In office, I was doing some reconciliation.

I was struggling with that a few days. And I was asking God to help me. And today, I managed to reconcile. Okay.

I love it when reconciliation takes place. I had a... Quite the concept. I had a... We had a wonderful chapel manager in the Air Force whose job was to count the money and to reconcile the books. And he was successful one out of eight times. He was not in the right job. Anyway. So, that's great. Anybody else before we move on? Yes, ma'am. Well, my granddaughter has two children. And her six-year-old has been really, really acting out really bad. And Jocelyn and her husband don't really have good structure as far as, you know, they're young, what they need to do.

[6:12] And I've been praying about it. And I spoke to her today. And she said, Grandma, Yana's been really, really good. She's been really good at home. You've been really firm with her.

But let her... I said, we have to let her know you love her also. Oh, yeah, we are. We're really working on it. And I just want to praise you God. I said, yeah, it's going to be so worth it in the end. Yes. You know. So, that to me is the answer. Thank you. Yeah, John. I've got two. I'll try to make them quick. Okay.

Sunday Bible study is studying Galatians. And this past Sunday, for some reason, a lot of what you were talking about was this parish.

And it specifically came out, the things that Galatians compared to our parish. And I went to Mass and was flabbergasted.

[7:16] I mean, I hate to say I was looking around the whole time, but I was uplifted seeing what we had talked about alive in the church. So, it was phenomenal.

Then the other one, at the beginning of Lent, I told my confessor that I was going to see him during Lent. And he said, email me.

And, of course, I didn't. And Sunday, he said, how's Tuesday? So, I met with my confessor yesterday.

And I feel much lighter today. Amen. Thank you. Okay. You see, we did see Jesus in action. So, we're going to ask the same question next Wednesday.

So, be watching for Jesus. All right. Now, a little summary. So, last week, if anybody wasn't here last week, we have the course outline and the sheet, the handouts.

[8:25] And so, yes, you can pick that up. Okay. So, last week, we talked some basics about prayer. We introduced the concept of Acts. A-C-T-S.

And as we do our daily prayers, God calls us to adore him. To confess. To give thanks.

And then to ask. In our world, we tend to ask first. And so, a right relationship with God turns that over.

What is the worldly view of that? This week, we're going to talk about Jesus at prayer. And the books of common prayer are still there for you to pick up on your way out.

The prayers, mostly that are wonderful prayers, are on page 810. So, take a prayer book home with you. Bring it back during Holy Week.

[9:28] And use it as a way of developing your prayer life. And growing closer to the Lord. We're going to be doing Bible study. So, we have Bibles.

Holy Bibles. You know how I know they're Holy Bibles? It says, the Holy Bible. It's got to be a Holy Bible. So, Deacon, would you help pass these out?

If you have phone Bibles, that's okay. But most of us don't. Yeah, I know. So, we went to a church and the pastor said, All right, take out your phones and go to John 3.16.

I thought, this is a millennial church. Okay, now, I hope there are enough Bibles.

I think there are. Okay. Okay. Okay.

[10:41] And now, I have something else to hand out. I'm going to ask the other deacon to pass these out. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Luke chapter 2. Jesus at prayer. As a little lesson we all know, Jesus was very God and very man. True God and true man. In a mysterious way we really can't figure out, the man Jesus communicated with God the Father.

He did that regularly. And so, we're going to be using Luke, because Luke is known as the prayer gospel. Luke, in writing about Jesus, spent a lot of time talking about prayer and the prayer of Jesus.

[12:38] And the prayer of Jesus. This can instruct us in our own prayer life. So, Mary Ellen, why don't you begin? Okay. Okay. The first section we're going to talk about is in Luke chapter 2, where Jesus is a young boy.

He's probably 10 or 11 years old. And they take him to Jerusalem. And then they leave him, assuming that he's somewhere in the crowd of people that they went, Mary and Joseph, went to Jerusalem with and left with.

And then they find out that they can't find him. So, they have to double back and look for him. And where do they find him?

In the temple, of course. And so, Luke chapter 2, verses 45 through 49, talks about, And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

[14:03] And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.

And he said to them, Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house? Jesus, even at a very, very young age, was already in the temple.

And he was praying in the temple. And that was just a part of his life. And he spent his entire ministry in the temple and praying.

And this is just the beginning of it. Okay. And then our next passage is right. Next chapter, chapter 3, verse 21.

Now, when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened.

[15:15] Did you ever see that part about praying? That's interesting, isn't it? When he was baptized and was praying. We are called a sacramental church because we highlight special times when God touches our lives.

In the church, we do that in sacraments. And our two major gospel sacraments are what? Baptism. Baptism. And what's the other? Eucharist. Or communion.

Eucharist. Or communion. And so, Jesus was, interestingly enough, sacramental in his prayer life. I don't know if I spelled that right.

Who cares? Okay. Okay. And so, with us, baptism is not just something that's cute for little kids. we all pray at the baptism. The words, sometimes overly long, the words that the priest reads are, in a sense, praying toward what God is doing.

[16:36] Most of our prayers in the liturgy are prayers which not only talk to God, but they lead us along the path of what God calls us to do and be.

And the same thing with communion of the prayer, the prayer, institutional prayer that Father Caleb reads is a prayer to God, but it also pulls us into the drama.

And Jesus over and over again cemented his life, not only, I put church, but not only in temple and synagogue, but he was sacramental in the way he gave, he said his prayers.

Okay? The next passage is Luke 4, 16. And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

Okay? Notice it says, as was his custom. It was always his custom to go to synagogue.

[18:00] As it should always be our custom to go to church. And we pray in church. We can pray outside of church, but it should be our custom to go to church to pray, just as Jesus went to synagogue to pray.

Okay. So then we go to 442. And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him. Desolate place. He realized that he needed a place where there were not distractions.

Okay? So free from distractions. What's that? Distractions. The, I had a wonderful parishioner one time who said, I can't go any place where it's free from distractions because I got these kids wandering around all the time.

And I said, do you ever go in the bathroom and shut the door? She said, yep, that's your desolate place. we need to watch for areas where we're just alone.

[19 : 37] When we lived over in the Albany area, we had a convent. And I would go there once a month for retreat day. And the nuns were very quiet.

They were a non-talking order. It was wonderful. The next one is Luke chapter 5 verse 16.

But now even more the report about him went abroad and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

So he would go in the morning, early in the morning and he would pray in the morning in a desolate place. And then he would realize as the crowds were forming and he was in more and more and more demand by the people and by the crowds that he still needed that desolate place of prayer.

And he would set himself aside to go into a desolate place. to pray even in the midst of his ministry.

[20 : 58] And he needed that connection to God and prayer gave him the connection to God.

Without that connection to God through prayer, he knew that his ministry would be nothing.

It would not be the least bit powerful. he would not know what his father wanted him to do. He would lose his connection to his father.

So he was constantly staying connected to his father through prayer. And that's what we're called to do as well.

We're called to stay connected to our father through prayer. prayer. prayer. And if need be, during the course of a very busy day, we need to set ourselves aside and go into a desolate place and pray and fill ourselves up again.

Because we empty. We get emptied out. And the way we fill ourselves up again is to pray. And so we need to do that several times during the day.

[22 : 12] And in the course of a week, we also need our time of prayer together in common prayer with our church.

We need that just as much as praying alone. I had a friend who was a Pentecostal.

And he said to me, I have to continually be baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit because I leak.

We leak. We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

Okay, John, excuse me, Luke 6, 12 through 15. In those days he went out, that's Jesus, went out to the mountain to pray and all night he continued in prayer to God.

And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them 12 who he named apostles. He didn't kind of show up one day and say, let's see, I need some apostles.

[23 : 25] You, you, you, you, and you. Anybody else want to volunteer? No. He prayed all night, praying before decisions.

We had our daughter and son-in-law were praying for a car.

that word, that says decisions. They were praying for a car and they prayed seriously for a while.

every decision we make needs to be made in the context of our prayers, of asking God to cleanse us enough that we can hear him to pray.

Okay? When Dave was in the Air Force, we knew that every two or three years we would get orders. and when we knew it was about time for us to think about moving again, we would set aside time to pray and fast about where our next ministry would be.

[24 : 50] And it made it a little, it made the transition a little easier. It was never real easy, but it made it a little easier knowing that we had prayed about it and we were prepared to go where they wanted us to go.

Our personality is such that I'm ready to go today. And Mary Ellen is structured. Settled. Settled.

And so that's not the best life, the Air Force life in that context. But we did cover a settled person.

We did cover some territory though.

And we never left the earth. Yes, that's right. All right. We're on 918 now?

Yes. Okay, Luke 9 verse 18. Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him and he asked them, who do the crowds say that I am?

[26 : 03] So in this, once again, here, he was praying in solitude, but he was praying with his, what you might call his fellowship group, his disciples.

And so he not only needed alone time, he needed time with his group, with his group of disciples as well.

And as he was praying with them, he was also teaching them how to pray. and then just a few verses on, verse 28, now about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John

and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

I don't know if you ever caught that part. The transfiguration took place because he and his select group of leaders, three of them, went up on the mountain to pray.

We catch a vision of God when we're praying. The vision of God comes through prayer.

[27:26] I was reading in Acts today and Paul was talking about when he was praying and he said, when I was in a trance praying and I thought, I didn't know that.

Sometimes God so fills us when we make ourselves available to him that we might and you can do crazy stuff in your head, but we might actually move into a time when we're not fully in control of our mind.

That's weird. That's sometimes called a trance in prayer. And it this happened over and over again in the Bible.

Okay? next passage is Luke 10 verse 21. In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. And here's intimacy with God.

[29:03] He's feeling so close to God that he can be thankful to him. Thank you for being there and thank you for helping me.

thank you for the people that you have given me. And he's actually when he calls on the Father, he sometimes uses the word Abba.

And Abba actually means Daddy. So he is so close to God the Father that he calls him Daddy. So and the way he keeps this intimacy with God is by his continual praying and spending time with God.

If you had a dad growing up and you called him Dad or Daddy, raise your hand. Yeah, most of us. It's a familiar term.

And God doesn't mind if we use that with him. He is our God. He is God our Father. Okay, so 11, 1 through 4.

[30:19] Now Jesus was praying in a certain place. Do you notice a theme with Jesus? Did he pray a good bit? Yeah. As he was praying in a certain place, when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.

And he said to them, when you pray, and it's what we call the Lord's Prayer. In those days, people would go to a rabbi, and the rabbi would lead this group of people and teach them how to live.

And so one of the things rabbis did with their group was teach them how to pray. So the apostles and the disciples, right?

Apostle means one sent out, disciple means student. The apostles were students. They were students that Jesus selected after praying all night who became the leaders of the church.

As their rabbi, rabbi as a word means teacher, as their rabbi, he was tasked with teaching them to lead the church under the power of the Holy Spirit.

[31:42] The main part was learning how to pray. And so he taught them what we call today the Lord's Prayer. In the church I grew up in, it was called the Our Father.

Well, guess what it starts with? Our Father. This prayer is the perfect prayer, we call it. The first part is giving glory to God.

God. The second part is asking God to arrange our lives in accordance with His. It's very noticeable that the part of the prayer that gears toward us personally and what we want is give us this day our daily bread.

And then it goes on. Now that just doesn't mean I, by the way, whoever brought that sourdough bread, that was great. Good job.

So it's not just talking about a slice of bread, is it? It's talking about what happens to us in the course of the day. It was very early in the church's life that the apostles and the disciples said the church needs to be saying this prayer.

[32:59] And so every worship service we have, we share together as brothers and sisters and talk to our Father. It's for me almost the most important part of the worship because we're together in that.

In some of the Roman Catholic churches they hold hands and say the prayer. And that's kind of a neat thing is if you like to hold hands with people.

It can be kind of strained if holding hands is not your big thing. But the symbol is we are together as brothers and sisters. And so that's why Father Caleb is going to change the liturgy to have us all hold hands and pray.

Right, Raymond? Yeah, let's pray about that. Right, right, there you go. we don't have to hold hands to be together in the spirit.

But take a new understanding of the Lord's prayer if you would. And this Sunday when we worship together, see the Lord's prayer as your way of being with brothers and sisters talking to your dad.

[34 : 14] Okay, the next one is Luke 22 verses 41 and 42 where he's in the Garden of Gethsemane praying to his father.

And he withdrew from them, his disciples, about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. That's total surrender. Total and absolute surrender to God in prayer.

Not my will, but yours be done. And he didn't like what he was going to have to do, obviously.

And he was very, probably pretty nervous about it, what was coming. but he was willing to do it because it's what his father wanted him to do.

[35 : 20] So he totally surrendered his will to his father. And that's what God asks us to do. Surrender your will to me.

Pray to me. Surrender your will to me. And you share your, and he was sharing his honest feelings. And that's something that we also need to do when we are praying. God already knows our feelings anyway. So you're not keeping anything from him by not sharing it with him.

So you might as well say it. And if you're angry with God, tell him. If you're disappointed, tell him. He already knows it. But tell him anyway. Okay, then the last example we are citing is chapter 23 verse 34.

[36 : 35] And Jesus said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. forgiveness is fairly important in the Christian life.

And we forgive in prayer. One of the hardest things to do is actually forgive someone.

Especially when they've done something really horrible. I had a guy who sued me for a half a million dollars. because he didn't like me.

And you know, other than these two really great attorneys, you can find an attorney that if he thinks he can make some money out of the deal, he'll do it. Well, it turned out to be a frivolous lawsuit. Both attorneys agreed this was not going anywhere. And so it was all done. Except, I had to forgive this guy.

[37 : 46] He wanted to destroy me. Forgiveness did not come easy, but forgiveness came. Now, you know, there's that old phrase, forgive and forget.

That's not in the Bible. You never forget, but you so forgive that you put it behind you.

And the person no longer has control of your life. You have taken control in the power of the Holy Spirit and forgiven that person. That's done in prayer.

That's what Jesus did. Right? And how about Deacon Stephen? What did he say just before he died? Forgive them.

Sometimes the last words of our lips before we go to meet the Lord in a more personal way. Father, forgive me and I forgive everyone.

[38 : 49] That's making peace with God. That's what God calls us to do. It's not necessarily the best, I think, to wait until our deathbed before we make peace with God.

In fact, each night before we go to sleep, we should be, what did you call that, reconciliation? Reconciling the books in our hearts, in our minds.

I have this sort of standard prayer, Lord, if I have offended you or anyone in any way this day, I truly am sorry and I humbly apologize. And then I say, thank you, Father, for forgiving me.

That's really important to your life. Now, I'm going to put on my psychologist hat. When you do not forgive, you lay a burden on yourself. And you know what comes after refusal to forgive?

Bitterness. The root of bitterness. It takes charge of us. It steals the joy that God means for each of us to have.

[40 : 04] Did you know that Jesus wants you to have joy? We let Satan rob us of that wonderful joy.

And a lot of it has to do with forgiveness or lack thereof. Jesus modeled that. Now, we have gone through the passages and we have looked at some things that Jesus had. First of all, he anchored his prayer life in the church. For him, it was the synagogue. Synagogue, Back in those days, you had the temple in Jerusalem. but people went there maybe once a year, maybe twice a year. So, God divided the people of Israel into small communities and they were called synagogues. They look a lot like our parishes. Most of the time there was a rabbi, but there were lay leaders that ran that synagogue. The rabbi was more of a teacher. [41 : 20] Well, you anchored your life in that synagogue. For instance, some of us visited the synagogue in Capernaum last year.

Okay? I can tell you that only about 100% of the people in that village went to the synagogue every week. It was your way of life. You anchored your prayer in the synagogue. So, we anchor our prayer in the church. Jesus set that pattern. Jesus was sacramental in his prayer life. He hooked his ministry and his prayer to solid events. Okay? Not only was he praying at baptism, what was the other sacrament he was involved with? The Eucharist. He invented the Eucharist. He invented communion. He took what the Jews had been saying for a couple thousand years, which was the Passover that they celebrated once a year. [42 : 33] He took the words and changed them for his disciples to where instead of the Lamb being sacrificed, he became the Lamb.

That's what, do we say that, behold, what do we say? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

That's straight out of Old Testament. That's the Passover Lamb. Jesus is the Passover Lamb. You see, he was sacramental.

And the wonderful gift is he said, you don't have to do this once a year. you can do this every day if you like. The supper can be an everyday event.

In a lot of churches, it is an everyday event. Our church is really not large enough to do that. But I've been involved in churches where every day we had church, every day we had communion.

[43 : 33] And sometimes it was the same five holy women who would come. But the church was celebrating the Eucharist every day.

Okay. And so I always thank God for holy women. Okay. He was regular in his worship.

He often had to pray free from distractions, and that's why we see him over and over again going in the mountains. He needed to pray to have the strength to lead.

He was not only dealing with the Pharisees and Sadducees, but he was running a seminary at the same time. He needed strength to do that.

He prayed before major decisions. He prayed for vision. He prayed the Lord's prayer.

[44 : 38] So you know why it's called the Lord's prayer now. The Lord Jesus taught it to us. It's his prayer. He's lent it to us. The Lord's prayer. He surrendered as he prayed.

Okay. He declared his honest feelings. Dad, I don't really want to do this. This is going to hurt. Do I really have to do it? Could you find some other way to do that?

That's kind of what he said. And then he said, however, you're the dad. I'm the kid. You know what's best.

I'm going to trust you. Not too bad. That's what he calls us to do. And last, forgiveness. Prayers are based on the whole point of the fact that God has forgiven us, sent his son, Jesus, to die for us.

We call that the atonement, at-one-ment. His death brings us to be one with God the Father. He has shown that love for us.

[45 : 51] And so he calls us as a body to live life for him. Okay. Did I beat this to death with a stick? I just wanted to mention one other place where Jesus prayed very strongly.

And it was also in the Garden of Gethsemane. And at this, in John, Jesus prays for the cup to be taken away from him.

But he also prays for his disciples to give them strength. as they're going through this. And that's one of my favorite. I think it's in chapter 17.

And you can read through that. That's one of my favorite prayers of his that he prays for his disciples.

It's a beautiful prayer. It's sometimes called the pastoral prayer. prayer. John, the apostle, who put together the gospel of John, when you're writing books, you've got to figure out what you're going to put where and how much of something you put in.

[47:13] So he put a whole lot of emphasis on that one prayer that Jesus made to his father, the pastoral prayer. The key is that we all may be one.

as I am one with you and they are one with me. Thank you, Mary Ellen. That was excellent. Okay, now, the last thing we're going to do is break into groups.

We have one, two, three. we've got a whole table of kids over there.

And we've got Eric and Elaine. Maybe they can join that one. Maybe you can join another table and just see how that works. Okay, so if you'll notice on your sheets, there are two questions once again.

Share a time when you felt the presence of Jesus when praying. And the second is, share a time of spiritual dryness and how that feels.

[48:24] I introduced that second question because that's a time to care for one another, to minister to one another. We are not all on the mountain at the same time. And so we need each other to help move us along.

And we're going to, you need to be really honest with each other about this spiritual dryness thing. Because, once again, talking percentages, it only hits 100% of all Christians.

But it hits us all at different times. So that's what we're going to do. Now let's see, we need leaders for each table. People who were not leaders last week.

So Raymond, you're going to be this table leader. Stephanie's going to be, no, she was last week. No, she wasn't here last week.

She wasn't here last week. No, no, Carol did it last week. I know. Oh, I thought you were pointing to Carol. Okay.

[49:27] Okay, Stephanie, good. At this table, we'll have Chris be the leader. All right, and so what I'm going to ask you to do is, leaders, start with a prayer, facilitate the conversation simply by asking the questions, and when I say time's up, close the prayer.

Close with the prayer. Okay, so there we go. Father, we pray that you would come to us now and fully be in our beds, be in our presence, be in our what we say and what we ask.

Help us to know you and to walk through and to hear you. if you are going to be clear. Let's go.

Let's Let's go. go.

go. Let's Let's Let's go. Let's go. Let's Let's Let's