

Bible and Prayer

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Date: 07 January 2026

Preacher: Peter Adam

[0:00] Hi, welcome to the 2026 Summer Bible Studies. My name is Jeff. I'm one of the pastors here at Holy Trinity.! Well, I wonder how your prayer life is.

I wonder how often you think about that. I bet there'd be many and varied responses to that question around the room. Tonight and throughout these studies in January, Peter will be challenging us from God's Word to consider why and how we pray, particularly using prayers from the New Testament.

The New Testament is filled with prayer and it's a wonderful resource for learning how to pray. I'm eager to hear how Peter will use the Scriptures to challenge us into understanding God and prayer and how we together will be encouraged to pray.

Please join me. Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank you for our gathering. We thank you that we can join together as brothers and sisters to serve and encourage one another, to fellowship together as we hear from your Word.

Would your Spirit be at work in our hearts and our lives tonight that we may hear the truth of your Word and may know how to respond to it in repentance and faith for your glory.

[1:51] Amen. Amen. We're going to have the Bible read now. If you'd like to perhaps open up both Bible passages now, the first one from Hebrews chapter 10, starting at verse 19, and the second Romans chapter 8, starting at verse 9, and then I'll read them one after the other.

Amen. Would you join me as I pray?

Father, the psalmist says, direct my footsteps according to your Word and let no sin rule over me. As we prepare to hear your Word, may you lead us by your Spirit, strengthening us to put sin to death in our lives, that we might humbly serve you in all we do.

Amen. Our first reading is Hebrews chapter 10, verse 19 to 25. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way open for us through the curtain, that is his body, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

[3:57] Our second reading is from Romans chapter 8, verse 9 to 17. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh, but in the realm of the Spirit.

If indeed the Spirit of God lives in you, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again. Rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.

[5:17] And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings, in order that we may also share in his glory.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks, Peter. Well, it's a great delight and privilege to be with you. My friend Paul Barker tells me this is the 30th series of summer Bible studies. So it's amazing, isn't it? And God has kindly organised a lovely summer's day so that we'll know that these are summer Bible studies.

Thank you, God, for that. Actually, I went to a convention recently and was ready to hear the speaker and sat down and the speaker stood up to speak and I fell asleep and I do not remember one word the speaker said.

So if God gives you the gift of sleep tonight, accept it gracefully and just try not to snore too loudly. That's all right.

[6:42] Well, I'm not going to expound particular passages tonight. I'm going to talk more generally about prayer, God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. Just think for a moment how important human language is.

Information, instruction, coordination, responses, invitations, wants, desires, warnings, advice, promises, apologies, emotions.

Human language is a really important part of human relationships. Friends of mine have a grandson who was born, the normal way grandchildren are born, but was not learning to speak.

He was... The age where he should be learning to speak, he was just making odd noises. So they took him to the doctor, of course, and they worked out that he was so deaf that he couldn't hear human words and so he couldn't learn human words.

Well, of course, they've done the right thing and he's now able to hear language and so to speak language.

[8:12] He's able to hear words so he can say words. And hearing and saying words is a really important part of our human life.

Oh, I should say reading them as well because we do lots of reading of words, don't we, nowadays. But receiving words and expressing ourselves by words, that's a really important part of what it is to enjoy human life.

And God gave us words, the ability to speak. God gave us language so we could do that. We could speak and listen to each other.

But God also gave us words so that we could listen to God, read his words in the scriptures, and then speak back to God.

So words enable us to know what God says and words enable us to say to God what we want to say to God.

[9:21] So I think words, language, is fundamentally about relationships. It's hard to relate to someone who won't speak to you.

When I was a teenager, I used to go in for three-month-long sulks. So my mother would say, is something wrong? I'd say, would you like to see a doctor?

Would you like to talk about what's wrong? I was a witty conversationalist, even in my younger years, as you can imagine.

When we're thinking about prayer, the first question we ask is, does prayer work? Which is a very revealing question because it reveals the fact that by prayer we mean asking for something and getting it.

But does prayer work in your relationship with God now? That is, are you consciously receiving God's words from the scriptures, intentionally reading the Bible, hearing the Bible read, in order to hear what God's saying to you?

[10:40] And are you responding? Not only with your life, but also with your words. Just imagine if my house was wrecked tonight and you kindly invited me to come and stay with you.

I should warn you, I've just got two dogs. So the dogs would come as well. Their names are Millie and Oscar. They're quite well behaved, but not always. But just imagine I arrived at your place, settled in, watched telly, ate the meals, used the bath, and didn't ever speak to you. You'd think this is... Anglican ministers, they're a breed apart, you'd think. Why doesn't he talk? And I imagine God feels that way when he speaks to us and we don't speak to him.

Tonight what I'm doing is talking about the way in which God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are involved in the process of praying.

I'm going to have lots of Bible references. You can either decide to be conscientious and jot down the Bible reference, I'll give it every time, or you might just like to sit back and let the Bible, let God's words float around in your mind.

[12:13] Let's think about prayer, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. God the Father, one, God the Creator, created and sustains all things and is everywhere present in his power and gentleness in his creation.

So please don't think God is an absent God and we need to somehow get his attention because God is everywhere present in his power and gentleness throughout his creation.

God said, let there be light and there was light. Genesis 1, verse 2. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, the starry host by the breath of his mouth.

Psalms 33, verse 6. All these wonderful words about the way in which God sustains his creation. All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them, they gather it up. When you open your hand, they're satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified. When you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.

[13:25] When you send your spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the ground. Psalm 104, 27 to 30. Or, as Jesus said, God causes his Son to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Matthew 5, 45. Or again, Jesus' words, are not two sparrows sold for a penny, yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.

Matthew 10, 29. Why is all that important? Because it tells us that God's intimately involved in every aspect of our lives.

You can't live in the universe at a distance from God. God surrounds us. All things come from him, are in him, and are for him.

Secondly, God is the God who speaks in order to relate to humanity made in his image, to reveal himself to humanity, and to teach us how to live for him and speak to him.

[14:38] So the Lord said to Abram, Go from your father's country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.

Genesis 12, 1 and 2. Or this command to God's people, from Leviticus 19, verse 2, Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

Or from Exodus 20, verses 1 and 2, God spoke all these words, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods but me. Or these beautiful words through the prophet Jeremiah, God says, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

I have drawn you, that is, to myself, with unfailing kindness, Jeremiah 31, verse 3. So God shows us who we are and then how he wants us to live.

[15:41] If God was dumb, unable to speak, we would not know who God was and we would not know how to serve him.

If your God cannot speak, you don't know your God and you don't know how to respond to your God. God loves his people, thirdly, as their father, protects and provides for them, and loves to hear their prayers of thanks, praise, need, confession of sin, grief, lament, and promise.

Psalms 50, verse 15. Call on me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you. 2 Chronicles 7, 15.

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to your prayer. That is, the great and glorious God is constantly paying attention to us.

we're never out of his focused attention. 24-7, God is seeing us and when we speak he is hearing our words and I guess he hears our unspoken words as well.

[17:09] People sometimes say to me, you know, I get sick of praying the same things. I say, well you may be sick of saying them but God is not sick of hearing.

Psalm 34, verse 15. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry. And here are some of the people asking God.

So Psalm 38, verses 21 and 22. Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Saviour. Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me.

In you I take refuge. Psalm 57, verse 1. And God even hears words of complaint. Lord, why have you rejected us forever?

Why does your anger smoulder against the sheep of your pasture? Psalm 74, verse 1. It's a bad thing to speak disrespectfully of God to other people.

[18:16] That just discourages them. But the book of Job is full of someone who's complaining to God chapter after chapter. If you read it through, there's lots of complaining going.

And if we are unhappy about something, it's better to say it to God than to kind of keep it inside to make us bitter and twisted. So God can even hear our complaints.

Isn't that extraordinary? His mercy and kindness. But then there are songs of joy. Psalm 95, verse 1.

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord. Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation. Or Psalm 123, verse 1. I lift my eyes to you, to you who sit enthroned in heaven.

Notice what the writer of the psalm is doing. He's not just lifting his eyes to God. He's saying to God, I lift my eyes to you, to you enthroned in heaven.

[19:27] God, the Father, is the creator and sustainer of all things, is everywhere present in his power and gentleness in his creation.

God is the God who speaks in order to relate to humanity made in his image, to reveal himself to humanity and to teach us how to live and speak to him.

And God loves his people as their father, protects and provides for them, loves to hear their prayers. God the Son. God the incarnate Son of God prayed when on earth.

He spent nights in prayer, prayed for his disciples and for us, and prayed as he prepared to die for us on the cross. Mark 1.35, very early in the morning, when it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

or a longer quotation from John 17, where Jesus is praying to the Father about his disciples and about us, that is, those who believe in him through the words of the disciples.

[20:44] I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they forbade your word. I pray for them. I remain in the world no longer, they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.

Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is true. And then, my prayer is not for them alone, I pray also for those who believe in me through their message, that all may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. It was Robert Murray-Machane, I think, who said, if I could hear Jesus praying for me in the next room, I could do anything.

Well, there are words that Jesus did pray for us and we'll see in a moment that he is still praying for us. God the Son, Jesus our Saviour, died in our place for our sins and rose for our justification.

[22:10] By his death and resurrection we are in him. We can call God our Father by his grace. So Galatians 4, 4-6, when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law that we might receive adoption to sonship.

Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out Abba, Father. So we're adopted into God's family, so we have the privilege of calling him our

Father.

When I was about 10 years old, my parents adopted my young sister, who was then two, I think. And it was so beautiful, when she was growing up, my parents had three boys and they desperately wanted a girl.

They said to her, we had to take what we got with the boys, but we chose you, so we adopted you. Isn't that wonderful? people. So we're chosen by God and adopted, so we can say to God, Abba, Father.

Jesus tells us to pray, our Father in heaven. Matthew 6, 9. But also, as we heard from Hebrews, we can enter the presence of God by Jesus' high priest, our high priest who shed his blood and entered into God's presence for us.

[23:45] Jesus died so we could enter God's presence with confidence and full assurance of faith. Jesus died so that we could pray close to God.

Hebrews 9, 19, 19. Sorry, Hebrews 10, 19. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way open for us through the curtain, that is his body, and since we have a great priest over the household of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and the full assurance that faith brings.

But also, Jesus, our high priest, is now seated at his father's right hand, where he prays for us and also presents our prayers to his father.

So, from Romans chapter 8, verse 34, 34, Christ Jesus died, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and it also interceding or praying for us.

Or Hebrews 7, 25, therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

[25:29] that is, if nobody else is praying for you, Jesus is praying for you. Isn't that extraordinary? And he's a pretty good prayer, and he's at his father's right hand in the place of power and authority.

So his prayers, they really work. And if you're a believer today, you're a believer because Christ is praying for you.

If you're still a believer, it's because Christ is praying for you constantly. As Jesus says in John 16, 23, 24, very truly I tell you, my father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Until you have not asked anything in my name, ask and you'll receive, your joy will be complete. The great reformer John Calvin wrote a catechism for children, a question and answer.

Great way to teach children and adults as well. And one of his questions is, how can we be sure that God our father hears our prayers? It's a wonderful answer, Calvin writes, because God our father hears our prayers from the lips of his son.

[26:59] Because Jesus is the mediator and our high priest. He's the one who brings our prayers to our heavenly father. So the times when you wonder if your prayers are getting any higher than the ceiling, please notice that they go from Jesus' mouth to his father's ears.

And you couldn't be closer to God the father than Jesus is, seated at his right hand in glory. God our father hears our prayers as it were from the lips of his son.

And God the spirit. God the Holy Spirit lives within us, ensures our adoption as God's children, and tells us that we are God's children.

A reading we had earlier on from Romans 8, 14 to 16. For those of you who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

The Spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear, rather the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, Abba, Father.

[28:09] And the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. So all the time inside, the Holy Spirit is reminding you, your spirit, that God is your Father, and prompting you to pray.

Galatians 4, 6, because you are his sons, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out Abba, Father. But also, God the Holy Spirit prays within us, prays for us, to cover the ignorance and weakness of our prayers.

Romans 8, 26, 27. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

And he who searches our hearts know the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. God. And finally, of course, through the Spirit-inspired Bible, God teaches us to pray, calls us to pray, encourages us to pray, and gives us words to use in our prayers.

You know, the Bible is a book about God, but there are people on every page, and lots of them say things to God. Why are there words in the Bible?

[29:43] To show us how to pray, to be encouraged by their praying. When Hannah's pouring out her grief, her heart to the Lord, that's to teach us that we too, in great distress, can pour out our heart towards God.

When Jesus himself is praying, that's teaching us how to pray. When we read the Psalms, full of prayers to God, praise, lament, grief, thanksgiving, requests, and so on, that's to show that God's people should be talking to him and speaking to him in response to his words.

And finally, I've tried to show you that God is intimately involved in every aspect of our praying.

What is the Holy Spirit doing, urging us to pray? What is Jesus doing? Well, we can only come to God our Father through him, and he takes our prayers to his Heavenly Father, and he prays for us, and we pray to our Heavenly Father through Jesus, because it is through Jesus we know God.

Through Jesus we have access to God. Through Jesus that God hears and answers our prayers.

And God our Father, of course, is the one who delights to hear our prayers.

[31:20] I love watching parents trying to teach their baby how to speak. There's a kind of competition, isn't it? Will the baby say, Mama or Dada, first?

And will the respective parent be there to hear it and claim the victory? The first word little Elsie said was Mama. No, the first word Elsie said was Dada, and so on.

And with that delight, God loves to hear our prayers, short or long, frequent or infrequent.

God loves to hear the prayers we pray on our own. God loves to hear the prayers we pray with others, with our family, with our friends.

And of course, God loves to hear the prayers of his people, his church. God loves to hear the prayers we pray with our prayers. Amen. Amen. Gracious God, please help us to pray prompted by your Spirit with confidence to you as our Father.

[32:27] Please help us to pray through the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, our Mediator, our High Priest. And gracious Heavenly Father, please hear and answer the prayers you give us to pray.

For your glory's sake. Amen. Amen.