

Prayer Model Campaign

HE. WE. THEY.

Sermon Outlines



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Introduction Message: How Should We Pray?

Text: Matthew 6:5-8

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Next Sunday we are launching a brand new, church-wide emphasis called the “HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign.” Throughout this series we will be focusing on the Lord’s Prayer or the Model Prayer, both in worship and in our small group SS classes for all students and adults. You will need to make sure you go down to the FH today and pick up this book “*HE. WE. THEY. The Life-Altering Formula of the Model Prayer*” because we will be using it as a daily devotion guide and study book throughout the *HE. WE. THEY.* emphasis. You will begin reading this book on Monday (date).

Today, I want us to begin thinking about prayer. Let me say to you right up front that I believe in the power of prayer. I don’t think I would be here today if it was not for prayer! I believe prayer changes people both those who pray and those for whom we pray. I also believe prayer changes circumstances and situations in our lives, including our thinking, our priorities, and our actions.

So, let’s talk about prayer today. In our passage Jesus begins teaching His disciples what prayer is and what prayer is not. Then, Jesus gives them a model prayer or what we commonly call “The Lord’s Prayer.” (READ)

Let’s ask the most obvious of all questions: WHAT IS PRAYER? There are many definitions that can be given, but in its simplest form, prayer is communicating with God and God communicating with us! In other words, prayer is both talking to God and listening to Him as He talks to us.

I think it is important to point out this morning that for Jesus, prayer was a personal priority. In Mark 1:35, we read this about the habit of Jesus to pray, when Mark tells us, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there.” So, we see that prayer was not only a personal priority of Jesus, but that prayer should be a personal practice of those who follow Jesus. We see this in verse 5, when Jesus says, “Whenever you pray...” Jesus assumes that we want to communicate with Him through prayer. Today, let’s look at 2 key things related to prayer:

I. PRAYER IS COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

Here is the question: What should prayer or communicating with God look like in our lives? I believe it involves several things:

A) PRAY WITH PURITY (vs. 5 & 7)

How should you talk to God? You should talk to God with purity. In other words, when you pray, you should be honest. You should be real. You should be genuine. You should use words that you normally use. When you talk to a friend you don’t speak in KJV language using “Thee” and “Thou”.

Talk to God like talking to your friend, but with reverence and humility. If you study the most effective prayers in scripture, they were often uttered by people who

were just being honest with God and themselves. There was no pride. There was no pretense. There was just gut level honesty and openness with God.

Moses was one of the most effective people of prayer in the Bible. What I love about how Moses communicated with God is how open and honest he was with God. In Exodus 5:22-23, Moses was frustrated, and he did not understand God's timing. So, in this prayer we hear him being real with God when we read this:

22 So Moses went back to the LORD and asked, "Lord, why have You caused trouble for this people? And why did You ever send me? 23 Ever since I went in to Pharaoh to speak in Your name he has caused trouble for this people, and You haven't delivered Your people at all."

I like how Moses is just praying with purity of heart and being real and still reverent before the Lord. It is ok to say to God, "Lord, I don't get it. I just don't understand." Sometimes you may not even know what to pray. Still, communicate with God and always pray with purity!

B) PRAY WITH PRIORITIES (vs. 6)

In other words, talk to God about everything that really matters or is important to you. Paul said it this way in Philippians 4:6, *"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."*

Paul said that in everything we should make our requests known to God. This means BIG things and small things. Whatever is important to you...whatever is truly on your heart...whatever is a genuine priority for your life, talk to God about those things.

We see examples of this throughout scripture:

- Solomon- Wisdom / Elijah prayed about rain / Daniel prayed to understand a dream / Gideon asked God for confirmation / Abraham prayed for a wife for Isaac / David prayed for forgiveness / Jesus prayed His disciples would be in unity

C) PRAY PERSISTENTLY (vs. 8)

Another way of saying this would be to say that we should pray continually and consistently. Paul teaches us this truth in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 when he said, *"16 Rejoice always! 17 Pray constantly. 18 Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* We are told here that it is God's will for each of our lives that we spend each day rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks in everything!

We have to train our minds to pray. Most people are not good at praying because they simply do not pray. If you have to, set an alarm on your phone or apple watch to pray. Every time you send a text or answer a call, let that be a prompt for you to pray. You do not have to pray long prayers. Just be in a constant habit of talking to God throughout your day.

Often when it comes to prayer, we are just NOT persistent. We pray about something 1 time and if God doesn't immediately answer our prayer like we want or on our timetable, we act as if God is the problem! God is NOT THE PROBLEM.

If you are persistent in prayer, you go continually before God and pray until God does something, changes your heart and mind, changes the circumstances or answers! So, over the coming weeks as we launch HE. WE. THEY next Sunday (date), we want to help all of us get into a regular routine of daily prayer. Please understand...when we

pray, we are worshipping God. We want to learn through our daily devotions, small group lessons, and through the preaching of God's word how to communicate with God.

► Pray with purity of heart or genuineness. Talk to God like you are talking to a family member or your best friend using words that are actually your words! Avoid "babbling" and clichés and pithy phrases. Just talk to God.

► We want to learn to pray with priorities and talk to God about the things that are really important to us.

► But one thing we must do is that we MUST learn to pray persistently...this means continually, daily, routinely, and consistently.

I. PRAYER IS COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

II. PRAY IS COMMUNICATION FROM GOD

Every good relationship is built on good communication. 90% of the couples who come and talk to me about their marital issues all have 1 thing in common: They do not know how to or have never learned how to communicate with one another.

You see...communication is not just a one-sided conversation. Now, before we go to far, let's be honest with one another today. Often, when it comes to prayer, we usually do all the talking and very little listening. Isn't this true?

Here is a fact: God not only wants to hear from you, but He wants you to hear from Him! How does God speak to us? God speaks to us in many different ways:

- God may speak to you in a gentle voice of the Holy Spirit of God prompting your heart about something while you are praying and listening
- God may speak to you as you open up and read HIS WORDS to you in the Bible or as you read a daily devotion
- God may speak to you through a SS lesson or a sermon
- God may speak to you through music or through a song
- God may speak to you through another believer
- God may speak to you through clear circumstances in your life

This issue of God speaking to us is never a question of if God is speaking to us because God is speaking to you right now! The issue is always this: ARE WE LISTENING TO AND LISTENING FOR THE VOICE OF GOD as He speaks to us?

Listen to the words of David in Psalm 5:1-2, when he says, *"1 Listen to my words, LORD; consider my sighing. 2 Pay attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for I pray to You."*

Over the coming weeks, your life should look different...you should think differently...you should act differently...why? Because God is speaking to you right now! As He speaks, it is time to obey (Bow Heads)

I wonder today if there are those of you here who would say, "Pastor, my prayer life could use some improvement. Over the next few weeks, I want to draw close to the Lord through prayer." If that is you, just lift you hand today...

As our hearts and minds are still focused on God, I want you to think about your prayer life. If you are already a person of prayer today, think about what characterizes your

prayer. If you are honest, your prayers might be quite self-focused, “God here is what I need you to do for me right now.” Maybe today you are realizing that the way you pray needs to change, if that is you, just lift up your hand...

Today, some of you God is calling to be saved. You’ve worked through this issue for a long time now. You know the Lord is calling you to surrender your life to Him and let Him take control. Right now, you recognize the sin and mistakes of your life and realize you cannot fix yourself. So, today you want to be saved by the Lord, if that is you....

Message 1: Prayer of Partnership

Text: Matthew 6:9

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Today we are starting a new Sermon series that will take us through the end of Spring called "HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign." This sermon series will be based each week of the Lord's Prayer or the Model prayer found for us in Matthew 6. Each week we will read the words of Jesus as He teaches us to pray, & we will take 1 phrase each week of the prayer & see how prayer & the promise of the Lord's Prayer can change our lives!

Now what is Prayer? Simply put, "Communicating with God and God communicating with us." That is it! It does not have to be complicated.

The Lord's prayer taught to us by Jesus contains what I believe to be 7 life-changing phrases for us. Today we will see the Prayer of Partnership. When we understand the Prayer of Partnership, we will learn today this truth: God intervenes in all of our insecurities! (READ SCRIPTURE PASSAGE)

In all of the OT which covers thousands of years of history, God was only referred to as "father" 7 times. On the other hand, Jesus uses this expression of "Father" or in Greek the word is "Abba" or our English word of "Daddy" over 150 times. Through Jesus, we can come into a partnership with God as our Father.

In US 30% of all Anglo kids have no presence of a father in the home. 50% of all Hispanic kids have no presence of a father. 70% of all African American kids with the presence of no father. Kids are growing up in American never learning to say "Our Father". No wonder there is no prayer, communication or relationship with God in the lives of so many all across our country this morning!

WHAT IS GOD REALLY LIKE? 4 CHARACTERISTICS:

I. GOD IS A CARING FATHER

The Bible teaches us that God is love. He made you because He loves you and He made you so that He could love you and you could love Him in return. In Ps 103:13 we read this: "As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him." The Psalmist is saying that God cares about everything in your life compassionately.

Peter teaches us this truth about prayer in 1 Pt 5:7 "Cast all your care on Him, because He cares about you" The word translated as "Cast" here literally means "drop." It takes no energy to drop something. All you have to do is relax.

Listen to Jesus' words in Mt. 6:31-32, "So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'" 32 For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them." Caring fathers meet the needs of their kids!

Whenever we start to doubt God's love we immediately start to worry. Worry is a warning sign for our spiritual life. The reason we worry so much is that we do not know just how much God loves us

II. GOD IS A CONSISTENT FATHER

Through daily prayer with God, we come to learn that God is a consistent Father. This word "CONSISTENT" is so important when everything all around us changing all the time. This means when you pray & trust Him, God will not let you down! He is always dependable. He is reliable.

We read this truth in James 1:17, "Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..." God does not change.

Listen to what Paul taught Timothy about God's consistency despite our own inconsistencies in 2 Tim. 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

III. GOD IS A CLOSE FATHER

Listen to some promises of God's Word about the closeness of God through prayer:

A) God is never too busy for you!

Psalms 145:18, "The LORD is near all who call out to Him..."

B) God desires to talk with you & meet your needs

Jesus said in Mt. 7:11, "If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

C) God cares about & wants to heal the hurts in your life

Psalms 34:18, "The LORD is near (close to) the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit."

IV. GOD IS A COMPETENT FATHER

You can pray and talk to God about everything in your life no matter how you qualify the size. What problem do you have that God would consider big? It is all small stuff compared to the majesty and greatness of God!

Listen to what the Angel of the Lord tells us about the power available to us when we pray & talk to God our Father. He said in Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

God specializes on fixing things & fulfilling dreams. Paul teaches us in Ephesians 3:20, "God is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us."

So, what is it that you need God to do or to be in your life this morning? What is it? You know what it is...you know what is on your heart right now...what is that burden, worry, problem, person? Prayer....it is the key...how? Relationship with God through Jesus!

Message 2: Prayer of Priorities

Text: Matthew 6:9-10

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Today we come to the 2nd message in our series called “*HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Model Campaign.*” Today we ask this question: “What will God do with your Priorities?” I want to remind you that prayer is simply communicating with God and God communicating with you. When you talk to God, one of the first things God will do is talk to you about your priorities.

Why is this important? Because when the priorities of our lives get out of order then our lives get filled with stress & confusion. God has a cure for our confusion when we pray the prayer of Priorities. (READ THE LORD’S PRAYER)

What is God’s kingdom? It is not a political entity or national. It is an eternal & universal kingdom. John 18:36, Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world.” God’s Kingdom can be described by 2 things:

- ▶ God’s Kingdom is God’s Rule over all your life...all the issues of your life.
- ▶ God’s Kingdom is God’s Relationship with your life. Therefore, to be in God’s Kingdom is to live right with God in a life of peace & joy in the Holy Spirit. God’s kingdom is wherever Jesus is king so if Jesus is king in your life, then the Kingdom of God is in your life.

In the Model prayer when Jesus says, “Your kingdom come, your will be done” you will notice how the 2nd phrase “your will be done” actually explains the first phrase about God’s Kingdom.

■ The PRINCIPLE: The Kingdom of God is wherever God’s will is done. We are to pray this “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”. Why? Because God’s will is not done on earth. Often in our own lives, relationships, finances, on our jobs, and even in our church, God’s will is not done on earth as in heaven.

There are 4 choices we make in our Prayer for Priorities:

I. TO REARRANGE YOUR PRIORITIES MEANS LETTING GO OF CONTROL

Every day we must choose who will be in control of our lives...us or God. This is a battle that is real in our lives every day. Do you know why? It is because we do not like to give up control.

How do you get the Lord’s help? Prayer... “Lord, I need your kingdom to rule over my life & priorities. I need your will to be done in my life & not my will.”

Stop making excuses...you cannot be God. Stress relief starts with letting God be God because only God can control the uncontrollable things in your life. Listen to Psalm 46:10, “Be still & know that I am God.” The phrase “be still” literally means “let go” or “to stop your fighting.” In modern day terminology, “Chill out.”

No wonder you are so stressed...you are in direct conflict & competition with God. You are trying to control things only God can control. You cannot control your husband or your wife's actions or reactions. You cannot control what is happening at your company or workplace. You cannot control your grown wayward children. You cannot control your past or your future. The more you play God the worse things get. In any conflict with God you'll expend all your energy & lose when all you need to do is pray the prayer of Priority, "Your will be done."

II. TO REARRANGE YOUR PRIORITIES MEANS LEARNING CONTENTMENT

Here is the question we all must answer: No matter what you face in your life this week that you cannot control, are you still content in the Lord? What about that situation that won't change? What can you do with the uncontrollable things of life? Here are some options: Worry about it? Resent it? Feel Guilty? Feel ashamed? Have self-pity? Fill our lives with fear? None of these things work, yet this is what we do! There is only one thing works when it comes to the uncontrollable situations & circumstances of this life: Acceptance...learning to be content in your life no matter what.

Look at what Paul says in Philippians 4:11-13, "I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through Him (Christ) who strengthens me."

Here is the way it works: You can let uncontrollable circumstances dictate the level of your contentment with the Lord and your life OR you can let your contentment in the Lord and your life dictate your response to uncontrollable circumstances.

Pray a Prayer of Priorities related to contentment. Tell God you will accept what you have whether you understand it or not. Be content with life & claim it before the Lord.

Notice what Paul said..."I learned the secret of being content..." We have to learn contentment. You only learn contentment by facing uncontrollable circumstances in your life. Contentment is mark of emotional and spiritual maturity. Immature people are always discontent and unhappy. It is only possible through "Christ's strength".

You Pray the Prayer of Priorities: "God I do not need an explanation. What I need in the middle of this test of uncontrollable circumstances is your presence. If I have your presence, I'll be content." (Ps. 37:7a)

III. TO REARRANGE YOUR PRIORITIES MEANS LAYING DOWN YOUR CALENDAR

We all keep a calendar of activities & plans either physically or in our heads at all times. Your problems do not cooperate with your plans & calendar. Why?

A) We all make bad choices- We misuse our time, our resources, we don't eat right or rest enough. We make lots of bad decisions. We create lots of problems for ourselves.

B) We all have an enemy named Satan- He wants to steal, kill, & destroy our lives. If you get up & don't meet the devil face to face then it means you are going the same direction.

C) We live in an imperfect world of sin- Our health doesn't always work right-relationships...our economy...etc. It just happens. It is a part of life.

God wants to display His work & love in your life. He does it by working in & through the problems in your life. Where is God working in your life right now to help you rearrange your priorities? He wants you to learn to be unselfish. Life is about learning to be unselfish...to be like Jesus.

John shows us this 1 John 3:16, "This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers."

How do you lay down your plans & calendar? Live your life to serve God & others. In prayer of Priorities...You confess selfishness to God. You tell Him you commit your life to serve Him & others. We allow God to rearrange our priorities! "Your kingdom come, your will be done"

IV. REARRANGING OUR PRIORITIES MEANS LIVING FOR CHRIST NOW

We decide that right now today I will live for Jesus & let the results of my life be up to Him. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we learn this truth: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; 6 think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths." If you will trust the Lord & listen to what He thinks is best & you acknowledge Him as Lord in every area of your life, then God will keep your life on the right path. He will keep you close to Him.

Would you like to have less stress, more peace and contentment during this season of your life? The key...you must obey God!

Message 3: Prayer of Providence

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

We are in our 3rd week of the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Model Campaign. Today, we talk about the Prayer of Providence by focusing on how God desires to meet the needs of our lives so we do not have to worry about them. (Everyone will read the scripture aloud.)

In the Bible, Bread represents 4 things:

1. The necessities of life (Physical Needs)

The Psalmist says this: “27 All of them wait for You to give them their food at the right time. 28 When You give it to them, they gather it; when You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good things (Ps. 104:25-28).” We read this in Proverbs 14:23, “There is profit in all hard work, but endless talk leads only to poverty.”

2. God’s Word (Spiritual Needs)

The Bible is spiritual bread or food for our lives to grow spiritually. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, “It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Each of us needs spiritual nourishment for your soul found in God’s Word.

3. God’s Family and Fellowship (Relational needs)

WE all have relational needs. We need people in our lives. Bread is a metaphor for the church. Throughout the NT, we read the phrase “breaking bread together”. This is a synonym for “fellowship among believers.” We read this in Acts 2:42, when it says this of the early church: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.”

4. Salvation (Future needs)

Bread also represents salvation in Jesus. The bread represents His sacrifice as we celebrate the Lord’s supper. We partake of the bread & do so to remember Jesus & His sacrifice for us. But even more than that Jesus said this about Himself in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life. No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again.”

Basically, bread represents everything we need in our lives! God says “In my providence I will take care of that need if you will depend on me.” So, we pray the prayer of Providence asking God to meet whatever needs we have in our lives while acknowledging our dependence on Him for these needs.

I. WE MUST SEE GOD AS OUR SOURCE

A) Everything is a gift from God

B) God can supply your every need

Paul shared this truth in Philippians 4:19, when he said, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Rick Warren says, “God has enough for all the need in the world, but not enough for all the greed in the world.”

C) God supplies your needs because of His love for you

In Mt. 7:11, Jesus said, “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

D) God is waiting to meet your needs right now

You are not waiting on God to meet your needs. God is waiting on you! Listen to James 4:2, “You do not have because you do not ask.”

II. WE MUST TRUST GOD FOR EACH SECOND

“Give us this day our daily bread”...Take life in bite sized pieces. Trust God for today! God says, “Trust me one day at a time and let me show you how much I love you! I am already at work in your tomorrow, so don’t worry about tomorrow. Just trust me today.” How do we do this? 4 steps

In Philippians 4:6-8, Paul gives us the answer. *“Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise—dwell on these things.”*

A) Step 1: Worry about nothing!

Why is worry such a big deal? It is not just a bad habit; worry is a sin. It is an insult to God. When we worry, we are saying “God I do not believe your promises, that you love me, that you will take care of me, or that your Word is true.” The Prayer of Providence allows us to overcome this worry. Let me put it like this: Worry is the practical expression acting just like an atheist & believing and acting like God does not exist! Wow! It is a sin to depend on yourself and not God. It is a sin to try and fix everything instead of trusting God. Jesus taught us this in Mt. 6:34, “Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

B) Step 2: Pray about everything!

Everything is an important word here! You can worry or you can pray! Every time you worry you are not praying. Every time you pray; you stop worrying. You are worrying or worshipping God, but not both.

Paul said this in Romans 8:32, “He did not even spare His own Son but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything?”- God has already solved your biggest problems of forgiving your sins that leads you to Hell so that you might go to heaven.

C) THANK GOD IN ALL THINGS

Key word: 'IN'...We are not thankful FOR all things, but in all things.

III. WE MUST SHARE WHATEVER HE SUPPLIES

Every time God gives you something, He has done so for you to share with others. It says "Give US this day OUR daily bread." He wants you to share because God is a generous God. God so loved the world that He gave! When we give, we are becoming more like Jesus!

Some need to Pray this Prayer of Providence: "Lord you command me in your word to give and share all that you have given to me. Today I will trust you & I give as you have commanded so that I might show you my love, prove my trust in you, & meet the needs of others"

We read in 2 Cor. 9:10-12, *"Now the One who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God."*

Message 4: Prayer of Purification (Choosing Grace over Guilt)

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

We read a great truth in Psalm 59:10, “My God is changeless in His love for me (TLB).” It does not matter what we face in this life, we can be assured of God’s love for us. Do you know what holds us back more than anything else? It is guilt from our own unconfessed sin! We read in Hebrews 12:1-2, “Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, 2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him[c] endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God’s throne.”

How do we react? Rather than confess our sin, we deny it, excuse it, rationalize it, justify it, and it never works. When we rationalize our sin, we try to convince ourselves that everything is ok when everything within us knows it is not. Guilt is a destructive emotion. God did not design you to carry guilt. It destroys your confidence, defeats your potential, and ruins your relationships. Guilt causes you to have fear that makes you think that if people really find out about who you are, they will not like me, accept me, or understand me.

Guilt causes us to avoid commitment to others and to God. “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy (Prov. 28:13).”

Jesus said we are to pray, “And forgive us our debts (sins, trespasses).” There is another verse that parallels with the words of Jesus here in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (NIV).” Let me simplify this verse as much as possible. John is saying, “If you genuinely confess sin God graciously forgives sin.”

The Prayer of Purification: Forgive me my sins! How can you have this in your own life?

I. REVIEW EVERY PART OF YOUR LIFE

Take a personal spiritual inventory of your life. The Bible teaches us this principle of reviewing our lives. We read in Lamentations 3:40, “Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD.” Listen to the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23-24. This is to be a part of our Prayer of Purification, “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.”

II. REPENT OF EVERY SIN GOD REVEALS TO YOU

What does it mean to repent?

- ▶ Take responsibility for your sin
- ▶ Turn away from your sin
- ▶ Turn back to God & receive grace & forgiveness.

We read in Lamentations 3:40, "Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD."

We read in 1 John 1:8, "If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

III. RESOLVE TO MAKE RESTITUTION

We see this in the life of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8-9, "But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord! And if I have extorted (cheated) anything from anyone, I'll pay] back four times as much!' 9 "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him..."

IV. RECEIVE GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Listen to Hebrews 4:16, "Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time."

▶ What is the difference between mercy and grace? ◀

* Mercy is forgiveness for your past * Grace is the power to change in the future

The word "confess" means "to agree with" God about your sin. We read in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

V. REVEAL YOUR STRUGGLES TO A FRIEND

Listen to James 5:16, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect." Healing comes in sharing with at least 1 person!

When you tell someone else it releases the pressure in your life. How do we do it?

Share with one mature believer in confidence

Share with someone who will respond with God's love, accountability, and prayer

Share only with that one person and that is all.

Share only with someone of the same gender

Share and let this mature believer encourage you

VI. REPEAT THESE STEPS REGULARLY

Hebrews 10:22-2, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. 23 Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works."

Message 5: Prayer of Pardon

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Psychologists tell us that 2 of the greatest barriers in your life that keep us from experiencing peace of mind & joy in our lives are guilt & resentment. We talked about guilt last week & we learned that guilt can be removed through the Prayer of Purification when we humbly ask God to forgive our sins. Now we want to take the next step. We want to learn how to be healed from the hurts of sin & guilt by focusing on our problem with resentment. The Prayer of Pardon takes forgiveness a step further. It is not that we just receive God's forgiveness, but that we receive God's forgiveness in the same proportion with which we offer forgiveness to others.

Peter asked this question of Jesus in Matthew 18:21, "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how many times could my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times?'" The Jewish law required forgiveness of people 3 x. So, Peter doubles it & throws in 1 for good measure trying to impress Jesus. Jesus said in verse 22, "I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus said to him, "but 70 times seven." Jesus says your forgiveness for others is unlimited & our forgiveness for one another must be unlimited. You must relinquish the hurt and release the offender. So, let's talk about what this means.

Jesus tells us the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35 to teach us some important principles about the Prayer of Pardon which allows us to release the hurts of our lives.

The question: Why must we forgive those who have hurt us deeply? Why must we release them so as to release this hurt? This is a choice you make: You'll either rehearse it or release it. So let's look at 2 things today:

I. THERE IS FORGIVENESS IN RELEASING OUR HURTS

We want God's forgiveness. We also want the hurts of our lives to be healed. In order for this to happen we need to understand that Jesus teaches us that forgiveness & healing are found in releasing & forgiving those who have hurt us. Why do we do this?

A) WE FORGIVE BECAUSE GOD FORGIVES US!

Jesus tells us in this parable of forgiveness this in Mt. 18:27, "Then the master of that slave had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan."

The Bible teaches us in Romans 3:23 that "All have sinned..." We've all sinned & blown it! But when we trust our lives to Jesus, God declares us "Not guilty!"

Now the key issue for us today is this: We forgive because we have been forgiven

The question is not this: Does this person deserve my forgiveness? That is not the question with our sinful lives before God is it? We do not deserve God's forgiveness.

Likewise, WE do not forgive because someone deserves our forgiveness, but because we have been forgiven by God.

You need to receive God's forgiveness and offer it to others. I want you to read Ephesians 4:32 out loud with me: "And be kind & compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ."

B) WE FORGIVE BECAUSE RESENTMENT IS TORTURE!

Resentful people or bitter people are hurt worse than those who hurt them. Your past cannot hurt you today unless you continue to hold onto the past. If you continue to let those people from your past hurt you today, then it is you hurting yourself. It is self torture!

In our story today, when the king hears about this servant's unforgiveness, he is furious! He is livid and he has the servant brought in and he calls him wicked. The king tells him vs. 33-34, "Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?" 34 And his master got angry and handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed." The servant was sent to the jailers to be tortured. The word "jailers" in Greek literally means "torturers." His unforgiveness resulted in personal torture.

C) WE FORGIVE BECAUSE DAILY WE NEED FORGIVENESS

Here is the principle: You cannot receive from God what you are unwilling to give to others. The Lord's Prayer Jesus teaches us to pray the Prayer of Pardon, "God forgive me as much as I forgive others." Forgiveness is not a 1-time event. It is a lifestyle. Jesus summed up the parable in Mt. 18 with these words in vs. 35, "So My heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart."

There is Forgiveness in Releasing our Hurts.

II. THERE IS FREEDOM IN RELEASING OUR HURTS!

Paul teaches us in 1 Cor. 13: 5, "Love keeps no record of wrongs." This is an example keeping a record...."I'll forgive them, but I won't forget it."

The Prayer of Pardon is the key because when we release & forgive those who have hurt us, we find real freedom from guilt, resentment, & bitterness that damages & destroys our lives. So how do I release my hurt?

A) I GIVE TO GOD THOSE WHO HURT ME!

If you want to heal from the hurts of your life, then you must personally choose to relinquish your right to try to get even. The Prayer of Pardon says, "God I'll let you take care of them!" Paul chose to live this principle in his own life & teaches us this in Romans 12:19, "Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord." God is a God of justice. Forgiveness is not the instant restoration of trust. Forgiveness is instant, but trust is earned over a period of time.

Also, Forgiveness is not resuming a relationship with no changes. If a person asks your forgiveness you can forgive, but things do not instantly go back to the way things were. Forgiveness does not mean we restore our relationship until there is repentance, change, and restitution.

B) I HEAL BY ALLOWING GOD'S GRACE TO WORK IN ME!

Too often we let others who hurt us control us. Rather than be proactive, we spend our lives being reactive to those who hurt us. The only cure for your hurting heart & to get some hurtful out of your mind & not controlling you is to heal it with God's grace. Heb 12:15

It only takes one bitter person to poison an entire family or group of people. Somebody must break this chain of bitterness in our lives and families.

C) I HEAL BY FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

There is power in the cross of Jesus. On the cross Jesus broke the chains of sin, addictions, hurts, habits, & pain. What Jesus did on that cross gives you the power to heal from your hurts, get over your guilt and your grief, to release and relinquish your bitterness, and to reveal and receive God's peace in your heart, life, mind, and family. There is nothing in all the world that will release the hurt and guilt of your life like the cross of Jesus! On that cross you are freed & forgiven of your sin. Romans 6:6 (NCV).

How badly do you want to let go of that hurt today? Let's be honest about this....How badly do you want the pain to go away? How badly do you want to let go of that memory of what that person did that hurt you so badly and you rehearse it over & over and over again?

MESSAGE 6 Prayer of Protection

Text: Matthew 6:13

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Today we want to talk about the Prayer of Protection. Do ever start your day with great intentions to change your ways, live differently, or be a better person? Do you ever feel like you fail at that day after day? Do you end up disappointing yourself and God? Maybe you've tried everything, and nothing seems to work. You wonder why you continue to make the same mistakes and fall into the same patterns over and over. You are discouraged and feel like your life is stuck. If your life is going to change & you're going to break free from the things that mess your life up then it will take more than good intentions. We get stuck in this harmful pattern of good intention, failure, guilt, & then confession. We need the Prayer of Protection (READ LORD'S PRAYER TOGETHER)

Temptation is a lot more subtle than we ever imagine. The answer is the Prayer of Protection. This prayer always leads us to a path of escape from temptation. It is prayer that delivers us.

The path of escape...Read 1 Cor 10:13, out loud with me, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it." Notice that the temptations you face are no different than what everyone else around you experiences! Here are some suggestions:

I. You must ANALYZE YOUR VULNERABILITIES

In other words, you have to learn to identify what makes you vulnerable or weak to temptation. My question is this: What causes you to be vulnerable, weak, or susceptible to temptation? What situation? What thought? What image? What feeling? What location, scent, attitude, or time of day makes you vulnerable?

Jesus says in Mt. 26:41, "Stay awake (Watch) and pray, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ...

How can you determine the things that make you weak & vulnerable? I can assure you Satan knows these things. 5 questions:

1. When am I most tempted? (What day of the week? What time of day? What time of year? Think about it...I can handle any diet until noon. It is at lunch I fall off the wagon! I can blame my genes & heredity.
2. Where am I most tempted? (Work? Neighbor's house? In the kitchen? At a Sports bar? At the beach? In front of a computer?)
3. Who is with me when I am most tempted? (Alone? With a friend? With a family member? Co-worker? Teammates? Crowd of strangers where no one knows us?)

4. What temporary benefit do I get if I give in to temptation? (Even the Bible says there is pleasure in sin for season, but the consequences are horrendous. Sin is fun, but the consequences will destroy your life. Comfort? Excitement? False sense of confidence? Recognition?)
5. How do I feel right before I am tempted? What are my emotional triggers? (Bored? Frustrated? Lonely? Discouraged?)

II. You must AVOID YOUR WEAKNESSES

What you do is you decide in advance whatever needs to happen or that you need to do so that you do not allow yourself to get into the situation, circumstance or around the places or people that make you the most vulnerable & susceptible to temptation.

See Proverbs 4:26-27, "Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established. 27 Don't turn to the right or to the left; keep your feet away from evil." Plan carefully what you do. Temptation always begins with a natural desire inside of us. Often temptation is fulfilling a legitimate desire in the wrong way, or fulfilling it in the wrong amount or fulfilling the legitimate desire at the wrong time. Temptation is when we abuse or misuse what God gave us for good.

III. You must ARM YOUR HEART

Proverbs 27:19 says, "As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the person." In Matthew 15:18-19 Jesus teaches us everything comes out of our hearts- words, actions, attitudes, emotions, feelings, & even sin. Temptation always starts inside of you, not outside of you. The trigger may be on the outside, but it comes from inside of you. James 1:14, "But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires." We read in Prov. 4:23, "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life."

IV. You must ASK GOD FOR PROTECTION

Pray for God's help. That is what Jesus tells us in the Lord's prayer. God promises to help us! Psalm 50:15, "Call on Me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor Me." Listen to Hebrews 4:15-16 as it describes Jesus, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time."

V. You must ADJUST YOUR ATTENTION

In other words, you decide, "I will intentionally turn my attention elsewhere! I will choose to change the direction of my thoughts. I will refocus my thoughts on something else." The key to overcoming temptation is not resisting it, but refocusing your life. The battle is in the mind. Refocus your mind. WE learn in Ps. 119:5-6, "If only my ways were committed to keeping Your statutes! 6 Then I would not be ashamed when I think about all Your commands."

Whatever is tempting you...if you focus on it then you'll continually be drawn to it. Temptation always works the same way: Attention, arousal, then action. Refocus! Paul

said in 2 Cor. 10:5, "...take every thought captive to obey Christ." Paul says in Romans 12:21, "Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good."

VI. You must ACTIVATE SOME ACCOUNTABILITY

You need to have close Christian friends. You need someone or a group of people to depend on. You need to be in a small group SS to find accountability.

How serious are you about breaking free from this pattern of temptation, failure, guilt, sin, & frustration? You will never do it on your own or without support. God will help you, but you need someone who checks up on you, holds you accountable, & a group to support you! We read this in Eccl 4:9-10, *"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. 10 For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up."*

Message 7: Purpose of Prayer

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Note: Congregation Sermon Notes are available for each sermon in the HE. WE. THEY. Prayer Campaign Kit.

Look at again at verse 13... There are 3 key words we need to know today. These 3 key words are vital to our existence. These 3 key words are the difference between destruction & revival. The 3 key words are these: Kingdom, Power, and Glory. You were not only created by God, designed by God, & made by God, but you were created, designed, & made for God. You are here for God. You are here to live out His purposes. God is a God of mercy, compassion, grace, & love. God IS love. This is the very essence of God's character. God made you to love you. You are the object of His love. God wants you to live in/fulfill His kingdom, to show His power, & to bring Him glory.

With all of that said... why do we always feel so unfulfilled in this life? Why does it seem that we are never quite living up to the purposes for which God made me? Why do some people never seem satisfied with life? The answer is quite simple: You were made for more than what the world says is success, fulfillment, happiness, or joy. You will never be satisfied living for yourself like the world teaches you. You were made to live for the Kingdom, Power, & Glory of God.

How do we do this? So, let's talk about these 3 key words today:

I. God's Kingdom- The Kingdom of God is a Personal Reality!
In other words, you & I can be a part of God's Kingdom right now. God's Kingdom is wherever God is king or ruler. If God is king of your life then you are a part of God's Kingdom. Paul tells us this in 1 Thessalonians 2:12, "We encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

You want to have a happy, fulfilled, & satisfied life? Then you must make God's agenda your agenda. His will your will. What God cares about must become the priority of your life. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus concludes all of this by saying this in Mt. 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

Here is the principle: Whatever you want God to bless in your life, just put him first in that area of your life.

What does it mean to put God first in your life? Rick Warren's Acrostic:

F- Finances. If you want God to bless your finances you must tithe. There is no other alternative. There is no way around it. God first means you tithe. You steal it from God, you are bordering on losing it all.

I- Interests. Your hobbies / Careers / Recreation / Friendships / Decisions. What does God want from my life?

R- Relationships. Marriage, Family, Business Partnerships, Friendships

S- Schedule. Your calendar is driven by making God first on your schedule. First day of your week you start in God's house.

T- Troubles. Turn to God first when you face problems. God is an ever-present help in times of trouble. God should not be your last resort, but your first choice. Don't try everything else first and decide, "Well it is hopeless so I guess we should pray." Prayer should be your first choice. This is what Jesus teaches us here in the Lord's Prayer.

II. God's Power- The Power of God is Personal Resource!

God's power is the energy we can tap into as His followers so that we can fulfill God's plan in this world & for our lives. In 1 Cor 4:20, Paul teaches us this: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power."

God does not bless self-reliant people. He blesses people who depend on Him & trust in Him. Jesus said in Matthew 9:29, "Let it be done for you according to your faith!"

God wants you to live in His power so you can fulfill His purposes. When you do God blesses you, not because of who you are, but because of who He is. Not because of what you have done, but because of what Jesus has done on the cross for you. It is in God's power that you can make a difference in this world. However, you cannot do it & will not do it living for yourself.

Paul tells us this in Ephesians 3:20, "Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us."

How do we get God's power in our lives?

A) By our Communication the Father □ James, the ½ brother of Jesus teaches us this about the effectiveness & power of prayer in James 5:16, "The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect."

B) By our Commitment & Faith □ We only grow when our faith is stretched! Take risks by faith exercises our faith. God does a miracle when we take the first step of faith to trust him.

III. God's Glory- The Glory of God is our Personal Response!

In other words, living for God's glory is the reason for all that we do. Look at Romans 11:36... "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

Whose glory are you living for? How can I live for the glory of God?

A) Show love to others

We show glory for God when we learn to love others the way God loves them. We read in Romans 15:7, "Therefore accept one another, just as the Messiah also accepted you, to the glory of God."

B) Use your Abilities to serve others

We read in 1 Peter 4:10-11, "Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God... To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen" This means take the skills, abilities, education, experience, & wisdom, not to edify yourself, make more money, to promote your own agenda, but to help others and serve them so that God might be glorified. God did not

give you your talents and abilities for your benefit. The things you're good at are given to you by God for others.

C) Share the good news with Everyone

We are not trying bring people to a religion, but to Jesus. Religion will not change people's lives, but Jesus can. We have the responsibility to show people the love of Jesus. This is a good, safe place for people to come & hear the good news of Jesus.

D) Be active in God's Family

Eph 3:20-21, "Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— 21 to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." ... You bring glory to God by being a member of the church & participating with other believers, studying God's Word, & worshipping God. God made us for community.

Are you in God's Kingdom? Are you living in God's power? Are you living for God's glory?