

Connecting with God in Prayer

Big Idea: Jesus depended on prayerful guidance to show us that we can walk as He walked.

Review

Last time we talked about intentional relationship and God's mission. We saw that Jesus said his mission was to seek and to save the lost. We looked at how he went out of his way to share the good news with a Samaritan woman. We were challenged to identify three unsaved friends and begin to pray, invest, and invite them.

We also said that opening the eyes of an unsaved friend to the gospel was only a work that God could do as we allow God to work through us.

Therefore, we want to consider practices that are important for us to stay connected to God, so He can work through us.

Intro

When you first wake up in the morning, what is the first thing you look to or depend on to get you through the day? (Caffeine, sugar, the weekend)

We are going to look at one day in the life of Christ and see what he depended upon to get him through the day.

I. The Priority of Prayer in Jesus' life

A. Long day of ministry Mark 1:21-39

1. Jesus teaches in the synagogue in the morning v. 21-22
2. He casts out an evil spirit v. 23-28
3. He goes to Simon and Andrew's house for lunch and heals Simon's sick mother-in-law v. 29-31
4. That evening after sunset Jesus healed the sick, demon possessed, and diseased v. 32-34
5. That is a long day of ministry that undoubtedly would have been exhausting.
6. Yet where is Jesus early the next morning? 1:35
 - a. he didn't sleep in "before sunrise"
 - b. he went to a solitary place to pray.
7. Prayer was a priority in Jesus life.

B. Luke 5:16 "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray."

C. Why do you think prayer was such a priority for Jesus?

1. In his humanness, he needed God to work if eternal things would be accomplished just like we do. John 5:30 "by myself I can do nothing"
2. He lived in perfect harmony with the Father from eternity past. He probably enjoyed spending time and talking to his Father.
3. He needed God's direction and wisdom, and guidance

Transition: If Jesus made prayer a priority, how much more do we need to pray?

II. Jesus teaching on how to pray Matt. 6:9-13

Often when we pray we just bring to God our requests. Fortunately, Jesus instructed His disciples (us) on how to pray.

Notice the difference areas Jesus told us to focus on in prayer:

- A. Worship and praise to God for who He is. 6:9
 - 1. How often do we need to be reminded of how great our God is?
 - 2. If God is sitting on His righteous throne in heaven that changes everything
What difference does that truth make to you?
- B. Realign our priorities 6:10
 - 1. Our life is not about us getting what we want
 - 2. It is not about us being in charge so we can feel good about ourselves.
 - 3. it is about serving God and accomplishing his priorities
- C. Bring our needs to God daily 6:11
 - 1. it is about spending time in a relationship with God
 - 2. it is not like He doesn't already know what we need 6:8
 - 3. he enjoys spending time with you and meeting your needs.
- D. Acknowledge our own sin and our need of a Savior 6:12-13
 - 1. it is about confessing our sin and experiencing forgiveness
 - 2 it is about being gracious toward others
- E. Acknowledge our own weakness and need for God's strength to live in victory 6:13

III. Practical steps to making prayer a priority

- A. Choose a time that you can consistently meet with God.
 - 1. This needs to be a time when you can be quiet
 - 2. This needs to be a time you won't be distracted
- B. Give attention to the procedure
 - 1. Use a prayer journal where you record what you are praying for and make note of how they are answered.
 - 2. To help you pray in the areas Jesus mentioned you can use the "ACTS" acrostic and focus on these four areas:
 - a. Adoration- for who God is.
 - b. Confession- acknowledge your sin and your need of a Savior.
 - c. Thanksgiving- for what God has done
 - d. Supplication- pray for specific things not things in generalities.

Conclusion

Tonight we are going to be setting goals in a spiritual growth plan. We will focus on three different relationships in our life as we work on the growth plans this year.

1. Relationship with God
2. Relationship with Self – personal holiness
3. Relationship with others- sharing the gospel. (Pray, invest, invite)

I want to encourage you to set a goal specifically in the first area- relationship with God. Maybe you want to set a goal in the area of prayer for this month. If you aren't reading God's word for yourself I would encourage you to set a goal to spend time in God's word. That is what the Ontrack Devotionals are all about. You can still get them if you let PR know.

In application to our lesson tonight I am going to challenge you to take the 15-15 challenge.

Application 15-15 challenge

Are you willing to make a commitment to pray 15 minutes for 15 days?

Maybe some of you need to make a 30-30 challenge? 30 minutes for 30 days.

Small groups

1. How would you describe your prayer life?
2. If you got paid a dollar a minute to pray do you think it would make a difference how much you prayed? Why/why not?
3. What do you think your life communicates to God?
4. What application steps do you need to take from this lesson?