

What is Prayer ?

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss some things that the Bible teaches about prayer.
2. Lk. 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;"
 - a. Luke is the only writer who records this parable
 - b. Luke notices more of the prayers of Jesus than any other writer.
 - c. The stated purpose of this parable was that men ought to always pray and not to faint.
 - d. As his disciples we can always pray - I Thes. 5:17
 - e. We should not become discouraged and fail because of opposition.
 - f. Prayer is the answer to fainting and growing weary.
3. Many Christians look at prayer as something to be used only in an emergency, like a spare tire on our car.
4. God's desire is that we be constant in prayer - Col. 4:2 - as it has always been. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"
 - a. O.T. - In Mosaic Age prayer probably followed their sacrifice -- Lk. 1:10 Deut. 26:12-15 -- This grew into a regular service with regular hours of prayer at the 3rd, 6th, and 9th hours [Morning, noon & Evening]
 - b. N.T. - We have the model prayer in Mt. 6:9-13 and the Lord's prayer in Jn. 17:1-26
5. What is the benefit of prayer for us today?

Discussion

I. PRAYER IS A SHIELD TO THE SOUL!!

A. Shield

1. It is a defensive armour
2. Used to protect

B. Prayer is like a shield to the soul. It is used as a defensive armour.

1. Mt. 26:41 "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation:"
2. Mt. 6:13 "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:..."
3. Heb. 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

C. Temptation is the lure of Satan

1. He displays his delicious treats
2. They would lead the flesh to overpower the spirit in the decision for good or evil.
3. The world is full of the pleasures of sin
 - a. It is not a sin to be tempted
 - b. But to yield to the temptation is sin - and sin brings forth death
 - c. Heb. 12:1 - Talks about that besetting sin -- it is different for each person
4. Therefore we must never enter into temptation
 - a. We can't hide behind the excuse "I couldn't help it."
 - b. God has promised a way of Escape - 1 Cor. 10:13
 - c. We must pray to God so that we will be able to see that way of escape.

- D. We need this shield at all times
1. The Devil is always out to destroy - I Pet. 5:8
 2. I Thes. 5:17 "Pray without ceasing"
 3. Rm. 12:12 "...continuing instant in prayer."
- E. Prayer is a shield for our soul.

II. PRAYER IS A SCOURGE TO THE DEVIL

- A. Scourge - a whip, an instrument of punishment or criticism, to punish severely, devastate, destroy.
- B. Prayer is a scourge to Satan
1. Resist and he will flee
 - a. Jas. 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - b. Resist - stand against
 - (1) This must be a complete and total rejection of sin
 - (2) To yield slightly will open the door!
 - (3) "They could be doing something worse"
 - (a) Implies they are doing something bad
 - (b) Soon they will be doing something worse.
 - (c) Opens the door for the Devil
 - c. Flee -
 - (1) Jesus is an example - Mt. 4:1-11
 - (2) We must do the same as we follow his example
 - (3) When we resist the Devil he will flee - Prayer helps us to resist!!

2. Draw close to God

- a. Jas. 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."
- b. Get closer to God
- c. The Closer we get to God the harder it is for the Devil to tempt us.
- d. Therefore prayer acts as a scourge to the Devil.
- e. Ask to deliver from Evil
- f. Mt. 6:13 "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:..."
- g. When we ask in faith God will grant it - Mt. 7:7
- h. This acts as a scourge to the Devil.

C. The Devil is tricky & powerful

1. I Pet. 5:8 - like a roaring lion - to devour!
2. Eph. 6:11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
 - a. Wiles - tricks, cunning
 - b. A part of this armour is prayer - Eph. 6:18 " Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"
3. The Devil's influence is always around and is always powerful. Therefore we must use the scourge of prayer.
4. If we do not scourge the Devil through prayer, he will scourge us through sins.

III. PRAYER IS A SACRIFICE TO GOD

A. Sacrifice

1. Under the O.T. they made these animal sacrifices
2. The shedding of the blood and the offering of the animals was their sacrifice to God.
3. Christ became a sacrifice for man making further animal sacrifice unnecessary.

B. But how is prayer like a sacrifice

1. "...but I give myself unto prayer." Ps. 109:4
 - a. This is a sacrifice to God
 - b. We give voluntarily of our time and self in prayer to God.
2. Acts 10:4 "...Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."
3. Rev. 5:8 "...golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."
4. Rev. 8:3-4 "...offer it with the prayers of all saints ascended up before God..."
5. Ps. 141:2 "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

C. How will this sacrifice of prayer help us?

1. It will help us to resist the Devil.
2. It will help us to live better.
3. It will help us to do more for the church.

CONCLUSION

1. What is Prayer?
 - a. Shield to the soul - protects
 - b. Scourge to the Devil - destroys
 - c. Sacrifice to God - pleases God
2. Prayer is to the Christians life somewhat like water is to the body
 - a. We can't endure very long without water
 - b. We need it often to refresh us
 - c. We need it to do our very best.
3. Follow the example of Christ
 - a. His life was a life of prayer
 - b. He taught us to pray
4. How is your prayer life?
 - a. We all need to improve
 - b. Lk. 18:1 - it will keep us from fainting.

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