

Open Windows Toward Jerusalem

Prayer

Int.

1. Aim: To show the need for prayer in our life as a Christian.
2. Daniel 6:10 NKJV “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”
 - a. The king had signed a decree that no one should pray to any god or man for 30 days except to the king.
 - b. Daniel opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed 3 times that day as he had the other days.
 - c. His punishment was to be cast into a den of lions. But God spared him.
3. Without prayer we as Christians cannot enjoy the full blessings that God has for us.
4. There is no substitute for prayer in our life.

Discussion

I. WHAT IS PRAYER ?

A. Positive view

1. Sincere desire of the heart expressed in words unto God - Romans 10:1
 “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”
2. Prayer is expressed not just meditation or an attitude - John 14:13 “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

3. Revelation is God talking to man; prayer is man talking to God.

B. Negative view

1. Prayer is not a means of informing God and scolding man
2. Prayer is not a fire escape to be used only in time of disaster
3. Prayer is not a means of getting out of doing what God requires
4. It is not an ultimatum issued to God.

C. Definition of prayer

1. A request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God
2. A humble request, as to God.
3. It is an acknowledgment of the all-sufficiency of God and our dependency upon Him.

II. WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY ?

A. "Petitions should be as often as our wants, and thanksgivings as often as our blessings."

B. We are to pray without ceasing

1. 1 Thes. 5:17 "Pray without ceasing." Ceasing = uninterrupted, without omission
2. Col. 4:2 "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"
3. This does not mean that we can never cease to pray.
4. It means that we should never get through praying.
5. We should always be in a prayerful attitude and should pray to God regularly.

Psalms 55:17 "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."

C. "Pray all the time" - Song

III. FOR WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY ?

- A. **All people** - "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2:1-2
- B. **Civil Rulers** - 1 Tim. 2:2
- C. **Our Brethren** - James 5:16 "pray one for another"
- D. **Gospel Preachers**
1. "Brethren, pray for us." 1 Thes. 5:25
 2. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith." 2 Thes. 3:1-2
 3. If Paul an inspired apostle needed the prayers of brethren, then certainly preachers today need our prayers.
 4. III. "Better than criticism"
- E. **The sick**
1. James 5:13-15
 2. Paul prayed for the sick father of Publius - Acts 28:8
 3. David prayed for his sick child - 2 Sam. 12:15,16

F. The Lost

1. Romans 10:1 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
2. Jesus prayed for the lost when He was dying - Luke 23:34
3. His prayer was answered on Pentecost - Acts 2:36-47

G. Our Enemies

1. Matt. 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"
2. Stephen prayed for those who were killing him. "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:20
3. Luke 23:34 - Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him.

IV. CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

- A. Addressed to God - Matt. 6:9 "Our Father in Heaven"
- B. In Christ's Name - Eph. 5:20 "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"
- C. In faith - James 1:5-7 v. 6 "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting"
- D. According to God's will - 1 John 5:14 b "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."
- E. With the spirit and understanding "I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding." 1 Cor. 14:15

V. GOD REALLY ANSWERS PRAYER

A. The Bible tells us that God answers prayer

1. Isa. 65:24 "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear."
2. Matt. 7:7-8 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."
3. 1 Pet. 3:12 "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

B. We have many examples of God answering prayers

1. Hannah - 1 Samuel 1 - Hannah prayed asking for a son and God answered
2. Elijah - James 5:17 "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months." - 1 Kings 17 & 18
3. Early Church - Acts 12:5-19

C. God answers prayer in five ways

1. By saying **yes** - James 5:17
2. By saying **no** - Matt. 26:39,44 Heb. 5:7
3. By saying **wait awhile** - Jer. 42:4,7
4. By giving us **something all together different** - II Cor. 12:7-9
5. By giving us **more than we pray for** - I Kings 3:11,13 Eph. 5:20
6. Illustration - Prayer answered

VI. THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER in the life of a Christian

A. Prohibitive against sin

1. Matt. 6:13a "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:"
2. Luke 21:36 "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."
3. Prayer and evil do not exist in the same heart
4. We can withstand the devil by praying always - Eph. 6:13, 18 v. 18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"
5. Illustration: The power of a praying parent

B. Prayer will prevent apostasy

1. Apostasy begins at the closet door
2. Backsliding begins in the knees
3. It is difficult to stumble while on your knees

C. Prayer puts Christians to work

1. We pray for the sick, for our bread and then we must work to get them.
2. We should pray for the lost and then strive to bring them to Christ
3. Prayer changes things. A prayer that does not change us will not affect God.

CONCLUSION

1. Daniel 6:10 NKJV “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”
2. The other people were jealous of Daniel and so they conspired to have this law enacted by Darius. They knew that Daniel would be faithful to His God and would be killed when he was thrown into the den of lions.
 - a. Daniel could have reasoned that he would stop praying to God for 30 days after all he wanted to be careful about putting himself in any kind of danger.
 - b. But Daniel was courageous and continued his prayers to God as usual.
 - c. For what did he pray? We do not know. But we can imagine that he prayed for God's protection and deliverance.
 - d. King Darius spent the night fasting and went forth the next morning to check on Daniel. Dan. 6:20 “And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”
 - e. Dan. 6:21-22 “Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.”
3. Daniel's prayers were effective
4. Our prayers can be effective also. Prayer is powerful
5. Pray without ceasing.

Sources

1. Toward Spiritual Maturity - by Wendell Winkler p. 19
2. Files on Prayer

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