



Fifteenth Avenue
BAPTIST CHURCH
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LEARNING TO PRAY

Introduction

- It has been rightly said,
 - The **secret** of all **failure** is our failure in **secret prayer**.
 - Not just our failure **to pray**, but our failure **in prayer**.

Introduction

- In the story of the Pharisee and the publican
 - The Pharisee prayed **long and often**,
 - But he was a **miserable failure**.
 - His prayers were **never heard by God**
 - Because neither he nor his prayers were ever right with God.



Introduction

- When we work, **we work**, when we pray, **God works**.
 - Throughout history, the men and women God used mightily have been
 - People who **knew how to pray** and
 - People for whom prayer was a **priority** and a **necessity**.
 - As we study the gospels we find that prayer is to be a vital part of a disciple's life.



Introduction

- **For Example**

- Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. 13 ***And whatever you ask in My name***, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **John 14:12-13**
- If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ***ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.*** **John 15:7**

LEARNING TO PRAY

Introduction

- How important is prayer in the Word of God?
 - Variations of the word **pray** (**prayer, praying**, etc.)
 - Occur **545** times in the KJV
- Most Christians recognize and accept, at least intellectually, the need and importance of prayer.
 - However, the church today is anything but a praying church.

LEARNING TO PRAY

Introduction

- We talk of its **necessity**,
- But too often we fail to **accomplish its reality**.
- The disciples had this same experience.
 - ...it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples. Luke 11:1



Motivation for the Question

- Disciples heard John had taught his disciples on prayer and they too wanted instruction (11:1).
- No where in the gospels - From Matthew to John
 - Do we find an occasion where disciples asked,
 - Lord teach us how to **witness**, or
 - Lord teach us how to **perform miracles**,
 - Lord teach us how to **teach**.



Motivation for the Question

- What was the motivation behind this question?
 - Can you imagine what life with Jesus Christ was like during His ministry on earth?
- Where does Jesus' power come from?
 - He was God incarnate **John 1:14**
- **But there was something else...**



Motivation for the Question

- The Pharisees prayed and so did the disciples.
 - It wasn't just prayer;
 - It was the way He prayed.
 - It was His manner and attitude in prayer
 - It saturated His total being and living,
 - His every step and action,
 - It showed the intimacy of His relationship with and dependence on the Father.



Motivation for the Question

- Prayer was never just a **religious responsibility**
 - It was **not an exercise** Jesus engaged in
 - Because He was **obligated** to do so.
- Prayer for Jesus proceeded out of His deep dependence on God!
 - Resulted in a very intimate fellowship that He always had with the Father.



Motivation for the Question

- From the standpoint of His humanity,
 - Jesus was totally convinced He could do nothing of own resources.
- The disciples came to recognize that,
 - While they could be **believers** in the Lord,
 - They could not be true **disciples**
 - Or became like their teacher unless they learned to pray like Jesus. **Luke 6:40**



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- In **John 5:19** Jesus said,
 - ...the Son can do nothing of Himself.
 - In **John 8:28-29** and **14:10** He repeated the principle.
- For Jesus Christ, prayer was an absolute necessity.
 - It was a means of communion with the Father
 - Of bringing the power of God the Father to bear on the humanity of Jesus Christ moment by moment.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- As we study the life of Christ, note a consistent pattern:
 - In the midst of a busy schedule, when men were clamoring in their need for His attention,
 - Christ retired to pray
 - To draw upon the resources of God the Father for He knew that the Son can do nothing of Himself.
- Mark 1:32-37**



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- When it was time to **choose the disciples**,
- Jesus isn't reviewing the qualifications of each of the disciples.
 - Rather we find Him retiring to pray. **Mark 3:13 & Luke 6:12-13**
- Why?
 - Because He needed the direction and provision of the Father.

LEARNING TO PRAY

Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- When Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus
 - He raised His eyes heavenward in dependence and thanksgiving for what the Father was about to do **John 11:40-42**.
 - Demonstrating His dependence, thanksgiving, and confidence that His prayer had been heard.

LEARNING TO PRAY

Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- When He prayed to the Father,
 - He wanted all those around Him listening
 - To know the secret of dependence.
 - When performing miracles Jesus was always praying in dependence upon the Father from the standpoint of His humanity.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- When He fed the five thousand
 - And spoke the words while **looking up toward heaven** demonstrates the Jesus' prayerful dependence.
- When **He blessed the food**
 - He thanked God the Father for the blessing of the miracle and for what He, the Father, was about to do through Jesus.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Jesus Christ.
 - The Son of God, God incarnate,
 - The perfect man and the absolute Creator God
 - The one who adequately and continuously fulfilled every expectation of God for man.
 - The one who was the constant delight and joy of the Father's heart.
 - The one who always pleased the Father.

LEARNING TO PRAY

Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- But ask yourself
 - How much did He personally, as man, contribute to His mighty works, deeds, and ministry?
 - Christ Himself gives us the answer,
 - . . . **the father abiding in me does His works.** John 14:10

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Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- And how did that come about?
 - Through prayerful dependence on the Father!
- Out of a conscious and constant sense of need,
 - There arose a continuing attitude of prayer.
 - A continual expectation in Jesus that
 - If anything was to be done, the Father must do it
 - By way of initiative, and wisdom, and power.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Jesus demonstrated a continual expectation that
 - If anything was to be done, the Father must do it
- If this was true of Jesus Christ,
 - How much more should this also be true for us?
- Prayer, according to the pattern of Jesus, is to be a vital goal of true disciples.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- The disciples saw in Christ's life,
 - Not only prayer,
 - But a prayer life which demonstrated a dependency upon and intimacy with the Father unlike anything else they had ever seen and they wanted to know the secret of this.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- What was the request posed by the unnamed disciple?
 - It was, **teach us to pray.**
 - Not just how to pray as to the **mechanics,**
 - But how in the sense of the **motivation.**
 - The how aspect is included in His answer in **Luke 11:2-13.**



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Prayer should demonstrate
 - A **total consciousness** of our need,
 - A sense of our **complete inadequacy** and
 - A sense of God's **complete adequacy and willingness**.
 - Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, **2 Corinthians 3:5**



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance,
 - But laying hold of God's ever present willingness.
 - Prayer is not for emergency use only, when we get in a pinch and need someone to bail us out.
 - Prayer is not an **Aladdin's Lamp** or a trip to the wishing well for our wants.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Prayer is a means of intimate communion, fellowship, and dependence upon God the Father.
- The God that has promised to work in and through us through His Son, just as God worked through Him.
- Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.
- Prayer is a means of claiming God's promises and knowing and becoming abandoned to God's will.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- In **John 14:10-14**, note the relationship to prayer mentioned in verses 13-14 and the works we, as disciples, are to do in verse 12.
- Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- There is no activity in the life of a believer which does not require a prayerful attitude
 - A prayerful dependence on and an expectation that God is at work and will work according to His purposes and leading.
 - In ourselves we can do nothing. Christianity is living by faith in the Creator God who dwells in us, and prayer is God's means for us to draw upon Christ's miraculous life.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Christianity is as Paul expressed it in Galatians 2:20,
 - 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
- Faith for a committed believer is expressed in intimate, prayerful living.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- In practical terms what exactly does this means?
 - The phone call we are about to make, we can't really handle, at least not in Christ's power and life, apart from prayer.
 - The lesson we are preparing to teach, we can't do effectively without prayerful dependence.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- It means that while we usually recognize our need of God's power in things like witnessing,
 - We nevertheless tend to take God for granted and operate in our own abilities in other areas because we think something doesn't seem too difficult or it is within our area expertise.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- An example of this is found in Luke 5:5-11.
 - What was Peter thinking in this passage?
 - Christianity is living by faith and prayerful dependence upon God and under the power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of how things appear to us.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- Christianity is never a matter of living by who and what we are
 - Our insight, our background, our experience, our training, our giftedness, etc.
 - Rather it is living by faith in God's Word, biblical insight, and by faith in Jesus Christ, the Creator God and His availability to work through us as we are available and submissive to Him.



Jesus' Attitude in Prayer

- But such only happens when we live by intimate prayerful dependence upon the Father through a life of prayer,
 - A life of praying without ceasing, and a life devoted to special times of prayer alone with the Father and His Son in the power of the Spirit.

