**Intervening Prayer, Part Three** June 26, 16

Text questions to my cell - 250-642-3577

Prayer is one of those things many of us struggle with.

We know we should pray... and many of us do.

We know it is a good thing to talk with and listen to God, and many of us try.

But we can easily feel uncomfortable, even guilty about prayer, because we’re uncertain whether we pray enough, or pray right.

We learn in the Bible that prayer has different facets.

Jesus wonderfully combined these facets when he taught the disciples to pray.

**Matthew 6:9-13**.

Prayer acknowledges God – who he is.

Prayer invites God – your kingdom come, your will be done.

Prayer asks God – give us today our daily needs.

Prayer confesses to God – forgive us our sins.

Prayer gives God authority - in our lives

We are most familiar with several of these facets of prayer – thanking God and asking for his help.

And these facets are connected to who God is and who we are.

Listen again to this familiar story - **Luke 11:5-10**.

The story Jesus told is about two friends.

In any friendship there can be times when friends may be reluctant to help one another because it is inconvenient to do so.

But... if the needy friend is persistence and bold in their asking, this will often convince their friend to give them the help they need.

What was Jesus’ point in telling this story?

**This is not how it is with God.**

Jesus assured his listeners - ask God for what you need and he will give to you; seek after God and you will find your needs met; make your requests known to God like you’d knock on the door of someone’s home... and the door will be opened to you.

God is our Father.

We are his children.

God will not say to us, “Don’t bother me,” like the one man in the story -v.7

God isn’t reluctant or inconvenienced when you ask for his help.

You and I don’t have to bug God to get something from him.

That said, later on in Luke, chapter 18, Jesus told another parable about prayer, and his point was – we are to always pray and not give up.

God wants to develop persistence in his children.

But understand, persistence is very different from bugging.

God is a good, good father.

How good is God?

**Luke 11:11-13.**

As James wrote in 1:17, *“Every good and perfect gift is from above...”*

What is the point of v.13?

All of God’s help comes through the Holy Spirit.

Like a parent who gives good gifts to their children, so is God.

He takes care of and provides for our needs.

But it isn’t just “things” that he gives.

He gives us himself.

One aspect of prayer is learning to speak with, to listen to and to trust our heavenly Father regarding the things we need.

Jesus assured us in Matthew 6:25: *Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Your heavenly Father who cares for the creatures of this world, cares far more about you.*

Some of you are at this place in your faith walk.

You’re learning to pray like this – to thank God and to ask him for his help.

I want to encourage you to keep on.

Learn to relate to God, not as a cash machine, or as a shopping channel, but as your dad - a dad who is good.

As we studied back in May, we learned that in addition to prayer that thanks and asks, there is prayer that intervenes.

Such prayer connects to and expands on the prayer Jesus taught his followers – *your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

If we are to learn to pray intervening prayers, there is specific truth that we must clearly understand and believe.

**Truth of who Jesus is.**

When Jesus ascended to heaven, after his resurrection, the prophetic vision of Daniel 7:13-14 was fulfilled, and was confirmed by Philippians 2:8-11.

*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

If Jesus is Lord in heaven and on earth, why is the world still in the mess that it is?

Parable of Matthew 13:33 gives a cryptic explanation that when we study the gospel of Mark in the fall, I will expand upon.

When we place this parable alongside Psalm 110, which prophesized about the Messiah, we learn that in this present time, Jesus rules from heaven over the earth, ***“in the midst of his enemies.”*** (Psalm 110:2)

Jesus... is the Victor. Nothing and no one can ever change that.

**The truth about this present time.**

There is another cryptic statement made by Jesus in Matthew 24:8:

*All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

Before a woman gives birth to a new life, she experiences birth pains.

What words would describe what those pains are like?

Intense.

...

...

...

Since the ascension of Jesus, one way of understanding what is going on in the world, is to view what is happening as being like birth pains.

What is being birthed? New creation.

We are living in between times.

New creation has begun; the old creation is ending.

And in this in between time, the enemies of Jesus, while defeated, continue to create havoc, wherever the selfish choices of people open up possibilities for them and give them opportunity.

This is why bad stuff happens in the world.

In this present time, Jesus is not a passive observer standing on the sidelines of history. While Jesus could do everything himself, he doesn’t.

He involves his church.

He prompts his followers to pray and he intervenes in this world, through our prayers and our acts of grace and goodness, to change circumstances, situations and lives.

The gates of hell have no hope of being able to stop Jesus.

They cannot reverse his victory.

So why does Jesus take the risky way of involving us; of depending on us?

This is where I want to build onto the teaching from May.

**The truth of who we are in Jesus – now and in the future**

As you and I learn to pray prayers of intervention, in addition to making a difference in this world, Jesus is actually training us.

For what?

In order to answer that, I want to walk through with you, some of the passages

I only mentioned last time; some of the passages we hurried through because of time constraint.

As we do so, we are going to have to move back and forth – between the present time and the time of the new earth and heaven.

Matthew 24

What is the greater context of this chapter? **v.1-3**.

Jesus is seated with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, and they talked about three subjects:

(1) when the temple would be destroyed,

(2) what would be the sign of Jesus’ coming, and

(3) how they would know the end of the age had come?

When would the end of the age come? - **v.14**.

When would the temple be destroyed? - **v.15>**

(We know it happened within 40 years)

What would be the sign of Jesus’ coming? - **v.30-31.**

How are Jesus’ followers to live in light of this reality? - **v.36-46.**

Faithfully and wisely.

Why are we to live like this? Look at **v.47.**

Verse 47 can slide by us so easily.

We can miss what Jesus says about the incredible destiny for his followers who are found faithful. And what is that destiny? ***“put in charge of all his possessions”***

Look ahead to Matthew 25:14-23.

***You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.***

Jesus is not talking abstractly here.

Right now as we pray and acts in his name, we are being given opportunities to be trained; to prove our trustworthiness.

As we do so with “a few things,” it is with the intent to make us ready for “many things.”

Who are we in this present reality?

Ephesians 2:6

***“we are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms”***

Who we are... is connected to... who Jesus is.

He rules from heaven.

He hold all authority and power.

Seated with him explains an incredible reality - Jesus has given us authority to act in his name. And as we do, through our lives, Jesus makes a difference in this world. And... he is teaching us, his followers, the necessary skills that we will need for the age to come.

Our present reality in Jesus, will not end when he comes again, but will be greatly enhanced.

 John wrote of this in Revelation 3:21; 5:10, as did Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:1-3.

***“to sit with me on my throne”***

***“made to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and to reign on the earth”***

“***the Lord’s people will judge the world”***

***“the Lord’s people will judge angels”***

Let me restate it again, because this earth-shaking, reality altering truth.

What we forfeited, when we as a race, said no to God - that lost responsibility and privilege – is being given back to us, as we take hold of God’s rescue.

We are learning and being trained in this present time to rule on God’s behalf.

Look at Matthew 16:19

***“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”***

*bind and loose*

What are the keys?

They represent authority.

Look at Revelation 1:17-18.

Look at Luke 9:1; 10:1, 19.

What does it mean to bind and to loose?

Look at **Matthew** **18:19-20**

*if two of you agree, it will be done*

*when you gather in my name, I am with you*

Intervening prayer uses the authority of Jesus to bind and to loose.

But what is it that is bound and loosed?

The context of Matthew 16:19 – matters pertaining to the building of Jesus’ church.

The context of Matthew 18:19-20 – matters pertaining to the purity of Jesus’ church.

Look also at **Ephesians 6:10-17**.

The context here is standing our ground in the struggle against evil.

Remember –we are in the time where this present world is ending and the new one is being birthed.

We are in the time where the defeated enemies of Jesus can still cause havoc wherever people still alienated from God provide opportunity for them to act.

But remember - we are not left defenseless.

The resources of heaven are not abstract.

They are provisions of grace, available to us to utilize.

We are seated with Christ.

Everything he has is available to us.

This is why *“we are more than conquerors through him who loved us,”* as Romans 8:37 says.

Ephesians 6 details the resources of grace that are available to us.

Truth

Righteousness

Peace

Faith

Salvation

The word of God

And one of the primary ways in which we use the authority of Jesus and the resources of heaven is described in Ephesians 6:18.

*pray in the Spirit*

*on all occasions*

*with all kinds of prayers*

*be alert*

*always keep on praying*

Don’t forget the promise of Matthew 18:19-20.

Intervening prayer is exercised together – with as little as 2-3.

Intervening prayer is directed by Jesus – he is present with us.

Here’s one example of how the early church prayed intervening prayers.

Look at **Acts 4:23-31**.

In response to the prayer made in Acts 4, the believers were filled afresh with the Holy Spirit and spoke God’s word boldly.

**Let’s summarize**.

\* To pray prayers of intervention require us to be clear about who Jesus is and who we are because of him – he’s the ruler of heaven and earth, and we are God’s adopted children, friends and allies of Jesus.

\* Prayers of intervention are spoken by those who understand the authority of Jesus, and who use that authority in agreement with others of like mind and faith.

\* Intervening prayer is not just a cry to God for help; it is a confident assertion and insistence that the will of God be done here on earth as in heaven.

\* Prayers of intervention verbally speak the truth and the kingdom of God into and over a presenting need or circumstance.



Tomorrow Monday, June 27th, from 7-8pm, here at the church, will be a prayer meeting. I believe with all my heart, God is calling us to learn how to pray such prayers of intervention for our town and the families who live here.

Philippians 2:15 says because of our hope in Jesus, we “shine like stars” on a dark night, even as “we live in a crooked and depraved generation.”

While we live fully engaged to see God’s kingdom advance here on earth, our hope is for the return of our king, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The last book of the Bible closes with this shout, “Come Lord Jesus.”

Listen and sing along with this song that expresses this longing.

**Even So Come**

 **The Blessing**

Matthew 18:20:

*Where two or three come together in my name,* ***there am I…***