



*Prayer
&
Providence*

Lesson 7 – What Do We Expect When We Pray



Learning to Pray from the Psalms

Individual Lament Psalms

Psalms 43, 54, 64, 69, 70, 86

- Ps 43:3 Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle.
- Ps 54:6 I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it is good.
- Ps 64:1 Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- Ps 69:16 Hear me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.
- Ps 70:1 Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord!
- Ps 86:11 Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. 12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore.



Our discussion of prayer so far ...

- What prayer is
- Whose prayer God hears
- The importance of prayer
- Being constant in prayer
- Intercessions; praying for others
- For whom or what should we pray
- Prayer in time of trouble
- Prayer and healing
- When God refuses to hear our prayer
- When God says 'no' or 'wait'
- The blessing of unanswered prayers



What do you expect
when you pray?



What do you expect
when you pray?

What would you expect as a
child from an earthly father?



Jesus and Prayer

- What do we see?
 - An intimate and close relationship between Him and the Father
 - A complete and full trust in the Father to guide and direct in His teaching and work on the earth
 - John 11:41-42; John 12:27-28
 - A sense of total submission to the Father's will
 - Lu 22:42
 - Finding strength and power to overcome all opposition



Paul and Prayer

- Seeking the brethren's prayers on his behalf
 - 2 Thes. 3:1-2 "... that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified ..."
 - Eph. 6:18-20 "... that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel ..."
 - Col. 4:3-4 "... that God would open to us a door for the word ..."
- Paul believed that God would hear and respond to such prayers or he would not have requested them



Paul and Prayer

- Faced many trials and difficulties
 - 2 Thes. 3:1-2 “... that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men ...”
 - Rom. 15:30-31 “... that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe ...”
- Believed God did in fact deliver him, and that God answered his prayers
 - 2 Tim. 3:10-11 “... and out of them all the Lord delivered me.”
 - 2 Tim. 4:17-18 “... and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion ...”



Prayer of Jabez

- 1 Chron. 4:9-10

“Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.”



Prayer of Jabez

- A fervent, sincere petition to God
 - For blessings
 - To enlarge his territory – perhaps implying the borders of his influence or service
 - For God’s abiding presence and guidance
 - To be protected from moral or spiritual evil
 - Heard by God and granted
- This should be our expectation as well
 - God will answer our prayers when expressed in sincerity and in keeping with His will

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a scenic landscape. It features a dense forest of evergreen trees in the background, a line of trees in the middle ground, and a calm body of water in the foreground that reflects the sky and the trees. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Does prayer change God?

“For I am the LORD, I do not change ...” (Mal. 3:6)

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”
(James 1:17)

“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19)



God does change or relent

- Jonah 3:9-10; 4:1-2
- Amos 7:2-3
- Jer. 18:7-10
 - “... if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it ... if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.”
- Ex. 32:9-10



God is deeply affected by His people

- Ps 34:15 “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.”
- Jas 5:16 “... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- Mt 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”



“... we best imagine the world not as a state governed by a potentate but as a work of art, something like a play, in the process of being created. The playwright allows his characters to affect the play itself, then incorporates all their actions into the final result. The drama of human history is one in which the scene and the general outline of the story is fixed by the author, but certain minor details are left for the actors to improvise. It may be a mystery why He should have allowed us to cause real events at all; but it is no odder that He should allow us to cause them by praying than by any other method.”

C.S. Lewis



“By using prayer rather than other, more direct means, God once again chooses the most freedom-enhancing style of acting in the world. God waits to be asked, in some inscrutable way making God’s activity on earth contingent on us ... **in the same way parents slow their pace when the youngest child is learning to walk. Their goal is to equip someone else, not themselves.**”

Philip Yancey



Persistence

- What does Jesus mean in Luke 18:1 where He says they ought “not lose heart.” What’s the antidote to this?
 - **Luke 18:2-8; Luke 11:5-13; 1 Thes. 5:17**
 - **Persistence!**
 - Firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition
- Ask ... seek ... knock (Luke 11:9)
 - “The real value of persistent prayer is not so much that we get what we want as that we become the person we should be.” (Yancey)



“... And if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary Him with assiduous cries.”

John Milton

Final Thoughts ...





Next Week – Lesson 8 – Providence – God is Able

1. How would you define 'providence'? What is the difference between providence and miracles?
2. God had a plan or a purpose for man even before the creation. What was God's purpose for mankind? (Eph. 1:1-14; 1 Peter 1:17-21)
3. Consider some of the Hebrew and Greek names for God: El, Elohim, El Shaddai, Yahweh-Jireh, Yahweh-Rapha, El Roi, Pantokrator. What do these names tell us about God's ability to answer prayer?
4. When you further consider the idea that 'God is able,' what do the following passages tell us? Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 7:25-28; Mark 10:23-25; Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 4:13

+ Daily Readings from the Psalms

