

Sunday Leftovers

Sermon Title: Feed Me - Prayer

WHAT'S THIS MESSAGE ABOUT?

Scripture is the most concrete source of spiritual food for us, but prayer may be the most central source of nourishment. We're not born knowing how to pray, so be free of the burdensome expectation that you should be able to sit down and pray for 4 hours. Prayer in its most basic sense is direct communication with God. What we forget is that good communication has to be two-way. It has to be as much about listening as it is sharing. The deepening of any relationship begins with clear, honest, two-way communication.

One key benefit of prayer is that you put yourself in a place to receive the gift of God's grace. This is the broader purpose of all disciplines, and the specific purpose of prayer: it puts us in contact with the Giver of Grace in such a way that our hearts and wills begin to be transformed. It starts with the small and gradually grows larger in effect. Don't begin with expectations of moving mountains; begin with expecting to listen, hear and be transformed.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think was the main point of Matt's message?
- Do you think prayer should be a priority in our lives? Why or why not?
- Why do you think people are reluctant to pray or to pray regularly?
- What can we do to make prayer a more vital part of our regular routine?

Do something about it:

We're not born knowing how to pray, so be free of the burdensome expectation that you should be able to sit down and pray for 4 hours. Start with 4 minutes. Put yourself in a place to receive the gift of God's grace. Remember that prayer is "communication." Good communication has to be two-way, so consider setting aside time to just be quiet and listen to what God has to say to you.

Digging deeper:

Daniel 9:1-9; 2 Corinthians 3:6 (also see pages 2,3)

Deuteronomy 4:7 - What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?

2 Chronicles 7:14,15 - if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

Job 22:23-28 - If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent and assign your nuggets to the dust, your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines, then the Almighty will be your gold, the choicest silver for you. Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God. You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows. What you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways.

Job 42:10 - After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before.

Psalms 10:17 - You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry...

Psalms 32:6,7 - Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalms 46:10 - He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'

Proverbs 15:8 - The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

Proverbs 28:9 - If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.

Isaiah 45:20 - Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.

1 Peter 3:12 - For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Matthew 5:44,45 - But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

Matthew 6:5-8 - And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 7:7-11 - Ask, and [Ⓢ]it will be given to you; [Ⓢ]seek, and you will find; [Ⓢ]knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you [Ⓢ]who, when his son asks for a loaf, [Ⓢ]will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or [Ⓢ]if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, [Ⓢ]how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Matthew 21:22- If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

Mark 11:24-26 - Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Luke 11:1-4 - It happened that while ^[a]Jesus 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.” ² And He said to them, “When you pray, say:

‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.’³ ‘Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

Romans 8:26,27 - In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

James 4:2,3 - ...You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and [Ⓢ]do not receive, because you ask [Ⓢ]with wrong motives, so that you may spend it [Ⓢ]on your pleasures.

James 5:13-16 - Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.