

LORD'S PRAYER SERMON – March 29/30, 2014

We've been in an extended series through the Book of Acts
I think it's been encouraging and challenging to all of us
Together, we've marveled at what the early church experienced
 they endured hardship with great joy
 they were bold in sharing the gospel
 And they saw thousands come to faith in Jesus and be baptized
 And we've learned how God gave them a unity and love across racial and
 cultural barriers like nobody had ever seen.

I'm encouraged by that, because I see God doing some of those same things in us
But I'm challenged because I think we're only seeing the tip of the iceberg

Just a few weeks ago, in Summit Kids, our kids studied Shadrach, Meshach and
Abednego. Three guys persecuted, thrown in the fiery furnace, because of their faith
in God. But God miraculously delivers them.

On the way home Hudson says

"Mom, that kind of stuff doesn't happen today, does it? Just back in old times, right?"

You see, I'm afraid we might read the Book of Acts and think the same thing

that kind of stuff doesn't happen today, does it? Just back in old times, right?

Listen, God is ready willing and able to do in and for us what he did in the early
church

So what keeps us from that?

Acts 2:42 says it this way *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* And they did it in response to the gospel. Every facet of their lives (corporate and individual) was impacted by the power and presence of God because they were devoted to Him. **They gave themselves to knowing and experiencing God.**

They were EACH ONE devoted to these things. Please don't miss this. They were devoted to these things as a body because they were devoted to them individually. **Their collective individual devotion is what produced the dynamic corporate experience.** It wasn't the other way around. They weren't expecting the corporate gathering to keep them going spiritually. And the same has to be true of us. **Our collective individual devotion is what will lead to a dynamic corporate experience.**

I have one goal in mind this weekend. That is to stir, provoke, challenge you (every one of you) to pursue devotion to the Word of God and to Prayer. **I say pursue, because devotion to anything is cultivated and developed.** Devotion is giving yourself wholeheartedly to something. Abandoning yourself. Discipling yourself for the purpose of godliness. **Walking in lifelong devotion is cultivated by intentionally choosing devotion step by step.**

On your way in today, you got a copy of a new resource that we've produced called "30 DAYS - Kickstart Your Daily Time with God" I'm going to challenge you to take it and commit to using it, along with our Summit Bible Reading Plan. Because I'm convinced that if we will respond to the gospel by daily devoting ourselves to knowing and experiencing God, then we will come to see and know God in a way that we never have before.

If you've got your Bible turn to Matthew 6.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **10** your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

I believe this short prayer outlines for us what our daily time with God should look like. This is not a prayer for us to repeat. It's a model for us to follow. Jesus did not say "pray this" what he said was "this is how you should pray" Don't miss that, because they are fundamentally different. One becomes a ritual, the other shapes a relationship.

Let me show you FOUR WAYS I think this prayer should inform or influence our daily time with God.

1. Our daily time with God should celebrate and cultivate our relationship with him

Jesus' instruction on prayer begins with this – verse 9

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"

This has to be the place where we begin all of our time with God. If you and I can start our approach with a right understanding of God as Father, then everything else will fall in place. Oswald Chambers said "We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties"

To the disciples this would have been a revolutionary idea – up to this point, no one called God Father. The idea of referring to God, let alone speaking to Him, in such a relational way was unheard of. But Jesus is underscoring an essential truth here. We have access to God because we are his children. By faith in Jesus, you and I are adopted as sons and daughters of God. Let the wonder of this settle in on you. What an incredible privilege, in Christ, you his beloved child. And our praying should be on the basis of that position and for the purpose of nurturing that relationship. Your time with God should be first and foremost about relationship.

Jesus said, right praying is rooted in understanding our relationship to our Father God. But sometimes our relationship with God does not reflect the closeness and engagement of a father and son. And the distance in our relationship is not His fault, it's ours. God hasn't abandoned us, we've abandoned Him. He hasn't neglected us, we neglect Him. God is not an absentee-father, we are absentee-children. You and I need daily time with God precisely because we need God – like a son needs His father – we need our Father in heaven.

Not too long ago, our boys were having a conversation. To be honest I don't really remember what occasioned it, but Haddon, our 4 year old, looked at 6 year old brother and said "Hudson, if Mom and Dad died, we could play Wii and iPad all the time." My first thought was, maybe we need to get some counseling" ...followed by "should we lock our bedroom door at night?" He has no idea how much he needs me. There is no way he could comprehend and appreciate all that I mean to him. He can't even imagine what would happen if I weren't there to provide for him and lead him and love him and protect him. He doesn't really have a category for what life would be like without Dad. Sometimes all he can see is that I am keeping him from what he wants to do. Truth be told...we're not much different. We are woefully unaware of how much we need God. And we might not say it, but internally we think if God was out of the picture we could do whatever we wanted to.

We need to learn to say with the Psalmist

Psalm 63:1

1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

There is nothing, apart from Himself, that God could give me or do for me that would satisfy. I don't need something from God...I need God.

That's why so much of your time with God needs to be focused on who He is- Father, and who you are – child. The more clearly I see Him the more my prayers will be filled with praise and thanksgiving. Worshipping Him in adoration and gratitude will draw me, compel me to run to Him.

Let me suggest you cultivate this by journaling. The prayer section of this guide (HOLD IT UP) will provides a place and some direction in how to do this. Feed your praise by documenting what God is teaching you about Himself. Go back over your sermon notes and pull out where you heard or saw God. Make a list of things for which you need to express gratitude and thankfulness to God. Open up your eyes to the goodness, kindness, mercy and love of God. Where do you see that in scripture? Where do you experience it day by day? Write it down. Be specific. Build for yourself something that feeds your faith and causes you to remember the greatness of God, something that turns your attention toward Him and not toward yourself and your circumstance.

2. Our daily time with God should reorient us toward His kingdom and His purposes “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

What has permeated our preaching and teaching here at the Summit, our mission and vision as a church, now needs to make it's way into our praying. You and I need a Gospel revolution in our prayer lives. Way too much of my praying is motivated by and focused on my own desire for comfort, ease, relief, and pleasure. This is often reflected in ways that may be very subtle. I pray for things to go well, for the absence of complications and conflict, I pray for safety, and health.

Too much of what I pray for is temporary and me-centered. I should know by now that God's primary agenda is NOT my personal comfort, ease, relief, pleasure. And honestly it's a waste of breath for me to pray in ways that don't reflect God's agenda and his purposes. I need to recall the promises of God and make those central in my praying. I should be praying more eternal, kingdom focused prayers.

Recently we were reading the Gospel Storybook bible with our kids. When we finished the story of Cain and Abel, Hudson was furious. You could see it in his eyes and all over his face. “Mom,” he said, “it's not fair. It's not fair that Cain killed Able and he didn't get to live his real life. He had to go up to heaven and live some fake life.” You see, to my 6 year old, this is what's *real*, and heaven is NOT real, it's fake. But isn't that how we pray???...as if all this were real, as if eternity was fake.

Our praying needs to be motivated by the Gospel, through the lens of the Gospel, for the purpose of the Gospel. From the moment sin entered the world, God's purpose in everything has been to redeem and reconcile us to Himself. From Genesis to Revelation it's the story of what God has done, is doing, and will do. When he killed an animal to make a garment cover Adam and Eve, God was pointing to the day he would slay His only Son, the Lamb of God, to cover our sin and shame – restoring us to relationship with himself. Redeeming, reconciling, restoring, remaking us in the image of His Son - this is God's eternal purpose. Are you praying that would happen in you? Is that what you pray for your kids? Your boss? Your co-worker?

If God answered all your prayers in one, fell swoop, to what degree would “his kingdom come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven? How many new people would be in the Kindgom? How many of His promises would be fulfilled for you? How much of His purposes would be accomplished in your life? Are you praying those kinds of prayers?

Practically speaking, **you and I need to build for ourselves a bank of “your kingdom come, your will be done” things to pray.** Start a list of the promises of God that you discover as you read the Bible. Write down prayers recorded in Scripture and say those back to God. Be intentional about praying for people you know who are lost, as well as nations and people groups that don't have access to the gospel. Again, this guide that we are giving you today will help you begin the process of cultivating this kind of prayer life.

3. Our daily time with God should affirm our dependence on Him

“give us this day our daily bread”

This is the most fascinating phrase in the entire prayer to me. It’s the first real “ask” in the prayer. And it’s the first thing that seems to be focused on me and receiving something from God.

When God delivered the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, He provided food for them. God made it rain potato flakes. Daily manna, bread from heaven was God’s way of sustaining them. They had no other source of food. No means of getting what they needed. No alternative way to sustain themselves.

Saying “daily bread” was Jesus’ way of pointing the disciples, and us, back to this very basic truth – in the most fundamental physical way, we are all dependent on God for life. **My prayers should acknowledge my dependence on God’s sustaining provision.** It’s not a prayer for abundance or excess, it’s a call to humble reliance.

But I need more than just physical bread. Jesus said “I am the bread of life” I need Him, I need to be with Him. In another place he said “man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Jesus’s instruction to the disciples, and to us, is that we must remember that **we are not only dependent on God for physical sustenance but we are absolutely dependent on him for the sustaining of our souls.** You don’t just need bread for your body, you need the bread from heaven to feed your heart, soul and mind. I am in all ways, physical and spiritual, utterly and completely dependent on God.

And not only should my prayers reflect that, but my pursuit of God in His word should position me to receive that daily bread. Listen, the manna that god supplied for the Children of Israel didn’t do them any good unless they picked it up!

Psalm 19:7-10

7 *The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.*

*The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.*

8 *The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.*

9 *The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.*

*The decrees of the Lord are firm,
and all of them are righteous.*

10 *They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.*

When I'm weary and worn out, I need to be recharged
When I'm at the end of my understanding & I don't know what to do, I need wisdom
When I'm discouraged and broken, I need joy
When I'm confused, I need clarity
When I'm in the dark, I need light
When I'm insecure, I need a firm foundation to stand on
When I'm left wanting by the best the world has to offer, I need satisfaction in Christ.

According to Psalm 19, all that is found in the Word of God. Not somewhere else. Not in vacations, or relationships, or marriage, or kids. It's found in the Word of God.

Again, can we be honest here? We've filled our lives with so many other things that we don't perceive a real need for time in the Word. We say we don't have time, or we don't know where to start, or we just don't understand the Bible. But in reality what we're saying is that we don't think it's necessary.

When you neglect time with God, what suffers is the life of Christ in you. Believer, Christ follower, do you understand that? By faith, Christ has come to dwell in you. But that life of Christ must be nurtured. It must be fed. It must be fanned into flame. It must be cultivated. That happens when you spend time with God in prayer and in his Word.

Listen, this is why I'm worried about some of you. It's why you are spiritually weak and unhealthy. You're not feeding on the word of God. You waltz in here once a week (late half the time) and expect somebody from this stage to feed you. It's not the pastor's responsibility to FEED you once a week...like that would keep you healthy and strong anyway. It's your responsibility to pull yourself up to the table, draw near to God, and feast on the Word of God SEVEN DAYS A WEEK! ...taste and see that the Lord is good...and feast on Him all week long!

If you took half the time you spend on Facebook ...or even a third of it... a fraction of the time you spend on twitter, or texting and email, if you gave up one television show and devoted that to the Word of God, you would be astounded at what God would do. You'd be overwhelmed by how He works in you. But you will never know until you start.

4. Our daily time with God should lead us to receive, give, and rely on grace.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

I need daily time with God, in His Word and in prayer, to connect me to grace.

You and I have blind spots. Faults, errors, sins we can't see or don't want to see. It's time in the Word that uncovers and reveals what I overlook. When it's exposed I can confess and repent. Then I can experience that joy of 1 John 1:9.

1 John 1:9 “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Confession is not saying you’re sorry, it’s owning your rebellion and agreeing with God that it’s sin.

At our house we try to avoid just saying “I’m sorry” cause we’re mostly just sorry we got caught. We want to say “I was wrong” and identify our sin because then we can turn from it.

1 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*

The Word warns me, exposes me, corrects me. And that is God’s grace to us.

Listen to me, we live in a culture that thinks rebuke is hate and calling out sin is intolerant. The scripture says “those the Father loves he disciplines.” I tell me kids – if Daddy didn’t love you, he wouldn’t care what you did. It’s because I love you, because I want life for you that I correct and discipline you. We need that kind of grace from God. Grace that identifies our sin and leads us to repentance.

Receiving grace should compel me to give grace. Jesus makes a pretty strong statement here – “forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors” Jesus was assuming that a REAL experience of grace and forgiveness from God would lead us to freely extend grace and forgiveness to one another.

If I know:

*My sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, oh my soul!
How can I possibly refuse to forgive you??*

When you and I refuse to forgive, we demonstrate that we really don’t understand that grace that’s been extended to us.

There’s one more piece of this connection to grace that’s so important. Time with God teaches me to RELY on grace. The grace of God isn’t just from my past, it’s for my present and my future. I’ve been a Christian a long time, a pastor in this church for almost 28 years...and I am still in desperate need of God’s grace. I am
“prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love....”

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
(do you know what a snare is? It’s a trap)
Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
’Tis grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home*

How am I going to be directed away from temptation? How am I going to say "NO" to the desires of my flesh? How am I going to be delivered from the enemy who "prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."????

GRACE. Remembering God's grace, Believing grace, Soaking in grace. GRACE GRACE
And that's why I need to spend time with God.

You and I desperately need daily time with God. We need to celebrate and cultivate the relationship with have because of Jesus. We need to have our perspective reoriented toward His Kingdom and His purposes. We need to recognize our dependence on God and position ourselves to receive his daily supply. We need to be saturated in the Gospel.

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.
Will you? Will you draw near to God? Will you devote yourself to seeking God DAILY, in His word and in prayer?

In just a moment, we're going to spend some time praying together. Your campus pastor will come and lead you through this time. But before they come, let me pray for us.