

Learning From the Prayer Life of Jesus

1 Peter 3:12

One of the real treasures of living the Christian life is the ability to communicate with the Lord through prayer. I would say that prayer is probably one of the richest, greatest spiritual blessings that we enjoy in Christ. You remember in Ephesians chapter one at verse three, Paul tells us that every spiritual blessing resides in Christ Jesus. So naturally, one of the great benefits of being a child of God, a member of the Body of Christ, is to know that there is a God in heaven who hears our prayers.

You remember Peter said in first Peter chapter three in verse 12, for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. His ears are open to their prayers. What a great blessing to know that the Almighty. Here's our prayers. In our lesson today, I want to talk a little bit about learning from the prayer life of Jesus. Now, many times we talk about Jesus and what a great example he has set before us.

Peter tells us that Jesus left us an example that we should follow in his steps. That being the case, when you begin to look at the scriptures and sift through the gospel narratives Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it's amazing to note the numerous instances that Jesus spent time in prayer to the Heavenly Father. Thus, if as a child of God, we're trying to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, wouldn't it stand to reason that we would look to his life and try to pattern our behavior after he ends?

And that if the Lord Jesus recognized that there's something to be said about prayer, that we would want to make it a daily part of our lives. You know Jesus as the master teacher, has left before us so many tremendous virtues to strive to live up to. But when you begin to look at his prayer life, there are some things that we can take away that I think will aid us in our prayer life to the father.

That being the case, I want to begin by first and foremost talking about Jesus prayed reverently in Matthew chapter six, in what is often called the sermon on the Mount. You remember Jesus set forth in chapter six, beginning in verse nine, what we often call the model prayer. And it's in that context that Jesus said, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Now let's just pause there for a moment. When Jesus said, Our father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. We're talking about a God who is wholly separate, distinct in so many ways. The word hallowed. Here's what the idea of being set apart. You know, Isaiah said many years ago talking about God. He said, my ways are not your ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. In Isaiah chapter six, you remember when Isaiah said that he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up? It's in that context that the seraphim cried one to another, saying, Holy, holy, holy. Now just back up for a moment or two. Think about Moses. In Exodus chapter three, we read of Moses being challenged by God to assume a mantle of leadership to lead the children of the lead, to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

So it's in that context that the Lord said to him to remove his sandals. He said, because the ground where you're standing is holy ground. When we come before the throne of God. However, a pause to think that we are in the presence of a holy God, that in many ways we are on holy ground. Now, understanding that we have approached the Creator and Sustainer of

the universe that we live in.

Now oftentimes we talk about the character and nature of God. God is a God of love. The Bible tells us that he is a God of grace, a God of mercy. But to realize that God is involved in the affairs of our lives, that he is interested in us. So it's somewhat humbling to remember that the Holy God, the one who brought this world into existence, but he invites us into his throne room or invites us to come before his throne.

Now there's a second thing. Number one, we talk about the Lord Jesus that he prayed reverently. And I think that we as the people of God, that we ought to approach the throne of God with reverence and dignity. But there's a certain amount of decorum that ought to accompany our prayer life. The psalmist, many years ago in Psalm 89 at verse seven, said, God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all them that are about him.

And so again, to just remember that we are being invited into the very presence of a living God. But then secondly, Jesus not only prayed reverently, but I would submit to you that the Lord Jesus Christ prayed thankfully, in John chapter six we have an account of Jesus taking five barley loaves and two small fish. And you remember, the text tells us that he fed about 5000 people.

And so in John chapter six, John, in recounting this experience in the life of Jesus, said that Jesus took the loaves and after having taken below the loaves, he gave thanks to the father, and then distributed the loaves to the disciples, and they in turn to distribute it to the multitude. So what can we learn from that? Did you know that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift?

The Bible says in James chapter one, every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the father of lights, every single blessing that we enjoy in this life. Those blessings might be material in nature. They might be physical in nature. They might be spiritual in nature. But all of those blessings come from the very same source, and that's Almighty God.

Over and over again, we are encouraged to express thanksgiving to God in heaven. In the very text we looked at a moment ago in Matthew chapter six. You remember Jesus said in that context that in our prayers we ought to say, give us this day our daily bread or daily loaves. And the idea is that the food that nourishes our body, well, who does that come from?

It comes from God, doesn't it? Again, he is the dispenser of every good and perfect gift. In Verse Orleans chapter five, when Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, you remember he encouraged them to pray without ceasing. And no doubt, as a child of God, we ought to spend a great deal of time in prayer to God. In other words, it ought to characterize our very lives.

But he also said in that context, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. Paul, in writing to the saints in Colossae, will say in Colossians chapter four verse two, continue steadfastly in prayer, and then listen to him watching therein. With thanksgiving, the food, the clothing, the shelter that we enjoy on a daily basis, all of the abundant resources and blessings that we have, the rich soil, the clean air, fresh water, the rain, the sunshine, all of these blessings ought to be taken into account.

And then, yes, those tremendous spiritual blessings we're talking about prayer and learning from the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ. To realize that Jesus expressed thanksgiving

to the father. And so if we're trying to walk in the footsteps of Jesus again, wouldn't it stand to reason that we like Jesus, would pray reverently? That we would pray, thankfully, that we would continue on a regular basis?

One of the things that I think about often in my life is in. As I look back over the years, I have often questioned, have I been as grateful as I should be for all the many blessings that I enjoy now? Let me tell you what. Sometimes when we talk about the Christian life and you hear people say from time to time, the Christian life is the very best life.

And I believe that with all my heart. Let me tell you why. It's the best life. It is the best life because it is the blessed life. And you see, in Christ Jesus we have an abundance of things to be thankful for. Can we not say to God, thank you for pardoning our sins? Then when we came to Jesus in simple, trusting faith, believing that he is the Son of God, repenting of our sins, confessing his name, being immersed in a watery grave of baptism, rising to walk in newness of life, being added to the body of Christ.

As Peter talks about in acts chapter two, and as Luke records in acts two, verse 47. Shouldn't that gladden our heart? Shouldn't it make us appreciative of the fact that we enjoy redemption, reconciliation? Now you think about pardon, to understand that not only have we experienced pardon through our obedience to the gospel, but there's what is often called the second law, a pardon that is a child of God.

John said that we rise above sin. But he said, if any man sins, let him know he has an advocate with the father. Jesus Christ the righteous. So that means if I succumb to temptation, we're trying to live above sin. But there are times in life when, because we are fallible beings, we succumb, we falter. And yet, here's what John said if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us.

Our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So I thank God from being pardoned, from sin. I can thank God because I have peace with him. That's what Paul said in Romans chapter five, verses one and two. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah said many years ago, there is no peace for the wicked, says my God.

There are a lot of people in our world today there bearing the burden of guilt, shame, the shame of sin, the stain of sin. And yet to know that through Jesus Christ that we enjoy reconciliation and we are at one with God in heaven. You see, Jesus is our mediator. He and he ever lives to make intercession for us.

We are enjoying fellowship with God. What a blessing. But then we're talking about prayer. Can we not express thanksgiving that God is willing to hear our prayers? Just as you heard the Lord Jesus when we go before his throne, he is listening again. Here's what Peter said. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. His ears are open to their prayers.

That's a wonderful thought. And then to remember that I have his abiding presence in my daily life. The Hebrew writer said, on behalf of God on one occasion, I will never leave you nor forsake you. What a blessing to know that we're not traveling through life alone. But there is a God who is concerned about our well-being and who is standing beside us day in and day out.

You know, there are a lot of people that live alone and feel isolated and alone from those around them. And you have to remember that as a child of God, we never leave the presence of God. Now, if we leave, it's our own choosing. But the Lord never leaves us. And then there's a final thought here in terms of gratitude.

What about the hope that we have? You know, Paul said in Titus chapter one in verse two that we live in hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. Let me give you a third, I think, characteristic when we talk about the prayer life of Jesus, the Lord Jesus. Yes, he prayed reverently. He prayed thankfully.

But I would submit to you. He prayed regularly. When you began sifting through the gospel narratives, it is abundantly clear that Jesus spent an inordinate amount of time communing with the father in prayer. Now, I mentioned a moment ago what Paul said in first Thessalonians chapter five that we are to pray without ceasing. But go back and look at Mark in chapter one, verse 35.

Mark tells us that on one occasion Jesus rose early in the morning, went out to a solitary place, and there he prayed. In Luke chapter six, the Bible tells us, prior to selecting the apostles, that Jesus spent the night in prayer to the father. In Luke chapter five, in verses 16 and 17, we find Jesus withdrawing into the wilderness for the purpose of praying.

You remember in John chapter 17. Sometimes we refer to that chapter as the high, as the High Priestly prayer of Jesus. What's in that context that Jesus said, father, the hour has come. Glorify your son, that your son may glorify you also. You've given him authority over all flesh to give us, to give eternal life to as many as you have given him.

Here Jesus is praying in the shadow of the cross. And then, of course, he went to get some money, didn't he? And we have a record of the Lord Jesus in the presence of Peter, James and John. And he's bowing before the father and praying about the cross that lay before him. Now that being the case, if the Lord Jesus recognized the importance of regularly communing with the father in prayer, what does that say to us?

You know, David said in Psalm 55, on one occasion, evening, morning, and noon, will I pray and cry aloud? How often do you find yourself praying to God? Are you like Jesus rising early in the morning, praying to the father? Are you like David and you have regular times throughout the day that you go before the throne of God?

Are you like the Lord Jesus who spent the night in prayer to the father? Now, many of us, we've probably fallen asleep praying to the father, but how many of us have literally spent the night communing with God in prayer? Prayer is a tremendous blessing. And to understand something about the prayer life of Jesus, and to understand that we can learn from the master teacher.

And I would grant that Jesus many, many times verbally taught the people of his day as he does us through His Word. But then we talk about that superlative example of Christ. The fact that he modeled the behavior that we ought to strive to emulate on a daily basis. So yes, Jesus prayed regularly to the father. But then I would also suggest that Jesus prayed thoughtfully.

Now let's just go back and look at what Luke said in chapter six. Here we have an account of Jesus prior to selecting the apostles. Now think about this for a minute. The Lord Jesus is going to identify 12 men. They're going to spend about three years of their lives in his presence. And over that period of time, he's going to begin to mold and shape and bend them toward the will of the father.

They will ultimately become his ambassadors. It would be in these men in whom the Word of God would reside, and they would take that gospel and literally permeate the world with it. So the Lord Jesus is thoughtfully, prayerfully recognizing that these men are going to have a vital role in the kingdom of God. Now, that being the case before we make major decisions

in life, when we think about some of the circumstances that we're battling from day to day, sometimes we're battling major obstacles in life.

Wouldn't it stand to reason that we would want to spend some time praying to the father? I think about young people, young folks that are thinking about committing their lives to one another, and that beautiful in that beautiful union that we call marriage, and understand that what Jesus said is true. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

And so before selecting someone that I'm going to spend the rest of my life with, would it stand to reason that I would go before the throne of God and pray about that selection process, that I would want to find somebody who is like minded? You know, Amos said. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? I want to identify somebody who thinks like I do, who has similar goals and aspirations, who above all, wants to serve God and ultimately be in heaven with him.

That's just one example. There are times in life when we have to rely heavily upon God. I think about those of us as we grow older in life, and many of us have aged parents, mature parents who are still living. And one of the things that sometimes we have to get involved in is trying to assist and help our elderly parents in their sunset years.

It might be that you're watching this program right now, and you're trying to decide how best to care for your elderly parents. Wouldn't it stand to reason that you'd more spend some time in prayer to God, that you would want the wisdom that comes from above? You know, Solomon said, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not under your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he'll direct your paths. And so as we go through life to understand something about the importance of prayer and how pivotal prayer is in our daily lives, that we're making wise decisions, good decisions, decisions that will not only aid us today, but will ultimately help us gain that eternal home in heaven.

So I encourage you as you think about your prayer life, I want to encourage you to think about the importance that Jesus placed on prayer, and to discern difficult decisions through prayer. There's another thing I would call your attention to that is that Jesus, the Son of God, prayed submissively. Now here's the hard part. You know, sometimes when we go before the throne of God, I get it because we're human beings.

Many times we know what we want, or at least we think we know what we want. And so we go before the throne of God and we lay before him. Our petitions. We're requesting things from him. And nothing wrong with that. But how often in our prayer life do we subordinate our will to the father's will? Again, we go back to the summary in Matthew chapter 26 and verses 36 through 46.

Again we have the Lord Jesus Christ in a very intimate setting, and he is battling the cross that lay before him because he's about to drink the bitter cup that would be placed upon his sinless head. Jesus would vicariously suffer, bleed, and die for the sins of the human family. You know, when we talk about the redemptive plan and the fact that we are going before the God of heaven, our creator, our sustainer, and, yes, our Redeemer, but to realize that as Jesus is in the garden, he is wrestling with the weight of the cross.

Now I understand, at least to some degree, the horrific anguish that he must have felt on that occasion. I mean, imagine if you can. Here is the sinless Son of God, and He is, as John the Baptist said, the Lamb of God, who will take away the sin of the world. And so here's the Lord Jesus, and he's praying, My father, if at all possible, let this cup pass

from me.

If there's any other way. But he said nevertheless, not as I will, but your will be done. Now Paul said in second Corinthians chapter five, verse 21. Him who knew no sin, he became sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. I think what Paul was saying is that Jesus became that sacrificial lamb that I spoke of a moment ago.

He was the Passover lamb sacrificed for us. Paul talked about in First Corinthians chapter five. In verse seven, Jesus is wrestling with the weight of the cross. Now the pain, the anguish that of that would have been great. But think about this. You remember as Jesus was dying on the cross, that he said, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Now, I'm not sure that I can fully grasp the full import of that statement, but to understand that Jesus is grappling with the separation that would occur on Calvary, a separation that had never occurred before. So yes, Jesus prayed submissive submissively. Now here's what John said. This is a confidence that we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Now again, I said a moment ago, the difficult part of prayer is to subjugate our will in deference to the father's will. So as we pray, let us pray. Not our will, but God's will. Because after all, it's all said and done. Who best knows what we need in this life? When you say God does, I mean God knows all.

God sees all. God knows us inside out. He knows what we can handle. He knows what we can handle. He knows what we need. He knows what we don't need. Now there's another thought I want to attach to this. That is that the Lord Jesus Christ? He prayed fervently. Again, we look at Luke chapter 22. And here is Jesus again battling the weight of the cross.

And you remember Luke said in his account, and being in agony, he prayed more fervently. Sometimes when times get difficult in life, when when we're battling a sea of problems rather than spending more time in earnest, fervent prayer to God, we fail to pray and the blessings that we rob ourselves of. You know, James said many years ago, the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Two thoughts here. Number one, we talk about the privilege of prayer to realize that there's a God in heaven who will listen to my prayers and answer those prayers. But then to add to that, not just the privilege of prayer, but the power of prayer, I'm convinced that God is intimately involved in the affairs of this world. He's interested in my life just as much as he's interested in your life.

The Bible tells us in Daniel chapter four The Most High Rules and the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will. So if God is active in the affairs of this life, wouldn't it stand to reason that I would fervently reach out to him in prayer? One final thought before we close. And that is Jesus prayed tearfully in Hebrews chapter five at verse seven, the Bible says, and again, this takes us back to just so many who in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him who would say, who was able to save him from death?

And he was heard, and that he feared. How many times have you ever stopped, and just thought that Jesus, as he anguished over the cross, that he shed tears? Now many of us have faced some difficult moments in life. Maybe we're battling a cancer or some type of incurable disease. Maybe we have a loved one that's dying. Maybe we're faced with in a number of perplexing situations in life, and we have been moved to tears.

David said in Psalm 56, which I believe is one of the great Psalms. David said that the Lord puts our tears in his bottle, says to me that our tears are precious in the eyes of God. Now I want to close by saying this our time is running out. Jesus was the master teacher, his life and his teaching unparalleled.

So we can learn from the Lord Jesus. We are his disciples. A disciple is a learner. So when I began to look at the prayer life of Jesus, to understand that as a human being, as a child of God, I can learn from the greatest man that ever lived, the son of the living God. I'll see you back here again next week.

Until then, God bless.