

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT FAITH AND PRAYER

Mt. 6:5-15

I. Two kinds of Faith

A. Faith as joined with repentance at the beginning of the Christian life.

1. What it is

- a. Not mere intellectual belief
- b. But a personal trust & surrender
- c. Faith that ACTS in FOLLOWING Christ

2. Why this kind of faith is needed.

- a. Without it repentance would be helpless and hopeless.
- b. It is the door to all life and joy and peace.
 - (1). Where it is lacking He cannot work. Mk. 6:5
 - (2). But He is willing also to take even the feeble faith that cries out, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Mk. 9:23, 24.

B. Faith as a LIFE of TRUST.

1. The life of trust is the other side of the life of obedience.

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

2. Great peace, joy, strength, and confidence belong to this life of trust.

3. The conditions to the life of trust.

Mt. 6:19-34 and 10:16-39.

a. A vision of God.

- (1). To see God's power in all things.
- (2). To see God's care for all things.

b. Surrender to God.

- (1). The root of worry is a divided mind
- (2). The cure for worry is a single purpose.

"I know not what the future hath
of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.
I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his life and care."

II. What Jesus Taught About Prayer.

A. More important than what He taught about prayer
is what He DID about it.

Here again His life is a greater lesson than
his words.

1. Jesus was not interested in the theory of prayer.

2. His aim was PRACTICAL. *Prayer is a life.*

3. He showed that the first need
was not forms of prayer,
or a doctrine of prayer,
but simply that men should pray.

B. Prayer rests on one important condition:
TRUST IN GOD.

1. Men did not pray because

a. God seemed too far away

b. or they thought He did not care.

2. Jesus taught them to think of God as "FATHER"
and to pray to Him as such.

C. Fundamental to Christian prayer is
a spirit of utter surrender to God.

1. Pagan prayer seeks to bring God to its will.

2. Christian prayer seeks to come to God's will.

3. If we really trust God we shall want His will
rather than our wish.

Notice the place of prayer in the life of Jesus:

He engaged in prayer after his baptism.

He retired to the wilderness for prayer after the healing of a leper.

He spent the night in prayer before he chose the twelve apostles.

He had prayed before he asked the disciples "Who do the people say that I am?"

He was praying at the time of his transfiguration.

His own practice of prayer inspired his disciples to ask for a model prayer.

He had been engaged in prayer just before his arrest.

His last words on the Cross were a prayer:

"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

His parables of the importunate friend, of the unjust judge, and of the Pharisee and the tax collector illustrate his teaching on prayer.

TWO SIDES TO HIS TEACHING ON PRAYER:

1. On one hand Christ bids us ask, and keep on asking at the mercy seat;

He implies that there are circumstances in which such persistency alone gives us a chance of receiving.

2. On the other hand there is his teaching on the "prayer of resignation" or the "prayer of suspended desire", as Calvin called it, for God's will to be done.

Sometimes as we pray, we grow less and less sure that we are right, and feel increasingly that God in his wisdom has another plan and will for us. (Cover) →

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At such a time, like Paul, we cease from our repeated asking and leave ourselves with confidence and quiet minds to God's ordering and disposal.

But when are we to use the one method of prayer, and when the other??

No rule can be set down as to which method of prayer ought to be used in any given case.

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Introduction:

Just the fact that He prayed should be a tremendous lesson to us.

Mt. 14:32; Mk. 6:46; Luke 6:12; 9:28,

"He went up into a mountain apart to pray
and was alone

Mt. 26:36, 39; Mk. 14:32: "Sit ye here while I go
and pray yonder."

Luke 22:41, 44, "Being in agony he prayed more earnestly.
Jn. ch. 17, vs. 9, 15, 20: "I pray for them, not for the
world. I pray not that thou take them out of the world
nor pray I for these alone, but for those who shall
come after them...."

Mark 1:35, "He went into a solitary place and prayed."

Luke 5:16, "He withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."

I. The Time of His Prayer

A. Time of difficulty and opposition, Luke 6:12

B. When we are in difficulties God wants us to pray.

C. But we should not forget God when the difficulty
is past.

D. Jesus prayed before he chose the 12 disciples, Lk. 6:13

E. Jesus "continued all night in prayer to God."

F. Mk. 1:35, "in the morning, rising up a great while
before day."

II. The Place of His Prayer

A. Jesus prayed in a mountain, a solitary place,
a wilderness, Luke 5:16

B. Jesus prayed alone, Mt. 14:23

C. It is good for us to have a definite place of prayer.

D. We must not discount the value of praying together
in meetings with one another, but the Bible says much
more about Jesus praying alone than with others.

III. The Earnestness of His Prayer

A. The greatest example of earnestness in prayer is
Jesus in Gethsemane, Mt. 26:36, 39

B. James 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a
righteous man availeth much."

C. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel.

D. Robert Bruce said, "I protest I will not go unless thou goest with me."

E. Sin hinders earnest and effectual prayer
(The Ancient Mariner)

IV. The Petitions of His Prayer

A. Mostly intercession for others, Jn. 17

B. For God's will to be done in His own case,
(Gethsemane)

A. T. Pierson told the story of an engineer in Bolivia who brought in the first locomotive ever seen in that part of the country. Some of the native Indians came to see the sight and sat on their haunches discussing what a strange monster could be.

One said, "It is made to go"; and another, "Let's make it go." So they got their lassoes out and lassoed the front end of the locomotive and began to pull, and they pulled the locomotive 5 or 6 yards. They exclaimed, "The great and little father has enabled us to do something wonderful!"

The next day the engineer came and got up steam in the locomotive and hitched a couple of cattle trucks on to it, and when the Indians came, he put them into the trucks and locked them in.

Then he stood on the fire-plate of the locomotive, opened the regulator, and let steam into the cylinder, and it began to move the piston and the wheel of the locomotive; and the locomotive carried the Indians along ten miles an hour!

Pierson said he didn't know what the Indians said then to their great and little father, but they learned a great lesson--that locomotives are not made to be moved along by outside human power, but by means of a power within, and so to carry human beings along. And so we must understand that prayer is not a machine to be worked by human zeal, but by the power of God within.

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