

December 10, 2017

## Learning to Pray Like Jesus

Sermon Topic: Learning to Live in Your Father's Plan for Your Life (And Pray Accordingly)

James 4:1–4

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (ESV)*

Introduction – Today we are moving a little higher on the prayer scale. Last week I asked you to pray for small things to show you God cares for you. This week we will expand our prayer life to include what it is that God wants in our lives, not so much what we want in our lives. So, the typical prayer meeting: “Lord, help Aunt Lucie heal from her arthritis, **she’s making my life miserable with her complaining**”. “Jesus, help Stan to keep his job, you know the trouble he has with coming to work having had too much booze to drink, **and his children are becoming a real burden to the church’s benevolent fund**.” “Father, fix squabble between Heloise and Hannah, **because their constant and unresolved turmoil is taking up too much of my time**.” “Jesus, please help Dustin to stop taking drugs, **because he’s giving the church such a bad reputation with his frequent arrests by the police**.”

1. If we want God to answer our prayers, we need to ask ourselves if we are asking rightly.
  - What does God want in the above illustration with Lucie? Finding God as her sole sufficiency.
  - What does God want in the above illustration with Stan? To get fired once again and face his own inadequacy so that he turns totally to Jesus for his victory over the bottle.
  - What does God want in the above illustration with Heloise and Hannah? To see Jesus at work in the other person's life so that God may get the glory for every little conformity to Jesus.
  - What does God want in the above illustration with Dustin? Maybe it is to have Dustin almost die in a car accident while driving high so as to sober up and be saved.
2. Our prayers are often for temporary material and physical needs while God is far more concerned with eternal soul needs.
  - Paul's request for the thorn to leave. 2 Corinthians 12:7–8 *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. (ESV)*
  - My call from Gabe. I told him to paint the picture so she could decide. All too often fathers want perfect son-in-laws so they can make their lives less stressful.
3. Our prayers may often be for the right thing, but are at the wrong time.

- King David's desire to build the temple. 1 Chronicles 22:6–10 Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.' (ESV)
    - i. Think about it this way. . . General George Patton wanted to spend the rest of his earthly days building a house of prayer and it would be known as Patton's House of Prayer!!?? I don't think so. The Temple and its purpose would be directly connected the name of the builder, Solomon (rich in peace).
  - Aunt Elaine remaining single for so long. I'm sure she had been praying for years for a suitable husband but had settled for God's will that she would be single and useful for God as a single. Along came Kenny. . . .
4. Jesus shows us how to ask "rightly" in His High Priestly Prayer (John 17)
- Pray that our loved ones and friends will not succumb to the temptations of the evil one. John 17:15 *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (ESV)*
  - Pray that our loved ones and friends may be sanctified (separated from the world's draw) John 17:16–17 *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (ESV)*
  - Pray that our loved ones and friends will display God's love by loving others (even those who are racially different) John 17:20–21 *"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (ESV)*
5. Abraham shows us how to wait patiently in the time between the promise and the fulfillment (the time between hope and reality that can lead to despair) Romans 4:18–21 *In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (ESV)*
- However, there were moments – Eleazar, & Hagar this is the temptation to take matters into our own hands and make it happen without God's help.
  - It helps to know what God is doing in this time of silence – He is destroying your idols. What is it you think you must have to be happy? Been diagnosed with cancer, you want to know if you are going to survive. . . spouse drifting away? You want to know if there is any hope to salvage a marriage. . . Children straying from the faith . . . you want to know if they will return. . . job situation tenuous . . . you want to know where and when your next paycheck will come from. When you and I realize during this time of agonizing

waiting that what we have so desperately wanted and prayed for is really an idol that substitutes for God, then God's purposes are nearly achieved.

#### Application

1. Go over your prayer list for your family and revise it this week to fit better into conformity with God's plan's for your children and grandchildren.
2. Look at your own prayer list and ask yourself if God is putting these requests on hold because you crave the idol more than the gift giver Himself.