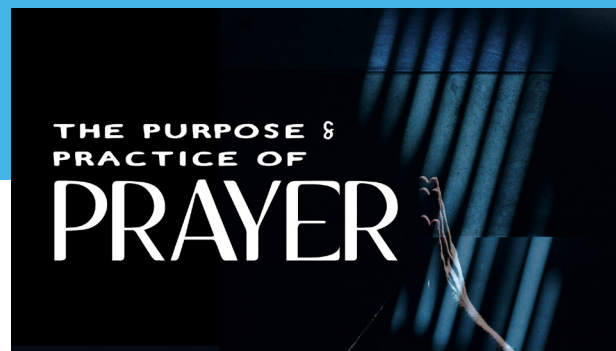


Discussion Questions

September 20, 2023

Prayer: A Greater Revelation of the God Who is Near



1. Briefly share what has been most frustrating for you with prayer and what has been most life-giving.
2. Read Philippians 4:5-7 through a couple times.
 - Discuss the significance of “the Lord is near” to the rest of that passage.
 - In what type of circumstances and situations does Paul encourage them pray?
 - How does Paul say prayer will impact anxiousness?
 - Discuss why we often struggle with the truth and promises of this passage.
3. Read Ephesians 3:14-19 (avoid New Living Translation for this question as it summarizes Paul’s point)
 - What things is Paul praying for the Ephesians in this passage?
 - Paul gets caught up in God’s goodness as he prays for impossible things. Discuss what it looks like for us today to increasingly comprehend God’s love in this way and know a love that surpasses knowledge.
4. Read Revelation 4:1-11

Jesus gives this revelation of his throne room of what is happening while the church is suffering.

 - How does this encourage a church that feels they are losing the battle against evil and that God is not listening to their prayers?
 - Discuss how this revelation of God’s power, Holiness, and His presence should impact the way we pray and how we trust Him.
5. A 2 Part exercise for individuals or as a group.
 - Read revelation 4:1-11 again, (don’t get caught up in the stranger parts of the imagery) then sit in silence for a couple minutes and meditate upon this picture of God being worshiped.
 - Next Read Revelation 1:10-18, then meditate upon this image of Jesus. Notice He is among the lampstands, meaning He is right in the midst of the churches who are hurting. As you do, bring the requests, frustrations, and struggles you have been praying through to God again. Recognize His power, might, and holiness as you pray. Go to Him with your prayers, with your loved ones, and with your hardships.

8.20.23 Prayer: A Greater Revelation of the God Who is Near

Philippians 4:5-7

The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4 - 6 (NIV)

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 3:12 NLT

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.

Ephesians 3:14–19 (CSB)

For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Revelation 4:1–11 (NIV)

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing...

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures...

Day and night they never stop saying: " 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come."

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Revelation 1:10–18 (NLT)

It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast... When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a

long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

Revelation 5:8 (NLT)

And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people.

2 Kings 6:14–17 (NLT)

So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. When the servant of the man of God [Elisha] got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. "Oh, sir, what will we do now?" the young man cried to Elisha. "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

Thomas Merton

We do not want to be beginners [at prayer]. but let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything but beginners, all our life!

John Chapman - Spiritual Letters (1935)

Pray as you can, and do not try to pray as you can't.

The more you pray, the better it goes.