

Scripture reading: Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8.

Intro: The thoughtful reader of Scripture cannot but be impressed with the praying of many of the men and women of Scripture. Sometimes prayer was the result of a particular testing, but this is not always the case. There is a great deal of evidence to the effect that prayer was a vital part of the lives of many we read about in the Bible-- a daily habit, and often occurring many times a day.

"PEOPLE
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ING EXAMPLE
OR FORCED
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(Strong's
p. 14).

Paul was not speaking fancifully when he wrote, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17), or, "continuing diligently in prayer" (Rom. 12:12). Our Lord before Paul had taught that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

David wrote in Psa. 5:3, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and wilt look up." In Psa. 55:17, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." Add to this Psa. 119:164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee; because of thy righteous judgments."

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Daniel's enemies knew that there was one way they could get him: If they could get the king to make some declaration that would affect his relationship with his God--especially his praying. They succeeded. For 30 days no one was to pray to his God. Read Dan. 6:10,

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did previously."

Or, take the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. What person has read his epistles without being impressed that he was reading a letter written by a man who spent a tremendous amount of time in prayer? Think of what he wrote to the Roman church--a church he had never visited: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

Tonight I want us to look at the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, especially from the Gospel according to Luke, to see the place th prayer had with Him.

But, before we get to some of those passages, let us make some observations from the passages we have already read:

- 1) We can see from these OT and NT passages that prayer meant being with God. Prayer was a means of fellowship

- with God. Where they prayed, and what they said, were of great importance, but most important was the realization that they were with God, talking with Him.
- 2) Then, you can see that this was more important to them than anything else. You can even threaten them with the loss of life, but they will pray. There was a deep sense of personal need.
 - 3) There was the conviction that it would make a difference if they prayed--in not a difference in their circumstances, then certainly a difference in ~~them!~~
 - 4) It seems, if we can say anything at all, that the longer they lived, the more they prayed.
 - 5) Busy-ness was no excuse. Who was busier than David, or Daniel, or Paul? And we could mention many others in the Bible. They would apply preeminently to our Lord Jesus. He was often so busy that the only time He had for prayer was all night, or very early in the morning.

Speaking of our Lord, when we see how much He prayed, our need to pray suddenly becomes overwhelming, and any excuses which we might have made suddenly vanish into thin air. He, the eternal Son of God, in becoming a man, ~~He became~~ became a man of prayer.

Let us look at the incidents recorded by Luke where we see the Lord Jesus as a man, the Son of man. (We will omit those passages where He was teaching His disciples to pray, and refer to only those where He was praying.)

They fall into three categories:

- 1) The experiences which came to Him as a servant of the Lord. There are four of them. In all He prayed. We are not told what He said in the first two; we are told in the last two.
 - 2) His praying for His work.
 - 3) His praying as He worked.
- I. The four most sacred hours in His life (as recorded by Luke):
- A. His baptism (Luke 3:21).
 - B. His transfiguration (Luke 9:29).
 - C. In the garden (Luke 22:39-46).
 - D. On the Cross--two prayers (recorded only by Luke):
 1. Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them . . ."
 2. Luke 23:46, "Father, into Thy hands . . ."

All of us have special hours. Are they times of special prayer as they were in the case of our Lord? Think of how Abraham prayed about a son. Remember Hannah also. Read again how Moses prayed when God called him to go back into Egypt. Some of David's most wonderful Psalms are prayers he prayed when he was being pursued by men who hated him

and who wanted to keep him from the throne of Israel.

Every experience, especially the major experiences of life should be times to be remembered because we prayed.

II. Our Lord Praying For His Work. These were times when He went alone to be with the Father. Sometimes they were early; sometimes they were extended seasons during the night.

A. Cf. Luke 6:12, noting the two circumstances which fall on each side of the verse: opposition (cf. v. 28), and then the choice of the men who were to be apostles.

How do we handle the problems and needs which we face in our lives, especially as they may be related to the Lord's work? Do they become special times of prayer for us? Is our first thought to pray?

B. Cf. Luke 9:18--evidently concerned with the influence, the effectiveness of His ministry.

When you get discouraged because so little seems to be accomplished, do you ever remember the Lord and try to enter into what He must have felt as the disciples answered His first question?

Do you believe you can be effective without the blessing of God, or that it is not important for you to pray for your work?

III. Our Lord Praying In His Work.

Luke cites one example. It must have been an illustration of what happened continually. Cf. Luke 9:16.

Our Lord prayed before He worked, while He worked, and after He worked! Can we do any less?

Concl: You ~~never~~ usually do not have to argue the need or the importance of prayer in the life of a child of God. But in spite of this there is never the praying that there should be. Why? Because we do not look upon it as a priority which is absolutely essential for our own blessing and for the ~~the~~ outpouring of God's blessing through us upon His work.

The early Church leaders refused to neglect this ministry. Cf. Acts ~~6~~ 6:4. If we want to see the Lord's blessing today, if we want to be kept for the Lord's glory, and used to turn others to Him, then we must pray.

Do you "pray without ceasing"? *Prayer opens the Word to us. It opens our hearts to God, and opens the hearts of men to the Gospel.*