

IT'S NOT ABOUT PRAYER

Helplessness in Prayer (John 15:1-11)

“It’s NOT about Prayer” because it’s ALL about Jesus, and prayer is our daily conduit to HIM. Prayer is our divine means to be ushered into His presence and therefore prayer is a divine gift, but HE is the PRIZE!!! **3 Analogies:** (Train, Power source, Tree/Vine)

-1830’s train travel changed everything. Shrunk our world. Transcontinental railroad. Can fixate on the train, the seats, the dining car, sleeper car -but in essence – a train is just a vehicle to get you where you need to go. Transportation is very important. But the destination is the point!

=End of war, train brought back soldiers to their wives/family. Train is nice, but can’t luv you back

=Though the journey is important, the destination is paramount. **The destination is the point.** *God Himself is the prize, fellowship with Him is the destination, and prayer is the transportation to get you to Him.* How’s yours? How’s your prayer transportation? Stalled? How’s your steam engine (loaded & ready, boiling hot?) or sitting empty, just waiting to be lit??

-Do you need a lift? Does your prayer life need a boost this morning? I think so....

In this life, Jesus is everything, which means how we get to Him, how we connect with Jesus is vital. Our life, our peace, our grace, our spiritual power, our courage, our obedience, our JOY are all tied to our connectedness with Jesus. If you are disconnected from Him, you can’t experience... i.e. He is the *power source*. We need an outlet to connect, to plug into HIM to live/thrive/grow

-How do we connect with Jesus everyday as Believers? *Through humble, dependent, and childlike prayer.* = Being utterly, spiritually helpless. Dependence & desperation

(an infant is helpless); new Christians are spiritually helpless; babies need a mother’s presence daily to care for, protect, & feed/nourish in order to survive/grow

-Jesus gives another analogy of **connectedness & helplessness:** Tree/branches (Olive)

Main POINT: Our helplessness (dependence) in prayer is tied to our connectedness to Jesus

READ John 15:1-11 =The more connected you are to Jesus, the more dependent you become!

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it [lit. cleans it/cuts it back] so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean [pruned back] because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither *can* you [bear fruit] unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.** ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so ^[g]prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.”

1. Jesus is clarifying that being connected to Him is vital to our spiritual life; **if no connection, no life!** =Apart from Him, we can do nothing (spiritual), bc we are nothing w/out Him.

Vs. 4 Remain in Me, and I (will also remain) in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither *can* you [bear fruit] unless you remain in Me

2. Jesus clarifies that a demonstration to being truly connected to Him, is bearing spiritual fruit: (Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, self-control) - (Gal. 5:22-23) = Mt. 7:20 "So then you will know them by their fruits; =fruit inspector Vs. 5 the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, -What fruit is evident in your life? Is it evident in your prayer life?
3. Jesus clarifies that those who are not connected to Jesus are spiritually dead; thus, those who are posers/religious/trying to live in their own flesh – religion is the means “to good works” working to please God and earn His favor – in your own power/flesh = STILL spiritually dead! -All those who are spiritually dead & remain so, will not make it to heaven. Vs. 6 If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. -Do you know that you have been born again to new life? Or playing church? Religious?
4. Jesus clarified that being connected to Him gives us spiritual life; it transforms our heart, our mind, our perspective, & our desires. As we begin to pray (through God’s Spirit within us), He changes our desire of how to see the world (flesh vs. spirit), & how we pray (what we ask and don’t ask) -James 4:3-5 “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures.” You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
5. -Jesus clarifies that being connected to Him makes us **dependent** upon Him for everything. Being connected to Him makes us **love His Word**, His eternal truth (**His love letter to us**); Being connected to Him makes us **desperate** for Him in all ways as we spiritually see our helplessness without Him. In that utter spiritual helplessness, in that childlike dependence upon Him, God delights to answer our hearts cry, our needs, and our prayer requests that will glorify God above all. God wants to answer our hearts’ cry for more of His glory!!! Vs. 7 If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. -God delights in our dependance upon Him bc He is most glorified as we need Him, and our worship to Him is our gratitude to Him for being our loving Creator, our sole provider, our gracious redeemer, and the lover of our souls. = Our worship is our thanksgiving to Him for answering our prayer to get more of Him above all else; He wants to always answer that prayer. -That is the prayer of the growing, spiritually mature disciple: *Lord show me more of yourself; Lord I need you more and more each day; Lord please give me more of yourself; Lord fill me with your presence; Lord change my heart to need you more every minute of the day;* =Moses’ desperation: -Ex 33:15-16 “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. ¹⁶For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are on the face of the ^[a]earth?
6. Jesus clarifies that being connected to Him draws us into His love; that love is tied to obedience to His Word. We demonstrate that we love Him above all others as we obey His commands toward our life (which are for our protection & provision); He gives us His best! Vs. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. Childlike faith/dep. =obeys daddy. **TRUSTS him**

7. Jesus clarifies that our connectedness to Him is the key to our JOY!

Vs. 11 *These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*"

What does this passage teach us then; Being connected to Jesus is everything! Prayer is the means by which we are connected to Him daily. Prayer ushers us into His presence. He is Prize!

So, prayer is vitally important to lead us into His presence daily! Prayer is our means of being connected to Jesus. (=Prayer needs to be: Daily, intentional, unhurried, active, listening, watching)

APPLICATION

-A Praying life does not offer you a less busy life, but rather a less busy, less crowded heart.

-A needy heart is a praying heart. Desperation & dependency are the heartbeat of prayer

-The power of prayer as God's gift to us, as a means of daily grace to be ushered into His presence, is that honest prayer reveals our preoccupation with the self; our own self-reliance, our resistance to being truly dependent; our lack of desperation. Prayer demonstrates our allergic reaction to dependency! Prayer unmasks us. Prayer reveals our doubts about God, His goodness, and His power. Prayer doesn't seem to be answered how I want, when I want, or produce the results I expected. Prayer reveals my doubt in God as a good Father. Prayer tests our shallow Faith. *Prayer teaches us that prayer is NOT ultimately about prayer!*

-This is hard on our faith. But this is where God wants us. Prayer reveals my truest heart and my truest need: (=less answered prayer and MORE of God's presence; more relationship; more Joy and peace in that **He is** our sufficiency. *God *can* change my circumstances; but what is infinitely more valuable is that God changes me through prayer! I get more of Him; I get more of everything because He is my everything!! He is the prize. *Prayer is the conduit to get to Him!*

-So what's the remedy to a selfish, self-reliant heart? Becoming like a child again in my prayer life (in love, in need, and asking for more of Him with boldness). *Kids want to spend time with their parents (you are their whole world); until you aren't. BUT we get bored, we are tired, we are preoccupied, we are are distracted – and neglect our kids. Jesus never does!! HE wants to be invited in; He wants to be asked to spend time with Him; Jesus is NOT to busy for you!!! He lives to make intercession for you* (Heb. 7:25)

QUESTIONS TO PRAY ABOUT:

-What do you need to begin to do in order to jump start your daily prayer life?

-What do you need to stop doing in your life that's blocking your prayer life?

-How can you begin to become more childlike in your prayer life? Trusting Abba Father; needing Abba? Wanting more of Him in your life?

-What is the spiritual connection between obedience to His Word and loving Him faithfully?

-What does your prayer life consist of? Asking for things for yourself? Or For God to reveal more of His glory in your life and challenging circumstances? Which Prayer is God already ready to answer?

-What does intercession mean to you for others? How does Jesus model intercession for us?