

## TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

### [scripture reading before lesson ]

**John 6:67,68** – “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**– “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

It is the Father's will and desire that His children pray.

In all the New Testament books you'll find the saints admonished and encouraged to pray.

Prayer is an expression of our gratitude, and also of our need.

**Hebrews 4:16** – “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

How do we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need". By PRAYER!

These are things we NEED!

These are things we MUST have!

These things, Mercy and Grace, can ONLY come from God.

How do we get them? - by praying to Him who has them to give – or not.

Prayer is an expression of our gratitude and need. “Rejoice evermore ... give thanks”

But **more** than that: Prayer is a **DEMONSTRATION** of our faith and trust in God.

Prayer is a demonstration that we think of ourselves as the CHILDREN of God.

Prayer shows our **submission and union** to Him.

That He **IS** our God and Father – BY OUR ACTION – by our coming to Him.

God TESTED Abraham to prove his faith.

**Genesis 22:12** – “And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

Our FAITH also is tested every day – Do we pass the test?

Do we go to God in **prayer** for what we need?

The message we send in our prayers isn't so much the words as the **fact that we're doing it.**

**Romans 8:26** – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”

Prayer is a **demonstration** that we **know** we can not do it alone – we can not provide for ourselves. As Solomon said:

**1 Kings 3:7-9** – “And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in. And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people,

that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

Prayer demonstrates we know we have a need and that our heavenly Father is the ONLY one who can take care of it. And when we go to God in prayer acknowledging this, as Solomon:

**1 Kings 3:10** – “And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.”

God will be **pleased**. The demonstration of our faith and submission to God, our coming to Him, pleases God.

Is this surprising to us? That we acknowledge we have no strength and must go to God for it? AND that God will be PLEASED with this.

This is a good demonstration that His ways are above OUR ways.

We have an example in the church, those that obeyed the gospel call, in Philadelphia. What did Jesus praise about them?

**Rev 3:8** – “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”

Thou hast a little strength HAVE NOT DENIED HIS NAME! The power of his name – they went to him to God in prayer.

By prayer to God we acknowledge that we know it is not OUR strength but God's:

**Philippians 4:13** – “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

### JESUS LEFT US AN EXAMPLE

**1 Peter 2:21** – “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”

Jesus prayed, at the **beginning** of his ministry – and it was pleasing to God:

**Luke 3:21,22** – “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”

He prayed all night, before selecting the 12 apostles the next day.

**Luke 6:12,13** – “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”

Jesus prayed often, his disciples saw this. They asked him to teach them how to pray. Jesus showed them his example - they wanted to follow it – so should we!

**Luke 11:1-2** – “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth”

**V2** – Thy Kingdom come – it has now.  
Thy will be done. What does God will? That none perish

**2 Peter 3:9** – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”

We’re not praying for God - for Him to have the strength that His will be done.  
He willed the heavens into existence.

No, we’re praying for **men** that they will obey God’s will. **“as in heaven, so in earth”**.

**V3** – “Give us day by day our daily bread.”

We go to God for our daily needs – **every day!** The **manna** was a shadow of this, going to God daily for what we need.

**V4** – “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”

Forgive our sins – only God can do that. We need him to have mercy and grace to do so. But as the children of God **we** should be like him also with mercy and grace and forgiveness.

Do we think we can handle the temptations by ourselves? Do we think we can muddle through somehow? Then don’t ask God for Deliverance, and note he said “deliver” not “help”.

We must KNOW that the ONLY place we can get what we need is from God. As he continues

**Luke 11:5-8** – “And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. ”

**And the result?**

**Luke 11:9** – “ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Where are we going to go???

If we DON’T go to God, if we don’t importune Him – if we don’t press him continually,  
We’re saying we either DON’T want it badly enough, or that we think we can get it elsewhere.  
We don’t need God, we have faith in other things.

**IS THAT THE MESSAGE YOU WANT TO SEND TO GOD???**

If not, then PRAY!

We need to be as Peter who cried in desperation to the Lord:

**John 6:67,68** – “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Our prayers to God must be in the same vein – TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

It's another lesson on How we pray, praying in Jesus name, and what we pray for.

But we must remember God's promise to answer prayer is **conditional**.  
We want God to be PLEASED with our prayers. We want Him to HEAR us.

**1 John 5:14** – “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

**He will answer IF we ask according to His will.**

**What is his will? That we be HIS children. God wills that we:**

1. Have a forgiving spirit: **Matthew 6:15** – forgive trespasses
2. Abide in Christ: **John 15:7, 8** – ask and bear fruit, we are branches
3. Be holy without wrath - **1 Tim 2:8** – **as His children**
4. Pray in faith: **James 1:5-7** - believing  
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5. Have right motive in our prayers: **James 4:3** - not for ourselves
6. Not adulterate ourselves with the world: **James 4:4**
7. Have humility: **James 4:6**
8. Be righteous: **1 Peter 3:12**
9. Be obedient: **1 John 3:22**
10. Help the widows and fatherless **James 1:27**

**Conclusion:**

Prayer is an expression of our gratitude and need.

But more, it is an ESSENTIAL demonstration of our FAITH.

It shows we **know** we have a need that only our heavenly Father can fill.

**TO WHOM SHALL WE GO – YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.**

By prayer we let our Heavenly Father know of our **gratitude**, our **faith**, our **trust**, our **submission** and that we **are** His children – in DEED and not just in word. Because we are going to HIM for the things we need. And as a loving Father, he **wants** to give them to us, despite our past sins.

**Luke 13:34** – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!:

Jesus wanted them! It was **their** choice though not to go to Him.

Prayer is an essential DAILY demonstration of our faith in God – TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

**Invitation:**

There's another condition on our prayers being heard – our obedience. God wants to answers prayers from his children – those that come to him in faith.

**1 John 3:22-23** – “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

Do you believe in Jesus, How do you **know** God will believe you? God gives us a test, just as he gave Abraham a test:

**Mark 16:16** – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

If you believe, you'll demonstrate your faith by obedience. If you don't obey, it because you really don't believe. You might say you believe, but God hears your lack of obedience louder than your words.

**Here is the calling that God hears:**

**Acts 22:16** – “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

- By Ed Kelleher at the West Columbia church of Christ, SC, 4/10/2011
- Note: All scriptures are projected on screen and read