

Simple Prayer

Series 1/6- Seeking the Transformation We Need

Silent Prayer

Introduction: To pray is to change.

The movement inward comes first because without interior transformation the movement up into God's glory would overwhelm us and the movement out into ministry would destroy us.

A. Transformation starts from within

1. Yearn for prayer/hide
 - a. Attracted/repelled
 - b. Something we should do/Agony of prayerlessness
2. Work and family obligations/ Our business seldom keeps us from eating and sleeping
3. How to pray -Prayer is not like mastering algebra or auto mechanics
4. **When we pray, we come as those who surrender control and become incompetent and naive**

Motives:

- a. Caring/selfish
- b. Merciful/hateful
- c. Loving/bitter (Don't pray for patience...you might get it)

B. Simple prayer is like children coming to their parents- **Matt. 7:7-12**

1. Motives not pure enough?
2. Not enough knowledge?
3. Not good enough?

It is the act of prayer- the intimate, ongoing interaction with God that allows God to move in our lives

I. Just as we are -As a small child can not draw a bad picture, so a child of God can not offer a bad prayer

- A. The most basic prayer is Simple prayer •Warts •Heart/Requests •Don't try to sort things out •Humility
 1. Many times our prayers: •Pride •Conceit •Vanity •Arrogance •All-around egocentric
 2. No doubt though, they are also: •Noble •Generous •Unselfish •Universal goodwill
 3. **Simply prayer is called the "Prayer of Beginning Again"** (We make lots of mistakes)
- B. Simply prayer- is the most common form of prayer in the Bible
 1. Moses- (Complaining to God about His stiff necked people)
 2. Elisha- (as he retaliated against the Children who called him a "Bald head")
 3. The Psalmist- (delighting in the violent death of the enemies babies)
- C. Yet in the midst of all this self-serving prayer are some of the most noble and magnificent utterances
 1. Moses- (Interceding before God on behalf of a stubborn and disobedient Israel)
 2. Elisha- (Who cursed the children, shows mercy to a barren woman)
 3. The Psalmist- (Crying out to Yahweh)
- D. In Simple Prayer- The good, the bad and the ugly are all mixed together (**Morning Prayer**)
 1. Simply prayer involves ordinary people bringing ordinary concerns to a compassionate Father
 2. There is no make believe in simple prayer-

Only way we move beyond self-centered prayer (if we ever do) is by going through it, not by making a detour around it!

3. Simple prayer is when the adventure begins, as God works with us

Where do we begin?

II. Beginning Where We Are

- A. Simple prayer begins right where we are
 1. To believe that God can reach us in the ordinary circumstances of our lives is the stuff of prayer.
 2. Many believe that God can't bless me here, not now! (once I am successful He can)

The only place God can bless you is only where you are, because that is the only place you are.

B. Frustration and tears and anger are also the language of Simply Prayer

1. Jeremiah's frustration **Jer. 20:7**
- C.S. Lewis- "**Lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us**"
2. We must never believe the lie that says the details of our lives are not the proper content of prayer.
3. I urge you to carry on a an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life...

- a. Remember Tevye (**Fiddler on the Roof**)
- b. Share your hurts -Your sorrows -Your joys
- c. God listens in compassion & in love, just like we do when our children come to us (**Matt. 7:7-12**)
- d. We will discover that by praying, we learn to pray. - **“play the cello by playing the cello.”**

III. The Conversion of the heart

- A. Simple prayer is ignored many times by teachers and preachers-- There's a legitimate concern
-**Joseph Schmidt notes:** “They are dangers on the right road. We must move with some caution but not turn back.”
- B. In the beginning we are indeed the subject and center of our prayers
- C. God wants us to move from God being a part of our lives to the realization that we're a part of His life.
- D. When God moves from the periphery of our prayer to the center, a conversion of the heart happens

Conclusion: Your prayer

Dear Jesus, how disparately I need to learn to pray. And yet when I am honest, I know that I often do not want to pray.
I am distracted! I am stubborn! I am self-centered!
In you mercy Jesus, bring my “want-er” more in line with my “need-er” so that I can come to want what I need.
In your name and for your sake, I pray. --Amen

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