

Outline: Raymond's Exhortation: Mathew 6:5-8; 14-16

Scripture NLT: 5. *"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.* 6. *But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father who sees everything, will reward you.* 7. *"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.* 8. *Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him!* 14. *"For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.* 15. *"But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

Define Prayer [Solicit audience help]

- ❖ So, it is communication with God.
- ❖ Tell me about God, i.e., what is He like what are His qualities and characteristics?
- ❖ If prayer is communicating with God, based on what we are attempting, is it safe to say that prayer can be more mysterious than evident?

Reflection: When it comes to prayer in our western culture, believers seem to be focused on God's response to our immediate concerns more so than relationship with God and His process when it comes to answering our prayers. R.F.

Personal Example: Rash move to Commercial sales-COIT..."reality check" guarantee expired... Old friend and a Lucrative job offer...my soul both enticed / confused...I sought counsel...tried to persuade the counselors...several weeks deal not finalized...I tried to persuade God...to no avail...frustrated, on edge, impatient...still certain this is God's will...right there for the taking...my prayers-pay off my house in 5yrs-answered... I cried out to God, fussed with Him tried religious "God's in control" method...Finally I shared with COIT GM... [he threatened me-smile] ...COIT Counter Offered...RE-BUILD Colo. Springs office...I now have a project...opportunity to rebuild an office, new team...proper direction...predominantly Conservative...military community...God offered me the best choice...Hard as it was-my being unreasonable-I took it...

Question: What does our Heavenly Father want from us in regard to prayer?

- ❖ Is.1:18 AMP- "Come now and let us reason together... [note remainder of vs. and vss.19-20.

Mike Bickel: Buying Gold from Jesus and Dining at His Table in John 13-17

"The point of the Resurrection...Gods people to enter into the conversation relationship with Him forever...Bible makes it clear that God The Father, God The Son, And God The Holy Spirit have enjoyed deeply satisfying relationship with one another from eternity past...the point of creating the human race and of salvation was that humans can enter into that family conversation /dynamics...shared by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...the point of salvation is not mostly to rescue us from darkness which it does but it's to bring us into the family dynamics of God The Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."

Agape: Affectionate regard...it is God's willful direction toward man. It involves God doing what He knows is best for man and not necessarily what man desires.

Reflection: How often have I been the unreasonable party in this tender, loving overture from Heavenly Father.

Peder Reminder: Jael...complete meltdown...Closet test...result-she fell into my harms...crying as I affirmed my love for her...

Song: "Just as I am" ...Jael knows no other way to come to me...

James 4:8 AMP-Come close to God [with a contrite heart] and He will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded[people].

- ❖ Are we okay with coming to God in our absolute worst behavior...if yes?
- ❖ Are we okay with doing it over and over again? He is!

6. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father who sees everything, will reward you. 8. ... for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him!

Show of Hands: How many present here today desire to be more active in greater Kingdom impact with God?

Question: What is preventing us from realizing this desire?

- ❖ "I found the enemy and the enemy is me."
- ❖ African Proverb: "If there is no enemy within, the enemy outside can do us no harm."

Reflection: We have more influence / say so about how we can partner with God than we realized.

Reflection: "Impactful Kingdom experiences are usually preceded by consistent times of intimacy with our Heavenly Father."

Example [Personal]: DCJ...Evangelism...

Example: Hebrews 11:1-40...people of whom the world was not worthy...

Example: Yeshua...ministry launched after a 40-day wilderness closet with Heavenly Father...many times of drawing near to God...His final closet prayer in a garden...prepared Him for the greatest act in human history...

Reflection: Often closet prayer will involve AGONY...find a prayer closet...put it to good use.

Hebrews 11:6 AMP-But without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him.

Quick Share:

Dr Johnny Coleman...shared a story once. "She talked about a man who had been captured behind enemy lines in a war and was sentenced to be executed or he could choose another option...the Captain said to the prisoner: Listen...he said tomorrow morning at 6 O'clock, you can face the firing squad, or you can go out this door over here...and the guy said. What is on the other side of that door? He said no one knows, all we can tell you is unknown horror...he thought about this and the next morning, he selected the firing squad. After the shots rang out. The Captain's secretary asks him. What's beyond that door and he said Freedom but very few people would select to do it because it's unknown."

"If there is no enemy within, the enemy outside can do us no harm."