

# What Do We Know About Jesus? (3)

## Jesus and Prayer

We have noticed in our previous bulletins that Jesus, as a man, is our example. Only His life, as a man, could serve as a proper example for us. This is just as true in reference to prayer as it is in anything else. So, in this bulletin we wish to see Jesus, as a man, in prayer. It may be that we can learn some adjustments to make in our prayer life that will enhance our own life. For what did Jesus pray? What were the circumstances of His prayers? What did His prayers manifest to us? Was His teaching on prayer consistent with His practice?

We have the following statement recorded for us in Luke 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint;" We have asked questions about Jesus, now, let us ask questions about us! Why don't we pray more often? Do we gain much from prayer? Why don't we benefit more from prayer than we do? Just maybe, we gain more than we think from prayer! Together, let us look at some basic facts about the Christian's prayer life that we need to remember. First, we are commanded to pray; pray without ceasing; (1Thes. 5:17), "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." (1Tim.2:8). James tells us our prayers must be in faith, nothing wavering; 1:5 "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. Also, look at what John has to say about prayer; "and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." (1John 3:22). Here we are told that we receive what we ask of Him (LISTEN CLOSE lhm) because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. There are a multiplicity of examples that show the importance of prayer to the early Christians: ACT 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.; 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 20:35 -37 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to

receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,. These are not the only references to prayer, as Gailen has so aptly addressed in his lessons on Sunday evenings, but these are given to help remind us what has been taught.

Now, why would we be commanded to pray? Is it for God's benefit or our benefit? Why would we be told the conditions of an acceptable prayer? Would this not also be for our benefit? Do we realize that prayer is one of those special privileges of the Christian? John 9:31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Why, then, don't we take fuller advantage of prayer? So, let us look to the man, Jesus, in prayer, and see if we might find some help.

It was custom of Jesus to enter the synagogue regularly for worship (Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.), and this would include prayer. In Mark 1:35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed., we are told that Jesus went to a "solitary place" to pray. Here no one could hear Him but the Father to whom He was praying. He would be praying in secret (MAT 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.). What did Jesus say in this prayer? We do not know; for we are not told! We can see from this that at times prayer is a personal confidential thing, between the individual praying and the True and Living God of Heaven.

We are told to pray always and not faint-just don't give up praying. Look at Jesus prayer in Matthew 11:25-26-At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. In this short prayer we see humility and submissiveness. Do these two attributes characterize our prayers? In praying for those who crucified Him, Luke 23:34-And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. Jesus demonstrates another trait-forgiveness, and was praying for His enemies, as He has told us to do. In Mark 6:46-And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray., we see Jesus once again praying alone, to God the Father. We are not again informed of what Jesus prayed for.

We have noticed the brevity of Jesus prayers, now look at Luke 6:12-16-And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples; and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles: Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, and James {the son} of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas {the son} of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor;. Jesus was here about to make an important decision, one that would affect the whole world. Before making that decision, He prayed to His Father all night. On another occasion, Jesus prayed, and spoke of these apostles as having been given to Him by the Father-JOH 17:-v6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.; v11-12-And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we {are}. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.;

v24-Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. God had answered Jesus' prayer and have given Him twelve that should have been best suited for His needs. Finally, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane shortly before His death, He prayed, Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. (Matthew 26:42). Does this show us anything about the characteristics of a successful prayer? Since God knew best in all things, Jesus would trust Him and accept His answer to His prayer.

Look in Luke 11:1-And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. Jesus followed by giving a sample prayer; more details of this prayer can be found in Matthew 6:9-13. It is important to note, that this is not a prayer that Jesus prayed, but simply a lesson in prayer to His disciples. Does not this show that we can be taught to pray? And there is no better place to learn it than at the feet of Jesus. Now, go back and read Luke 18:2-5 and see the parable that Jesus used to illustrate that we ought always to pray. Jesus made an application of the truth taught in verse 7. These verses surely teach persistence in prayer. All of these things are well illustrated in the life of Jesus, from beginning to end. If prayer meant so much to Jesus (Him

being the Son of God), then surely we can see what an important part of our life prayer should be!

The longest prayer of Jesus that is recorded is found in John 17.

This is a beautiful prayer and a profitable study. In this prayer Jesus appears to be concerned about three things: (1) giving proper honor and glory to His heavenly Father, (2) the welfare of the twelve apostles in their work, and (3) those who would believe on Him through the words of the apostles. If Jesus, as a man could show all these good qualities in prayer and that in the face of all His opposition, then surely we can do so in our less troublesome lives...??