

Sermon for February 25, 2009

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: John 17:1-3, 13-22

Title: "The REAL Lord's Prayer"

Introduction: Alright, let's get down to business. I know some of you are here because I said that we were going to change the name of the Lord's Prayer. It's true. Starting Sunday we are going to do a six week worship series on what we call the Lord's Prayer, but we aren't going to call it the Lord's Prayer.

When it comes to a desire to experience WHOLE LIFE, as opposed to feeling like we have a hole in our lives, there is nothing more important that we can do than to PRAY. Prayer is a personal communication with the One who is the Creator of all things seen and unseen. What a privilege! We are told that if we call on the name of God, our prayers will be heard by the One who gave us life and has the power to change, transform, heal, comfort, give strength, and give unconditional love so that we can love unconditionally!

Luke 11 tells us that as Jesus was finishing up praying one day that His disciples asked if Jesus would teach them how to pray. What a great request! Whichever disciple it was had figured out that prayer was Jesus connection to His Father. Maybe that disciple had figured out that for any of us to be who God wants us to be, we have to be connected to God in prayer! How can we be in relationship/partnership with anyone if we don't talk to them?!?

Now, when Jesus told the disciples, "When you pray, pray like this..." Jesus was teaching them, not the Lord's Prayer, but the Disciple's Prayer. It was a prayer for Jesus' disciples to pray. It was not a prayer to recite over and over again (although we do). It was a prayer model ... a form for us to follow when we pray and talk to God.

Again, over the next 6 weekends we will be breaking down the DISCIPLE'S PRAYER and finding out what we need to get out of it as we pray it each week as well as following the form each day.

Tonight, I want to get to the REAL LORD'S PRAYER. The real Lord's Prayer is what Jesus prayed for His Disciples ... not with them. What Jesus models for us in this prayer is what we call "Intercessory Prayer". Intercessory Prayer is when we pray for specific things for specific people and we are not on the list (It's not about me!). We are inviting the power of God to go to work in another person's life.

James taught us to "...pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results." Do you know what we just learned in the 5th Chapter of James? We learned that our prayers for other people can and will make a difference if we are in a right relationship with God!

Dad as a 17 year old ... died of a ruptured appendix. Grandmother's prayers went from selfish to God's will...

Let's listen to Jesus' prayer FOR His Disciples...

READ JOHN 17:1-26 NOW AND PRAY!

Here are 6 things we can learn from Jesus when it comes to praying for other people:

1. Pray that Other People will Know God – John 17:3
 - a. What could be more important for we who understand that this life isn't it? Why would we not pray for those we know to know God with an understanding that their eternity hangs in the balance?
 - b. When we say "Know", this is more than 'head' knowledge. This is the knowing that means we have experienced Jesus Christ and the transformation that can happen in our lives as we make Jesus Lord!
 - c. We can intercede for all those in our lives ... Parents can intercede for children (or vice versa) ... Bosses can intercede for employees (or vice versa) ... maybe you need to pray this part of the prayer for someone you don't like, but you know you need to love!
 - d. Make a list of people you know and continually pray for them.

2. Pray that Others Will be Protected by God – John 17:11, 15
 - a. I don't know too many people who don't pray for protection for the ones they love. If we believe that God hears our prayers and has the power to protect, why would we not keep praying for safety.
 - b. But, what about this 'spiritual protection' ... protection from "the evil one"? What exactly do we need protection from? Let me suggest a couple of things: How about pride, unhealthy/sinful pleasure (some call these addictions) and material things?!?
 - i. Pride = It's easy to think we have the world by the tail and that we don't need God. Pride comes before the fall ... pray for protection.
 - ii. Unhealthy / Sinful Pleasure = Our addictions have a way of getting our attention when we are at our weakest. When do the addictions hit? When we are tired, stressed and/or bored! Pray for protection!
 - iii. Material Things = This isn't a prayer FOR a truck, it's a prayer to not get so caught up in material things that we don't use our time and money for Godly things. Remember money and possessions are the top contender for our attention!!

3. Pray for Others to Have Joy! – John 17:13
 - a. This is not just happiness. Happiness depends on external circumstances. Joy depends on internal circumstances.
 - b. We can have Joy in Christ no matter what is going on in our lives ... when we get the realization that this world is temporary and the next lasts forever, it makes it easier to have joy no matter what is going on in our lives ... good or bad.

4. Pray for Others to be Spiritually Dedicated – John 17:17
 - a. If we are going to serve God's Kids, we all need someone praying for us to be spiritually dedicated ... sanctified ... set apart for God's service.

- b. I need people continually praying for me to know and live by God's Word; no matter what the circumstances are!
5. Pray for Others to be Spiritually Fruitful – John 17:20
- a. "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony." Jesus was praying for us and all who believe in Jesus because of our testimony!
 - b. Jesus wants everyone on earth to know Him. Even though we mess up ... often ... God desires to use us to spread His Word to the nations!
 - c. Nothing is better than giving people a chance to go face-to-face with Jesus Christ ... let's pray for each other to be Spiritually Fruitful!
6. Pray for All of us to Experience True Unity in Christ – John 17:23
- a. We are not going to experience Whole Life unless we learn to become ONE with Jesus Christ and with Each Other!
 - b. Like we talked about a couple of weeks ago ... we must be like a constellation of stars ... working together to bring light to our community and world!
 - c. Jesus prayed that we would come together and be ONE like Jesus and His Father are ONE! Wow, could we ever serve the Kingdom then!

Pray! Pray without ceasing ... non-stop! We are not going to impact the world for Jesus Christ unless we are constantly connected to Jesus Christ.

This Lenten Season, please strive for WHOLE LIFE ... Jesus' way!

Let's Pray!