

Notes – Part 2 – Why? The Question of Prayer

Topical Exegesis

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Introduction

- Hyperbole – overstatement or exaggeration to make a point in language...Jesus used this...hand cause sin/cut off, camel through eye of needle if rich man to get to heaven?
- Hyperbole – not logically possible...hungry enough to eat a horse?
- Must be careful to understand theological meaning of scripture rather than a literal reading...Matthew 21: 21-22 as example. Asking for prayer in faith invites you to pray deeply and does not mean you can literally move a mountain

Questions

- What good is God if we pray and nothing happens?
- If God can bless Tebow with a touchdown then why can he not heal my child?
- Why do we thank God for the good but not blame him for the bad?
- Why does God not answer my prayers? Does he hear me?
- Is there a wrong way to pray? What does prayer look like?

Prayers Unanswered or Answered Differently

- Christ appeared to question in the garden and on the cross
- We question when things happen differently than what we pray
- Is it God's will or ideas or ours in the answer to prayers?
- Healing takes many forms but we get disappointed when expectations are not met
- Many turn away from God when prayers are not answered as we see fit
- Struggle because of perceived silence and response when we cry in prayer
- Some say you are not seeking to please God, lack faith, have improper motives, or have unconfessed sin if your prayers are not answered...NOT. Really, can we say God would have answered our prayers if we had only a little more faith...Jesus healed the imperfect
- Seeking and living for God is important but absence of this does not stop God's presence
- We want to ask and have immediate answers
- Prayer for a particular job but got a different one and realized you were better off?
- God answers prayers in his way and his time
- He knows needs before we ask

Meaning of prayer and answers

- Prayers for a dying friend, safety of children, or new job but become confused when bad happens
- Saved by God's grace, not our works
- Seeing the faith of many people united in prayer moves
- "Failure of prayer not found in what we do wrong when we pray but in our failure to understand what Jesus meant when he said we could move mountains and have whatever we ask for if we pray in faith."
- Must read scripture spiritually rather than literally
- In ways we don't fully understand, God will get us through our place of brokenness
- If all we had to do was pray for healing then no need for doctors, nurses, medical research, and hospitals
- God may not heal in accordance with our desire but will see us through the struggle
- Sickness may lead to humility and a dependence upon God
- Misfortune may be the place for the power of God to be realized

- Sometimes prayer in your life with something you experience or the prayer you pray for another causes a change
- Good can come from the pain

Answered prayers

- How does God answer prayers?
 - Miracles – Rare for a reason, very special and often occur for a reason we may not be able to see. They are the exception
 - God typically sends people to help
 - Neurosurgeon experience
 - God typically works through ordinary means
 - Does not suspend laws of nature
 - Often intends us to be the answers to others prayers...mission, help, support
 - God's answer may be to walk with you just as he did Jesus rather than removing you from the situation
 - It is okay to pray for miracles

Purpose of prayer

- Habitual or Symbolic acts of thanks...thank you for the raise, the new job, the car
- Believe God hears your prayers...prayer of faith...God cares
- If you are able...heal me....God is able however your healing may look different than his.
- Take burdens to the Lord, pray deeply, trust he hears
- Praying for God's will
- Thinking of prayer as something to be answered or rather as a relationship with God and submitting to him
- Prayers for healing, strength, peace, obedience, commitment
- Confession and pardon
- Praising God
- Sincere
- Gives peace, rest, and hope
- Knows our heart

Prayer is not

- Way to instruct God
- Used to take away free will of others
 - Can't ask someone on a date and expect God to force them to go out with you
 - Can't ask for God to hurt another and expect him to do it
 - Can't pray not to get caught or suffer consequences for a crime and expect God to do it
 - Can't pray for a good grade in school and not do anything yourself.
 - Do you want to live knowing someone else could pray your actions
 - Not going to cause someone to buy your house
- Way to blame or attack others
- Not to pray for misfortune of others
- God is not a push button machine that hands out answers
- Empty phrases or big words
- Don't deny Jesus

Closing

- My grace is enough for you because power is made perfect in weakness (Paul heard this)
- When we are weak, we are strong
- God did not forsake Jesus in the garden or on the cross...something bigger came out of it

Scripture

- *2 Corinthians 12: 8-10*⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me,⁹ but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong
- *3 John 1: 2*² Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.
- *Isaiah 41:10* Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea; I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
- *Isaiah 53: 5*⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.
- *James 5: 13-16*¹³ Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise.¹⁴ Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.¹⁵ The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.
- *Jeremiah 17: 14*¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise.
- *John 15:7*⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
- *Luke 22: 42*⁴² "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done."
- *Mark 10: 13-16*¹³ People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them.¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.¹⁵ Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.
- *Matthew 6: 7-15* The Lord's prayer
- *Matthew 14: 35-36* After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him,³⁶ and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed
- *Matthew 15: 30-31* Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them,^{31so} that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.
- *Matthew 17: 19-20* Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"²⁰ He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."
- *Matthew 21: 21-22*²¹ Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done.²² Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."
- *Matthew 8: 1-3* When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him;^{2and} there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me

clean.”³ He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- *Matthew 8: 17*¹⁷ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”
- *Matthew 9: 2*² And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.”
- *Matthew 9: 35* Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness
- *Psalms 23* The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou annointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- *Romans 8: 26*²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

References

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