

## **Title: PRAYER IN THE PANDEMONIUM (Part 1)**

**Text: Luke 11:1**

- *Intro...*
- **We believe that God is wanting to work IN THE MIDDLE of this season. And that he is not after just survival, but revival in our own hearts (we need it) and in our world.**
- Imagine with me for moment that you are one of the disciples
- Jesus: one thing...
- **What would it be?** What would you ask him to teach you to do?
- It would have to be something meaningful, right? Something that would have profound implications for your life, and your world.
  - It was tumultuous times they lived in, so it would have to be something that could help with THAT.
- And it would have to be something that, when you got to the end of your life, you could look back and say, "I'm so glad that I asked Jesus to teach me how to do THAT."
- In **Luke 11**, we get a glimpse into what that ONE thing might have been if we were one of the disciples, walking with Jesus.
- **Up until this point in **Luke 11**, the disciples had seen Jesus:**
  - Turn water to wine
  - Cast out demons
  - Courageously stand up to corruption
  - Miraculously feed thousands of people
  - Command storms to stop
  - Heal lepers, blind people, paralytics
  - Raise a little girl from the dead
  - Preach the life-changing, revolutionary, sermon on *the mount of olives*.
- **And they never asked him to teach them to do any of it.**
- By this point I would have asked for SOMETHING.
  - "Lord show me how to... healing... walking on water... raise dead people
- **Luke 11 is the only time we see them ask Jesus to teach them how to do anything, and it might surprise you what they ask for.**
- **Luke 11:1 (NLT)**
- 'Once Jesus was in a certain place **praying**. As He finished, one of His disciples came to Him and said, "Lord, **teach us to pray...**'
- Prayer?
- Of all the things... PRAYER?
- For the majority of us, this would NOT BE our ONE ASK.

- Which tells me that: There is something about prayer that the disciples understood that we do not.
- The life of Jesus was marked by it.
- The vitality of the early church seemed to be contingent on it.
- Every revival in history started with it.
- It is the lifeblood of the church, and possibly the most effective weapon we have against the forces of wickedness that drive the battles that we find ourselves in in every season of life.
- **AND YET**, it's the thing we do least.
- I don't know why EXACTLY this is the ONE thing the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to do...
- But I DO know that if this WAS the one thing they wanted to do better, then we should want that TOO.

Today: THREE key things that happen when we pray. Three things that pray DOES.

### 1. Prayer Leads to Peace

- "Prayer in the Pandemonium"
- **Pandemonium** — "an uproar or a chaotic situation" — something that seems no one has control over.
- In many ways, this is our world right now, and understandably.
- And we want to be able to live in the reality of it (not avoid it), while not being overcome by it.
- There is a deep unrest in the soul of humanity.
- And I don't know that this season CREATED IT, but maybe exposed it.
- We are in need of soul peace. The Bible gives us prescription to find it.
- **Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)**
- "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all he has done. **Then** you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."
- **Disclaimer:**
  - Some people have legitimate chemical imbalances that cause anxiety.
  - Some people have legit trauma triggers that cause neurological anxiety.
- **Phil 4** is not talking about mental health and trauma triggered anxiety.
- This is talking about situational anxiety. Worry produced by circumstances.

- Can the principles of **Phil 4** HELP someone who has clinical anxiety? I believe they can.
- But that's not the thrust of this passage.
- **But, for the kind of worry and anxiety that is the result of anxious situations (which is what the majority of us experience), Phil 4 DOES give us a path forward.**
- **Two steps.**
- **Step 1: Don't worry, Pray.**
  - When your thoughts are overcome with worry, invite God into your thoughts.
  - When the worry starts creeping in, instead of entertaining anxious thoughts, invite God into your thoughts (that's prayer). Bring God into the conversation.
  - **Spoiler alert:**
    - God already knows what is happening in your mind, so don't try to keep it from Him.
    - And He loves you even WHEN you're struggling.
- **Step 2: Pray with Petition and Praise**
  - So we don't just petition — we don't tell God what we need (we DO do that), but:
    - **"Tell God what you need and THANK HIM for what he has already done."**
  - We like to forget this last part. We like to jump right to the asking for stuff.
  - **But the THANKING HIM is kind of the key here.**
  - Scientific studies are now discovering that, what the Bible says here, is actually **neurologically** true.
  - Thankfulness and, what they call "appreciation memories", have the power to change your mental state from worry to peace.
  - **God designed us so that when we fill our minds with gratitude and appreciation, worry begins to dissipate.**
- But this is not a one and done. We don't just chuck up a prayer and praise, and wait for God to magically pour out peace on us.
- **We need to pray and praise UNTIL we sense the peace.**
  - We don't stop until we sense the peace.
- The peace is actually already there. The Prince of Peace lives in you. Doesn't get more peaceful than that.
- But the worries of this life cover the peace up.
- **Prayer helps the worries to dissipate so we can sense God's peace again.**
- One of the other reasons prayer seems to lead to peace:
  - **Prayer slows us down to experience God's presence, and in God's presence IS peace.**
- Prayer has a way of stilling our hearts so that we can once again sense the presence of God with us.
- And in the presence of God we find PEACE.
- **Also:**

- Prayer turns our hearts and minds toward God which leads to peace.
- **Isaiah 26:3** “You will keep him in perfect **peace, whose mind is stayed on You**, because he trusts in You.”
- **Prayer leads to Peace.**

## 2. Prayer Changes Things

- Sometimes we can almost feel like it’s pointless to pray, because it doesn’t feel like we’re “accomplishing” something that we can see.
- If I PHYSICALLY do something, I have more confidence that something is actually getting DONE.
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- **James 5:16b**
- **“The effective prayer of a righteous person accomplishes much.”**
- God works when we pray.
- As the old quote says:
- **“When men work, men work, but when men pray, God works.” - Angus Buchan**
- I’m not saying we don’t PHYSICALLY participate in things like bringing justice on earth. We do.
- But injustice on earth is rooted in the wickedness of people’s hearts.
- And people’s hearts can only be changed by the power of God, which makes PRAYER maybe the greatest tool we have.
- What we see in scripture is that prayer changes things.
- **‘When [Herod] had seized him, he put him in prison... but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God...**
- **...On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison....**
- **And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter’s side and woke him up, saying, “Get up quickly.” And his chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and continued to follow, and he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision...**
- **...When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I**

know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod...

- ...When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together **and were praying.** (Acts 12:4-12 NASB)
- Why does Dr. Luke (the author of Acts), under the power of the Holy Spirit, make sure to mention at BEGINNING AND THE END of this story, that the church was PRAYING for Peter?
- **I think he wants us to see the connection:**
- **Stuff happens when we pray.**
- **There was NOTHING these people could have done, but they wanted to do SOMETHING.**
- **Through prayer THEY COULD.**
- We may not be able to physically be on the other side of the world ministering to Muslims, or caring for orphans, or at the World Health Organization, helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- We may not be able to be in places like Minneapolis, as an ambassadors of God's love, peace, and justice in a time like this.
- **HOWEVER: Through prayer we can do eternal, effective work in places where we can't physically be.**
- When the people of God pray, things change for the glory of God.
- *Ex. 32 Moses is on the mountain with God for days, the people get mad, and begin to make golden calves and worship them, and God isn't happy about it...*
- *"I'm going to destroy these people"*

**'Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God...**

**Moses PRAYS to God and he asks him to relent from His plan of judgment and to show mercy instead.**

**...So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.' (Exodus 32:11,14 NKJV)**

- **So the Lord "Relented"**
- **Literally:** "To turn from an undesirable course of action." Some translations read: "**The Lord changed his mind.**"
- God would have been just in pouring out judgement OR in giving mercy, but judgement was the "undesirable course of action".
- When Moses prayed, God changed the plan and relented from the undesirable course of action.

- **Now**, when God relents from something, it's not like when man changes his mind.
- When man changes his mind it's because
  - 1. He just felt like it (arbitrary)
  - 2. Because he made the wrong decision in the first place.
  - 3. He got new information that he previously didn't have.
- God is neither arbitrary, nor wrong, nor ill-informed, but sometimes does relent from an undesirable course of action.
- **Moses prayed and THEN the situation changed.**
- **When God's people pray, things change.**
- **Now it's the power of God that does it. When God's people pray GOD moves.**
- **My prayers don't have power apart from God, but WHEN we pray God DOES MOVE.**
- This makes prayer one of the greatest tools we have AND one of the greatest WEAPONS that we have.
- **Prayer is a weapon that wages war on the devil.**
- In **Eph. 6** Paul instructs us what to do in spiritual battle and there's only two offensive weapons he mentions:
  - **Ephesians 6:17-18**
  - **"And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."**
- We talked about the sword of the spirit from from right here. We talked musical worship from **2 Chron 20** which God uses sometimes as a spiritual weapon.
- **But maybe the most powerful weapon of all, is the weapon of prayer.**
- **There is a war going on, and although we feel it in the physical, it is spiritual in nature. And spiritual battles must be fought with spiritual weapons.**
- **One of those weapons is prayer.**
- The real battle is happening in the spiritual realm and must therefore be fought with spiritual weapons.
- Prayer is one of those weapons.
- **When we pray, things can begin to shift.**
- And what we see is that SOMETIMES it appears that God is actually WAITING to do something until we ask.
- I don't know how this works with the sovereignty of God, but we do see it in scripture.
- **Ezekiel 22:30 "I looked for a man who would stand in the gap (intercede) for these people, but there was no one. Therefore, I have poured out my judgment on them."**
- In other words God was waiting for someone to stand in the gap — to plead with Him on their behalf, until He acted.
- **James 4** says that reason we don't have is because we **have not yet asked.**

- I don't know why but **Sometimes God waits to act until we ask.**
- Obviously there are some things that God has set in motion that no amount of prayer will ever change.
  - If you were to pray for Jesus to not return, that's not going to happen.
- **But there are SOME things (it seems) that are waiting to change, until we ask.**
- **Maybe THAT is why the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. When Jesus prayed STUFF HAPPENED.**
- When the disciples couldn't cast out the demons in **Matthew 17** but Jesus could, He said it was because they didn't PRAY and HE DID.
- **If we want to see LASTING change — unconditional love and unity, social justice, the healing of the nations, racial reconciliation, the erasing of prejudice (IN ALL OF US), and revival, then WE MUST PRAY.**

### Speaking of REVIVAL and prayer...

### 3. Prayer Paves the Way for Revival

- Revival: I'm talking about an awakening of people hearts to be transformed gospel of Jesus.
  - That means: Sleeping Christians wake and become more like Jesus, and spiritually dead people are born again.
- **The reason I want to make the connection between prayer and REVIVAL, and not prayer and SOCIAL ISSUES, is because revival transforms the heart.**
- Injustice happens because of the wickedness in people's hearts.
- **Transformed hearts lead to transformed societies.**
- **So what we want is revival.**
- **And there is a deep and profound connection between prayer and revival.**
- **Today is Pentecost Sunday.**
- On this day in History, God poured out His Holy Spirit and the **church was birthed** almost 2,000 years ago.
- **What you may not know is that the happened at a PRAYER MEETING.**
- **Acts 1:12-14 (NKJV)**

- 'Then they returned to Jerusalem... and they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew... These all continued with **one accord in prayer and supplication...**
- **Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV)**
- 'When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...'
  - Tongues... Peter, filled with the Spirit, preaches the gospel, 3,000 people are saved and the church IS BIRTHED.
  - We CANNOT miss the fact, the it was during a PRAYER meeting that God poured out Spirit and birthed His church.
  - The first and greatest revival in all of History started at a prayer meeting.
  - And I do not know of a single revival in History that did not begin with God's people crying out to Him in prayer.
  - I believe that this is THE BEST way that we can partner with God's plan to redeem humanity and restoration.
  - In fact, God TELLS US to participate in this way.
  - **2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (NLT)**
  - "At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. **THEN IF** my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land."
  - It's an "if/then" statement here.
  - During times like these (and we ARE in times like these):
    - "IF my people pray, THEN I will heal their land."
    - I wonder if the opposite is true? "If my people DO NOT pray, then I won't heal their land."?
    - Or at least, "I am waiting to heal your land, until you begin to pray."?
  - People are searching for hope and healing and love and resolve that they will NEVER find on earth, apart from Jesus.
  - God wants to save redeem and restore humanity.
  - "He is not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance." **2 Peter 3:9**
  - That's revival.
  - This is why Jesus came. He is the healer of the nations. He wants to save many.
  - I think it start with prayer.