

November 20, 2016

Time to Pray Matthew 7:7-11

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

This week and every week, let's take _____ to pray and to give thanks. Today we're going to look at the _____ of expressing our hearts to God. We search the Scriptures for God's will. We want to _____ God in every way, and so we take the time to _____ to what God has to say. Our Father in heaven _____ today through His written Word. He gives us a message that is _____ for all time and all people. We study God's Word, because it has God's wisdom. We need that wisdom!

Daniel chose to spend the night in the lions' den rather than go one day without _____. He believed praying to God was more important than his own _____. Prayer is how we personally _____ God all the things that are in our hearts. It's one means of adoring Him, thanking Him, and praising Him. Prayer time allows us to _____ our sins and to ask God's forgiveness. Prayer gives us an opportunity to ask God to _____ our needs or the needs of people that we love. God invites us to pray to Him as our _____. He loves us that much.

First Thessalonians 5:17 urges us to "Pray without _____." We should never give up on praying or lose heart. Acts 2:42 reminds us that the early _____ was "continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Colossians 4:2 says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping _____ in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." Why does God want us to concentrate on praying day after day? Because God knows how much _____ a strong prayer life will be to your soul. If you wish to renew your zeal for God or merely draw closer to God, then take time each day to get _____ with God and pray fervently from your heart.

Our reading today comes from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:7-11.

Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus saw _____ in prayer. Mark 1:35 says, "And in the _____ morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there." Jesus needed time alone with the Father and He needed time to _____ His heart for the day's tasks. Luke 5:16 says, "He Himself would _____ slip away to the wilderness and pray." Before Jesus appointed the twelve disciples to be _____, He felt the need to pray. Luke 6:12 says, "And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the _____ night in prayer to God." Have you ever spent even a single _____ in prayer?

I can't imagine all that Jesus _____ on the night that He was betrayed. Jesus knew what struggles lay ahead of Him during the trials and on the _____. He knew that He would _____ a most painful death and He would bear the _____ of the whole world. He prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane for _____ hours. Luke 22:42 says He prayed, "Father, if You are willing, _____ this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." Again, He said to His Father,

“My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy _____ be done” (Matthew 26:42). Jesus was willing to pay the ultimate price with His own _____.

The Lord Jesus began and ended His crucifixion and His death with _____. While they were _____ Him to the cross, Jesus was praying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Even while these hardened soldiers were putting nails through His hands and feet, He was _____ of their forgiveness. Such was His devotion to granting forgiveness to the _____. He wanted everyone to be saved. His last words after suffering for six hours, and as He was breathing his last were, “Father, into thy hands I commit my _____” (Luke 23:46). His heart and mind throughout this horrifying time was upon His relationship to the Father and _____ the Father’s will. If Jesus needed to pray, how much more so do we?

God not only wanted us to pray, He also wanted to hear our hearts, and He also knew the value of prayer to our _____ lives. Praying can _____ your life in a multitude of ways. I just want to mention a few:

First, prayer can _____ you in times of temptation. The Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the Garden of Gethsemane. He wanted them to _____ and to _____ with Him. While He was pouring out His heart in prayer, they were falling _____. The Lord Jesus told them, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is _____, but the flesh is _____” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer can help us to remain _____ to God in trying times. When Satan tempts us, prayer can strengthen our hearts and help us _____ the temptation. We don’t have to _____ temptation alone. **Read Hebrews 4:15-16.** God will _____ us.

We also need to understand that the devil means business when he _____ us. He wants us to _____ and break our relationship with the Lord. James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will _____ from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” God will _____ and help us when we pray. Someone has said, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

Second, prayer can help you in times of _____ and struggle. First Peter 5:7 reminds us to cast “all your anxiety upon Him, because He _____ for you.” We all face worries and fears, but we can cast those anxieties on the _____. The Lord cares about you and your _____ life. No problem is too _____ or too _____ for the Lord. I love the promise in Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for _____, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall _____ your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

God wants you to be at _____, to find security in Him. Instead of worrying about every _____ that comes along, tell God about it! While you’re asking, _____ Him for listening, for caring, and for helping you. What will happen, if you pray? God will give you a _____ peace of heart and mind that surpasses all understanding. He will place a _____ all around your heart and mind; He won’t let your worries overcome you. He won’t abandon you. He won’t forget you. In every difficult situation, prayer to God with faith will help you ride out the storm.

Third, prayer can help you grow _____ to God. When we pray regularly and truly _____ that the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, we build our devotion to Him. When we see our prayers answered, it makes us _____ Him all the more. Prayer helps us _____ things differently and to want what God wants. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). How I wish _____ person in America, every person in the world hungered and thirsted for righteousness. This would change our country; it would change our world, and make it a better, more loving, more joyful, more hopeful, more honest, and more honorable society. Wouldn't you like to live in a _____ that had no crime, no drunkenness, no immorality, no hatred, and no prejudice? Wouldn't you like to live in a _____ where people helped each other, respected each other, and told the truth?

Prayer is the greatest precautionary measure that you can take against _____ away from the living God. The first step in falling away from God is when people _____ praying and become indifferent, and in time they _____ God altogether. Praying and being close to God will _____ you from growing complacent and apathetic. Praying _____ you of the most important matters of life. When you pray, you think of your soul and you think of the souls of those around you. In prayer, you thank God for His blessings, and this makes you appreciate and love Him all the more. Praying every day will _____ your life; taking time to talk with God will renew your spirit and keep your values and priorities straight. It will give you a _____ place to go from the world and all its temptations. Jesus needed time with His Father, and so do we.

Fourth, prayer can help you in your _____ for God. Prayer gives us the strength to carry on in our _____ for the Lord. In Ephesians 6:19, Paul asked the church at Ephesus to “pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the _____.” When we _____, God _____ the door. When we are weak, God gives us the _____ to bear our burdens. Sidlow Baxter said, “Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons – but they are helpless against our prayers.”

I think of Nehemiah, and how he heard, “The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.” Nehemiah 1:4 says, “When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and _____ before the God of heaven.” We too hear bad _____ now and then. What do you do? Nehemiah wept and mourned for days; he fasted and prayed. If you are hurting and in _____, pray for God to _____ you make a difference. God _____ Nehemiah's prayer and helped him rebuild Jerusalem.

We all find ourselves inadequate at times, unskilled, lacking wisdom, or unprepared for the challenge. At those times, we pray for God's _____! Paul said, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5). This is certainly true! God can work in and through us to do things that we couldn't do by _____. Never give up on the _____ of prayer! Never give up on God! If we're ever to recapture the _____ of the first century church, it will begin with prayer.

Paul praised God in Ephesians 3:20-21. He said, “Now to Him who is able to do _____ abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Fifth, praying can reassure you. Sometimes we just need to be _____ to the One we love. We need to tell Him we love Him, to thank Him, to praise Him, and to take our burdens to Him. Prayer is a great reminder that we have a “Father” in heaven. The Lord Jesus said, “your Father _____ what you need, before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). He knows all about everything, and He wants to _____ us. **Read what Jesus asked in Matthew 7:9-11.** God is _____ and He’s waiting for us to ask! Nothing is more reassuring than seeing prayer _____. God will answer our prayers. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Mark 11:22-24.** Faith and willingness to do God’s will are vital to our prayers.

Read James 1:5-8. When I need God’s _____ to help me work through a problem, I pray and God _____. I know He has helped me in the past and will continue to help me. God isn’t offended by my asking. He’s generous and happy to help.

So, prayer is how we _____ with our Father in heaven. We can connect anytime, anyplace. We need God every _____ and every _____. How is your prayer life? Are you a man or woman of prayer?

Real prayer, heartfelt and fervent, blesses _____ God and man. Proverbs 15:8 says, “the prayer of the upright is His _____.” God wants to hear from you regularly. You don’t have to _____ God to be heard. He wants to hear your _____ prayers. It’s a joy to count my blessings and recall all the _____ that my God has done. It’s a great blessing to _____ my heart, my burdens, my fears, and my concerns with my Father in heaven, knowing He cares to listen and that He can do something about them.

When people tell me about some trouble they face, maybe it’s trouble at home, or trouble financially, trouble with their health, or trouble on the job, I ask them, “Have you prayed about it?” Don’t give up on God too _____. Don’t imagine that God is unaware of our troubles and cares. God may very well be working behind the scenes in ways that we cannot _____ and we don’t understand to answer those prayers. God doesn’t always give us what we ask for, but He always gives us what is _____ for our souls. Let’s trust in God when we pray.

Some folks think that salvation comes from simply _____ a “sinner’s prayer.” The New Testament, however, never speaks of a “sinner’s prayer.” Does that surprise you? Saying a “sinner’s prayer” is a _____ invention. To be saved, the Lord expects people to _____ in Him, to love Him, to _____ of their sins, to _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to be _____ in His name for the forgiveness of their sins. In Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus was baptized to _____ away His sins, calling on His name. According to 1 Peter 3:21 baptism is how we _____ to God for a good conscience. We hope that you’ll follow the Lord’s teaching and be baptized today for the forgiveness of your sins. When you do, the Lord will add you to His church and make you His child.