

## **Sermon Series: POWERfull: The work of the Spirit through us**

### **Sermon Title: POWERFULL Prayer**

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#### **Scripture Text:**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Rom. 8:26- 27

In Luke chapters 5-8, we see the apostles following Jesus and observing all that he does. It is interesting to note that the disciples above all other needs felt the need to ask Jesus to teach them to pray. (They never asked him to teach them to preach, to heal, etc.).

**This should help us to understand our own need to ask Jesus to teach us to pray** - Jesus relied on prayer - modeled it for us - His disciples finally asked him to teach them to pray, because they understood that it was a real value to him, and crucial to his mission.

#### **Reasons we do not pray**

1. We do not see the value of it
2. We are not sure that it makes a difference
3. We don't know where to begin - "not good with words"
4. We have not scheduled it into the regular rhythms of our life
5. It takes discipline (the flesh is weak)
6. We have a law-based view of prayer instead of a grace-based view; (we pray to get God's attention/acceptance -- in reality, the urge to pray is God's getting our attention/calling us to know him and partner in his work).

#### **What is prayer?**

- It is simply conversation with God.
- It is an invitation into the heart and mission of God.
- It is not ritual, but relationship; it is the very breath of the soul toward God.

Though it is good to have a set time to pray, prayer is conversation with God and should be made without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:16-18). As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him. (Breathing - "breathe time")

Jesus told us the Holy Spirit would be our Helper. He helps us in our weaknesses, and one of our greatest weaknesses is knowing how to effectively pray. As the Spirit helps us in every other area, so we can rely and trust Him completely to teach us both what to pray and how to pray. Paul, in these verses, says the Spirit specifically comes to our aid in this area.

#### **The Spirit helps us in our weakness**

When we (Paul includes himself) have no strength, the Spirit 'helps' us - the Greek word is *sunantilambanomai* which means to lay hold of someone to support them - or to take hold of something *opposite together*). Luke 10:40 - But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

## How does the Spirit help us in prayer?

- **He stirs our hearts** - stirs our hearts and gives us a praying heart (burden)

("the Holy Spirit is the spring of all of our desires and breathings towards God" Matthew Henry)

*From burden or the compassion of God* - it is not enough that we pray properly for what is needed, if our hearts are cold and our prayers are formal... and our thoughts constantly wander.

- **He stirs our minds** (the what of prayer) - there are so many things to pray for we can be overwhelmed. We often don't know what to pray for but the Spirit brings it to mind. We need to learn to listen to the Spirit who gives us the petitions. It is part of "abiding".

## What are the different types of prayer?

Ephesians 6:18 - praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. (Literally: at all times, with all kinds of prayer). The Bible reveals many types of prayers and employs a variety of words to describe the practice. Here are the main types of prayers in the Bible:

1) **The prayer of worship (Who He is):** (*Our Father in heaven, you are holy, you are king*) The Psalms are full of this kind of prayer. Church leaders in Antioch prayed in this manner with fasting: "*While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'* Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3). Focus on who God is - character and nature (he reveals Christ in us) so we can see him better and worship him deeper.

2) **The prayer of thanksgiving (What He has done):** We see another type of prayer in Philippians 4:5: thanksgiving or thanks to God. "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Many examples of thanksgiving prayers can be found in the Psalms. The Spirit causes our carnal hearts to turn to spiritually minded, thankful hearts. He brings to mind what Christ has said to us and done.

3) **The prayer of consecration (My response to Him - repentance/holy living and surrender):** Sometimes, prayer is a time of setting ourselves apart to follow God's will. (Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; Your will be done) Jesus made such a prayer the night before His crucifixion: "And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will'" (Matthew 26:39). He helps us to set ourselves apart to walk in holiness (Holy Spirit) and to do God's will. He convicts of sin.

4) **The prayer of request (or supplication):** (*Give us this day...*) We are to take our requests to God. Philippians 4:6 teaches, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." He prompts us to ask, seek, knock.

5) **The prayer of intercession:** (*Your kingdom come*) Many times, our prayers include requests for others as we intercede for them. We are told to make intercession "for everyone" in 1 Timothy 2:1. Jesus serves as our example in this area. The whole of John 17 is a prayer of Jesus on behalf of His disciples and all believers. He helps us to turn our minds toward others and make requests on their behalf. He gives us God's heart for others (burden).

6) **The prayer of agreement (also known as corporate prayer):** After Jesus' ascension, the disciples "all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). Later, after Pentecost, the early church "devoted themselves" to prayer (Acts 2:42). Their example encourages us to pray with others. (*Our Father*) Since he baptized us into the body and he helps us maintain unity, he gives us the ability to join as one spirit and mind to agree together.

## Other kinds of prayer:

7) **The prayer of faith:** James 5:15 says, "And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up." In this context, prayer is offered in faith for someone who is sick, asking God to heal. When we pray, we are to believe in the power and goodness of God (Mark 9:23). The Spirit increases our faith - gives us gifts of faith to pray for the things we are burdened with and for people and situations around us. - One gift of the Spirit is faith... faith/faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit, the Spirit made the early church bold.

8) **The prayer of imprecation:** found in the Psalms (e.g., 7, 55, 69). They are used to invoke God's judgment on the wicked and thereby avenge the righteous. The psalmists use this type of appeal to emphasize the holiness of God and the surety of His judgment. Jesus teaches us to pray for blessing on our enemies, not cursing (Matthew 5:44-48).

## 9) Praying in the Spirit

The Bible also speaks of praying in the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:14-15) and prayers when we are unable to think of adequate words (Romans 8:26-27). In those times, the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us.

The Greek word translated "*pray in*" can have several different meanings. It can mean "by means of," "with the help of," "in the sphere of," and "in connection to."

The Spirit prays with "groanings too deep for words"

-sometimes it is with no words at all but just deep burden (example, Hannah)

-sometimes it is with strong crying and tears (example: Jesus Hebrews 5:7)

-sometimes it is praying in the Spirit (an unknown tongue, (1 Cor. 14:2, 14)

As we read the scriptures, one of the evidences that a Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit is the ability to speak or pray in an unknown tongue. It is a gift of the Spirit and He gives it as he desires to give it. It is not the only gift of the Spirit and it is not the only evidence of being filled by the Spirit (*an* evidence, not *the* evidence - boldness, signs and miracles).

When we pray in an unknown tongue, 1 Corinthians 14 tells us that:

- We speak directly to God (14:2)
- We speak mysteries with our spirit - (14:2)
- We build ourselves up (14:4)
- Our spirit is praying (not merely our mind) (14:14-15)
- We are giving thanks well (14:17)

This is why we do not stand around for the entire service and speak with tongues - When we are together we are to look to the edifying of the entire body. Tongues without interpretation will not edify the corporate congregation.

## Perfect Prayers

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. How would you like to pray perfect prayers? The Holy Spirit is the only one who know what to do - This is where my will, Gods will and the working together of all things intersect.

- He knows our hearts and minds.
- He knows the mind of the Spirit.
- He prays the perfect will of God through us.

The questions below are for House Church Group Discussion:

1. What did the apostles ask Jesus to teach them? Why?
2. There are many reasons why we don't pray. What is your reason? What measures can you take to overcome?
3. What is prayer?
4. What are the types of prayer?
5. Do you pray in the Spirit? Why should this be a part of your prayer life?
6. Can we pray perfect prayers? How?