

Praying as Talking Back to God

Text

Matt. 6:5-8 ⁵“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Memory Verse

1 Thess. 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

Introduction

One way in which we fellowship with God is through prayer. In fellowship, we exchange with God. In prayer, we exchange words with our Maker.

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We talk back to Him by reminding Him of what He has said about Himself - what we have believed and trusted as the reason He should act for us against Satan's destructive plans.

We also think of others when we pray. That is intercession (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Acceptable prayer for us as Christians is limited to what Christ taught about the Father, as passed down by His first witnesses (1 John 1-4).

Objective

To see that prayer is talking and appealing to God for our good and for the good of others through intercession.

Presentation

1. Prayer is Talking or Making an Appeal

Because Christ lives in us through His word, everything about us - our thoughts, words, and actions – is seen in heaven and will be rewarded (2 Cor. 5:10).

2 Cor. 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive*

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the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In prayer, we think about God as revealed in Christ and talk to Him. Without that, it is not based on true faith (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).

Talking back to God means drawing conclusions from His word and giving those as reasons He should act or not act for us and our neighbours. That is what the early Christians did in Acts 4:23-31. They took God's word and prayed it back to Him. See also Isa. 41:21.

2. Prayer is Appealing to God for Ourselves And Others

We pray to express dependence on God. That is faith (Mark 11:22).

We do not pray to inform God of our needs. He already knows and is able to provide before we ask (Matt. 6:8).

Prayer is also how we push back against the devil's attempts to destabilize our neighbourhood (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

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When we pray for others - even our enemies - we end up blessing ourselves (Matt. 7:12). That is the golden rule in practice.

Our real enemies are not human. People are simply horses that Satan rides to attack us. We should target the rider, not the horse. We do not attack people; we deal with the one working behind them (Luke 9:51-56).

It is not Christian to ask God to kill the people Satan uses against us. They are ignorant agents. Christ our Head does not want that (Matt. 5:43-48). We leave vengeance to God and pray for their eyes to open.

Conclusion

Everything God has given us - singing, praying, giving, sharing His Word, and other edifying practices - is meant to keep us close to Him. They are also sources of reward that we should not ignore, even if they seem small or hidden.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What did God say to us that we should talk back to Him in prayer?
 - * God gave us His promises and word about who He is and what He does. We talk back by reminding Him of those promises and asking Him to act according to them, as the early church did in Acts 4:24-30. We base our prayers on what He has already said.
2. Is prayer restricted to vocal or spoken words? Yes or No? Why?
 - * No. Prayer is talking to God, and that includes thoughts and the posture of the heart, not just spoken words. God sees the mind and heart (2 Cor. 5:10). “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), means a constant attitude of dependence, not just constant talking.
3. Why do we say our physical enemy is like a horse?
 - * Because humans are not our real enemy. Satan is. People often act as instruments that Satan rides to attack us. That is why Jesus said to love and pray for our enemies (Matt.

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5:44). We deal with the rider, not the horse (Eph. 6:12).

4. Why does Jesus forbid us from asking for the death of our physical enemies?

- * Because Christ came to save, not to destroy (Luke 9:56). Asking for their death is asking God to act like the devil. Jesus commands us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us, so that we reflect the Father's heart (Matt. 5:44-48).

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your word. Help us to use the authority You have given us in Christ to pray boldly, basing our requests on Your word. Make us faithful to pray for others and to stand against the enemy, not people. Amen.