



### **Week/Sermon # 3**

**Title:** How Can Passionate Prayer Change the World?

**Key Texts:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and Matthew 9:35-37

**Overview:** Jesus was in constant communication with His Father and prayed for His followers and for those who were still wandering far from fellowship with God. As disciples, praying should be like breathing. We can live in intimate communication with the God who made us and loves us. As we grow in the spiritual marker of passionate prayer, we will find ourselves praying for and with those who still need to discover and embrace the amazing grace of Jesus.

### **Sermon Outline:**

**Sermon Introduction Idea...** You might want to begin by sharing some answered prayers from the history of your church. Remind people that God has been moving in power and has answered the prayers of His people over and over in the life of your congregation.

- o What If...God hears the prayers of His people...His Church?
- o **Video of Live Testimonies...**You might want to create a short video with a collection of testimonies of answered prayers in the lives of people in your church. Or, you could have people share live testimonies or have someone read short stories of answered prayers in the lives of people in your church.

**Movement 1- Learning from Jesus...**For Jesus, prayer was like breathing!



- **Image:** If you are going to use the seven icons for the seven markers of spiritual growth, show the image for “Passionate Prayer” and let people know that this picture will show up in sermons, on your website, in youth and children’s materials, and other times when you are focusing on the marker of Passionate Prayer. Consider having the Icon on the sermon title if you project notes or on the cover of your bulletin if you have one. You might want to have the icon in one of the corners of every slide you project in this sermon. ([Here is the link to Passionate Prayer badge](#))

- For Jesus, **prayer** was like **breathing** (A natural part of life)
- Read: Luke 5:16

*Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed*

- Talk about how prayer was **not** a project or a burdensome task to our Savior. He spoke to the Father often and in many situations in life.
- Prayer in the flow of life (Meals and Miracles!)
- Read: Matthew 14:19

*...looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves (Matthew 14:19, NIV).*

- From thanking God for daily bread and the gift of a simple meal to asking the Father to break into the world with miraculous power to provide, prayer was normal to Jesus!
- Prayer across the emotional spectrum (the heights of joy!)
- Read: John 11:40-42

<sup>40</sup>Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

<sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me" (NIV).

- Jesus thanked the Father for His power to raise the dead and do miracles. He rejoiced that the Father heard His voice and prayer. Focus on how Jesus lifted up prayers of joy and praise to God.
- The depths of pain, rejection, and sorrow
- Read: Luke 23:34

*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (NIV).*

- Jesus cried out to His Father while nailed to the cross, bearing our sins, and taking our judgment and shame. His natural response in pain and agony was to speak with the Father in heaven.
- Prayer in the BIG moments of life (take time to look at Jesus' pattern of calling out to the Father in the big and important moments of His life on this earth). Jesus prayed when...
  - Calling His Disciples (Luke 6:12-16)
  - Revealing Who He Was...Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)

- o Raising of Lazarus (John 11:38-44)
- o Garden...Going to the Cross for Us! (Synoptics)
- o On the Cross (Synoptics)
- o Other moments you notice as you read the Gospels...
- Prayer for His Followers (Unity!) John 17
- Read selected portions of the High Priestly Prayer found in John chapter seventeen. Jesus took unity very seriously so He prayed for us to stand united!

## **Movement 2- The Journey of Organic Discipleship...**As we walk closely with Jesus, we learn to pray like our Savior prayed.

- God delights when His children talk with Him!
  - o Focus on the heart of God as our heavenly Father and how He loves to hear from His kids. As a perfect Father, His heart and door are always open.
- The curtain is torn and the way is open!
- Read: Matthew 27:50-52

*<sup>50</sup> And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. <sup>51</sup> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split <sup>52</sup> and the tombs broke open... (NIV)*

- o A cataclysmic rending in the fabric of the spiritual world took place when Jesus died on the cross...a way was made for us to draw near the very presence of God, through Jesus. Look at what Jesus did to make a way for us to talk with God, draw near God, be in relationship with our Creator.
- o You might want to give some background on the temple area, the holy place, the curtain, and how the High Priest only went into this area once a year with a sacrifice of blood. As the curtain was torn from the top to the bottom (a clear picture of the hands of God making a way open for us to come to Him), God opened the way for intimacy between God and people.
- The invitation is to draw near to God and talk with Him...always!
- Read: 1 Thess. 5:17

*Pray continually.*

- o **Quote-** The call to pray at all times (continually) can seem so massive and weighty. In her book, *Praying with Eyes Wide Open*, Sherry Harney says of this short and powerful passage:

*It is not that we have to pray all the time...it is that we get to pray anytime!*

- God invites pure honesty (whatever is on your heart and mind)
  - The Psalms (God's prayer book...covers everything!). Talk about how the examples of prayer in Psalms include a wide spectrum of emotion and focus. Why would God give us examples of these various kinds of prayers if He did not want to make it clear that He desires to hear from us from the deepest sorrow to the highest praise?
  - Celebration and praise- Part of our prayer life should be elation, joy, and natural expressions of thanks for God's goodness.
  - Lament and Confession- Part of our prayer life should be heartrending confession of sin and piercing lament of our deepest fears and pain. God wants to hear it all.
  - Everything in-between!
  - Invite your congregation to pray like Jesus, with honesty, with joy, with sorrow, with passion.
- Praying like Jesus! (You might want to look at how our prayers can follow the examples of prayers Jesus lifted up when He walked through this life. Each of these listed below have some exposition in the book, *Organic Disciples*. You can add your own study and look at the themes that best fit your congregation).
  - Powerful Prayers... Heal! Miracles!
  - Only by Prayer... Freedom from Demonic Control!
  - Crazy Prayers... For enemies!
  - Audacious Prayers... Don't Stop!
  - Surrendered Prayers... Not my will!
  - Evangelistic Prayers... Send out workers (starting with me)!

**Movement 3- How Passionate Prayer Leads Us to the World...** As we grow in prayer, we are moved into the world that Jesus prayed for and came to save. Prayer does not isolate or disconnect us from the world. It moves us close to the heart of Jesus that breaks for the lost in the world.

- Praying **for** people... make it habitual
  - Prayer Lists with needs...make this a regular part of your life. When you hear a friend, family member, or acquaintance express a joy or celebration, let them know you will be praying. Write it down, and pray often! When someone expresses a fear, anxiety, or tough situation in their life, write it down. Pray often. Then, ask them how things are going and how you can keep praying. Even hard-hearted people who have no faith in God will often appreciate your prayers!

- Praying **with** people... make it natural
  - Encourage believers to actually offer to pray (right in the moment) for people who share a deep pain or great joy in their life. When non-Christians are asked, "Would you allow me to lift up a short prayer for you?" Most will say yes! So, ask people, "May I have the honor of praying for you right now?" As you pray, God shows up. Prayers are answered in the name of Jesus. And, doors open for spiritual conversations as people ask questions like, "Do you think your prayers really made a difference in what happened in my life?"
- Praying **with** faith. As we learn to pray with confidence that God hears and answers...
  - Our bold certainty that God answers prayer shows that we believe what we say we believe! God is real. We trust Him. We expect answers that reveal the power and presence of God in our lives and world.
  - Faith-filled prayer shows that we have a real and authentic relationship (friendship) with God through our faith in Jesus. This draws people to the heart of God.
  - This reveals the presence and power of God...answered prayers. When non-believers hear prayers that are bold and confident, when they hear about or experience answers to prayer, they become curious and want to know more about the God to whom we pray.
- **Illustration**- Tell a story about a time you prayed for or with a non-believer and it opened a door for you to take another step toward Jesus together.
- Praying **with** the heart of God
- Read: Matthew 9:35-37

*<sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (NIV).*

- Look at Jesus' tender heart for the lost, broken, and forgotten in our world. He has compassion and sees them as they are... wandering sheep in need of a loving Shepherd.
- Praying **for** soft hearts! We need to pray for tender hearts filled with compassion for the lost, just like Jesus.
  - You might want to stop and pray for this right now!

- Praying **for** open doors and open mouths!
  - Believing in the power of prayer, we can ask God to open doors and opportunities for us to share our stories of God's work in our lives. And, we can pray for opportunities for open doors to share the life-changing message of Jesus.
  - In addition, call people to pray for courage to speak and share God's love and grace. It is one thing to have an open door. We need to walk through those doors. Pray for boldness, for gracious and truthful words, and for people to be open to the message of God's love and grace.
  - You might want to stop and pray for this right now!

### **The Great Reversal...How Does Organic Outreach Move Us Deeper into Prayer?**

- You might want to take a few minutes and reflect on how spending time with people who are far from God moves us to pray for their salvation, for wisdom, for courage, and for the right words to share. Doing outreach and sharing our faith actually grows our prayer life. And, a deep prayer life moves us outward with the Gospel!
- **Closing Prayer:** Close your message in prayer thanking God for the privilege of prayer and that God is always listening. Ask the Holy Spirit to move each heart of every believer to deeper prayer than ever. And ask that our prayer lives will move us out with Jesus on His mission to save the world.
- If you have prayer ministries in your church, you might want to highlight these and encourage people to get engaged!