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| Luke 11:1-4Jonah 1:17-2:10 | Prayer: What is it? | Pinelands – 9am – 08/10/2023Thornton – 10:30am – 08/10/2023 |

Two small boys were on the way home from Sunday school. They were

discussing whether their parents prayed or not.

One chap was quite certain that his mother prayed every night…

 *"Oh yes'"* he said *"My Mom prays every night.*

 *As soon as I go to bed I hear her say,* ***'Thank God!****'"*

Mom over heard her son praying…

 *"Please, God, make Paris the capital of Turkey."*

 After he'd repeated it several times, his mother asked why such

 a thing was so important.

Her son replied…

 *"Because that's what I wrote in my geography exam."*

A young girl was overheard praying her evening prayers:

 *Dear God.*

 *"Please bless and take care of Mom and Dad and my little*

 *brother, Alex - and please, God, do take care of yourself.*

 *Because if anything happens to you, we're* ***sunk****."*

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**PRAYER: WHAT IS IT?**

As **Luke writes** he says in verse 2… *(Luke 11:2)*

 ***“Jesus said to them, When you Pray”***

 **NOT…** ***IF*** you Pray… **but** ***WHEN*** you pray.

**PRAYER…** According to **JESUS…**

Is a… Given, Matter of Course,

 Expected, What we are to do.

**BUT…** ***WHAT IS IT?***

**Is it…** Asking for stuff…? Yes

 *(Expand – Confession and Forgiveness,*

*Intercession –*

 *For others – healing*

 *meeting needs*

*God’s intervention)*

Is Prayer… Saying Thank you…? **Yes**

 *(Gratitude and Appreciation)*

Is Prayer… Praising and Adoring God…? **Yes**

  *(Adoration and Praise and Worship)*

Is Prayer… Questioning God…? **Yes**

 *(Arguing and Fighting and getting Angry)*

It is **ALL those things** and ***MORE.***

The best way I can describe what prayer is…

 **PRAYER…** ***is what makes…*** **GOD REAL**

**Jonah** - thrown into the sea *(does NOT drown)*

 - Finds himself - in the belly of a fish

 - PLACE OF confinement, restriction, limitation.

 - Eugene Petersen - ***"Tight spot"***

 - It is **NOT** surprising that **Jonah** **prays** *(wouldn’t you?)*

* even atheists pray in ***"Tight Spots"***

WE OFTEN FIND OURSELVES IN ***"TIGHT SPOTS"***

 - Unemployment, Ill in Bed, Bereavement,

 Accident, Difficult Decisions, etc.

When we find ourselves in **‘Tight Spots'** - *Like* ***Jonah***

 We have **2 choices -**

 **1)** **Push** (squeeze) God out of the picture

 **2)** **Wrestle** with God in the situation… and He becomes ***REAL***

**JONAH** **chooses** to wrestle with God - **HE PRAYS !!**

And **GOD becomes REAL.**

**St Francis of Assisi** - **wrestled** with God for years

 **HE PRAYED !!** and **GOD became REAL**

 His prayer was - 3 questions

 ***1) God who are you ?***

 ***2) God who am I ?***

 ***3) God what do you want me to do ?***

 *(and his whole life was a*

 *response to those 3 questions)*

The bible is all about people who… **WRESTLED** with **GOD :**

 *- Moses, Jacob, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, James, etc.*

When they **WRESTLED** with **GOD…** **God** became ***REAL!!***

WHEN WE **WRESTLE** WITH **GOD** - HE BECOMES ***REAL !!***

**Jonah** chooses: - **NOT** to squeeze God out of the picture

 - **TO** wrestles with God… **HE PRAYS !!**

 **And GOD becomes REAL**

**BUT :** what is **astounding is... WHAT JONAH PRAYS.**

Each line that **Jonah** prays, comes from the **Psalms.**

 **vs 3** - "you threw me down into the depths" **Ps 88:6**

 **vs 6** - "I went down to the roots of the mountain" **Ps 65:6**

 **vs 7** - "When I felt my life slipping away,

 then, O Lord, I prayed to you, and

 in your holy Temple you heard me."

 **Ps 142:3 + Ps 11:4**

**Jonah** **DID NOT** make-up his prayer.

 Each line is pulled from a relevant **Psalm.**

**Jonah** teaches us :

 When we pray - **pray the scriptures** *(Psalms, Gospels)*

**Jesus** also Prayed the scriptures: On the Cross :

 "Father why have you forsaken me?" **Ps 22**

**Terry Waite** – Humanitarian and hostage negotiator was

abducted in Beirut *(Kuwait) (1988)*

 - **For 4 years** - solitary confinement - blindfolded

 - food every 8 hours - chained to a wall

 After he was released a journalist asked him

  *"Terry, what kept you going?"*

 **Response was… *"Blessed is the man whose***

 ***trust is in you O God." Psalm 84***

 ***- HE PRAYED IT !!***

 - That scripture kept him going… **God** Became ***REAL !!***

***A QUESTION TO ASK :***

- If you were in solitary confinement would you have any

 scripture to pray? - The words of Jesus

- Words of relevant Psalms

**Stuart Briscoe** said…

*"The effectiveness of your prayer life is closely related*

*To your depth in the Scriptures."*

There are priceless pieces of scripture

 (to commit to memory, to pray, to get into)

 **EXAMPLE** - **Ps 103** : God's goodness

 - **Ps 139** : God's knowledge of us

 - **Ps 88** : depression

 - **Acts 2** : Presence of God

 - **Phil 4** : Courage God gives

 - **Rev 22** : the eternity of God

Some of us here today are in **"TIGHT SPOTS"**

 **WE all** need to make a choice:

 ***- Squeeze God out OR Wrestle with Him ?***

When we **PRAY…** **We Wrestle** with God…

When we **Wrestle** with God… He becomes **REAL**

  **LET'S ASK:**  1) *God who are you ?*

 2) *God who am I ?*

 3) *God what do you want me to do ?*

**AND…**  **God** will become more **REAL** to us

***REAL PRAYER…***

***MAKES GOD REAL***

**Jonah 1:17-2:10**

At the Lord's command a large fish swallowed Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

**Jonah's Prayer**

From deep inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God:

“In my distress, O Lord, I called to you,

 and you answered me.

From deep in the world of the dead

 I cried for help, and you heard me.

You threw me down into the depths,

 to the very bottom of the sea,

 where the waters were all around me,

 and all your mighty waves rolled over me.

I thought I had been banished from your presence

 and would never see your holy Temple again.

The water came over me and choked me;

 the sea covered me completely,

 and seaweed wrapped around my head.

I went down to the very roots of the mountains,

 into the land whose gates lock shut forever.

But you, O Lord my God,

 brought me back from the depths alive.

When I felt my life slipping away,

 then, O Lord, I prayed to you,

 and in your holy Temple you heard me.

Those who worship worthless idols

 have abandoned their loyalty to you.

But I will sing praises to you;

 I will offer you a sacrifice

 and do what I have promised.

Salvation comes from the Lord!”

Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah up on the beach, and it did.

**Luke 11:1-4 Jesus' Teaching on Prayer**

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Jesus said to them, “When you pray, say this:

‘Father: May your holy name be honored;

 may your Kingdom come.

 Give us day by day the food we need.

 Forgive us our sins,

 for we forgive everyone who does us wrong.

 And do not bring us to hard testing.’”