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| Luke 11:1-131 Thess 5:14-18  | Prayer: The Need for Intercession | Pinelands – 9am – 05/11/2023Thornton – 10:30am – 05/11/2023 |

**Prayer is Powerful and it Works**

Corrie ten Boom once asked…

 *“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tyre?”*

Billy Graham said…

*“Heaven is full of answers to prayers for which*

*no one has bothered to ask”*

**Story of Kerry Dixon…** *("A Life Worth Living" - Nicky Gumble page 14 f)*

***“In 1992, Kerry Dixon (Not the Chealsea Football player and coach)***

***but a Church Army Officer working in the Philippines with some***

***Christian Missionaries tells the story of after sharing the Gospel with***

***some local people.***

***Not knowing the language after a long discussion between the locals***

***and the interpreters, a man born blind was thrust in front of them.***

 ***The locals wanted to see this Jesus in action.***

***Kerry tentatively prayed for his healing, once, then twice and then***

***a third time. No interpretation was needed…***

***The man was jumping for joy having had his sight restored.***

***That day fifty people came to faith and a new Christian Church was born.***

***PRAYER IS POWERFUL AND IT WORKS***

**BUT…** We often **doubt** our prayers…

* Often we **forget** to pray
* Often we make decisions without praying
* Often we **do not** pray because we feel it is too small
* Often we **do not** pray because our prayers go unanswered

**BUT…**  ***PRAYER IS POWERFUL AND IT WORKS***

A Study that was published in 1998…

by **Dr Randolph Byrd…** A Cardiologist,

working in a Heart Unit in San Francisco, USA.

**Dr Randolph Byrd,**

**conducted a study involving 393 of his patients.**

**Without their knowledge they were divided into two groups.**

 **Group 1: Was not prayed for at all**

 **Group 2: Was prayed for daily by a small prayer group**

**All the group had were,**

**The first names of the patients**

**Asked to pray daily for their healing**

 **To pray until they were discharged.**

***NO OTHER details were given.***

 **This prayer activity continued for 10 months.**

**The results were astounding…**

 **For those who were prayed for… Group 2…**

 **5 times less likely to require antibiotics**

 **2 and a Half times less likely to suffer**

**congestive heart failure or cardiac arrest.**

 *("Readers Digest" - May 1998 pg. 69 ff)*

***PRAYER IS POWERFUL AND IT WORKS***

That is some Evidence of **PRAYER WORKING**

We might even have our own testimonies of answered PRAYER.

**BUT** Sometimes… we still feel our **PRAYERS** go **UNANSWERED.**

**So… What do we DO?**

 Continue to ***PRAY…*** **OR… *Give up Praying.***

**Ministry of Jesus...** He Prayed often…

**Luke 18:1**

*“Jesus told his disciples a parable to teach them that they*

 *should always pray and never give up.”* (be discouraged)

**Luke 21:36** *“Be alert and pray always.”*

Paul regularly encouraged people to...

 **PRAY and to keep PRAYING**

**1 Thess 5:17** – *“Pray without ceasing”*

 *(His last instructions to the Church in Thesselonica… Pray)*

**1 Timothy 2:8**

 *“In every Church service I want people to pray.”*

**James 5:13**

 *“If you are in trouble… You should pray!”*

**YET… We Struggle to PRAY**

**C. S. Lewis wrote…**

*“Every war, every famine or plague, almost every death-bed*

 *is a monument to a petition that was not granted.”*

 - Unanswered Prayer

**BUT…** **C.S. Lewis went on to say…**

*“If God had granted all the silly prayers I’ve*

 *Made in my life, where should I be now?”*

**Ruth Graham…** (Billy Graham’s daughter) said…

 *“If God had granted all my prayers…*

 *I would have married the wrong men several times.”*

The Struggle is **very REAL…**

 Some Prayers are **ANSWERED…**

in the way we want them answered.

***AND…***

Some Prayers are **NOT ANSWERED…**

in the way we want them answered.

**Does that mean we…** **STOP asking? STOP Praying?**

**Of Course not…** **JESUS** TEACHES us to PRAY

 CALLS us to PRAY

 INVITES us to PRAY

**Luke’s Gospel…** The passage we read…

 **Jesus says…** Keep Asking… Keep Praying

 God, like any Father…

 Longs to give Good things to His Children

***SO…*** **In our Praying** for ***OTHERS* and *OURSELVES***

 Let me share a few pointers that might help

**POINTER 1…**

 **When we pray… Try to SEE things GOD’S WAY**

We stand under the mystery of God and His ways…

 This is… ***God’s World, God’s Will and God’s War***

We often do not understand God or how he operates.

Often in our short sightedness…

* We ask for things **NOT** in our best interests.
* We ask for things **DETRIMENTAL** to others
* Our prayers mean the **REFUSAL** of other people’s prayers

**Peter Forsyth** *(Congregational Minister)* observes perceptively…

 *“We shall come one day to heaven where we shall*

 *gratefully know that God’s great refusals were*

 *sometimes the true answers to our deepest prayers.”*

**SO…** in many cases it is **GOD’S Grace and Mercy…**

 That prevent our prayers from being answered.

 God withholds his gifts from us for our Good.

We need to see things… **God’s Way… through God’s eyes**

***Part of our prayers and petitions must always be for an…***

***increasing discernment to…*** **See things as God sees them.**

**POINTER 2…**

The simple fact is that many times our prayers are answered…

 **BUT…** **we LACK THE EYES to see THEM.**

**God understands our deeper need… deeper intent…**

 And responds to that greater need in His time and His way

 Which solves our prayer concern.

**Richard Foster** put it this way…

 *“We may ask for great faith so that we can heal others,*

 *BUT God… who understands our human need far better*

 *than we do, GIVES us greater compassion so that we*

 *can weep with others.”*

**You might remember this poem…**

I asked for Strength…

And God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for Wisdom…

And God gave me Problems to solve.

I asked for Prosperity…

And God gave me a Brain and Brawn to work.

I asked for Courage…

And God gave me Danger to overcome.

I asked for Love…

And God gave me Troubled people to help.

I asked for Favours…

And God gave me Opportunities.

I received nothing **I wanted…** **BUT…**

I received everything **I needed.**

***Part of our prayers and petitions must always be for an…***

***increasing discernment to…*** **See things as God sees them.**

**POINTER 3…**

We need to confess how little we know of…

 **GOD’s WAYS and TIMING**

Our finger-tapping anxiety is simply, and often…

out of sink with the ever-patient mercy of our Eternal GOD.

We need to remember this is God’s Kingdom…

 And God is going to operate **in HIS WAY… IN HIS TIME.**

**AGAIN…**

***Part of our prayers and petitions must always be for an***

***increasing discernment to…*** **See things as God sees them.**

***BUT…*** This truth remains…

***PRAYER IS POWERFUL AND IT WORKS***

**We have…** TESTIMONIES

 SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

 PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

To back up that… ***PRAYER is POWERFUL***

 ***AND it WORKS.***

As we **PRAY** for others and for self, ***MAY WE…***

 See things… ***GOD’s WAY***

 Understand things… ***GOD’s WAY***

 Accept things… ***GOD’s WAY***

**AND…** **MAY WE NEVER, EVER STOP PRAYING**

**Luke 11:1-13 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 honoured;

 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.’”

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Suppose one of you should go to a friend's house at midnight and say, ‘Friend, let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine who is on a trip has just come to my house, and I don't have any food for him!’ And suppose your friend should answer from inside, ‘Don't bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.’ Well, what then? I tell you that even if he will not get up and give you the bread because you are his friend, yet he will get up and give you everything you need because you are not ashamed to keep on asking. And so I say to you: Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For those who ask will receive, and those who seek will find, and the door will be opened to anyone who knocks. Would any of you who are fathers give your son a snake when he asks for fish? Or would you give him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

**1 Thessalonians 5:14-18**

We urge you, our friends, to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but at all times make it your aim to do good to one another and to all people.

Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.