

Overflow: Dependent Prayer

Bethany Assembly of God

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Central Proposition: You can open the curtain to reality through prayer.

Introduction

Today, I want to preach to you about prayer. We're in a series of messages speaking about what we need to hold onto in order to experience renewal. Of course, prayer is crucial for any church that wants to experience renewal and I want to stir you up to a greater hunger for God and passion for prayer. Sometimes life can feel like a performance. It can feel acted, shallow, staged, monotonous, and inevitable. But those who believe in Jesus have been awakened to a new reality. When Jesus rose from the dead, the illusion that we just repeat the same actions over and over again until we die was shattered. When He sent the Holy Spirit, the feeling that we are alone in the universe and that there is no meaning except to be as comfortable and happy as possible was broken. We have a glimpse behind the curtain. See 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 10:19-25. If we desire renewal then we have to be hungry for the presence of God and the ways of God, expressed in prayer. Consider how prayer pulls back the curtain on reality.

1. When we pray, we remove the veil over self. See Galatians 3:27.

When God created Adam and Eve, they were naked and not ashamed. They had an unhindered relationship with one another, but even more importantly, with God. When she and her husband ate, the Bible says that their eyes were opened, but not in the way they thought. They hid from God. They were evicted from the Garden, their fellowship with God was ruined and their relationship with one another broken. This became their reality and the reality for all human beings. However, God made them a promise that a redeemer would come and He provided a covering for them – with the skin of an animal, indicative of the sacrifice necessary to cover sin. That sacrifice was fulfilled through Jesus, whose body became like the veil in the Temple. What was originally designed to keep people out—the veil—was now the way that had been made to enter the presence of God—Christ's flesh. Prayer is the powerful weapon by which we pull back the curtain on ourselves and our souls and we stand before Almighty God as we were meant to: righteous through Jesus alone. It is the means by which we stand in God's presence so that He can change us.

2. When we pray, we pull back the curtain on the world. See 1 John 2:15; Ephesians 6:18.

Satan has lied to people that there is no backstage and nothing more to life than the material things that meet the eye. The activity of prayer itself is a rebellion against the world. It is a fight against the lie that all there is, is what meets the eye. Could it be that the Enemy knows that when the believer simply begins, "Our Father in Heaven," he is reminded that there is a greater reality and is reconnected to that reality? Could it be that the Enemy knows that prayer is the very foundation of the Armor of God that keeps the believer alert and ready to do God's will? Christian, when you find your soul pushing against prayer, that is the exact moment you need it most! When you pray, you acknowledge your dependence on God.

3. When we pray, we open the shutters on God's purposes. See Matthew 6:9-10; Acts 4:23-24; Acts 19:29.

When we are connected to God in this manner, we cannot help but begin to understand His purposes and, when we pray, the Holy Spirit opens the shutters on God's purposes so that we can see what God is up to and how He wants us to join Him. Prayer is crucial for the church's mission, specifically, praying together. We are called together as one body. We are baptized in one Spirit. Together, we are the temple of God and the Bride of Christ.

Conclusion

We should listen to the call of the Holy Spirit to join our brothers and sisters in prayer, especially for renewal. You need it and the church needs it. Make prayer a priority in your life, privately and corporately with the church. This is critical if we want renewal.