

Foundations of Prayer

Locational Continued:

- Last week we discovered that prayer is not only relational but it is also locational. That not only do we pray to someone but that someone is somewhere and that somewhere is heaven.
- Right now Jesus is in heaven, therefore when we pray that is where we are. Jesus told His disciples that after His death, resurrection, and ascension that they would have access to the presence of God without hinderance (John 13:36). The writer of Hebrews also tells us over and over that we can now come before God who is in heaven because of the work of Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:19).
- We also discovered that heaven, although invisible to us now, is a very tangible real place, not an ethereal realm that has no dimension or physicality.
- This revelation wars against our cultural paradigm of heaven but is essential to the foundation of our prayer life although we may not knowingly believe so. We must come under the Word of God and allow it to speak truth to our hearts and minds instead of disregarding it because it doesn't match our current thoughts, views, and beliefs (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Standing Before the Throne:

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." - Hebrews 4:16

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb....crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne'.....therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them." - Revelation 7:9-10, 15

- When we pray not only do we stand in a very real place called heaven, but we stand in a very specific place within heaven itself. Throughout the expanse of heaven the saints are only ever depicted in one place and that is before the throne.
- Many try to make the throne a "positional metaphor" but the Bible gives us detailed description and clarity about what the throne looks like and what happens around it. For this reason we can understand the throne, like heaven, to be a very real thing.

Jesus on the Throne:

- Right now Jesus is sitting on a physical throne that has real shape, form, and dimensions. He has always been enthroned and will forever rule from a real throne.

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." - Revelation 3:21

"Immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne." - Revelation 4:2

"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne.....stood a Lamb as though it had been slain," - Revelation 5:6

"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated....His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels were burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him." - Daniel 7:9-10

"And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around." - Ezekiel 1:26-27

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne...." - Isaiah 6:1

- Whenever we catch a glimpse of heaven there is always a throne at the center of everything. In fact in Revelation 4 and 5 alone John mentions the throne 16 times.
 1. Because the throne is the center of heaven and the activity therein the throne must also become the focal point of our prayer life.
- Daniel saw the Lord sitting on a throne, Ezekiel saw One like a man enthroned, and John saw the Lamb who had been slain sitting on a throne and being worshiped by the angels, elders, and saints of old.
- We serve a Messiah who is also Lord (Acts 2:36).
 2. This understanding was at the core of the early apostle's understanding.
 3. They did not serve a Messiah only but the King and Lord of all who is enthroned above all.
 4. This high and loft view of an enthroned Christ is what produced confidence and boldness in their hearts to preach to the lost in the midst of persecution. It was also their hope for vindication at the end of the age when the One who sits on the throne of David would come back and make all things right.
 - A. Our confidence in God, both in the place of private prayer and public boldness, struggles when we lose sight of the fact that He is the enthroned Lord of all able to do whatever He pleases (Psalms 115:3).

The Place of Dominion:

- Both in the natural world that we know and the spiritual kingdom of heaven the throne is the sign of government and dominion.
- The only one granted to sit on the throne is the one who is the sovereign ruler over the his kingdom.
- His kingdom is everlasting and His dominion is eternal and complete. He lays claim to all things at all times. Simply put He is the sovereign King of the all that has ever been, all that is, and all that will be.

"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all." - Psalms 103:19

"And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords." - Revelation 19:16

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the the glory of God the Father." - Philippians 2:9-11

"....and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." - Ephesians 1:21

- His throne is above every throne, his name above every name, and his authority rules over all. This revelation of the power, majesty, and supreme authority of God on the throne must become central to our prayer life.

5. At the core the main reason we don't pray is we don't believe it works. We believe this for one of two reasons:

B. We believe no one is listening

C. We believe our situation is beyond repair or salvation

- This is where a revelation of the throne comes into play. We have so reduced the power, dominion, and authority of Christ that we believe deep down that He is not able to save.
- As Martin Luther said, "Your thoughts of God are too human."
- The remedy for this unbelief is a return in our hearts and minds to a high view of Christ who sits on the throne.
- Every situation we face is within His power to fix and within His dominion to intervene.

Some verses on the sovereign power of God:

"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?.....All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless." - Isaiah 40:12,17

"The dead tremble, those under the waters and those inhabiting them. Sheol is naked before Him, and Destruction has no covering. He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.....He covers the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness." - Job 26:5-6,9-10

"For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; 'I dwell in the high and holy place...' - Isaiah 57:15

"For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne." - Psalms 47:7-8

Our Confidence:

- We must restore a high and lofty view of Christ and this begins with understanding that we pray, yes to a Man, but this Man is the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords. He is no ordinary Man. He is in fact the sovereign Creator of all and He has been given the throne the rules over the entire universe.
- The rulers of the earth rise and fall at the move of His hand. Their hearts are held in His hand and are turned as easy as water (Proverbs 21:1)
- The leaders, presidents, prime ministers, and kings of the earth may believe that they are calling the shots and making the decisions but the power and authority they wield is not theirs inherently, but it has simply been granted to them.
- When approaching prayer and intercession we approach the throne that is above every other throne. Therefore the fate of the earth and the nations lie not in the hands of parliament or congress but in the voice of the intercessor.
- When we understand that we stand before the highest throne that rules and governs the earth the importance of prayer will become evident to us and will begin to bear down on our hearts. As we see people going to hell all around us we will understand that their hope lies not in a voice representing them in congress but a voice representing them in the courts of heaven before the throne.
- Prayer is the greatest privilege of our Christian life. Because of the blood of Christ we are able to enter the presence of the Holy, stand before Christ enthroned on high, and rule with Him.
- Prayer is both relational and locational and our confidence is this: He is hears and is able to save.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that is cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." - Isaiah 59:1