

# The Foundations of Prayer

## What is Prayer

- Prayer is much more than a religious ritual or discipline. It is the essence of Christianity, like the air you breath. Prayer is simply the place where your heart connects with the heart of God and you converse with God like a friend talks to a friend.
- Prayer is first and foremost relational. It is an ongoing encounter with a person. When we pray we don't speak vain empty words into the air but we speak to a person.
- Prayer is how we relate and connect with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. A Christian that doesn't pray is like a withering branch cut from the vine.

*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.....If anyone does not abide in Me he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." - John 15:1-2,6*

## 2 Dimensions of Prayer: Relational and Locational

*"Our **Father** in **heaven** hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." - Matthew 6:9-10*

### Relational:

- Prayer is a relationship with a man. Try having a relationship with your friend and never talking to them....it doesn't work. Yet this is how we treat God. We come to church twice a week at best and listen to someone else talk about God yet we never encounter Him individually.
- When you pray you are speaking to a real living person who is in a real tangible place, called heaven. Thus we cannot treat prayer like a ritual or discipline primarily.
- We must have the understanding that prayer is not recited bible verses or speaking random things into the air, it is a conversation with a person who listens to us and speaks to our hearts.

## The Incarnation:

*"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh....." - 1 Timothy 3:16*

*"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily..." - Colossians 2:9*

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:1-2,14*

- Jesus was God in the flesh. We cannot glance over this like we know it because the truth is that we will never fully grasp it. Paul called it the the great mystery of godliness. It is the thing that cannot be comprehended. That the God of Genesis 1 took on the form of His creation and lived among us for 33 years.
  - We must take time to think and meditate on this truth because it is a fountain of life and the eternal object of fascination. The fact that God so loved you that He sent His son as a man will forever remain a mystery to our minds and our hearts. (John 3:16).
  - We worship a man, who is God, yet He is man just like you and I. He ate like we do. He slept, laughed, hurt, cried, and lived a human life just as we do. (Hebrews 4:15)
    1. Think about this, God had to learn how to talk. He had to learn how to walk. The God who needs nothing and is dependent on no one was forced to depend on Mary his mother to take care of Him and feed Him. Jesus had siblings and had to learn how to get along with them and relate to them.
  - Even the angels look into this mystery and cannot understand it. (1 Peter 1:12)

## Forever a God-Man:

- Not only did Jesus come in the flesh, He died, rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God as a man. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
- Did you know that right now in heaven there is a human body? And not only is He in heaven He is the center and focus of heaven.

*"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the **center of the throne**, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." - Revelation 5:6*

- When Jesus was raised from the dead He was raised in a glorified human body.

*"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." - Luke 24:30*

- This is the same glorified body that we are promised as our inheritance. It is for this reason that Christ is referred to as the firstborn from the dead (Revelation 1:5), the first fruits of those who will be raised from the dead when He returns (1 Corinthians 15:23), and the heavenly Man (1 Corinthians 15:48).
- Jesus will forever be a human. When He took on the form of man it was an eternal commitment to us. Even when we get to heaven we will relate to Jesus through relational prayer.
  - Did you know that although the Holy Spirit can be anywhere and everywhere all at once that Jesus, the Man, can only be in one place at one time. Even in heaven Jesus is in one place, the throne.
  - Many of us have this idea that when we get to heaven we will all be with Jesus, but Jesus, because He is in a human body, is in a specific physical location, even in heaven.

What does this mean:

- Like previously stated this means that right now Jesus is a human man who has a human body. Therefore we must approach Him in relationship. He is not a theory or fairy tale, but a human being and therefore we must treat Him as such.
- When we let this sink into our hearts it will dramatically change how we pray. No longer will prayer be a discipline that requires us to endure boredom but it becomes a vibrant relationship that allows us to have confidence that we are heard and that we can hear His voice as well.
- The greatest impact this revelation will have on our prayer life is in our confidence in prayer. Jesus was in perfect relationship with His Father therefore He had confidence that His prayers were heard (John 11:42-42). When we understand prayer as a relationship with a person we can have confidence that we are heard.
- This confidence grows even more when we consider that this Man is also God who created all things, is in control of all things, and is upholding all things.

*"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...." - Hebrews 1:1-3*

- We pray to a man, who is God, and a God who is also a man. This is our confidence that we can approach the throne of God with boldness because Jesus, the Man, is our High Priest and He is praying for us.

*"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 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 4:14-16*