

I. Introduction

- A. Matthew 6, Jesus invites us into intimacy with Him by giving us pathways of knowing and experiencing Him more deeply.
 - 1. When you give, pray, and fast (meditate on Scripture)
 - 2. As we take a break from Romans, we want to dive back into one of those pathways of intimacy – prayer.
- B. Struggle with prayer
 - 1. Prayer is both the most accessible and ignored part of our ability to know and experience Jesus.
 - a. Accessible because God is always present and listening
 - b. Ignored because I love to see, hear, and touch the ones I'm talking to
 - c. *Often, our approach is to do and plan and then pray when we've exhausted ourselves.
 - 2. Prayer is primarily transformational, not transactional.
 - a. Asking is a part of prayer and as amazing as that is, it is not where its primary power lies.
 - b. The most powerful impact of prayer is how it deepens our understanding of God and how it changes who we are to become more like Jesus. If that's not what is happening, there's something missing from our prayer life.
 - c. *Over the next six weeks, we are going to look at how Scripture models prayer through the Law, Prophets, Writings, Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation. My prayer for you is that you will, through understanding and then practicing prayer better, grow in intimacy with Jesus and understand better how to live and what to do in your daily life.

II. The Law – snapshots

- A. Abraham
 - 1. *After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, You have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward Heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:1-6)*
 - a. "After these things" God had showed great favor
 - b. "You made a promise, and I don't know that I see it happening," questioning the validity or follow through on God's promise
 - c. God responds and Abraham believes. Not only is God not offended, but He gives assurance and illustration of how overwhelmingly He will keep His promise.

2. So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will You then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do what is just?" And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will You destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." Again he spoke to Him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." And the Lord went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place. (Genesis 18:22-33)
 - a. Genesis 15:1 – the Lord appeared to Abraham
 - b. Genesis 18:22-33 – art of the deal
 - c. *Abraham had conversation that sounded a lot like making a deal with God.

B. Jacob

Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. But You said, "I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." Genesis 32:11-12

Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." (Genesis 32:26-30)

1. Jacob would accurately be described as someone who used all his ability to get his way and take care of himself.
2. Genesis 32:11-12 – consequences from deceptive decisions, but reminding God of His covenant
3. Geneses 32:24-31 – persistent in claiming the blessing of God (did same with his earthly father)
4. "I have seen God face to face and lived," but not without consequence.
Changed name and walked with a limp as a reminder.

C. Moses

“Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.” But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, “O Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people, whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and relent from this disaster against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’” And the Lord relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on His people. (Exodus 32:10-14)

1. God gives 10 commandments, and the people practice idolatry.
2. God, “I will wipe them all out.”
3. Exodus 32:11-13: What did You promise and why? So that Your Kingdom will come and every heavenly and earthly power and kingdom will worship You alone. Every tongue and tribe will know the name of the Messiah King beginning with the gods of Egypt and the kingdom of Egypt

III. Character of prayer in the Law

A. Characteristics

1. Real conversations
2. Candid and bold speech
3. Persistence sometimes pushing the limits
4. Reverent and honoring

B. What does my prayer life look like?

1. Grew up: don't doubt or challenge or question God; some of you've been told not to say that to God in your struggle
2. See in Scripture: God is able to handle my genuine doubts, questions, fear, and even my frustration at what He is or is not doing. God participates in genuine conversation with His people when they struggle with His ways.
3. *Jamie Winship (story in Raw Mission)
4. *Doesn't always happen this way, but God will meet you and I when we relate to Him as if He is right there with us - because He is.

C. Encouragement

1. Whatever you're struggling with, God wants that honest conversation with you. He can handle it and He won't reject you for being honest and candid.
2. Be bold, be persistent, and know that He is God and He is good.