

WHAT IS PRAYER?

TEXT: James 5:16.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES:

- A. Nothing in life is more profound and important than worship to the God of heaven.
- B. Few things are as misunderstood as worship to God.
- C. It will be the purpose of this series of sermons to better help us understand worship, what we call the acts of worship.

- 1. Prayer.
- 2. Preaching or teaching.
- 3. Giving.
- 4. The Lord's Supper.
- 5. Singing.

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Prayer is a profoundly interesting subject.
- B. It is wonderful in all its phases.
- C. Prayer is one of the outstanding duties, privileges and joys of the CHRISTIAN.
 - 1. Heb. 4:16.
 - 2. It is encouraging to know-James 5:16.
 - 3. Prayer is for the righteous man. (Not self-righteous).

BODY: TRYING TO DEFINE PRAYER.

I. WHAT PRAY IS NOT:

A. Not Only an Emergency Device:

- 1. Drowning man said, "Lord, save me, I never bothered you before but now I need your help.

2. Atheists have been known to cry out to God in the time of deep need.

B. Not to Inform God or Scorn Other Men.

1. Luke 18:9-14.
2. Tells God "How Great I am."
3. Tells God "What a worm the other man is."
4. God knows your worth and your neighbors worth.

C. Not to Serve Our Selfish Desires, (A shopping list or wish book).

1. James 4:1-3.
2. Lord I want this and I want that.
3. Do you think God would give a child of His something to help him sin better?
4. Would you give your child something that would help him hurt himself?

D. Prayer is NOT a Substitute for Obedience to the Gospel.

1. Could you see Noah praying to God to save him and his family and then not building the Ark?
2. Later we will look at something we should not expect from prayer alone.
3. Someone once said, "Pray as if everything depended upon God and work as if everything depends upon YOU."

E. Prayer is Not an Ultimatum to God.

1. Ex. 32:32, 33. **"Yet now if You will forgive their sin-but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, "WHOEVER HAS SINNED AGAINST ME, I WILL BLOT HIM OUT OF MY BOOK."**

2. Who are you to threaten God? "If I don't get a raise then I will have to cut my contribution."
3. Prayer is not playing let's make a deal with God.
4. "God you give me a million dollars and I will give a hundred of it to the Church."

F. Prayer is Not meaningless Repetition.

1. Matt. 6:7.

2. This can start with children, please don't teach your children this habit. "Now I lay me down to sleep, . . . I pray the Lord my soul to take."

3. This carries over to adult life.

G. Prayer is Not Something We Do to be Seen of Men.

1. Matt. 6:5.

2. Matt. 23:14.

II. WHAT IS PRAYER?

A. Webster says, "Humble entreaty addressed to God, to a god, etc; a request made to God, etc. Any set formula for praying as to God" (Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition.)

B. 1 Tim. 2:1-3 Speaks of Prayer.

1. Prayers: a general word that could include all the following; beseech, desire, entreat, request, will, longing, seek, wish.

2. SUPPLICATIONS: "Primarily denotes a wanting, a need." (Vine's, p. 882). Earnest entreaty in behalf of self.

3. INTERCESSIONS- "To make a petition or intercede on behalf of another" (Ibid., p. 607).

4. GIVING OF THANKS-expression of gratitude for divine mercy and blessings.

C. Prayer is talking to the Father, in the name of Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit. We will look at this later in another sermon.

III. THINGS WE WILL LOOK AT LATER.

A. Prerequisites to acceptable prayer.

B. Where we should pray.

C. Impediments to effectual prayer.

- D. What a prayerless life shows.
- E. Kinds of prayer, posture for prayer and parts of prayer.
- F. Some things not given directly in answer to prayer alone.
- G. Does God hear a sinners prayer?
- H. The disciples prayer.
- I. What should we pray for?

CONCLUSION:

- A. It is our prayer that you will obey the Gospel today.