

Pastor Jordan Gades, Sermon 5.16.21, John 17

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

Prayer is a powerful thing. More powerful, more meaningful, a deeper and wider thing than we usually think of. All of our Gospel today was Jesus laying out everything before the Father. His hopes, his dreams, his fears. He pours them out to God. Prayer initiates for us this beautiful connection between us and our God. Our God who cares for us, who blesses us, who walks with us on the dark paths of life. Through prayer we are reassured. Through prayer we are strengthened. Through prayer we hear the words of life given by our God. We know how important praying is to our faith, to our relationship with God. So why don't we pray more often?

Ok so by this point your probably thinking, yeah, I should pray more, got it. I didn't really want to just give a sermon about how you should pray more. But, I mean, if you don't get anything else out of this sermon, Pray More. Pray when you rise in the morning, pray in the evening before you go to sleep. Pray when you driving, pray when life going poorly. Pray when life is going well. Pray. Prayer is the mortar which holds all the different bricks of our faith together. If you're not talking to God then having faith in God isn't doing you much good.

Why is prayer so hard? I think we all have our own reasons. I can speak to mine. 1 is that I forget. If I don't set up a time, a routine, it's not going to happen. Like any relationship if we don't mark it as special, as worthy of our time and consideration, then it's not going to grow and flourish. And we are talking about the creator of the universe here people, God is worth the time and effort. Another, is that sometimes I just feel like I'm not doing enough in and with prayer. Sometimes I just feel like calling into the void and hoping for a response. Is that worth my time? No, it's not unless I also am hearing the words like those in Jesus prayer today. Jesus is talking to the Father. Jesus is imploring the Father to be with us as He is with Jesus. We have this promise from our messiah and savior that we are not yelling out to the void. We are speaking with our God, speaking as if from father to son and son to father.

I'm going to share a little story. So, I don't remember all the details around this event, so you'll have to forgive me a little, but there are somethings which are so clear it's like I can still see and feel them right now. So, I this was during seminary, think the endish of my first year? Like late spring? And I don't really remember all the circumstances as to why I was praying while I was driving. Think right around that time was a crush of school work and I had a couple of stressful part time jobs I was trying to manage. So full time student in a master's program also trying to fit in 40+ hours of work a week, and also see friends and family.

Anyway, here's the part that I remember clearly. And not just clearly but its crystal. I'm sitting at the stop light of Como and 218, and I'm feeling stressed and overwhelmed and I start praying. Just put all the pain and sorrow and stress I'm feeling into this short prayer.

God, I don't know what to do. I don't know how to do this anymore. And as I'm praying this the light turns green and I start my turn and something, some feeling runs through my entire body. You ever been something been carrying something really heavy for a while and then you

put it down? It was almost like that only it was internal. It pulsed through me and I felt better, so so much better. Like to this day I don't understand it better, so much better that my eyes start to water and I have to pull to the side of the on ramp of 218 because I'm starting to cry, better.

In that simple prayer, I gave all that stress and pain, and I gave it to God and I know God took that burden. It's not like school was magically easier or I had less work to do but that day became one of peace.

I don't know if something like that has happened to you, please let me know if it has I would love to hear your story. God is here. God hears our prayers. God answers our prayers. God releases us from our burdens and God blesses us.

When Jesus is praying in our gospel, he is laying down his burdens. He is laying on God the Father the future of all the disciples and all the faithful. Jesus is about to get up go to the garden and be arrested and then killed on a cross. In this prayer he gives the care and blessing of all these people over into the Father's sure and skillful care. And then he goes and does what he must for the redemption of the world.

That's is how far our God goes for us. That is the power we ask and implore every time we pray. And we tap into the relationship not only for ourselves but for the sake of others. When we pray for others, when we say to others I'll be praying for you, what we are they should be understanding is that the God of all the cosmos is going to be hearing about this. You and your issues have an advocate in me and the Holy Spirit. You have someone fighting for you and what you need and how you are doing. Pleading your case before the Almighty, the Alpha and Omega. That is something incredible. That is power and Comfort.

And to close I'll give you this one last piece of info. You are being prayed for. Your friends your family, your church, we are praying for you. If you lack the strength or the faith, you are being held in our prayers always. Every week the staff of this church prays for 10 families. It took us a year but you were all prayed for by name by the people here. And most importantly, you were prayed for by Jesus Christ our savior and messiah. Its time to lean into this power and comfort that we know in our God in prayer. Let us Pray.

Lord be with as we come and as we go. Watch over us and keep us safe. Give us strength and give us your peace. Amen.