

Bouncing Prayers and the Cry of the Soul

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in our lives, teaching us to pray to our Father, seeking His kingdom, His will, and His glory.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9, Luke 18:9, John 15:7, James 4:7, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Gods Will"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the power and importance of prayer, using the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector to illustrate the significance of humility and sincerity in our prayers. He emphasizes the need to understand who we are praying to, align our prayers with God's will, and trust in His provision for our daily needs. Bieber highlights the necessity of seeking forgiveness and extending forgiveness to others, as well as relying on God's strength to overcome temptation and evil. He concludes by emphasizing the glory and eternal power of God in all our prayers.

Transcript

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.'

But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18

Two men went up into the Temple to pray. Both men addressed their prayers to God.

The prayers of the first man bounced back and accomplished nothing.

The prayers of the other man got through.

Every minute of the day, prayers are rising from earth.

Some are official prayers, uttered at official ceremonies.

Some are "strategic prayers," aimed at warding off bad luck.

Some are in-turned prayers, aimed at calming the soul.

Some are prayers of desperation.

Some are prayers of thanks.

In our own lives prayer is sometimes a burning cry, sometimes a half-heated bleat. Often, even while we pray, a voice within us says, "Do you really believe that God is listening? How do you know you're not wasting your time?"

Yet the Lord Jesus tells us that we should keep at it and not lose heart. He insists that if we ask our Father for bread we will not get a stone.

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."

John 15

Why is it that so often our prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling and return to us empty? So often we pray with words that drop to the earth like stones.

How can we find our way to the place where heaven opens, and our prayers rise like incense? How can we be sure that our prayers have been received into glory---heard, and answered?

"Lord, teach us to pray," cried the disciples.

In answer, the Master gave them all the basics in a few words.

Know who you're praying to.

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

We're not talking to ourselves. We're not complaining to our Buddy. We're not crying out to the thin air. We're opening our soul to our Father, whose name is HOLY.

It helps to take time at the beginning of our prayers to remember who is listening.

He is my Father, as if I were his only child.

He is wrapped in blinding light. Unspeakable power emanates from his throne.

Yet he is as close as my breath.

Fit your prayer into the Big Picture.

"Thy kingdom come"

Instead of trying to make God fit into my program (which is always twisted), I need to yield myself to fit into God's program (which is always clear).

It's called the Kingdom of God, where things are as they should be, where evil is banished.

Every time we pray Thy kingdom come in faith, the life of the kingdom visits us as a foretaste of the coming Glory.

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God's will --- his good, holy, redemptive will --- is not being done on earth at present.

But it will be.

As we pray these words ---Thy will be done..... the day of glory on earth is hastened.

The answer to this prayer is more important than all our aches and pains and worries and fears.

Pray your daily life into the Big Picture.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

I'm looking to my Father to supply my needs for this day.

Food, shelter, clothing, money, strength to live.

I acknowledge that I am not the supplier: God is.

I focus on this day, leaving tomorrow in God's hands.

Enter the realm of Holy Mercy by letting it rule your heart.

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The greatest need of our life is God's forgiveness. This is a constant. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves."

But this healing, redeeming, life-giving forgiveness only becomes ours when we yield our hearts to the Spirit of Forgiveness.

Even if we have to pray, "Lord, I'm willing to be made willing by your grace. Help me to give up my bitterness, and forgive as you forgive."

Call down God's strength from heaven.

"And lead us not into temptation."

"Save us from the time of trial."

"Be with us as we resist the powers of darkness."

"Keep us focused."

Confess the need of God's sustaining power.

"But deliver us from evil."

We admit that the evil around us and in us is more than we can handle.

We cry out to God to hold us as we move through the darkness and buck the evil winds.

Pity help us, if we forget where we are, and ignore the reality of evil as a living, intelligent reality!

Wrap this prayer, and all prayer in the confession of the Father's glory.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

The doorway to a walk with God is a life of prayer.

The Lord Jesus opened the way for us, and now teaches us through his Spirit how to pray.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus shows us how it's done.

If we truly want to learn, he will teach us.

His School of prayer will continue for the rest of our days on earth.

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