

PRAYER THAT WORKS

Effective prayer follows the patterns of the Word of God.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Many are convinced that we are living in the “last days” just preceding the coming of the Lord. Surely, they say, this *must* be the time! Just look at the world we’re living in. Things can’t possibly get any worse.
- ❖ We need to understand that our day is really no different than any other day. From the day Jesus ascended back to Heaven, people have been expecting His return in their time. Today’s message intends to answer the question: “How then should we pray in such a time as this?”
- ❖ In Matthew 24, we read that as Jesus left the Temple one day, His disciples took Him on a little tour of the surrounding buildings on the Temple Mount. Jesus at the time said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2).
- ❖ The Temple had initially been built by Solomon (completed approximately 957BC), destroyed by the Babylonians and rebuilt by Zerubbabel (completed approx. 515BC), then again renovated, upgraded, and expanded by Herod the Great (completed approx. 26AD, during Jesus’ time). So, as you can imagine, the disciples were stunned to hear Jesus say that this freshly rebuilt Temple would again be destroyed (which took place in 70AD).
- ❖ Reading what Jesus said reminds of us another Temple experience, back to the time when the original Temple was being dedicated.
- ❖ In 2 Chronicles 6, Solomon knelt before the altar, stretched his hands toward heaven and began to pray. Starting at verse 14, he began to express the greatness and majesty of God and how impossible it was for all of creation, much less human structures, to contain Him (vv. 14-21).
- ❖ The average person in Israel had no access whatsoever to the presence of God (as represented by the Ark of the Covenant inside the Holy of Holies at the back of the Temple). So, all Solomon could ask is that God would hear his prayers and those of the people whenever they would turn to face the Temple and bring their needs before Him.
- ❖ There were a lot of crucial requests he made for people who could do no better than to just look toward the Temple as they prayed (see vv. 22-33, 36-39).
- ❖ After hearing Solomon’s prayer, God showed up in a big way and sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices on the altar. The cloud of His glory filled the Temple, and the people were awestruck. Then God came to Solomon in a night vision for one of those unforgettable face-to-face meetings as He gave His response in 2 Chronicles 7 (see verses 12-16).
- ❖ Note that the negative situations and troubles like drought and pestilence spoken of in verse 13 were not optional. The Lord said, “*when* I shut up heaven,” not *if*.
- ❖ The pandemic situations we face today are of a similar nature. But then God gave Solomon the outcome people could expect IF they would act as they should. He said (v. 14):

KEY SCRIPTURES: Psalm 46:1; Matthew 24:1-14; 2 Chronicles 7:12-16; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 11, 19-20

- IF My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, THEN I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
- ❖ This is a very pertinent instruction to help us pray PRAYERS THAT WORK. It is pointless to ask God to forego what He prophesied He is going to do. God’s word *must* come to pass, but He’s been good enough to show us how to respond in times like these.
- ❖ But God has something even more incredible for us to understand and experience!
- ❖ He appeared to Solomon and said, “I have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice” (v. 16), and as stated earlier, the Spirit of God dwelt in the Temple, represented by the Ark of the Covenant. But what a day it was when Jesus Christ came into the world as the Son of the virgin Mary—God manifested in flesh.
- ❖ People weren’t just praying in the direction of a building. They were now able to bring their petitions directly to the Almighty God, Jesus the Messiah.
- ❖ Now, every child of God can pray as Jesus prayed—fully aligned with the Word of God and the Spirit of God, as our bodies have become temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:19-20; see also vv. 16-17).
- ❖ So, how would we describe prayer that works in the 21st century AD? It looks and sounds a lot like effective prayers in the 10th century BC, or 1st century AD.
 - We pray in the Spirit (Jude 20; Ephesians 6:18).
 - We pray with fervency (James 5:16).
 - We pray persistently (Eph. 6:18).
 - We pray consistently (1 Thessalonians. 5:17).
 - We pray with humility (2 Chron. 7:14).
 - We pray with repentance (2 Chron. 6:26-27).
 - We pray according to the will of God (Romans 8:27; 1 John 5:14-15).
 - We pray for His will to be done (Matt. 6:10, 26:39).
- ❖ This is PRAYER THAT WORKS.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. It’s time to pray. Using Solomon’s prayer of dedication in 1 Chronicles 6 as guidance:
 - Appeal for God’s justice to be displayed (vv. 22-23);
 - Ask for forgiveness of sins and deliverance (vv. 24-25, 36-39);
 - Ask for restoration upon repentance of sin (vv. 26-27);
 - Request God’s deliverance from food insecurity, disease, enemies, etc. (vv. 28-31);
 - Request answers for the prayers of the unsaved who would put their trust in God (v. 32-33).

PRAYER TIME

Lord, humbly I come before You, seeking Your face and asking You to please forgive my sins.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2021

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🤔 (Think about)

! (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE
WORD

Start-up: Do you have a sure-fire method for a particular task? What is that method and how did you discover it in the first place?