

In Jesus' Name, Amen

"A House of Prayer"

(Matthew 21:12-17)

- Introduction:
1. I think we need to study the topic of prayer.
 2. In my judgment, there are at least three reasons to do this.
 - a. Jesus was concerned about his people praying (Matthew 21:13).
 - b. Prayer is neglected.
 - c. Prayer is not innate, but must be learned (Luke 11:1).
 3. Although two thousand years have passed since Jesus observed these people and their worship, he's still watching today.
 4. He hears our prayers and devotions today, and I wonder if he is irritated and disappointed with us today.
 5. Today, the temple of God is the church (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:5).

I. Introduction to the Class

- A. Our schedule of topics will be as follows...
 1. A House of Prayer.
 2. For What Should We Pray?
 3. The Lord's Prayer (1).
 4. The Lord's Prayer (2).
 5. The "Real" Lord's Prayer.
 6. How God Answers Prayers.
 7. What About Unanswered Prayers?
 8. Things for Which Early Christians Prayed.
 9. Six Prayers Never Prayed.
 10. Balaam's Strange Prayer.
 11. When to Stop Praying.
 12. Prayer, Providence, and Angels.
- B. In addition to these topics, we'll address many of your questions.

II. Observations About Prayer

- A. Prayer is not innate, it must be learned.
 1. (Luke 11:1).
 2. Both John and Jesus taught their disciples how to pray.
 3. (Matthew 6:5-13).
 4. What Jesus offers in Matthew 6 is not a prescribed prayer to be memorized, but contains the elements that should be incorporated in our prayers.
- B. Prayer has been neglected.
 1. Jesus said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but are we?
 - a. Individually?
 - b. Corporately?
 2. Does the church focus on prayer today?
 - a. Do you know that Wednesday night services used to be called "Prayer Meetings?"
 - 1) We've all heard of song services and have frequently participated in them, but when's the last time you attended a prayer service? ... "My house shall be called a

- house of prayer.”
- 2) We’ve all attended lectureship programs to hear preaching all day long, but when’s the last time you joined with people to spend the day in prayer? ... “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”
 - 3) If we were to call a special prayer meeting, how many would show up? They’ll drop \$50 on a UT game or a trip to Dollywood or their favorite restaurant. But Jesus doesn’t draw today. ... “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”
- b. Our focus is almost exclusively on the sermon in today’s church.
- 1) God’s word doesn’t say, “Let us therefore come boldly to the preacher...”
 - 2) What it does say is, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in a time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).
- c. The disciples continued steadfast in prayer (Acts 2:42).
- 1) Do you think they were watching a clock, worried about the time?
 - a) As a preacher, I can tell you from experience that there are many Christian who “watch the clock.”
 - b) One of the casualties of Covid has been, and will continue to be our worship services.
 - 2) We betray who we truly worship when we attempt to manage our worship time.
 - a) Have you ever heard anyone say, “We can get that out of the way so we can have the rest of the day to ourselves?”
 - b) Some are more sophisticated, “We’re canceling services so you can spend time with your family.”
 - c) Ills. Of church that started a 5 a.m. worship service so they could attend Titans’ games.
 - 3) “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”
- d. Prayer demonstrates one’s maturity and genuineness of faith.
- 1) (Acts 9:10-11).
 - 2) Behold he is praying.
- e. The priority of prayer can’t be lost.
- 1) (1 Timothy 2:1,8).
 - 2) “First of all...”
 - 3) “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”
- f. The imagery of what our prayers mean to God.
- 1) (Revelation 5:8).
 - 2) They are a sweet, pleasing, smell to God.

- Conclusion:
1. We need to restore the place of prayer in the life of the individual Christian and the corporate church.
 2. Prayer is not a last resort.
 - a. When all else fails...
 - b. It’s the least I can do...