

Pt. 5 The Price of Pentecost – Prayer & Supplication

Acts 1:12-14

Review...

Four Prices to Pay...

- A. Obedience
- B. Unity
- C. Prayer
- D. Leadership

A. *Price of Obedience*

Three basic areas to start:

Attendance

Tithing

Ministry

B. The Price of UnityACTS

Are You a...

Peacemaker...not a Troublemaker!

Question

How can we practically apply these things?

1. Learn to control your speaking.
2. Learn to control your thinking.

Read...Acts 1:12-14

It takes a lot of prayer to have a powerful church! People willing to pay the price of intensive, genuine, heart-agonizing prayer. Nothing of eternal importance is accomplished apart from prayer!

INTRO. - ILL.- Shortly after the US Supreme Court outlawed prayer in public schools, a pupil in class heard her teacher sneeze and said, "God bless you." The teacher said, "Cut that out or we'll both be in trouble."

ILL.- One person said, "Now that there's no more praying in schools, kids will have to go to motels to read the Bible. And if this keeps up, the Gideons will have to go underground."

ILL.- Comedian Bob Hope said in 1970 at Miami University, "It was a little easier to get through school in my day. The questions were just as hard, but praying was still legal."

Thank God that praying is at least still legal in our churches! What's so important about prayer? Prayer means nothing to some people because they don't believe in the Lord, but it should mean a great deal to the Christian!

What is Prayer?

Jonathan Edwards said, "Prayer is as natural an expression of faith as breathing is of life." Prayer is or should be a normal part of daily living for the Christian just like breathing is.

Corrie Ten Boom wrote: "Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" In other words, why do you pray? Do you pray for the Lord to direct you in life or just to help you whenever you get into trouble?

What Prayer Is Not

- ***Prayer is not magic.*** We cannot summon God as though He were a genie, waiting to grant our wishes without regard for our circumstances or the consequences.
- ***Prayer does not make demands.*** While we can make requests of God in prayer, we dare not make demands. God is the Creator of the universe and does not take orders from us.
- ***Prayer is for our benefit, not God's.*** We need a relationship with God, available to us through Jesus Christ and engaged primarily through prayer, because we were made to function best when we are in a proper relationship with our Creator.
- ***Prayer is not a guarantee against suffering.*** "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33); "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:12-13).
- ***Prayer is not an opportunity for us to show off.*** "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men" (Matthew 6:5).

1. Definitions

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a relationship, wherein we humbly communicate, worship, and sincerely seek God's face, knowing that He hears us, loves us and will respond, though not always in a manner we may expect or desire. Prayer can encompass confession, praise, adoration, supplication, intercession and more.

What is Supplication?

The Hebrew and Greek words most often translated "supplication" in the Bible mean literally "a request or petition," so a prayer of supplication is asking God for something. Unlike the prayer of petition, which is praying on behalf of others, the prayer of supplication is generally a request for the person praying.

The early church is our example:

Ch. 1:14prayed for guidance
2:41-42...prayed daily
3:1.....went to the temple at the hour of prayer
4:29.....prayed for courage
6:4.....Prayed continually
7:59-60....Stephen prayed as he was being stoned!
8:14-15....Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans
9:11.....Saul of Tarsus prayed for 3 straight days after being saved
36-40...and Peter prayed before raising a woman from the dead
10:9-15.....Peter prayed on the housetop, and God told him of Cornelius,
opening the door to the Gentiles!
12:5-10.....believers prayed for Peter in prison and he was miraculously rescued! [Rhoda]
13:1-3.....church of Antioch fasted and prayed prior to sending out Paul and Barnabas
16:13-15.....at a prayer mtg. God opened Lydia's heart to the gospel
22-32...also prison doors were opened...Paul and Silas this time! Jailer saved
20:32-36....Paul prayed for his friends before leaving them
27:30-36....Paul prayed for God's blessings in the midst of a storm
28:7-9.....Paul prayed for God to heal a sick man...

...and these are just the recorded instances of prayer in the early church [the world couldn't contain the books!]

Clearly, from ch. 1 thru 28, it's obvious that things happen when God's people pray! The prayers began in ch. 1 and the blessings began falling in ch. 2!

2. "Musts" for the Christian when it comes to prayer.

A. WE MUST FIND GOD'S PLACE

Turn to Acts 16:13

Acts 16:13...On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer.

ILL.- One of his neighbors, the mother of a ten-year-old girl, noticed that the child often visited Albert Einstein's house. The woman wondered at this, and the child explained: "I had trouble with my homework in arithmetic. People said that at No. 112 there lives a very big mathematician, who is also a very good man. I asked him to help me. He was very willing, and explained everything very well. He said I should come whenever I find a problem too difficult."

Alarmed at the child's boldness, the girl's mother went to Einstein to apologize. Einstein said, "You don't have to excuse yourself. I have learned more from the conversations with the child than she has from me."

I am glad that Einstein learned something from that child.

We all can learn something from children, but here's the point.

We all are children in a sense and we all need an expert mathematician.

- **WE ALL NEED AN EXPERT IN LIFE!**
- **And where do we find that expert?**
- **HE IS GOD, OUR FATHER AND CREATOR!**
- **And we need to find a place where we can talk to Him and receive counsel and comfort from Him.**

Psalm 46:1 " God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

- How can God be our refuge, our ever-present help in life if we don't meet with Him?
- If we don't find time and a place to talk to Him?

Psalm 121:1-3 "I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber." God's light does not go out at night!

Hebrews 4:14-16 "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

There it is! The throne of grace. That's our special place in life.

Have you been in the throne room today?

- You can enter God's throne room in your car, at home, in your office, while walking into Walmart, practically any place you can think of!
- This is why it says in I Thess. 5:17 "pray without ceasing."

Every human person needs a special place, perhaps a hiding place where they can find comfort, peace, security, etc. God is our hiding place. He is our peace and security.

Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Jesus found His place of security and probably every morning. He had to talk to His Father. He was in the flesh and was tempted just like you and me, consequently, He needed time with His Father. He needed comfort, love, and grace for living in this sin-cursed world. If He needed this special time and place, what about us?

B. WE MUST LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

Read Acts 16:13-14

1. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia. Listening is a good thing to do.

ILL.- The minister's sermon concerned the relationship between fact and faith. "That you are sitting before me in this church," he said, "is fact. That I am standing, speaking from this pulpit, is fact. But it is only faith that makes me believe anyone is listening."
ARE YOU LISTENING?

2. You may or may not listen to what I have to say in a sermon but the important thing is that you are listening to God in His Word. I may accidentally steer you wrong but God's Word never will!

ILL.- Before the beginning of an athletic event, awaited by thousands of fans, a little dog strayed from his master onto the field. From the grandstand on one side of the field, one whistled. Presently, many were whistling to the dog from all sides of the field. In the middle of the field, the little dog, filled with confusion and fright, crouched to the ground. Then, a boy at the end of the field put two fingers into his mouth and whistled shrilly and loudly.

The little dog, recognizing his master's call amidst the others leaped to his feet. With ears erect, the dog ran swiftly to its master.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we responded to our Master's word that well in a world that is constantly calling to us?

James 1:19-25 "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does."

C. WE MUST RESPOND TO GOD'S WILL

Read Acts 16:13-15

ILL.- One time a little girl was asked if she always came when her mother called her. She said, "Yes, but sometimes I go so far away that I can't hear her call."

Are we that way with God?

Do we hear Him and respond to Him when He calls to us?

Or do we ignore His call?

Dr. J. R. Miller wrote: "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it."

Sometimes when we hear God's message, we may think, "Wow! I'm not sure I can do that." Or maybe, "I don't think I want to do that." God's will may appear to be quite tough or hard, however, disobedience could be a lot tougher.

Lydia responded to God's message about being baptized. Some people need to respond to this same message. Others need to respond to other messages from God.

ILL.- In the book "A Window on the Mountain," Winston Pierce tells of his high school class reunion. A group of the old classmates were reminiscing about things and persons they were grateful for. One man mentioned that he was particularly thankful for Mrs. Wendt, for she more than anyone had introduced him to Tennyson and the beauty of poetry.

Acting on a suggestion, the man wrote a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Wendt and addressed it to the high school. The note was forwarded and eventually found the old teacher. About a month later the man received a response.

It was written in a feeble longhand and read as follows: "My dear Willie, I can't tell you how much your letter meant to me. I am now in my nineties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and like the last leaf of fall lingering behind. You will be interested to know that I taught school for forty years and yours is the first letter of appreciation I ever received. It came on a blue, cold morning and it cheered me as nothing has for years. Willie, you have made my day."

Brothers and sisters, don't you want to make God's day? The way to do this is to respond to His Word. Of course, we not only want to make God's day but we will also make our own day!

GOD BLESSES THOSE WHO RESPOND TO HIM IN SURRENDER AND OBEDIENCE!

What is God's message for you?

What is it that He wants you to do?

It would be good to pray about whatever it is you think He wants you to do.

ILL.- Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane...prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." And what did Jesus do? He apparently made up His mind while in prayer and submitted to the will of His Father. He was willing to bear the cup of suffering on the cross.

Perhaps we need to pray similar to Jesus, "Father, what is it you want me to do? No matter what, help me to do your will."

3. Areas where prayer is needed:

1. Your ministers

Whole other message on that, on the need to pray for us:

Holding up our arms like Aaron and Hur did for Moses...as long as you are behind your leader, lifting him up, the battle will be won!

2. This ministry

You can tell, I'm all for modern methods of reaching people, and as money allows there's many proven ways we can try to go forward....and yet, nothing, no programs, no advertisement, no music, no gimmicks, no organization, no location, no alliterated outline will substitute for the Pentecostal power that falls from above—only thru prayer!

There is a difference between man-made excitement and Holy Ghost endowment!

I love to read after the old-fashioned revivalists,

- because they were there, they saw it happen w/ their own eyes...
- they all can impart great truths we can gain from. How to have a church on fire!
- I've had a taste of that,
- I've been in a place that had it in some degree, but perhaps not the full-meal

Praying in a bean field

Carol Morrison
24 hr. prayer ministry
17 weeks of 15-20 people saved each Sunday
750 saved /Power Team
See a Tower /Pray for power

I look & think of some great men of yesteryear and their writings about how it happened:

John R. Rice, Hyman Appleman, R.A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, Billy Sunday, Oliver B. Greene, D.L. Moody, J. Vernon McGee, W.A. Criswell, G.W. Truett, Billy Graham and others...

- 1 common denominator that they ALL bring out is...prayer!
- They all say that if you're not willing to pay the price in prayer, don't expect the power to come!

John R. Rice tells of when he was 20, new pastor, called to do a revival in a country church outside of Decatur, TX)

- He was part of a 2 man ministry team w/ a Bro. Ross [preaching]/Rice was leading the singing/
- found out they hadn't had a single person saved in 2 yrs./dead!/
- they were actually warned not to expect too much/but they were young, zealous, enthusiastic, believed in prayer/
- sang and preached on Sunday...nothing happened
- Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/...nothing happened
- on Saturday morning they met and talked about the week, and what was wrong, committed to make Sunday a day of fasting and prayer/
- Saturday night told the church we're gonna have a full day at church, come early to pray before s.s., and let's stay all afternoon and fast, have a 3 pm service, then pray until evening service at 7,
- let's tell God we're not letting go until He blesses us!/.they did it, the church got excited and believed God could do it/
- all morning, nothing happened/stayed all afternoon fasting and praying/3 pm service...nothing happened/end of service took testimonies and prayer requests/elderly lady said her request is for someone to get saved/
- Rice went to Bro. Ross and said, let's believe God for 10 souls in the final service!/do you believe it will happen?/Rice: I want it to happen/but do you believe it will?/ok, yes, I do!/.they and the church continued fasting and praying until 7, no one wanted to leave the building, or their knees, they didn't talk and fellowship, they prayed earnestly./...looked up at 7 and the building that was only half full before was now packed!/they had to put people in the choir loft/windows looked like picture frames as people tried to peer in from outside!/Bro. Rice led the singing, Bro. Ross gave a simple gospel message, gave invitation...said the first man came fwd. to be saved from the choir loft, a known bootlegger!/many others flooded the altars repenting of sin and praying for God to move!/another man in the choir loft was under such deep

conviction that he didn't use the aisles but just stepped in front of him on empty seats to get to the altar/they continued counseling w/ people, leading them to Christ, one after another, until 11 pm that invitation continued, and no one went home/everyone could feel the Lord's presence, and most everyone was at the altar sometime in there, many several times!/. . .Bro. Rice recounted that at 11 they were done counseling, there was nothing left to do, but no one wanted to go home, they all wanted to know the count!/they had believed God for 10 souls, not much more than 100 could even fit in the building. . .but they anxiously lined them up across the front, how many were there?/there were 23!/Why?

Why? Because some people decided--we don't need more programs, activities, we just need to pay the price of prayer, get a hold of God, and beg down His blessings!

It's the most important of the 4 prices of Pentecost we've been looking at.