

*(Could divide into 2 parts)*

Title: What is Prayer

Text: I Tim 2: 1-8

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to I Timothy chapter 2. I would like to spend the next few weeks looking at the subject of PRAYER. And today I just want to ask the question: WHAT IS PRAYER?

I Timothy chapter 2 verses 1-8 (Read)

(PRAY)

There was a preacher in the fourth century A.D. who was called Golden Mouth. His name was Chris-soff-stin. And he was one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. His translation of the N.T. is beautiful to read. A man with a tremendous vocabulary. He could put words together in wonderful ways in order to draw men to God. He was one of the greatest preachers of all of church history. And had a tremendous impact on people of his time. Let me quote from his writings on prayer.

"The potency of prayer has subdued the strength of fire. It has bridled the rage of lions, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, stopped sickness, repealed floods, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, arrested the progress of the thunder bolts. Prayer is an all sufficient treasure, undiminished, a mind which is never exhausted, a sky without clouds, a heaven without storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings."

Isn't that beautifully put? I could sum it all up by saying that prayer is fantastic...It is tremendous.

U) I just want to share two things today with you about prayer. Prayer is the privilege and the responsibility of every believer in Jesus Christ. I think when you first become a christian there is this sudden realization that someone in some meeting is going to call upon you to pray. AMEN

And if you are not skilled in it, or, in your first prayer experience you ended up with Mrs Prayer warrior of the year, who started out: "OH, GREAT DESIGNER AND CREATOR OF THE UNIVERY." And that left you out.

A lot of people are scared to death to pray out loud. They don't know where to start. They don't know how to begin.

I remember a man who once came to Christ. He was a lawyer. He was skilled in the use of the Kings tongue. But he had no concept of how to pray. So, he had to learn. I said to him, "The first thing we ought to do is get down on our kness."

He said .."WHY?" We need to be humble before God. We should learn this.

He said, "Well, how do you start?" I said, "Well, I think you can start with the word 'Lord.'" And so he looked me start in the eyes and said, "LORD!"

I then said that sometimes we close our eyes. He said, "WHY?" Well, so that we will not think of other things.

And this guy was the kind of guy who ask me everything...Let's bow the head: WHY?...Do you understand? Why do you say what you are saying? You know, it was funny talking to him, about prayer. And literally I guided him through that first prayer.

Hay! It is not easy to pray. Anybody told you that probably doesn't pray much. I guess it is easy to say words that you might have pickked up from someone, but it is not easy to pray.

But, I want everyone of us to understand. No matter how long you have kown the Lord. Whether you are a new Christian or a christian by many, many years. PRAYER IS A PRIVELAGE AND A RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY BELIEVAER. And there is something among us , I don't know where it comes from, unless it is from the enemy, that tells us that prayer is a heavey trip. That it is a big hassle. It is really a difficult discipline. There are aspects to it. And I want to share with you what makes it difficult. But, I believe we need to start with the fact that it is a wonderful priavilage and responsibility of every believer.

And I just want to share three things with you about that.

(1 ) Number one, we have direct <sup>access</sup> ~~accuses~~ to God through the work of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Take your Bibles and turn to Ephesains chapter 2 verse 18.

It is a message that we can never hear enough. We have direct access to God through the work of Jesus Christ. You don't have to go through anybody else. You can talk to God yourself.

Ephesians 2:18 ..."for through Him we both(that is Jew and Gentile) have access in one Spirit to the Father."

And if you look back at Vs 16 Paul says "and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross." It is through the cross of Jesus Christ that we now have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Turn to Hebrews chapter 10, please. Hebrews chapter 10 and look at verses 19 to 22. We have direct access to God through the work of Jesus Christ. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19.....(Read Vs 19-22)

Since He has cleansed us , we have access, Let us draw near. It is an invitation to all of us to draw near.

You know, I loved it when God speaks about access and he uses the phrase "draw near." It could have said, "Hay! come any time you want." He could have said, "Well, you can come but please stand at the door." He could have said, "come, but please remember that there is a great gulf between us." "So don't get too close.

God never said any of that. He said, "draw near." In James chapter 4 we read.."draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Isn't that great. What a wonderful thing to know that prayer not only gives us access to God, but gives us the ability to sense the closeness of God. A lot of us felt that God is a long ways away. He is not personal and real with us. Even though we believe in Him.

Wouldn't you like to have a warm personal relationship with God? You know the kind of relationship that you might have with a best friend. One who is with you all the time. You just continue to talk with him. DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU. What a wonderful promise found in James 4:8.

(2 ) The second thing that I would like to draw to your attention is that we not only have direct access to God through the work of Jesus Christ, but we are invited by the Lord to pray. This really blesses me. It is a simple point, but turn to Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. We are invited by our Lord to pray to him. You say that you love Jesus. Well then talk to him. Many people says "Well, I really don't know what to say to God. You can understand that. But, listen, our Lord invites us to talk with Him. He wants us to pray.

Luke 11 verse 9....(Read Vs 9-213)

Jesus said to "ask and it will be given to you." How simple can it be. He has invited us to pray.

Turn to Hebrws chapter 4 and look at Vs 16..Hebrews 4:16..You know, we get ourselves in big trouble all the time. We get ourselves into so many difficulties. And we forget that God has invited us to pray. To call upon him. Hebrews 4:16 says .."Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace( that we may receive mercy (God holding back from you what you deserve) and may find grace (God giving you what you do not deserve) grace to help in time of need."

Now, if I read that correctly..when ever I have a need, I am invited to talk to the Lord about it. Now, that is pretty exciting, isn't it? I like to put it this way.."God never gets tired of me saying help."

Have you ever thought about that? Well, I ask Him for a couple of things last night. I probable shouldn't burden Him with it. After all there are probable a lot of others who really need to talk with him."

Listen, he is the eternal God. His understanding is without limits. He says "talk to me. Ask me."

An old time evangelist, who wrote many, many books on pray, was ask to sum up all that he had written on prayer in a simple sentence. He said.."ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE." And you know he is right. Most christians do not have because they do not ask. That is what James said.."You have not because you ask not."

And then when we do ask, James says that we often ask for selfish reasons instead of the glory of God. Hay! God isn't trying to keep things from us. God wants to give us "good gifts." That is what Jesus said in Luke 11. God wants to bless us, as I like to say, more than we want to be blessed. God want to use you more than you want to be used. God says, "ask me and watch."

And a lot of us us are hurting because we have never ask. Are you troubled Ask him for peace. Are you lacking in love for some body? Ask him. "Fell my heart, Lord, with love for that person."

Are you having trouble with bitterness? Ask God to take it away. Are you depressed? Ask God to give you joy. Jesus said, "ASK and you shall receive that your joy may be full(John 16:24)

Listen, folks, the Lord invites us to pray. Ask Him, and the Bible syas, it will be given to you. He is not going to give you something that you don't want or need. God is always going to give you exactly what you need. And sometimes we don't like what He gives. And later we discover it is just what we needed. The Lord is so good. He knows exactly what he is doing.

(3 ) The third thing about this wonderful responsibility and privilage of prayer is that we are commanded in the Bible to pray at all times. What a simple point. Yet, it is something that we continue to ignore. I want to ask you sereous christian, without any verbal response, but just think about it: DO YOU IN FACT PRAY CONTINUELLY ABOUT ALL MATERS IN YOU LIFE?

Turn to Luke cahapter 18, please, I would like you to see something. Luke chapter 18 and verse 1. We are commanded to pray at all times. Prayer is not only a great privilage. It is also a great responsibility. And God invites us to come. Why we do not come is an amazing thing when you think about it. Especially when God tells us what he is going to do. Man! we ought to come to him all the time.

Luke 18:1 says."Now he was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."

Write it down. Number one reason why you and I stop praying. It is because we lose heart or, we get discouraged. Number one reason.

Now, here is some information about that...

(1 ) One, you get discouraged when God answers your pray in a way that you did not want. ..AMEN...Hay! I have been praying for two years and it hasn't happened yet. I mean, what is the use of praying?"

I prayed for 6 years that so and so would get saved. And it hasn't happened yet. So, what good is prayer?

Jesus said that you ought always to pray and not to lose heart

(2 ) Secondly, we get discouraged often by the fact that circumstances around us are contrary to what we have been praying. Have you noticed that?

Oh, lord, fill my heart with patience. And all of a sudden, all hell breaks out. Well, if you read the Bible correctly, God is answering your prayer. Whether you know it or not. It is interesting. A lot of us do not understand how God works. And He literally does answer prayer, constantly, in our life. But, it is not exactly the way we want it. Thus, we have the tendency to get discouraged.

(3 ) Also, I have discovered that I get discouraged because it sounds too easy. What an interesting point. For example, if you came up to me after the service and said "Boy, I have a terrible problem." And I responded to you.. "Well, let's have a word of prayer."

I have had people, actually, get mad when I have done that. "Oh, what are you going to do? Say a little prayer and everything will go away?"

It is as though I had some magic in a little bag or some hidden counsel to solve all their problems.

Wait a minute. You mean that it is more important to talk to someone else than it is to talk to the Lord? about your problem?

A little insight about counseling. There is a physical gift of counsel. We all need counsel. But I believe, and please forgive me. If you don't agree just keep it to yourself..O.K.?.. But, I believe, one of the things that we have done in this generation is to substitute counseling for prayer..

I really believe it. I see it every where. People do not want to pray. They say, "Well, no! I ask you a question. Now, give me an answer. As if we don't need to pray. Just tell me what you think. And that is all that matters.

No Way! We need to pray. God answers prayer.

It is very interesting. A few years ago over in Aronzon the American Psychotic Association meet. There were over 5 thousand Psychogist and Psychrist at this meeting. And they had done an extensive research project over a number of years with two different study groups. One group had gone for counseling. And the second group had not. Everyone in the two groups had similar problems. The result of that study which they announced at this major meeting was: If you don't go for counseling your chances of getting better are just as good as if you had gone for counseling.

Now, I didn't say that. They did. Now, thank God there are some Biblical counselors out there. But, let me tell you something. We are missing the boat by not praying. If you get on your knees and pray about your children, pray about your marriage, pray about your finances, pray about your problems, a lot of things would change.

I like the story told by David Hocking. He was up in Seattle, Washington. And he says that this is a true story. He was up there in Seattle doing a family life conference. He was picked up by the host pastor at the airport. And it was raining cats and dogs as it often does in Seattle. His pastor friend picked him up in an old GREMLIN. Do you remember those cars? Well, apparantly there are a few of them still out there.

Well, they are driving out the freeway heading towards Tacoma. And it is raining. And the car stops. I mean it just stopped running. And so they pulled over to the side of the road. And this pastor friend of Dr. Hockings gets out of the car..and the rain is just coming down...He walks to the front of the car. Then he helars at Dr. Hockings to get out. And so he gets out and walks to the front of the car.

And there they are at the front of the car on the freeway getting sooken wet. And this pastor friend of Dr. Hockings puts his hands on the front of car and he begins to pray. And he is praying that the car will be healed. Dr. Hocking said that he hadn't felt so stupid in all his life. He was thinking all the way through this guys prayer how he was going to strighten out his theology concerning prayer.

The man prayed and he said. "God, you know everthing there is to know about a Gremlin. You know the people who worked on it. You know what is wrong with it. And he said, "God you can heal it." And lord, we just want to thank you for this victory."

And the rain is still coming down. They go get in the car. And Dr. Hocking is ready to clean house on him, theological. And this guy puts his key in the ignition and turns the key and the car starts right up.....(ha) Dr. Hocking said, "I will never doubt that God answers pray."

Believe me. God does have a sense of humor. In Ephesians 6:18 it says, "With all prayer and pettition pray at all times."

I Thess. 5:17 and 18 it says, "pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." Pray always...Pray without ceasing..Men are always to pray and not to get discouraged. Are you getting the point?

You know, it is amazing how sophiscated you can get after you know a lot of the words. To the point that you have all the answers. If you think it is some what childish and simple to pray about little things in life, God help us Pray is a wonderful privilage and responsibility of every Christian. We have direct ascess to God. We are invited to pray. And commmand by God to pray at all times, in every situation. And it is not meaningless activity.

(2 ) The second thing that I would like to draw to your attention is that prayer...to give a d simple definition..is the communication of the believer with God that includes four major things. Prayer is the communication of the believer with God that includes four basic things.

(1 ) One, PRAISE....Praise. You ask me..WHAT IS PRAYER? Prayer is Praise.

Take your Bibles and turn to Psalms 34. Psalms 34. When you start to pray..no matter what the occasion..start with Praise.



The Lord wants the praise of his people. The Lord delights in the praise of his people. It is beautiful to <sup>praise</sup> praise the Lord. Start with PRAISE.

Psalms 34:1 says....(Read Vs 1-3)

Turn to Psalms 113. What is prayer? Well, it is Praise. Praising God. Psalms 113 verse 1....(Read Vs 1-3)

*The Lord* Now, you know, some folks get upset with a christian who is saying "Praise all the time. You know? "Well, isn't this weather great? "Yes, Praise the Lord "what time do you have?" Praise God, it is 15 after 7..

"Hay! what are you haveing for lunch?" Praise the Lord, I don't know.

Have you ever run into someone like that?

Now, I have thought a lot about this. Because it can just drive you baty. And you wander..are they just putting me on?

But you wander, I wander? Maybe since a lot of us are not doing it like we should, Maybe we should just get into it. That we don't even say a sentence without praising the Lord. <sup>Maybe we should do that</sup> ~~Have you ever noticed that? How we can become so judgmental about someone who says it all the time?~~

<sup>Because</sup> ~~But~~, if I read this verse right, it says "from the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised."

This sermon is going to be over soon?...PRAISE THE LORD! *(ita)*

Do you praise the Lord all the time? What is prayer? Prayer is Prise Turn to Psalms 118 look at vs 28...."Thou art my God, and I give thanks or praise to you."

Look at Psalms 138 verse 1..(Read Vs 1-3)..There you have it. PRAYER... But filled with praise.

Psalms 145 verse 1....(Read Vs 1-3)...Are you getting the idea?

What "prayer" <sup>P</sup> <sup>It</sup> is communication of the believer with God that causes him to praise God for everything and all that is taking place.

Psalms 148 verse 13.....(Read Vs 13)

Psalms 150.....(Read the Psalms)

And all God's people said...the last phrass of Vs 6..PRAISE THE LORD.

Dear Friends

Folks, listen, you are not praying if there is no praise. Dear friends, this is so important. We are so quick to bring our request to the Lord, and God certainly invites us to do that, but let me tell you ..PRAYER IS PRAISE. PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD.

(2 ) Secondly, PRAYER IS THANKSGIVING.

Turn to Psalms 116. Sometimes these are put together: Praise and Thanksgiving. But there is a difference. You can praise the character of God and not be thankful for something that happened in your life. And there is a great hinderance, I believe, to prayer when we are not thankful. There is something in our life that is causing a root of bitterness or disapointment. And the flow of thanksgiving to Gdd is lacking. And the prayer, therefore, is hindered.

Psalms 116 verse 17.. "To thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the Lord."

Turn to Philippians chapter 4. Philippians chapter 4 verse 6. Thanksgiving Thanking God forevery thing. "God thank you for the flat tire. Thank you God that I lost my job. Thank you, Lord, that I am broke." *Lord, Thank you that I am sick*

You see, dear friends, we don't know about all of this. In our materialist culture, ~~we~~ <sup>an</sup> thanksgiving is always based upon more.....

**AND IT IS d.FFICULT**  
~~When are we going to thank God for~~ <sup>for?</sup> what we don't have.....It is amazing how in our materialist society which just want more. "God, give me more."

Philippians 4:6....(Read Vs 6-7)

That is a simple one to understand. Why do we not have peace? Because we do not pray...YES...But, also when we do pray, we do not pray with thanksgiving

~~For~~ <sup>100%</sup> I Thess chapter 5 and ~~at~~ at Vs 18.. "in everything give thanks." Do you know what the word "everything" means? It means..in everything that happens give thanks. "For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Now, folks I had a week in which I can say that God blessed and blessed. But, do ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> know that when ever God blesses, the devil is working over time to defeat your spirit.

So

Now, let me ask you. Have you given thanks for everything that happened to you this past week? You see, when you really get down to brass tacks about this business of prayer a lot of us are playing games. Are you praising God from the raising of the sun to its going down? Are you really thanking God for everything that has happened to you?

Hay! I find that my natural tendency is built the other way. And we wonder if we understand prayer.

~~Turn to~~ Hebrews chapter 13 and ~~look~~ at verse 15 SAYS ~~Hebrews 13 verses 15~~: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

Always thanking the Lord for everything that happens. Now, you say, "wait a minute. That sounds foolish to me. You mean I should thank the Lord when my car breaks down? Yes..But, you know sometimes when that happens, it is obviously very hard to thank the Lord, but we want to believe that there really is a divine purpose that is going to happen immediately that is going to be clear to us. Like when my car breaks down, I always think.."Well, there will be somebody who will come by to help me that I can witness to and share christ, so praise the Lord."

And then when one one comes by....Do you understand what happens to your heart? You are looking around and you conclude.."Well, not here, but maybe at the garage." Or, the Lord is going to send money to fix the car. It is going to come surprisely out of the thin air. And then it doesn't come. And you have to pay the bill. And you are still waiting. I know there must be a reason. "For every season God has a purpose." I know all of that.

Do you understand how we are reluctant to give thanks. Friends, we should have started that ~~that~~...You should have said the moment you had the car break down, HAY'. PRAISE THE LORD. I GIVE THANKS TO YOU LORD, FOR THIS EVENT. THAT HAPPENED IN MY LIFE WHICH I DON'T LIKE. BUT I KNOW YOU WILL USE FOR YOUR GLORY-EVEN IF I DON'T KNOW WHY. Thank the Lord.

(3) Number three, turn to Ezra chapter 9. Ezra in the O.T. chapter 9.

You ask..WHAT IS PRAYER? .

Prayer is the communication of the believer with God that has four basic ingredients....Praise, Thanksgiving, and (3) number three ..confession.

Do you want to know why a lot of people's prayers are not answered? We don't confuse what we have done to God.

Ezra chapter 9 verse 5....(READ Vs 5-9)

Then he continues on confessing sin.

Turn to Nehemiah. The next book following Ezra. Nehemiah chapter 1. And I read in Vs 6...Nehemiah crying out to God in prayer and once again confessing sin. Vs 6 says....(READ Vs 6-11)

Listen, my friends, a lot of us do not know much about that kind of praying. And that is the reason we never experience the blessings of God. CONFESION

Turn to Psalm 32. Psalm 32. And look at verses 5 to 7.....

Proverbs 28:13 says that "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper. But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

Let's suppose there is something really wrong in your heart. Something between you and somebody else. Or, something you have done. And you will not confess it. It is as though the power and flow of God's blessings is stop at that point. It is a like a clog drain. *That is, also, true about a church*

Psa 32 verse 5....(Read Vs 5-7)

Psal 51, please. Psa. 51. WHAT IS PRAYER? It is the communication of the believer with God that includes PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, AND CONFESION.

Psa 51:3...(READ Vs 3-9,17)

Anyone who comes with ~~an~~ arrogance and pride to the <sup>Lord</sup> ~~Lord~~, like you are doing Him a favor by praying, <sup>well</sup> ~~will~~ you had better get right with the Lord, right now. Let me tell you that God is very strong in His Word about confession

Turn to Psa 139. Psa. 139. And look at Vs 23 and 24...This is so beautiful. It says...(READ Vs 23-24)

Are you open to that? Do you desire that? That God would search you and expose all the secrets of your life? After all, in terms of his knowledge, you already are. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to deal.

And God wants you to admit it. God wants you to confess your sin.

~~Now, you He has no need. You have the need.~~ And some of us never get freedom. We never see God bless. Because there has been no real confession. We need to confess. ~~One last thing.~~

(4) You ask ..WHAT IS PRAYER.. It is communication with God that includes Praise Thanksgiving, confession, and (4) fourth petition..PETITION. Making your request to the Lord.

Turn to Psa. 34, please. Psalm 34 and look at Vs 17 and 18. Prayer is petition. It is asking God for things. It is <sup>bringing</sup> request to him about everything in life. Psalm 34 verse 17..(Read Vs 17-19)

Isn't it wonderful what God can do in prayer? Call on the Lord. Cry out to Him. He hears. And he will deliver you. That is what the Bible says.

Turn to Psalm 116. Psalm 116 and look at vs 1 and 2...(Read Vs 1-2)

Do you know that Lord? Do you have that <sup>kind of</sup> relationship with God? "I love Him because He has heard. I love Him because He has inclined His ear to me. Therefore, knowing that, I will call upon Him as long as I live." I will never <sup>stop</sup> coming to Him with my request and with my petitions.

Psalm 142 please and look at vs 1 and 2.....Psalm 142 vs 1 and 2(read)

Psalm 143 verse 1...(read)

Listen, God wants you to bring your request to him.

Once again from Philipians 4.."Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Bring your request to him. ~~One~~

~~One last passage turn to I John chapter 5...I John chapter 5 and look at Vs 14 and 15. WHAT IS PRAYER? Prayer is the communication between you and God that includes PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, CONFESSION, AND PETITION.~~

I John 5 verse 14 and 15..(Read)

~~(need an illustration)~~

~~(Explain Operation in Andrews)~~

One last passage. Turn to I John chapter 5. I John chapter 5. WHAT IS PRAYER? Prayer is the communication between you and God that includes: PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, CONFESSION, AND PETITION.

I John chapter 5 verse 14...says."And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the request which we have asked from Him."

That is so precious. A friend of mine says.."God wants to bless the socks off of you." He wants to bless you more than you want to be blessed. God is not sitting in heaven with a base ball bat ready to hit you with every false move. You can be thankful that He doesn't punish us according to our sin. But, as high as our sin might be, His mercy is much higher. Our God wants to bless us. Our God wants to forgive us. Our God wants to deliver us from our troubles. Our God wants to meet every need of our life. "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory." AND OUR GOD SAID..JUST ASK ME. JUST ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN.

(Explain Operation Andrew)

Close in Prayer