Rooted: Foundational Prayer

Matthew 6: 5-13, Psalm 23

030721

**Lent is a time to concentrate on our roots…**

* A time to focus on the **unseen** yet **essential** parts of our relationship with Jesus
* Roots **anchor** our lives in Christ, **nourish** our lives in Christ, **determine** the health of our lives in Christ.
* **Last Sunday we began a week’s journey of fasting…How did that go?**

**Today we have a new practice – Foundational Prayer/Rooted Prayer**

* Prayer is **unseen** as we’ll see in Jesus’ words, yet **essential**
* Prayer **anchors** our lives in Christ, **nourishes** our lives in Christ, and **determines** the health of our lives in Christ.

Sometimes sermons focus on something that requires us to **think deeply.**

This sermon focuses on something that invites you to **practice regularly.**

[Prayer is like the blinking **VCR clock of the 1980’s**…we know we should do it, but it seems complicated, so we ignore it.]

[Saving for retirement, lowering cholesterol, backing up the documents on your computer, getting that uncomfortable medical test, etc…]

I have heard some excuses for not praying:

* My mind wanders
* I don’t know how, what to say
* I tried once and God didn’t do what I asked
* I don’t have time

Here are some **goals** for today:

* I will help you know what to say
* We will learn a framework to keep our minds on track
* Did you do everything **perfectly the first time** you tried it? [bicycle, math, your profession, date, swim, etc…?]
* **Of course not, you learned those things and you can learn to pray.**
* You don’t have time to do a lot of things, but you figure out how to do what matters to you.

**[Imagine a friendship where you never speak except when you really need something]** This is what we do to God. That’s not really a relationship, right?

* When our only prayers are desperation, when we are in over our heads, we are missing the bigger purpose of prayer.
* Do you have relationships solely for what you can get out of them? **That’s gross**

* We have relationships because there is a reciprocal respect/friendship/love
* Jesus prayed all the time.
* Prayer was so essential to Jesus and his example of following God…
* If you don’t pray, I don’t know how you can truly be a follower of Jesus.

**I can’t load you up with that weight and not offer a solution so here we go:**

(Read Matthew 6: 5-13), on screen

I. Jesus teaches that prayer is like roots, unseen but essential

* An **assumed** part of the disciple’s life, “when you pray”
* An **inner room**, little chance of a show
* **God sees** and blesses what is unseen
* Don’t get caught up in **fancy language**, rather pray as Jesus taught

II. Matthew 6: 9-13 is a foundational prayer

* **Not limiting but rather a foundation to build upon**
* Jesus prayed like this
	+ Teaching what he knows and practices
	+ Jesus prayed so much that **we know these weren’t his only words**
	+ This is how we know **we can trust this as a foundation** to build upon
* **You can have confidence to pray like this, Jesus encouraged it. (v. 9)**
	+ We can know that we are praying in a way that pleases God **even if we are novice prayers**
* **This prayer unlocks the story of God**
* Here is way to pray not only this prayer, but many scriptures can become prayers in this way.
	+ [Like the last drip of ketchup on the best fries you’ve ever had, get the most out of every word and phrase in this prayer]
		- “Our Father” – Timelessness of God, universality of God, the authority of the Father in 1st century…

* + - “In heaven” – The rightful place of God, but also points us to God’s whole story: Eternal, Distant, Incarnate, Given in the Spirit, Soon to Return…

* + - “Hallowed” – Holy and unblemished by association with sin
		- **“Your kingdom come”** – Everything espoused in this sermon come in me and in our world. See it. Name it. Celebrate it. Participate in it.

* + - “Your will be done” – What is God’s will? The coming of his kingdom for sure. Also, not our will but God’s!

* + - “On earth as it is in heaven” – Where the faithful are should resemble a bit of heaven on earth. When it doesn’t, what is wrong?

* + - “Give us today our daily bread” – God is the true Source of all we need, literal bread and metaphorical bread. Remember it’s “us” and not just “me.”

* + - “Forgive us” – We cannot save ourselves, Jesus died to make this possible.
		- “As we forgive” – We cannot hold on to unforgiveness and pray faithfully. God restores both vertical and horizontal relationship
		- “Lead us not into temptation” – Just the opposite, lead us into righteousness
		- “Deliver us from the evil one” --
* This prayer is **memorize-able**
	+ If you already have it memorized, you are on your way!
* As a foundational prayer, what you pray **will look different** than what I pray and that is OK, Jesus will teach us to pray this!

III. Other well-known passages are foundational prayers

* Psalm 23 (on screen)
* Maybe we can begin with Matthew 6 because it is probably already memorized
* Maybe Psalm 23 is a next step?
* Meditate and consider each word and phrase in prayer…
* God will speak to you
* Psalm 103, Psalm 91, etc…all foundations upon which to build a healthy prayer life.
* **Learning to pray like this means we never “run out of scriptures to pray”**
* **Learning to pray like this means we recapture the primary purpose of prayer which is to put ourselves in a place where God can have regularly access to our hearts and minds to shape them.**

IV. How to…

* Find Solitude
	+ Not easy, but Jesus taught it, practiced it
* Pray and ask Jesus to help you pray
	+ Sounds odd but is essential.
	+ We cannot do the things of God in human strength

* + There is grace for this
* Memorize the passage/prayer
	+ This makes it portable
	+ This relieves you of excuses!
* Practice it over and over so it flows easily
* Pray it every day this week

* + There is a massive difference between praying and reciting
	+ Don’t confuse the two
* Meditate on the words and phrases and God will teach you
	+ Ask: “What does that mean to me?”
	+ Ask: “How have I experienced this?”
	+ Ask: “Lord, what are you saying to me in this?”
	+ LISTEN! God will answer.

* Add your confessions, intercessions, and petitions at the end
	+ If you lead with these, you start to treat God like a warehouse
	+ If you close with them, you have honored God and your requests will resemble his will.
* Pray a simple prayer of gratitude and move confidently into the next part of your day.

**Close**:

Two Closing Realities:

1. Faithful practices repeated over time will grow your relationship with Jesus.
2. If you do this in tandem with others you will find tremendous support and real change will happen. (Accountability)

**Let’s do this together**

**Like, share, comment on this picture [show Foundational Prayer image] and we’ll encourage one another this week.**

**Communion:** *At home, you can prepare your elements. In a few moments when it comes time to partake, if you are at home and practicing intinction, just wait until we drink the cup. That way we can all partake together*

*Those present today: Please take a moment and adjust or remove your mask so that you can partake of the elements. Also take a quick moment and familiarize yourselves with these individually wrapped communion elements. There is a thin layer of plastic covering the wafer, then another layer that opens up the cup for drinking. Take a moment and get all of that ready.*

**Today’s communion will be interspersed with a song…I’ll let you know what to do step by step.**

**(Listen) Liturgy:**

Communion, instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, which proclaims His life, His sufferings, His sacrificial death, and resurrection, and the hope of His coming again.

Communion is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. It is a way to enact our prayers…to engage our physical bodies in remembering and honoring Jesus’ death and resurrection. In light of that let all those who are turning from their sins and believing in Christ for salvation join in on this celebration of the extravagant plan of God.

**(Pray) Prayer:**

Holy God,

We gather at this, your table, in the name of Jesus your Son, who by your Spirit was anointed to preach good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, and set at liberty those who are oppressed. Christ healed the sick, fed the hungry, ate with sinners, and established the new covenant for forgiveness of sins. We live in the hope of His coming again.

And so, we gather as the Body of Christ to offer ourselves to you in praise and thanksgiving. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these your gifts. Make them by the power of your Spirit to be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the Body of Christ, redeemed by His blood.

By your Spirit make us one in Christ, one with each other, and one in the ministry of Christ to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **Amen**.

**(Listen and Worship) Song: Remembrance (V1, Chorus)**

**(Prepare the bread) Before the partaking of the bread, let the minister say:**

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, broken for you, preserve you blameless, unto everlasting life. Eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and be thankful.

**(Listen and Worship) Song: Remembrance (V2, Chorus)**

**(Prepare the cup) Before the partaking of the cup, let the minister say:**

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for you, preserve you blameless unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and be thankful.

**(Listen and Worship) Song**: **Remembrance (V3, Chorus, etc…to end)**

**Benediction**:

I want to thank you for your faithfulness to attend in worship at home and in person, and for the ways you have continued to serve and give so faithfully over the past year.

**Doxology** (The song will serve as our benediction today. I will have the people stand as we sing.)