

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Pray in the Spirit

SERMON REFERENCE: James 4:5

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0520

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 4:5
 - i) The Holy Spirit within us is very jealous for the cause of Christ.
- b) God has given the Holy Spirit to us, and the Holy Spirit within us is there to glorify Christ and to promote the cause of Christ.
 - i) This is what it means to pray in the Spirit.
- c) Ephesians 6:18
- d) Jude 20
- e) Romans 8:26-27
 - i) The word “itself” when referring to the Holy Spirit in this passage is a poor translation; it is more properly translated “Himself”.
- f) Prayer is the greatest Christian privilege that we have.
 - i) The need of the hour is for loving prayer, laboring prayer, lingering prayer and listening prayer.
- g) Prayer is our greatest Christian service.
 - i) Too often we think of prayer as the means of getting ready to serve God rather than as the means of serving God.
 - (1) We are serving God when we pray.
- h) Prayer so frequently is the greatest Christian failure.
 - i) We pray, but our prayers are unanswered.
 - ii) Isaiah 1:15
 - (1) God desires to answer our prayers, yet there are certain situations in which God will turn His face away and will not hear, in spite of the number of our prayers.
 - iii) One of the primary reasons why our prayers are fruitless, powerless and go unanswered is that we do not pray in the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Praying in the Spirit will change prayer from a weary grudge to a delightful privilege.

2) THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO US

- a) The Holy Spirit gives us strength where we do not have strength to pray.
 - i) Romans 8:5-7
 - (1) The word “flesh” in this passage does not mean skin and bones, but refers to a principle, a way of life that we inherited from Adam.
 - (a) It means our old, unredeemed nature.
 - ii) We have within us a spiritual nature and a fleshly nature, and there is a civil war between the two that goes on within us.
 - (1) Galatians 5:17
 - iii) When we go to pray, a battle begins between our spiritual nature and our carnal, fleshly nature.
 - (1) Our carnal nature doesn't want to pray; it is set against prayer.
 - (a) Romans 8:7
 - (b) This is why our thoughts sometimes wander when we pray and unbelief crowds in during prayer.

- (c) This is why God sometimes seems far away.
 - (2) There is a nature within us (this carnal mind) that is not subject to the law of God.
 - (a) This nature is at warfare with God.
 - iv) This carnal mind (and flesh nature) is a form of weakness within us.
 - (1) We need to admit this weakness.
 - (a) Romans 8:26
 - (b) The Bible declares this weakness.
 - (i) The Bible speaks of our weakness, and the Spirit helps our infirmities.
 - (c) Our weakness is actually an asset.
 - (i) God allows us to continue to have this weakness because it keeps us dependent upon Him.
 - 1. In the Bible, the secret of strength is understanding our weakness and, therefore, no longer depending upon ourselves.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 12:9
 - a. The Spirit of God helps us in our weakness.
 - v) There are two ways to pray:
 - (1) For the flesh to pray.
 - (a) This is why prayer sometimes feels like work.
 - (2) To pray the way the Bible teaches us.
 - (a) Admit our weakness and cast ourselves upon God.
 - (i) This is no longer being self-sufficient in prayer, but praying in the Spirit.
 - vi) God allows us to stay perpetually weak so that we might be perpetually dependent upon the Holy Spirit.
- b) There are six enemies that keep us from praying:
 - i) The enemy of indifference
 - (1) We just don't feel like praying.
 - (a) It isn't that we don't have time to pray; we just don't want to pray.
 - (i) We find time to do what we really want to do.
 - (2) Our flesh has no appetite for prayer.
 - (a) Romans 8:7
 - (b) We need to admit that the reason we don't pray is because we don't want to.
 - (c) It is the old carnal nature that is indifferent to prayer.
 - (3) How does praying in the Holy Spirit help us to want to pray?
 - (a) Romans 8:15
 - (i) It is the Holy Spirit within us crying, "Abba Father."
 - (b) The Spirit of God loves to pray.
 - (i) He gives us the energy and the desire to pray.
 - (c) Galatians 4:6
 - (i) The term "Abba Father" literally means "Daddy Father".

- (d) If we'll allow Him, the Holy Spirit is the one who will do the praying.
- (4) The problem of indifference to prayer can be solved by praying in the Spirit.
- ii) The enemy of ignorance
 - (1) Romans 8:26
 - (2) We don't know what to pray.
 - (a) The Holy Spirit of God knows what we should pray for.
 - (3) Even if we know what we should pray for, we don't always know how we should pray.
 - (a) How are we to know exactly and precisely what to pray for after we determine whom to pray for?
 - (4) The Holy Spirit overcomes our problem of ignorance, and He knows how to pray in the will of God.
 - (a) Romans 8:27
 - (b) 1 John 5:14
 - (c) The secret to praying in the will of God is praying in the Holy Spirit.
 - (5) Isaiah 11:2
 - (a) If we need wisdom, understanding and counsel, then we must pray in the Holy Spirit so that we'll know for what and how to pray.
- iii) The enemy of impotence
 - (1) This refers to our weakness and inability.
 - (a) For instance, we may have a hard time trying to pray when we have a headache or when we are sleepy.
 - (b) Simon Peter, James and John fell asleep in the garden when Jesus had told them to watch and pray.
 - (i) Mark 14:32-40
 - (ii) They did not have enough physical, spiritual or emotional strength to concentrate in prayer.
 - (2) Romans 8:11
 - (a) Many believe this passage refers to the resurrection, but there is nothing in the context to say that it applies only to the resurrection.
 - (3) Being filled with the Holy Spirit gives us energy, concentration and power when we don't have the power to pray.
 - (a) John 4:31-34
 - (i) The Spirit of God had energized the divine body of the Lord Jesus Christ and gave Him strength.
- iv) The enemy of interference
 - (1) This refers to devilish interference.
 - (a) James 4:7
 - (2) The devil will do anything he can to stop us from praying.
 - (3) There is only one way we can overcome the devil, and that is to pray in the Spirit.
 - (4) Ephesians 6:11-17

- (a) This is in preparation for the battle.
- (5) Ephesians 6:18
 - (a) This is where the battle begins.
 - (b) God tells us of the armor, and He also tells us of the warfare.
 - (i) As Christians, we are in a war; and that war is won or lost on our knees.
 - (ii) The battle is not won at church on Sunday mornings; it is won by our prayers.
- (6) We need to take on the whole armor of God and pray in the Spirit.
 - (a) The enemy is no match for the Holy Spirit of God.
- v) The enemy of inexpressibility
 - (1) There are times when we are not able to say what we ought to say, what we need to say or what we want to say.
 - (a) There are times when our words just fail.
 - (2) There are times when we are unable to express what is in our hearts.
 - (a) Praying in the Spirit makes up for this.
 - (b) Romans 8:26
 - (i) Praying in the Spirit is not praying in tongues.
 - (ii) This passage is not talking about something that we utter, but something we cannot utter.
 - (c) Sometimes a heart is so full that it almost breaks.
 - (i) The Holy Spirit of God knows how to take that prayer and make it acceptable.
 - 1. He takes the groanings that we cannot even utter and takes care of our inexpressibility.
 - 2. It is really the Holy Spirit within us who is groaning.
 - (3) Romans 8:26
 - (a) The word “groanings” in this passage is a term that expresses sounds uttered in childbirth.
 - (i) This groaning is unique.
 - 1. It is pain that is transfigured by hope and expectation.
 - a. This is the deepest form of prayer: pain transfigured by hope and expectation as the Holy Spirit of God in us prays the prayer of agony.
- vi) The enemy of inaccessibility
 - (1) Sometimes we feel as though our prayers are not getting through to God.
 - (2) Through the blood of Jesus, a way has been made through the veil and into the holy of holies, and we have been granted the right to enter.
 - (a) But we also need the power to come into the throne room.
 - (i) The blood supplies the right; the Spirit supplies the power to come into the throne room.
 - (3) Ephesians 2:18

- (a) It is the Holy Spirit of God who takes us by the hand and leads us into the throne room and gives us that accessibility.
 - (i) Not only do we have a royal invitation, but we also have a palace attendant (the Holy Spirit) who leads us right into the presence of Almighty God.
 - 1. It is by the blood of Jesus and by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

3) THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY THROUGH US

- a) The Holy Spirit has a ministry to us in order that He might have a ministry through us.
- b) Romans 8:26, 34
 - i) The term "intercession" means "on our behalf".
- c) The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, and Christ makes intercession for us; but there are differences between the two intercessions:
 - i) There is a difference in the places of these intercessions.
 - (1) Christ makes intercession for us at the right hand of the Father.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit makes intercession within us.
 - ii) There is a difference in the purposes of the intercessions.
 - (1) We are the object of the Savior's intercession.
 - (a) He is interceding for us at the right hand of the Father.
 - (2) We are the vehicle of the Spirit's intercession.
 - (a) He is interceding through us on behalf of others.
 - (i) The Holy Spirit gives a ministry to us so that He can give a ministry through in order to reach the world.

4) CONCLUSION

- a) We need to learn how to pray so that the Holy Spirit of God will minister to us, and then so that He might minister through us.
- b) Before we can learn to pray in the Spirit, we must first be surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16