

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Pray in the Spirit

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 8:26-27

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1975

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Prayer is the greatest Christian privilege.
- b) Prayer is the greatest Christian service.
- c) Prayer is also the greatest Christian failure.
 - i) We probably fail more in our prayer life than in any other area.
 - ii) Most Christians are not satisfied with their prayer lives.
 - (1) We are in a battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil that do not want us to pray.
 - (2) There is the problem of indifference.
 - (a) Many of us really don't want to pray.
 - (3) There is the problem of ignorance.
 - (a) We don't know how to pray or what to pray for.
 - (4) There is the problem of inability.
 - (a) We don't have the energy or the strength to pray.
 - (5) There is the problem with language.
 - (a) We don't know how to form or articulate our prayers.
 - (6) There is the problem of satanic attack.
 - (a) When we endeavor to pray, the devil comes to invade our minds and draw away our attention.
- d) God knows about these struggles and failures, and He has given us someone to help in our prayer lives.
 - i) He has given us the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Romans 8:26-27
 - (1) The word "infirmities" in this passage means "weaknesses."
- e) The Bible teaches us that we are to pray in the Spirit.
 - i) Ephesians 6:18
 - (1) The apostle Paul is not talking about spirited praying or praying with energy but about praying in the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Jude 20
- f) To pray in the flesh is to fail; to pray in the Spirit is to succeed.
 - i) The word "flesh" is just another word for the old nature.
- g) The early church was mighty in power because it was mighty in prayer.
 - i) They were mighty in prayer because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- h) In today's message, we will learn seven ways that the Holy Spirit of God will help us in our prayer lives.
 - i) We will see the necessity not only to be saved but to also be filled with the Holy Spirit.

2) THE ACTIVATION OF OUR WILL IN PRAYER (ROMANS 8:5-7)

- a) The Holy Spirit works in the activation of our will to pray.
- b) Most of us do not want to pray.
 - i) Not wanting to pray tells us that we are carnally minded rather than spiritually minded.
 - (1) Romans 8:7

- ii) There is something in our old nature that has an aversion to prayer.
- c) When we are Spirit-filled, the Holy Spirit of God will activate our will in prayer.
 - i) Romans 8:15
 - (1) The “Spirit of adoption” is the Holy Spirit that puts us in the body of Christ.
 - (2) When we receive the Spirit of adoption, God becomes our Father.
 - (3) The Spirit in us recognizes God as our Father, and it is natural for the Spirit-filled person to cry out to God and to worship and praise Him.
 - ii) Galatians 4:6
 - (1) The Lord Jesus loved to pray.
 - (2) When the Holy Spirit is in our hearts and in control of our lives, then we will have the nature of Jesus.
 - (3) Just as it was normal and natural for Jesus to pray to God the Father, it will be normal and natural for us to want to pray.
- d) When the Holy Spirit of God is in us and we are yielded to the Spirit and not walking in the flesh, then it is as normal as breathing to pray to God.
- e) Philippians 2:13
- f) When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will want to pray.

3) THE ANIMATION OF OUR BODIES IN PRAYER

- a) Sometimes when we pray, we get tired, sleepy, lazy and cannot concentrate.
 - i) Not only do we have a problem with our wills, but we also have difficulty with our bodies.
- b) The Holy Spirit of God will animate our bodies in prayer.
- c) Mark 6:31
 - i) There is a time for legitimate rest.
- d) There is nothing wrong with physical tiredness.
 - i) The Bible tells us that Jesus was tired and went to sleep in the midst of a storm at sea.
 - (1) Luke 8:23
- e) There are times when we go to pray that we become tired and our minds get fuzzy.
 - i) But something else (like a football game) can get our attention, and we become awake again.
 - ii) The problem is not physical; the devil has teamed up with our flesh to keep us from praying.
 - iii) Matthew 26:40-41
 - (1) Our flesh is weak.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit of God is willing to help us pray in these times.
- f) The Holy Spirit will refresh our bodies.
 - i) Romans 8:10-11
 - (1) We have been crucified with Christ, and He carried our sin to the cross.

- (2) Not only did Jesus give Himself for us, but He gave Himself to us.
 - (a) When He gave Himself for us, the body is dead because of sin.
 - (b) When He gave Himself to us, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
 - (3) The Holy Spirit gives us vitality, energy and power.
 - (a) This does not take away from legitimate rest.
 - (i) Psalm 127:2
 - (b) When we yield to Him, the Holy Spirit will energize us when we need the power of God to do the will of God.
 - g) John 4:4
 - i) Halfway through His difficult journey, Jesus was tired, hot, thirsty and hungry; and there was an opportunity for ministry.
 - ii) John 4:5-34
 - iii) When the disciples came back, they found Jesus refreshed.
 - (1) The Holy Spirit had energized the body of the Lord Jesus.
 - h) Romans 8:26
 - i) "Infirmities" in this passage means our "weaknesses."
 - ii) We out to accept and confess our weakness.
 - (1) Because it's a fact.
 - (2) Because it's an asset.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 12:9
 - (b) Many times, our problem is not that we're too weak but that we're not yet weak enough.
 - (i) When we come to the end of our strength and then appropriate His strength, we will understand how He will not only activate our wills but also animate our bodies.
 - iii) God's plan is to deliver us from self-sufficiency and for us to cast ourselves upon His sufficiency.
 - (1) He makes us perpetually weak that we might be perpetually strong.
 - iv) The word "helpeth" in verse 26 means "to take hold of" and "instead of."
 - (1) This is how the Holy Spirit helps us: together with and instead of.
 - i) When you pray in the Spirit, both you and the Holy Spirit are praying.
 - i) The Holy Spirit of God is praying instead of you, and He is praying together with you.
 - (1) You cannot do it without Him, and He will not do it without you.
- 4) THE ADAPTATION OF OUR REQUESTS (ROMANS 8:26)
- a) Sometimes we just don't know what to pray for as we ought; we don't know what to ask for.
 - i) Romans 8:14
 - ii) We may not know what to ask for, but the Holy Spirit does.
 - (1) Therefore, the Holy Spirit adapts our prayers.
 - b) In order for prayer to be effective, it must be elective.
 - i) There are so many things and people for which we could be praying.

- ii) Even when we know what or whom to pray for, we don't know what to pray in that specific instance.
 - (1) How are we supposed to pray for the sick?
 - (a) John 17:24
 - (b) We pray for them to be healed, but Jesus may be praying for them come home to Heaven.
 - (i) Though God may direct us to pray for someone's healing, in average prayer meetings, we are more interested in keeping the saints out of Heaven than the lost out of Hell.
 - (2) Before the apostle Paul was saved, he wreaked havoc on the church and was having Christians put to death.
 - (a) He even held the clothes of Stephen while he was being stoned.
 - (b) The early church may have prayed for God to strike Saul, but God struck him alive; and he became the great apostle Paul.
 - c) The Holy Spirit takes what we ask for in prayer and transforms it into what we need.
 - i) Romans 8:26
 - ii) When you don't know what to pray for, just pray.
 - (1) God knows your heart.
 - d) We should pray with a clean heart and a right spirit, and the Holy Spirit will adapt our prayers.
 - i) Romans 8:27
 - ii) The Holy Spirit of God knows what we need.
 - e) If we do not get what we ask for, that does not mean that our prayer is not answered.
- 5) THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUR ACCESS (ROMANS 8:14-15)
- a) The Holy Spirit presides over the administration of our access into the holy presence of God.
 - i) We need someone to bring us into God's presence, to give us access to God.
 - ii) Romans 8:14-15
 - (1) The Holy Spirit gives us access.
 - b) Ephesians 2:18
 - i) Through Jesus, we have access by one Spirit to the Father.
 - c) We pray to God through Jesus in the Spirit.
 - i) We have a Father to pray to.
 - ii) We have a Savior to pray through.
 - iii) We have a Spirit to pray in.
 - d) Prayer is not just simply sending prayer missiles to Heaven; it is talking with a friend.
 - i) God gives us the royal invitation to pray, and He gives us a palace attendant to bring us right in to Him.

- 6) THE ARTICULATION OF OUR WORDS (ROMANS 8:26)
 - a) Another problem in prayer is that we get tongue-tied and run out of words.
 - i) Words are just trucks to carry thoughts.
 - ii) Sometimes, the thought is too heavy for any truck.
 - b) Sometimes there are things that are so deep and big and heavy that we don't know how to put it into words.
 - i) That's when we need to pray in the Spirit.
 - c) Romans 8:26
 - i) "Groanings which cannot be uttered" means sighs that are too deep for words.
 - ii) The one doing the groaning is the divine Spirit merged with the human spirit.
 - iii) The word "groaning" is the same word that means "birth pains."
 - (1) This groan is pain transfigured by hope.
 - (a) Prayer is pain transfigured by hope.
 - d) Romans 8:22-23
 - i) Our souls and our spirits are redeemed, but our bodies are not yet redeemed.
 - (1) Therefore, we live in a world full of pain and sorrow.
 - (a) Neither saved nor lost are immune.
 - ii) When we pray, the Holy Spirit of God enters into that agony.
 - iii) As Jesus wept in Gethsemane, the Holy Spirit of God merges with our spirit in wordless prayer (groanings too deep to be uttered) during our darkest, deepest hours.
 - (1) Even when we can't put it into words, God knows what He means.
- 7) THE ENUNCIATION OF OUR CONFIDENCE (ROMANS 8:27-29)
 - a) The enunciation of our confidence comes from the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The will of God is to work all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, and He is doing it to make us like the Lord Jesus.
 - c) Sometimes we pray and weep, and it seems like nothing is happening.
 - i) God heard your prayer, and He is working all things together for good.
 - d) God's plan for us is not necessarily to make us healthy, wealthy and happy, but to make us holy and like the Lord Jesus; to be conformed to the image of His Son.
 - i) We may ask for one thing, but the Holy Spirit of God may give us another thing to make us more like Jesus.
 - e) Prayer is God's plan to make us like Jesus.
 - f) Romans 8:28
 - i) This is the enunciation of our confidence.
- 8) THE AMPLIFICATION OF OUR VICTORY (ROMANS 8:31-32)
 - a) The devil doesn't want us to pray.

- b) Romans 8:31
 - i) The devil will do all he can to keep us from praying.
 - ii) When we pray in the flesh, we are no match for Satan.
 - iii) When we pray in the Spirit, if God be for us, who can be against us?

9) CONCLUSION

- a) We cannot pray in the Spirit or in the name of Jesus until we get saved, until we surrender to the Lordship of Christ.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) 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