

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Victorious Prayer

SERMON REFERENCE: James 4:1-10

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0519

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 4:1-2
- b) The person who can pray can do anything; for prayer can do anything that God can do, and God can do anything.
 - i) Our desperate need in these days is to link our lives with the omnipotent God who has told us to pray.
 - ii) John 16:24
 - iii) James 4:2
- c) The failures in our lives are prayer failures.
 - i) There is no sin in our lives but what prayer could have prevented.
 - ii) There is no genuine need in our lives that fervent, believing prayer cannot meet.
- d) In today's message, we will learn how to pray so that our prayers shall not be denied.

2) THE PRESUMPTION OF UNOFFERED PRAYER (JAMES 4:1-2)

- a) God wants to bless us and give us what we need, but we're so presumptuous.
 - i) We are proud and so self-sufficient that we go about in our own strength trying to get the things we think we need.
- b) There is no problem that cannot be solved by prayer.
 - i) There are no problems too big to solve, just people too small to solve them.
- c) God wants to bless us, and He will bless us through prayer.
 - i) Matthew 21:22
 - ii) It is not until we pray that God moves into action.
 - iii) It is prayer that links our lives with the omnipotent power of God.
- d) Sometimes we are weighted down with heavy burdens and doing everything we know to do, but we fail to pray.
 - i) Have we asked our Father to help us?
 - ii) Have we linked our lives with His?
 - iii) God wants to bless us, and sometimes the reason He isn't blessing is very simple: we have not because we ask not.
 - (1) James 4:2
- e) It will amaze us when we get to Heaven and God opens the door to His storehouse and shows us all of the blessings that He wanted to give us but couldn't because we went our own way.
- f) Prayerlessness is a sin.
 - i) 1 Samuel 12:23
 - ii) We are to pray all the time.
 - (1) 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - (2) Luke 18:1
 - iii) When we don't pray, we're not only missing a blessing but we're also committing a sin.

- (1) We are doing without things that God wants us to have, and we're sinning against the Lord.
 - g) As mentioned in the introduction, there is no sin in our lives but what prayer would have prevented.
 - i) Mark 14:38
 - ii) John Bunyan wrote in *Pilgrim's Progress* that prayer will make a man cease from sin, and sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.
 - h) There is no substitute for prayer.
 - i) Not energy, enthusiasm, eloquence or intellect.
 - ii) Our lives are no greater than our prayer lives.
 - i) We need to repent of the sin of prayerlessness.
 - i) We can do more than pray after we pray, but we can do no more than pray until we have prayed.
- 3) THE PROBLEM OF UNACCEPTABLE PRAYER (JAMES 4:3-4)
- a) Sometimes the problem is not that we don't offer our prayers, but that we offer them and God will not accept them or hear our prayers.
 - b) James 4:3-4
 - i) To ask amiss means to ask wrongly.
 - ii) The word "enmity" in this passage means warfare with God.
 - c) When our prayers are unacceptable, it is because they are based on the wrong motivation.
 - i) There are people who are willing to sacrifice the answer to their prayer upon the altar of their lusts.
 - (1) They are not asking for the glory of God; they are simply asking that they might consume it upon their lusts.
 - (a) Their motivation is selfish and basically sinful.
 - (b) God will not subsidize our sin; He will not underwrite our selfishness.
 - d) James 4:4
 - i) When we became Christians, we became the Heavenly bride and the Lord Jesus is the Heavenly bridegroom.
 - (1) John 3:29
 - (2) The church should belong to the Lord Jesus and Him alone.
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 11:2
 - (b) We are to be jealous for the cause of Christ.
 - ii) The metaphor James is using in this passage is that we are married to our Lord.
 - iii) But there's another suitor who comes along, and this suitor is the world.
 - (1) The world is like a scheming, perverted, adulterous man who comes trying to lure our affections away from the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The Bible says that when we turn from Jesus and become friends with the world, we commit spiritual adultery.
 - (a) James 4:4

- iv) When we become friends with the world and we go to God asking that He give us what we want so that we might commit spiritual adultery with the world, then God says that our prayers will not be answered.
 - e) Many prayers are worldly at their base, and the motivation is not for the glory of God.
 - i) We're not interested in the glory of God.
 - ii) The motivation for our prayers is simply that we might have more, do more and enjoy more.
 - (1) James 4:3-4
 - f) We will never have our legitimate needs denied if we come in prayer in the right way.
 - i) Philippians 4:19
 - ii) We may pray for personal needs, but we may not pray for selfish desires and expect to have those prayers answered.
- 4) THE PRINCIPLES OF UNDENIABLE PRAYER (JAMES 4:5-7)
- a) The principle of sensitivity to the Spirit
 - i) James 4:5
 - (1) The Spirit who dwells within us is the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) The word "lusteth" means that He has strong desires.
 - (a) This word has no sexual connotation whatsoever in the Greek language.
 - ii) The Holy Spirit within us has some strong desires and is very envious.
 - (1) He is envious for the cause of Christ.
 - iii) Before we pray, God demands of us our whole heart.
 - (1) The Holy Spirit, as He lives within us, implores us to give our entire devotion to Jesus Christ.
 - iv) The Bible teaches that God is a jealous God.
 - (1) Jealousy is not always bad; the jealousy that God has is good.
 - (a) Many of us who are jealous have no right to be jealous.
 - (i) For example, a musician has no right to be jealous of other musicians because he does not own the realm of music.
 - (ii) An athlete has no right to be jealous of other athletes because he does not own athletics.
 - (b) There are other athletes and musicians, but there is only one God.
 - (2) Exodus 20:2-5
 - v) God does not want a place in our lives or prominence in our lives; He demands preeminence.
 - (1) Colossians 1:18
 - vi) We are to pray in the Spirit.
 - (1) We are to pray in the Spirit, through the Son and to the Father.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit wants to think through our minds, feel through our hearts and speak through our lips.
 - (3) Ephesians 6:18

- vii) The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray.
 - (1) Romans 8:26
- b) The principle of submission to the Father
 - i) James 4:6-7
 - ii) There is no answered prayer until we are submitted to God.
 - (1) This is what the Holy Spirit makes us sensitive to.
 - iii) Sometimes our prayers are not answered because we are saying, “Not Thy will be done but mine be done.”
 - iv) Prayer is not an exercise where we talk God into doing something He doesn’t want to do.
 - (1) Prayer is not bending God’s will to fit our will.
 - v) Prayer is finding the will of God and getting in on it.
 - (1) Matthew 6:9-10
 - vi) In the Garden of Eden, the first Adam said, “Not Thy will but mine be done.” In another garden, the second Adam said, “Not My will but Thine be done.”
 - (1) This is the way prayer is to be answered.
 - (2) 1 John 5:14
 - vii) Prayer is not for rebels.
 - (1) James 4:2-3
 - viii) When we submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then our prayers are going to be answered.
- c) The principle of standing against the devil
 - i) James 4:7
 - (1) If we resist the devil, he will flee from us.
 - ii) Luke 10:19
 - iii) I John 4:4
 - iv) Prayer is warfare.
 - (1) When we pray, we enter into warfare with the devil.
 - (2) Ephesians 6:11, 18
 - (a) When we put on the armor of God, we are just getting ready to go to battle.
 - (b) We have an enemy who hates us, not because we are so important, but because Satan’s real worry is with God.
 - (i) Wicked persons have always known that if they cannot hurt an individual, then they try to hurt someone that individual loves so that they can bring hurt to that individual anyway.
 - (ii) Satan’s warfare is against us because God loves us, and he is trying to get at God.
 - (iii) God’s warfare is against the devil, and He intends to win this war through the prayers of His people.
 - (iv) God moves when we pray.
 - (3) The devil mocks our scheme and laughs at our organization, but he will do anything he can do to keep us from praying.

- (a) There is no substitute for prayer.
- v) Once we're sensitive to the Spirit and submitted to the Father, then and then alone are we ready to resist the devil and to stand against him.
- d) The principle of separation from the world
 - i) James 4:8
 - ii) Once we have become sensitive to the Spirit, submitted to God, and resisting the devil, we can then become separated from the world.
 - (1) It is not that God will accept us if we clean up our lives; we cannot clean up our lives until we've come to God.
 - iii) We cannot come to God in prayer with divided hearts and double-minds.
 - (1) If there is any unrepented of sin in our lives, we need to get rid of it.
 - (a) We need to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.
 - (b) James 1:7-8
 - iv) When we let go of this world and take hold of God with both hands, we will then know power in prayer.
 - (1) Jeremiah 29:13
 - v) The Lord despises half-hearted religion and half-hearted praying.
 - (1) We must separate from the world.
 - vi) Psalm 66:18
 - (1) Much of our praying is asking God to bless us even though we are unwilling to let go of the things of this world.
 - (2) This passage does not say "if" we have sinned; we have all sinned.
 - (a) This verse refers to our regard for iniquity.
 - (i) Do you have a pet sin?
 - 1. That sin must be forsaken.
 - 2. God cannot honor our prayers when there is sin in our hearts.
- e) The principle of seriousness and soberness in our purpose
 - i) James 4:9-10
 - ii) Another reason why our prayers are not answered is because our prayers are not fervent.
 - iii) It is time that we prayed in keeping with the urgency and emergency of the need.
 - (1) We need to learn to weep before the Lord.
 - (2) 2 Kings 20:5
 - (a) Has God seen your tears?
 - (i) When was the last time you shed a tear over a lost soul?
 - (ii) When was the last time you fasted and prayed?
 - (iii) When was the last time you spent a night in prayer?
 - 1. Genesis 32:26
 - iv) Too often our prayers are lazy and "take it or leave it" prayers.
 - v) Psalm 51:17

5) CONCLUSION

- a) We need to get serious about our praying.
- b) James 5:16
- c) Christianity today is lacking in fervency of prayer.
 - i) God knows when we mean business.
- d) To know victorious prayer, we must first know the King of kings.
- e) Do you know the Lord Jesus personally? If not, you can ask Him today to come into your life.
- f) 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