

## ***Recovering Your Prayer***

Matthew 7:7-12

George Bush, former president of the United States and father of the current President, began his inaugural address with prayer on January 20, 1989. The inaugural address began like this. “My first act as President is a prayer. I ask you to bow your heads. Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: ‘Use power to help people.’ For we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us to remember it, Lord! Amen.” We were surprised that he had such courage beginning his Presidential inaugural address with prayer. Through this prayer, he realized why God gave authority to him and showed us his humble life to achieve God’s will.

Prayer is the best privilege given to His children. God gives us the opportunity to meet Him and bestow upon us His glory and blessings through prayer. God comes into a relationship with us individually through prayer. An unborn child in a mom’s womb receives nutrition through the umbilical cord. Likewise, we receive spiritual nutrition from God through prayer. If our prayer becomes disconnected from God, it is the same as if our spiritual breathing is stopped. If we do not pray to God, hatred and complaint will be increased and joy and thankfulness will disappear. If we do not pray to God, we will hate coming to church and will be filled with selfishness. Just as a relationship in which a couple doesn’t communicate well ends in separation, so does a spiritual life with out prayer – we’re separated from God. What is the reason why our Christian faith has become inactive and stagnant? Why is darkness clouding our reality even though there are many churches in this world? The reason is that the light of prayer is disappearing. The reason is that the power of prayer is disappearing. I have heard so many times from church members that a few years ago, older members of the church used to pray in the front seats for the church and it’s members. Now, however, it is very hard to find someone who prays like that. Moreover, the human voice, not the prayer voice, is getting louder. The human’s knowledge and experience, not the power of Holy Spirit, are placed in high value. This is because we think that prayer is insufficient and we lose the power of prayer. I believe that we have to recover the power of prayer to spiritually rebuild our church. If we want to achieve God’s will toward our church, we must burn a fire of prayer first. We must have the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit through our earnest prayer. Jesus tells us how to pray and the result of prayer through today’s scripture. Jesus already pointed out about the wrong way that Jews prayed through The Sermon on the Mount. They say that they believe in God who created all things, but yet they stick to rules that guide things like eating, drinking and clothing. I assume that our prayer life is the same as the Jews.

Today’s scripture is a part of the conclusion of the story in which Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. First, it says, “Ask and it will be given to you.” First of all, prayer is asking. A brand new church member cannot pray asking for God’s kingdom and His righteousness. A brand new church member can only pray about their own problems and wishes. However, if we pray to God for only my wish continuously, there are a lot of problems in our Christian life. There are many kinds of religions in the world and they have their own prayer rite. The prayer that they

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pray is most likely about their own wish. Those who believe in superstition try to touch God's heart so they pray with selfishness to make their own wish. So they make every effort to get what they want. That is just selfish in making their wish. Our prayer, however, is a different level from other religions. We also pray for health, wisdom and the success of business. We also pray for our family. However, if we stop here, we will become exactly like the others who believe in superstition. The obvious difference is that we have a different purpose. What is the purpose of asking God? The gospel according to Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." We are praying for God's kingdom and his righteousness. The reason why we ask for money, knowledge, and reputation is to show His glory through a right relationship with God.

Second, the Bible says, "Seek and you shall find." Young women and men are looking for their lover. A businessman is looking for customers. An entrepreneur is looking for money. Everybody is looking for something. As a Christian, what should we look for? This is why we are looking for God continuously. That is why we seek God after all situations in our life. Jeremiah 29:12-13 tells us, "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." The purpose of praying is to meet God. Since we can't meet God, we are always uneasy, worried, and afraid of something. A Christian life without meeting God is a very unhappy life. Have you ever met the living God? If you believe it and said 'Yes' in your mind, I am sure you met God. If you said 'I don't know' in your mind, you should meet God without delay. Knowing the phrase, 'God is with us' is insufficient. Even Satan knows that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If I do not meet the living God even though I know God with my mind, there is nothing that can change my life. I hope that those who are not sure about meeting God pray, 'God, I am looking for you earnestly, please meet me, please change me, and please make me new.' I believe that God will give you a blessing; that He will meet you when you look for Him earnestly.

Third, the Bible says, "Knock and the door will be opened to you." A closed door never opens no matter how long you wait. You have to knock on the door to get it to open. Jesus is telling us, "I am the gate" in the book of John 10:9. The Book of Revelation 3:20 says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." Jesus our Lord is still knocking on the door of our minds. Jesus is knocking on the door and awaking us to dream of God's kingdom and to go toward a new possibility. Jesus tells us certainly, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Believe this promise and pray earnestly. God will surely answer your faithful prayer. God, your Father in heaven, will give good gifts to those who ask Him.

Rev. Charles Spurgeon said, "Prayer is not something like diversion. It is a daily work, habit, holy labor and life." That's right. Prayer is not an option for Christians, but a duty. Prayer is a very holy labor and life toward God.

Beloved brothers and sisters! Please turn on the light of prayer in your house. Please turn on the light of prayer at your work place. Prayer solves every problem and is a key to opening the treasure of the kingdom of God. I hope we all have a great recovery of prayer. I hope we all are blessed with the joy of heaven through prayer. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ that we all

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experience the blessing of God who gives us many more good gifts everyday through powerful prayer.