

All Access

Week 6- Intercession

- ***“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” -1 Timothy 2:1-6 (ESV)***
- *Rachel and I, unlike most married couples, we can disagree on some pretty petty and stupid things and make them a big deal when they’re not.*

- *I know, NO ONE else really does that, but its something that we go through*
- *For example one of our biggest disagreements is over milk shakes.*
- *Apparently Rachel comes from a family of dessert connoisseurs, and I am more of a simplist.*
 - *When I think of a milkshake, I think of a classic diner milkshake that you get with a burger and fries*
 - *But Rachel thinks of this cup of ice cream that you put in an entire sleeve of oreos, half a cheesecake, 40 strawberries, and God knows what else.*
- *And in my mind, you can’t call that a milkshake*
- *If you can’t drink it through a straw, if you have to eat it with a spoon, it’s ice cream and you can’t call it a milkshake*
 - *It’s something we’ll never agree on*

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- Oh, but you should have seen the trouble I got in this week.
- We were down at myrtle beach, staying at Lakewood campground, Rachel's family's vacation spot of choice.
- And they have the camper that they keep down there year round and they have it pulled out whenever they're ready to beach it up.
 - And it's a world I don't really understand.
 - They park that camper right in the middle of redneck village, they spend 20 hours a day sitting on the beach with no plan and doing nothing, I get a little restless but they enjoy it
 - But I made the mistake, one day while we were riding on the golf cart by saying, "Do we need to stop by the trailer or anything?"
- GASP! The audacity that I had, to refer to their beloved camper as a trailer!
- Apparently that was as offensive as slapping somebody's momma!
- And it was explained to me, If it's primary use is for vacation and camping, it cannot be called a trailer, it's a camper
- However, If you remove the vacation aspect to it, if it is not used for camping, then you can't call it a camper anymore.
- Point being, the way that something is used, can determine how something is defined and what it is called.
- I give that example because, I think about what we would call and define church today, and I can't help but wonder if Jesus, or the early apostles would agree.
 - I can't help but wonder if Paul would look at what the American church in general has become and say, "You can't call that church."
 - Why? Because Jesus said, "My house shall be called a house of Prayer"
 - Not a house of preaching
 - Not a house of songs

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- Not a house of programs
- Not a house of discipleship
- Not even a house of community and fellowship
- Jesus said His house should be called a house of Prayer!
- Therefore any sermon that I preach, should have the sole intent of leading you to go before the throne of Grace. If the sermons taught here don't lead you to a place of prayer, I can't call it a sermon, all I did was give a talk
- If the songs we sing together do not lead you to communicate and connect with God on a personal level, we can't call it worship.
- If the relationships we build here, do not lead us to dive deeper into seeking God's face together, we can't call it church. It's just a hang out spot.
- Make no mistake, every single aspect of our church experience and our Christian lives;

whether it comes to the preaching, singing, discipleship, community, fellowship, outreach, serving....EVERY SINGLE ASPECT must be covered in prayer, empowered by prayer, and resulting in prayer

- That's why Paul tells young pastor Timothy, when he is giving him coaching and instruction of how to organize and lead a church, he says, "FIRST OF ALL"
- ***"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people" -1 Timothy 2:1 (ESV)***
 - Paul says this is the number 1 priority and starting spot whenever it comes to church
- Now, it's like Paul breaks down prayer into 4 aspects here in this verse, and 3 of them we have already hit on pretty heavily throughout this series.
 - Supplication: Specific Requests
 - Prayers: General Address of God

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- Thanksgiving: Keeping a heart of Gratitude, so that we can keep our spiritual influence and make the biggest impact
 - The one we have not hit on much specifically yet is a very interesting word, and that is **Intercession**
 - The term intercession is very interesting because it's one of those words that Christians love to pull out to make themselves feel super spiritual.
 - It's a very Christianese term that can be very loosely thrown around when we don't really have a full grasp of what it means or the power within it
 - And to be fair, it can be difficult to keep up with what it means to intercede because it's used in various different ways throughout scripture
 - The definition for the word intercession in the Old Testament can be translated: **Intercession (Paga): To Come Betwixt, To Reach the Mark**
- Yes, that is the literal word that is used in the Hebrew Lexicon, and I so badly just wanted to say that word out loud in public.
 - But the modern boring version means to come between
 - A lot of times Moses would have to come between God and the people of Israel, why? Because they had done something stupid, like worshiping a golden cow and would sin against God
 - But the other definition of intercession we just saw was To Reach the Mark
 - Why is that important? Because almost every time Moses would have to specifically intercede for the people, he had to come in between them and God, because they had lost their way
 - Intercession in this context is mostly about direction.
 - So here is the first definition I want us to work from today, and that is:

- **Intercession is the Intersection of Our Way and God's Will**

- My mom had spent many years interceding for me, because I had lost my way
 - And she prayed for years and years and years, that God's will would intersect with my way, and that my way would get blown up so I would surrender to His will
 - And I am so thankful that she never gave up on those prayers.
- But this is something very important that we need to understand about prayer, and that is that
- Prayers don't change God's will or God's mind, they change our will and our minds
 - In Psalm 37, David writes, ***"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."*** -Psalm 37:4 (ESV)
 - Now, many having taken that prayer to mean, if we just pray and read our bible

enough then God will give us all of the things we want.

- But that's not how it works at all
- You see, whenever we delight in the Lord, *(that word delight giving the word picture of truly savoring every bite of a delicious meal)*, but whenever we truly delight in the Lord and bask in the Glory and Greatness of all that He is, dwelling on His Goodness, His Holiness, His Majesty
- Whenever we truly savor all that He is, He won't just start giving in to our hearts desire
- It's not like we can just bat our eye lashes at Him or flash those baby blues to try and get Him to give us what we want.
- No, when we delight ourselves in the Lord, our hearts desire will begin to line up with His Heart's desire
 - When you truly pursue the Lord, your wants and desires change.

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- Now there are still sinful tendencies that we still have, but those are no longer primary
- No, when we surrender to the Will and Majesty of the Father, our goals change, our priorities change, our perspectives change, what we desire most in this world changes because His Will has become more important than our way.
- Surrendering to the will of God is the primary purpose of intercession, why? Because we can ask God till we're blue in the face to solve a problem or heal someone physically, but if they are not saved eternally what does the healing even matter?
 - That in no way means that we should shy away from praying and interceding for the miraculous, we should
 - However, we can never allow the temporary to trump the eternal
- Even Paul clarifies that this is the mark that we are shooting for, because He says to make intercessions and prayers for all

people, even kings and authorities, so that we will lead quiet, peaceful, godly lives...and then expounds:

- ***“This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” -1 Timothy 2:3-4 (ESV)***
- Jesus even had to make this point to his disciples after He had sent them out to minister from town to town
- They came back all pumped up after seeing so many supernatural things and they said, “Jesus! Even demons submitted to us in Your Name!”
- And what was Jesus’ response?
- He said, that’s not what you should be celebrating, He says you should be celebrating the names that are written in the Book of Life.
- The greatest miracle that can ever happen in a person’s life, is whenever they were pursuing their own way, but they come to an

intersection with God's Will, and chose to follow Him instead

- All of Heaven rejoices over 1 sinner who comes into repentance
- So the Old Testament usage of the word intercession is more about spiritual direction. The intersection of God's will and our way.
- However whenever used in the New Testament, it gives more of a courtroom feel.
- It's almost like a defense lawyer
- So here's the 2nd definition I want us to work from:
- **Interceding is Intervening on Behalf of Another**
 - There will be times where you are burdened over an issue that a person is going through, or a group of people are going through and we intervene for that person or people whether we are asked to or not

- And we intervene by interceding, by taking that burden to God
- I've shared before that Pastor Robert Morris gave one definition for prayer saying, "**Prayer is the transference of a burden.**" -**Pastor Robert Morris**
 - He goes on to say that is you are still burdened after you pray, you didn't pray you just griped
 - But he also goes a step further when he suggested that interceding isn't just prayer, it is an act
 - Intercession is not just a general, "Your Will Be Done" type of prayer, it is taking spiritual action on behalf of another person
 - When you are interceding for a person, you are placing them before the throne of God whether they want to be there or not and whether they realize it or not
- Jesus is the example that we follow in this. Jesus is the Primary intercessor

- In verse 5 Paul refers to Him as Mediator. He says, ***“For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” -1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)***
- That word **Mediator** means: **“One who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to ratify a covenant.”**
- This point is so vitally important and powerful whenever we realize that Jesus is interceding for us
- Whenever Jesus ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father, He did not stop working
- No He is still taking action on our behalf, He’s the one that maintains our peace and friendship with God by hiding us in Him
- He’s constantly declaring the Promises of God over us before the Father
- Hebrews says, ***“Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near***

God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”-Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

- In this context the writer of Hebrews is saying that Jesus is always asking earnestly and anxiously for the Father’s blessings over our lives.
- And this is the example that we are to follow
 - If He never ceases to make intercession for us, we should never cease to make intercession for others.
 - We are to love and He has loved us, right?
 - And His love is shown in the fact that He is always pleading our case, always wanting God’s best for us
 - Jesus always does His part, but do we do ours?
 - Sometimes we get overwhelmed or suspicious of the idea of intercession, sometimes because we have seen people be manipulative with this

language before, and other times because we feel like we've tried it and it didn't work.

- However, we do not just make intercession to achieve a specific result, we do so first and foremost because scripture tells us to and we want to follow the example of Jesus.
- Also, we do not always know why we don't receive specific things that we ask for:
 - Sometimes it is obvious: James bluntly says, ***"You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives"*** -James 4: 2b-3 (NIV)
 - Too many times we just ask and ask of God without taking the time to delight ourselves in Him like David said in order to make sure our hearts are lined up with His.
 - In that case, we pray with zero spiritual perspective and our motives will be all off
- However, in other cases, Paul tells us that honestly, we don't know how to pray

- And there's grace for that. Paul says, ***"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."***
-Romans 8:26 (ESV)
 - God is so gracious in allowing us to be indwelt with His Holy Spirit especially whenever we are burdened with a situation that we don't know how to pray for
- Life is tricky and messy and confusing, and I don't know about you, but I have been faced with many situations that I try to take before God and have no idea what to say
- I have to be honest with God and tell Him, ***"Lord, I have no idea how I am supposed to pray over this situation!"***
 - *I don't know if I'm supposed to just pray for strength, perseverance, and endurance*
 - *I don't know if I'm supposed to pray for healing or supernatural intervention*

- *I don't know if I'm supposed to struggle or be delivered*
- But in those cases, I have to have the faith that the Holy Spirit will intercede on my behalf when I don't know how to pray because He's God who can see what I can't see, and knows what I don't know
 - And my finite human mind cannot comprehend the big picture and I have to trust that no matter the immediate outcome He is in ultimate control and is going to work everything out the way He see's right.
- And even when the results seem confusing in the moment, or whenever it seems that God isn't answering, that doesn't mean I give up
 - *Because my job is to pray and intercede and His job is to be God*
- A passage I think about, when talking about this topic, comes from an account in Acts chapter 12, you can turn there in your bibles if you'd like.
 - At this time the church is new and it's growing and there's a lot of great things happening, but there is also extreme persecution that they are facing as well.
 - And verse 1 says, ***"About that time, Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also."*** -Acts 12:1-3 (ESV)
 - At this point, the church could have given-up. They had just lost James. One of the staples of the church, one of Jesus' inner 3. He was one of the very first followers of Jesus, he was there at the mount of transfiguration, one of the Son's of Thunder! He was one of the most vital pieces to their cause and movement!
 - Do you think that he wasn't prayed for? Do you think no one was interceding for him? Do you think his brother John didn't feel his loss?

- Then, while their grieving James, now it looked like they were going to lose Peter as well.
- Really the only reason he hasn't been killed yet was because it was the time of the feast of unleavened bread, and no matter how many Jews wanted Peter dead, it still would have gone against their religion, tradition, and customs to have him executed during a religious holiday
 - So they would have to wait a few days.
- But even with all of the hurt, loss, and grief that the church was feeling over James, they still didn't give up on Peter. Verse 5 says: **“So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.”**
-Acts 12:5 (ESV)
 - One commentator described this as a steady stream of prayers being sent up to Heaven
- And in this account I think we see some pretty powerful truths about what happens whenever

we intercede. Let's read a little bit, starting in verse 6 of Acts 12:

- **“Now when Herod was about to bring [Peter] out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and followed him.”** -Acts 12: 6-9a (ESV)
- The passage goes on to say that Peter, at the time, didn't even think what he was experiencing was real. He thought he was just having a vision.

- But eventually, he made it back to the house where the church was gathered together praying.
- Peter knocks at the door, a servant girl named Rhoda, goes to the door.
- She whispers, "Who is it?"he whispers back, "It's Peter...let me in!"
- And verse 14 says, ***"Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed." -Acts 12: 14-16 (ESV)***
- It's almost comical, how they are in their praying meeting, it gets interrupted by the very answer that they were praying for.
- And their immediate response was to get annoyed at the audacity of the servant girl interrupting their prayer meeting, and refuse to believe her even though the exact thing they were praying for was right on the other side of the door
- And we can give them a hard time, but I would have probably acted the same exact way!
 - They just lost James, persecution is just getting worse, people in that room are hiding for their very lives because of their faith.
 - They're almost expecting the worst, but hoping to get through it
 - Who knows if they had actually seen a specific request get answered the specific way they were specifically asking for
 - That's not the most common thing in the world.
- Because remember, we don't see the big picture and all of the interworking of heaven, and we don't always know how to pray or exactly what we should be praying for

- But I do believe that every single time we pray, something does happen, whether we see it or not.
- And I love verse 7 of this passage so much, because I think it shows us a few things that we can confidently say happens, every single time we pray and intercede
- Let's look at that verse again: ***“And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands.”***
-Acts 12:7 (ESV)
 - So what happens when we pray? Well first:
 - **WHEN WE PRAY: SOMETHING IS SENT FROM HEAVEN**
 - In this particular case, it was an angel.
 - You could think, well what was sent in James' case? Where was his angel?
- An angel wasn't sent in that case, but you know what was sent? Faith.
 - A faith strong enough to die for.
 - A faith among the church that would continue to send a steady stream of prayers to God even in the midst of grief and fear.
- Every time you pray with, over, or for a person, people, or place, something is sent from Heaven,
 - It may not be exactly what we asked for, but something is sent
- The writer of Hebrews says, ***“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*** -Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)
 - If nothing else, we can be confident that we will receive mercy and grace whenever we approach the throne of God

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- Whatever form that grace and mercy is shown is up to Him
 - Whether its an angel of deliverance
 - Whether is faith to endure
 - Whether it's wisdom from heaven
 - Whether it's strength in the midst of trouble
 - Whether it's a miracle
- Something is sent from Heaven every time we pray
- God invites us to intervene, intercede and come between Him and this world just like he did with Moses
- CPTA PRAYERS
 - Out of the two - three years that I put this into practice, I only saw 1 person healed, and only 1 person said no to the prayer.
 - But it was such an opportunity for ministry because every single time someone would come in for their initial consultation, they

are physically hurting and emotionally frustrated.

- They didn't want to be going through what they were going through
- There was a heaviness that every patient was carrying.
- But every single time we would pray in those patients rooms, you could almost feel a shift in the atmosphere
- It was almost tangible that you could feel that something was sent from Heaven when we prayed, and it would change the mood of the entire therapy process.
- How much more would you pray, how much more confidence would you pray with, if you really believed that every time you prayed, God sent something from heaven??
- So, the church was praying, and then God sends an angel to the cell, and then **“And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck**

Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands.” -Acts 12:7 (ESV)

- Here’s the next thing that happens when we pray:
- **WHEN WE PRAY: GOD SHEDS LIGHT ON THE SITUATION**
 - Whenever we pray, we bring a specific situation or person to God, it’s like heaven shines a spotlight on it
 - God wants us to know that He see’s the situation and that He is giving it attention
 - Also, whenever we pray, God will give us insight to the situation if we are listening
 - We talked a few weeks ago about what it’s like to Hear God’s voice and the importance of seeking and listening for God’s voice
 - So whenever we truly pray, intercede, and transfer the burden over to God on behalf of another person, the Lord will give you insight

to how to think, act, and pray over that situation

- He will give you the light of perspective to how to love that person well, but you have to listen for it
- Many times, intercessory prayer is more about God changing the intercessor
 - Paul makes it clear that a result in our lives of prayers and intercession is that we will become peaceful, quiet, godly, and dignified individuals.
 - My prayers for other people may not always change them, but they always change me
- Tyler Stanton said in his book, ***“Sometimes God will move heaven and earth, bending space and time to weave a supernatural narrative in response to our prayers. But God always purposes prayer to change the heart of the intercessor themselves.”***

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-Tyler Stanton: Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools.

- When we pray, God will shed light on the situation, sometimes to change it, but always to change you
- And finally,

- WHEN WE PRAY: CHAINS FALL OFF

- Just like those chains fell off of Peter's hands and feet, prayer has the power to break chains off of hearts and minds
- I shared a little bit before how my momma never gave up interceding for me
- Even when I got to my worst, arrested for the 2nd time, after coming home from spending the night in prison
- I knew I wanted to change but I had too many things that I was holding on to, I finally had a breakthrough, realized it's all or nothing, and truly decided to follow the Lord

- And little did I know, at that very moment just down the hall, my mom was interceding for me, and as she was praying she stopped, looked up, called out the enemies of hell directly, and said, "Get off my boy!" and at that moment, the chains broke off of me and it led me to being here today.

- And I know if the chains can be broken off of me, they can be broken off of anyone

- That's why I am so passionate about doing what I am doing, because I have experienced first hand the transforming power of the Gospel and the power of prayer over my life and the lives of others.

- *I'll share one last story.*

- *Downtown Greenville*

- When the people of God decide to make prayer the priority

- Whenever we are proactive with prayer rather than reactive with prayer

- POWERFUL THINGS HAPPEN

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- Brother and sister, don't wait for things to get bad before you practice interceding
- Don't wait for the struggle to get real before you delight yourself in the Lord
- Take full advantage of your Access to the Throne Room of Heaven!
 - Throw away all of your expectations of what you think is supposed to happen when you pray
 - And instead just be confident that something will be sent from heaven, He will shed light on it, and chains will be broken
 - Some of us may need some chains broken right now!
- *James says, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."*
-James 5:16 (NIV)
- So how about we start putting that Power into Effect right now!?