

“The Blessings of Prayer”

True Riches #3

INTRODUCTION

In this our third study in the True Riches sermon series, we look at the blessings of prayer. How often do we take time to consider the great privilege we have been given to come boldly into the presence of God and be heard at any given moment (Hebrews 4:16)? The scriptures give us insight and instruction concerning what prayer is and what it accomplishes. If we wish to increase the power and effectiveness of our own prayers, and partake of its blessings, we must take this knowledge and apply it to our lives.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What is the first prayer you remember praying?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Prayer relieves our personal anxiety

Q1. Read Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:31-33

In Philippians 4:6, Paul gives a simple solution to the problem of anxiety: prayer. He outlines three distinct steps in the process. First we are to come to God and bring the source of our anxiety before Him. Next we ask and petition God for our need. And finally we express our gratitude and thanks to God as we release and trust Him with our concern. What types of situations commonly cause us anxiety? What encouragement did Jesus give to those who were anxious in Matthew 6:33? What is one thing can you expect as a result of bringing your concerns before God in prayer? (see Philippians 4:7)

Prayer unites us with other believers

Q2. Read Acts 4:24, 31-32; James 5:14-16

Not only can we approach God through our prayer at any time individually, as believers, but we can join together to come before God in prayer corporately. In the book of Acts we find members of the early church raised their voices together seeking God. How did God’s response impact the relationships in the community of believers? In the book of James we are instructed to pray for one another, confess our sins to one another and be anointed by the elders for healing. Have you ever had an “accountability partner” with whom you confessed your sins and prayed? If so share your experience with the group.

Prayer releases God’s supernatural power

Q3. Read Matthew 21:22, James 4:3; Luke 22:42

To gain an understanding of prayer requires searching the scriptures thoroughly. The application of Matthew 21:22 out of context is likely to yield

disappointment. What does a quick check of James 4:3 reveal as one reason our prayers are not answered? The purpose of prayer isn't really to get “my” will done. Even in His prayer in Gethsemane, what was it Jesus sought to accomplish? (Luke 22:42) Those who have denied themselves, taken up their cross and followed Jesus Christ, are more concerned with God's will, than their own. They have great power in prayer and the promise of Matthew 21:22 is for them.

Q4 Read John 16:22-24; John 14:13-14

Prayer is a powerful force and God has chosen to involve us through it. What does Jesus anticipate being accomplished as a result of answered prayer (see John 14:13) Similarly in John 16:24, what response does He anticipate in you when God gives to you what you have asked for in Jesus’ name? Pick three prayer requests that your group has and commit to pray regularly for them. Keep a group journal of how God is answering your prayers.

WRAP-UP

Through prayer we have access to the very throne room of God. The act of praying can in itself result in blessing us by relieving our anxieties and uniting us with other believers. But greater still is the joy and blessing we receive when we experience the display of God’s supernatural power in response to our prayers. Not that we would get our will done, but that God’s will would be done and He would be glorified. What an incredible treasure we have as we join with God in seeing His kingdom come through prayer.

Memory Verse

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:6-7 ESV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:_____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)_____

Challenge

Pastor Ron has set aside the third Wednesday of each month for all-church prayer at New Life. Mark your calendar for 7 pm August 19th and meet with your group members to join in corporate prayer.

Hebrews 4:16 ESV - 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Philippians 4:6-7 ESV - 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Q2

James 5:14-16 NIV - 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 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.

Matthew 21:22 NIV - 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

James 4:3 ESV - 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Luke 22:42 ESV - 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

John 16:22-24 ESV - 22 So also you have sorrow now, but I [Jesus] will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. 23 In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Prayer requests con't _____

[illegible]