

March 6 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 6: Prayer, Not Despair

Is there an experience or situation that has deeply influenced your view that God hears your prayers?

What effect does your prayer life have on you and those around you?

The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:6: *But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.* God wants relationship and it is in prayer that He is most present for *God inhabits the praise of his people* (Psalm 22:3). He accounts Himself glorified by our addresses to Him, in seeking approval and assistance in every condition. While integral to one another, pray and supplication are not the same. Prayer is devotion (worship and adoration), i.e., silent submission, in which the will bows itself before God. It is the prayer of quiet trust, in which we do not so much seek as cleave; the prayer of still fruition¹. With Paul, prayer is followed by humble supplication as we give no demands but we petition God for the supply of our specific needs and wants. In the midst, we give thanks knowing in all of our needs and desires, God is all that we need and desire.

In the Parable of the Unjust Judge (also known as the Parable of the Persistent Woman) from Luke 18:1-8, Jesus assures us that God hears the day and night pleas of his people and brings answers quickly and justly, unlike the unjust and reluctant judge of the parable. Our God, out of great compassion, hears and answers the persistent prayer with great mercy and grace. We are reminded by the Apostle Paul to *pray without ceasing, rejoicing always and giving thanks in everything, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us* (Thessalonians 5:16-18).

In the miracle stories of Jesus' giving sight to the blind beggar, we are shown that God already knows what we need while doing His faith work and healing within us as we ask (Luke 18: 35-43, Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52). The persistence of the blind beggar is shown as he ignores the ridicule of the crowd to be quiet and shouts out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!". When Jesus asks the blind man what wants Him to do, he shows great faith in not asking for alms but says, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus tells him, "*Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you:*" The healed man follows Jesus, praising God, leading others to praise God. In Mark 10:46-52, we find a similar story but with some slight differences. The blind man is known as Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. When Bartimaeus stood up to go to Jesus, he threw his coat aside. In those days, beggars wore a special color of cloak which identified them as professional beggars. By leaving his cloak behind, Bartimaeus was not only abandoning his livelihood and but also finding his new identity in Christ, who knew him and healed him. Through the healing stories, we are shown that Jesus can go far above and beyond our present condition with faith. So, we may question - are our prayers big enough?

The story of the selection of Rebekah as wife for Abraham's son Isaac demonstrates God's answer to very specific and trusting prayer while fulfilling His sovereign will. When Abraham was 100 years old, he knew the importance of finding his beloved son Isaac a virtuous wife, of God's choosing. He sent his most trusted servant Eliezer to pick a wife from the daughters of his own kinsmen, in the land of Mesopotamia. Over the years, Eliezer had witnessed Abraham's faith in God and seen the Lord working in his master's life. And like his master, Eliezer was a man who learned the importance of trusting God in every circumstance of life, and seeking Him in prayer. Upon reaching a well of water outside the city of Paddan-aram, Eliezer prayed a simple prayer to the Lord. Eliezer asked God to show loving-kindness to his master, by granting him success in his mission. He said, "*may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels*

also'—may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this, I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master." His prayer was not only that his mission would be successful, and God's loving-kindness would be shown to his master, but also that God's perfect will would be carried out in the choice of a wife for Isaac. Eliezer's request was not vague and imprecise and before he finished praying, Rebekah arrived at the well with God answering Eliezer's prayer in her words and actions. Rebekah was the girl God had chosen.

The Apostle Peter says *cast all your cares on Jesus because He cares for you.* (1 Peter 5:7). Peter was a fisherman, so "casting" as in a net was common for him although not a common word used in the Bible. Casting suggests direction and purpose. The nets of our lives become tangled and twisted masses that become too heavy and burdensome to manage. In humility, submitting to and trusting in God, we heave our cares and troubles into His mighty hands as He brings us into a greater faith and Presence because of His loving-kindness.

Just as the watchmen of old (Isaiah 62:6), we are reminded to NEVER stop praying, especially for others. *Always pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayer and requests. Stay alert and keep praying for all the Lord's people (Ephesians 6:18).*

A song to reflect and pray on:

[\[OFFICIAL VIDEO\] Sweet Hour of Prayer - Radiance Acappella - Bing video](#)

Looking ahead – Sunday March 13

Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World

Section 3: Leave Your Concerns With Him,,,With Thanksgiving

Chapter 7 – Great Gratitude

ⁱ MacLaren Expositions of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren