

It's Hard to Pray  
TTAHTD #11 | Romans 8:26-30  
April 25, 2021

### Pre-Sermon Remarks

New series starts today | Next 6 weeks

- It's Hard to Pray | Romans 8:26-30
- It's Hard to Believe Abuse Could Happen in the Church | Matthew 7:15-20
- It's Hard to Truly Believe That You're Loved | 1 John 3:19-24
- It's Hard to Come to Grips With Hell | Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
- It's Hard to Interact With People of Other Faiths | Isaiah 43:1-7
- It's Hard to Stop a Habitual Sin | 2 Peter 2:17-22

### PRAYER

#### 1: Prayer is vitally important

**J.C. Ryle** Just as the first sign of the life of an infant when born into the world is the act of breathing, so the first act of men and women when they are born again is praying.

- I heard my children's first squawk...except for kid #2
- It's impossible to be a Christian who doesn't pray
- *Prayer is more important in the life of a believer than anything else*
  - The Bible is good! But illiterate people can have relationship with God
  - Church is good! But solitary confinement or first convert in a remote village
  - Serving is good! But disabled people can have relationship God
  - Preaching is good! But mute people can have relationship with God

#### 2: Prayer is communication

*Prayer is communication with God* | very open, broad definition. Shouldn't be complicated!

#### 3: Prayer is challenging

- We know what prayer is, and we know that prayer is vitally important, but we don't pray
- Now, don't be too hard on yourself. This has been a problem for many for a long time!
  - **Romans 8** <sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should...
  - Jesus' disciples asked, "teach us to pray"

#### Six Reasons We Don't Pray

1. Gospel gap | Romans 8:28-30
  - a. **Romans 8** <sup>28</sup> We know that God works together in all things for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.
2. Unconfessed sin | 1 Peter 3:7 (J.C. Ryle)

3. Unaddressed shame (fear) | Genesis 3:7
4. Busyness and distraction | Matthew 13 parable of the seeds “cares of the world”
5. Self-reliance | Proverbs 3:5 “lean not on your own understanding”
6. Lack of instruction | Luke 11:1 Want to spend some time on this today, but first...

### Encouragement to Pray

**Romans 8** <sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us, with inexpressible groanings. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

1. There is no “wrong” method of prayer
  - a. I’m not saying we can’t pray wrongly, of course we do: Jesus talks about showoff prayer, James about only praying for our selfish desires, Isaiah’s dead ritual.
  - b. I’m not talking about that, I’m talking about genuine attempts at regular prayer
2. The Holy Spirit is teaching you
3. The Holy Spirit is praying for you (and God the Father agrees)

### Practical Instruction

1. The Lord’s Prayer pattern | Matthew 6:9-13
  - a. Our Father - relationship through Jesus
  - b. Holy is your name - praise and adoration
  - c. Your kingdom come... - things are broken here
  - d. Daily bread - provision
  - e. Repent and forgive - daily!
  - f. Deliver us from evil - pray against the enemy
2. Prayer journal | Deuteronomy 6, write things on your doorposts
  - a. Helps you **remember** who and what to pray for
  - b. Helps you **go back** and see God’s answered prayer
3. Pray the Psalms | Psalm 23
  - a. **Psalm 23** <sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need. <sup>2</sup>He lets me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters. <sup>3</sup>He renews my life; he leads me along the right paths for his name’s sake. <sup>4</sup>Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup>Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.
4. Solitude, silence, meditation | Psalm 77, 130, 131
  - a. Solitude: getting alone (Jesus said to go in private) | turn off your phone
  - b. Silence: you can turn off the noise “out there” but your mind has a lot of noise
  - c. Meditate: ponder, muse, mull over | Christian meditation is not pagan meditation
    - i. Awareness of the presence of God
    - ii. Contemplation of the attributes of God

### **Get to Praying**

1. Diagnose the problem | sin? fear? practical?
  - a. Be honest with God, self, and others
2. Start somewhere | do not overcomplicate this
  - a. Monday night prayer!
3. Try something new | some of you pray well, but need to add
4. Make it regular | Daniel 3:10

### **Prayer Time | Before Communion**

**Psalm 28** <sup>1</sup>Lord, I call to you; my rock, do not be deaf to me. If you remain silent to me, I will be like those going down to the Pit. <sup>2</sup>Listen to the sound of my pleading when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your holy sanctuary.

<sup>3</sup>Do not drag me away with the wicked, with the evildoers, who speak in friendly ways with their neighbors while malice is in their hearts. <sup>4</sup>Repay them according to what they have done—according to the evil of their deeds. Repay them according to the work of their hands; give them back what they deserve. <sup>5</sup>Because they do not consider what the Lord has done or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and not rebuild them.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed be the Lord, for he has heard the sound of my pleading. <sup>7</sup>The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart celebrates, and I give thanks to him with my song. <sup>8</sup>The Lord is the strength of his people; he is a stronghold of salvation for his anointed. <sup>9</sup>Save your people, bless your possession, shepherd them, and carry them forever.

### **Benediction**

**Matthew 6:9-13** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.