

Prayer Life of Jesus Christ

Introduction

Jesus prayed! Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus prayed while He was on earth. This is amazing because it tells us of our deep need of prayer. If even the Son of God needed to pray, how much more do we stand in need of prayer!

The First Step

The beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth was begun with prayer. As Jesus was baptized marking the beginning of His ministry He prayed. And as He was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a bodily form like a dove (Ref. Luke 3:21,22).

We too have significant beginnings in life. But do we pray then? Jesus thought it important to begin His public ministry with prayer. We too need to follow His example. Let us not move out to take important steps in life without prayer. But first let us seek God's guidance and grace and strength in prayer. Then with His blessing resting upon us let us take the first steps during significant beginnings in our lives. Such praying is crucial for success during important turning points in our lives.

We do not know what Jesus might have prayed for at the beginning of His public ministry. But He must have certainly prayed for strength by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And God anointed Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit. If Jesus needed the anointing of the Holy Spirit before He ministered to people to meet their needs how much more do we need this blessed anointing! And the surest way to receive this blessing is to pray and ask God for it.

Alone with God

During many times in His life, Jesus withdrew from His disciples and the crowds to be alone to pray. He often went up on a mountainside or went to solitary or lonely places to pray. Sometimes He even went to pray very early in the morning, while it was still dark (Ref. Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 5:16).

These habits of Jesus teach us some important truths about prayer. Though we may pray while in a group or in a prayer meeting, there is a great need to get alone to pray. For this, if necessary, we need to find a place within our home or elsewhere, where we will be free from disturbance. We need to get away from people too. Though the company of believers is helpful for fellowship, for some intense moments of prayer, one needs to be alone. That is why Jesus got up early and also went to solitary places to pray.

It is in such undisturbed quietness (Ref. Psalm 23:2) that our souls will be ready for sweet communion with God our Father. For often God does not shout His messages to us, but gently whispers them to us (Ref. 1 Kings 19:12). And God will speak thus only to those who have shut down every other sound and every other presence to hear the voice of God.

The Night Watch

But at times, being in quiet and solitary places alone is not enough. We need to spend more time with God in prayer. This is evident from the way Jesus went about His task of choosing the twelve apostles. Jesus spent a whole night on a mountainside in prayer before He chose the twelve apostles (Ref. Luke 6:12). It is very clear from this that Jesus attached such great importance to prayer. Jesus had to take the decision the next day. This was very important because the apostles were to be with Him for the rest of His public ministry. It was to them that He would teach the truths of the kingdom of God. They were the ones who would later take the gospel to different parts of the earth after His death and resurrection. They were again destined to be the pillars of His Church. So the decision of that day was of great importance.

Let us follow His example. Let us spend more time in prayer when we have to take great decisions in life especially when decisions relate to matters like higher education, employment and marriage, let us seek God's face more earnestly. God will then guide us in our decisions that we may not need to regret later in life. He will then cause the blessings to shower on the course of action we take. It is thus of great importance to spend more time in prayer before taking important decisions in life.

Praying for Others

Jesus prayed for others too. That is why people came to Jesus with their little children that Jesus might place His hands on them and pray for them (Ref. Matthew 19:13). Again, Jesus, towards the end of His life informed Peter that Satan had asked to sift him as wheat. But Jesus added that He had prayed for him that his faith might not fail (Ref. Luke 22:32).

Later Jesus prayed specially for all His disciples. Not only that, He prayed for all who were to believe in Him (Ref. John 17). That includes you and me too. This reveals Jesus' great love towards us. And it teaches us that if love is absent, then we cannot pray meaningfully for others. Jesus' prayer for others came as a result of His overflowing love for them. Let us also seek to follow His example.

Prayer Attracts

Then there was an unmistakable quality about Jesus' prayer life. There was a beauty and simplicity and majesty about it that attracted people. No wonder it was when Jesus had finished praying while at a certain place that a disciple came forward and asked Him to teach them to pray (Ref. Luke 11:1). Something in Jesus' prayer life had influenced them. The result was that Jesus taught them how to pray.

Prayer should attract people. But unfortunately in our Christian world there are many who make a show of prayer. Sometimes people preach in prayer and make it very lengthy. Some others make it an occasion of shouting as if God would honor the prayer for its loudness. Many prayers are so dry and empty of compassion that it fails to move the heart of God. We should learn that real prayer has the power to attract. It has a godly quality about it that makes others want to learn to pray too. Jesus' prayer life had this quality and let us seek to learn and imitate Him in prayer.

Teaching Moments

Jesus' prayer life also helped the disciples to learn significant lessons of the kingdom of heaven. It was while Jesus was praying at one time and the disciples were with Him that Jesus chose as the moment of revelation. It was this point of time that Jesus chose to ask His disciples the question, Who do the crowds say I am? Certainly, some aspect of Jesus' sweet communion with His Heavenly Father must have influenced Peter to say that Jesus was The Christ of God in response to Jesus' question Who do you say I am? (Ref. Luke 9: 18-20).

Confidence in Prayer

Jesus' prayer life had another amazing aspect to it. It is that Jesus not even for a moment doubted the fact that God always heard Him. At the tomb of Lazarus Jesus looked up and thanked God the Father for hearing Him. Jesus added that He knew God always heard Him but that He had spoken thus for the benefit of the listeners that they may believe that God had sent Him. It was only after thanking God that Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb (Ref. John 11:41-43). This same confidence is seen when Jesus gave thanks by looking up to heaven before He fed the five thousand and four thousand people respectively (Ref. Matthew 14:19, 15:36, Mark 6:41, 8:6, Luke 9:16, John 6:11).

We have to learn to have such confidence in our praying. We should know that no prayer prayed in Jesus' name, no request made in Jesus' name, no praise rendered in Jesus' name, is lost. It is all heard by God. And we have to have the confidence that God will answer it appropriately for our highest good. Jesus' confidence in prayer is something we must learn to imitate.

Obedience in Prayer

Jesus prayed during His greatest Hour of need. When the time came for Him to bear the sins of the world upon the Cross of Calvary, Jesus was in agony. We find Him moving to the Garden of Gethsemane and pouring out His soul in prayer. Here we find the great obedience of Jesus in prayer. He knew that God the Father could remove the cup of suffering. He stated that fact in prayer. But He also went further by praying for God's will to be done. Jesus did not want His will to be done. Perfect Obedience! Unquestioning submission! This kind of prayer is the most difficult kind of prayer. Yet Jesus prayed this at His moment of greatest agony (Ref. Matthew 26: 36-46 and Mark 14:32-42).

There is a great lesson to be learnt here. Nothing pleases God more in prayer than to see us pray for His will to be done. That is why in the prayer Jesus taught it is said, Your will be done. (Ref. Matthew 6:10).

The Goal of Prayer

Another important aspect the goal of prayer is revealed in the prayer of Jesus found in John 17. Here Jesus is praying that He may be glorified. Jesus states that He had brought glory on earth to God by completing the work God gave Him to do. So Jesus prays that the glory, which He had with God before the world began, may be restored.

Our lives should be such that it should glorify God. Our work and deeds should be aimed to glorify God. Therefore when we pray; we should pray for that answer to prayer, which will bring glory to God.

Prayer is Warfare!

Finally, the writer of Hebrews turns the spotlight on one aspect of Jesus' prayer life that is not highlighted in the gospels: During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission (Hebrews5:7NIV).

Much of this remains a mystery. Yet it teaches us that prayer is not always filled with sweet language and fine expressions. Many times prayer turns out to be a battle. It is a valley of tears and struggle. The soul has to cry out to God. But one can have the assurance that God hears it all and answers them all. Therefore let us continue to pray.

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