

PRAYER: CONFESSIONS OF A CONTROLAHOLIC

Loosening Your Grip VII

Matthew 6:1-13

INTRODUCTION

- A. Is there such a thing as “wasted “ prayer?
- B. Are there times in your life you have prayed with no response?
- C. Three lessons in prayer to loosen grip of being in control.

I. PRAYER AND HYPOCRITES.

- A. Matthew 6:1-5.
- B. Don't Practice Faith on Stage.
 - 1. Vs. 1 – Righteousness to be noticed by men (KJ – alms).
 - 2. Vs. 2 – Praying for the purpose to be noticed.
 - 3. Vs. 5 – Giving for the purpose to be noticed.
 - 4. Vs. 5 – Reward already received.
- C. Our Prayers are for a Divine Listener.

II. PRAYER AND THE PAGANS.

- A. Don't Babble [*useless chatter*], vss. 7-8.
 - 1. Does it mean not to repeat items in prayers?
 - a. Garden of Gethsemane, same prayer three times.
 - b. Ps. 136 – for His lovingkindness is everlasting (26 times).
 - 2. Does it mean not to pray long prayers?
 - a. Jesus often prayed all night long.
 - b. Prayer examples found in Scripture:
 - i. 1 Kgs. 8 – dedication of temple by Solomon.
 - ii. Ezra 9 – Ezra confessing sins of the people.
 - iii. Jn. 17 – Jesus' prayer before betrayal (be glorified, guard apostles, unity for apostles and US!).
 - c. Instructed to pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. 5:17.
 - 3. Does it mean not to pray about minor things?
 - a. No warning concerning prayer over minor things.
 - b. Jesus often dealt with problems of only one person.
 - c. Paul prayed for his thorn in the flesh.
 - d. Phil. 4:6 – In everything by prayer and supplication...
 - 4. Does it mean not to pray in order to impress others?
 - a. Vss. 1-6 covers this.
- B. Don't Pray with Answers.
 - 1. Eph. 1:15-23 – eyes of their heart to be enlightened.
 - 2. Phil. 4:4-7 – peace that surpasses all understanding.
 - 3. Pray to get understanding, not because we have.

III. PRAYER AND JESUS.

- A. Prayer for Giving up Control, Mt. 6:9-13.
 - 1. Our Father in heaven – recognition of higher power.

2. Hallowed be Your name – we don't make His name holy, we recognize His ability to keep name sacred.
 3. Your kingdom come – we confess our lack of control.
 4. Bread, forgiveness, temptation – we seek what we can't do on our own.
 5. For Yours is the kingdom – YOU'RE IN CONTROL!
 - a. You're in control. The KINGDOM!
 - b. You're in control. The POWER!
 - d. You're in control. The GLORY!
 6. Prayer shows our reliance on God.
- B. Leave Room for God.
1. Jewish folk story concerning man whose house was too small.
 - a. Went to rabbi asking advice.
 - b. Add a goat, then chickens, then whole barnyard.
 - c. I can't stand it! Return them to barn.
 - d. Never realized how big house was.
 2. We have a need to empty our lives, our agendas, and acknowledge God as in control.
 3. Too often our prayer lives:
 - a. Command God's performance.
 - b. Enlighten God to the solutions we see.
 - c. Not seeking answers, but rather dictating solutions.

CLOSING

- A. Loosening our grip – and letting God!
- B. As Jesus prayed in the Garden, "*Your will be done – not mine!*" Lk. 22:42