

## **5-5-19 Message** **Hindrances To Receiving Answers To Our Prayers**

Last week was the national day of prayer. We focused on prayer last week in our messages. Last Sunday about 6AM in the morning I wrote the Scripture Song that we sang this morning. I thought it good to put it in the Bulletin this morning and once again speak to you on the subject of prayer.

Every great servant of the Lord in the Bible was a servant of prayer.

In Genesis 4:26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

When they called upon the name of the Lord, this means a group of people started to get close to God and become people of prayer!

Enoch it says walked with God. Synonymous with he became a man who prayed!

Abraham was a man of prayer.

Moses was a man of prayer.

David was a man of prayer.

Of David how often do we read: "He inquired of the Lord.."

How often he was saved in battle because he prayed to the Lord.

Last week we learned about how God gave great deliverance to Hezekiah because he prayed to the Lord.

Is there any example of great people in the Bible who were not great prayer warriors for the Lord?

This past Thursday at the National Day of Prayer Mike Pence said that President Trump opens each of his cabinet meetings in prayer. There were very few presidents who did that ever.

Now the greatest spiritual tool that we have in our life is the power of prayer.

This morning I want to talk to you about things that can hinder our prayer life.

### ***GREATEST HINDRANCES TO OUR PRAYER LIFE:***

#### ***I. ONE OF THE GREATEST HINDRANCES TO OUR PRAYER LIFE IS SIN.***

***IF WE WANT OUR PRAYERS ANSWERED WE NEED TO KEEP OUR HEARTS RIGHT WITH GOD:***

##### ***1. WE KEEP OUR HEARTS RIGHT BY NOT REGARDING INIQUITY IN OUR HEARTS:***

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

King Saul was an example of a person whose prayer life was hindered because of sin!

I Samuel 14:36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

**I Samuel 14:37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.**

Instead of repenting Saul just keep getting deeper and deeper into is spiritual slump until we read:

**I Samuel 28:6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.**

Saul's sin and rebellion was so bad that the day of his death he went to the witch of Endor to conjure up Samuel because God stopped speaking to him and answering his prayers.

How do people get into such a state?

Is it possible to get into such a bad spiritual state that your prayers would just bounce off the ceiling?

We see it happened to Saul. What was his sin?

I Samuel 15:23 **For rebellion** is as the sin of witchcraft, and **stubbornness** is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

I don't know if I can explain it but there is a spiritual state a person can enter into that is very dark and from which there seems no return.

It is a state of willful rebellion, willful stubbornness.

This happens when we willingly and knowingly enter into sin, and plan to sin, and our conscience is seared by our desire to sin.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

The idea is to enjoy and live with it, and dwell with it!

A Christian should be grieved by sin, if we sin it should grieve us and trouble us.

I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

We live in a sinful world, and this world trips us up in our thought life, and in so many other ways. However, a true Christian will be grieved in their heart when they sin, and will cry out to God for forgiveness, and then God is faithful and just to forgive us.

There is a difference with a true believer and a true child of God in this regard. A true child of God has a different spirit about them. They do not enjoy sin. They may trip and stumble in their life and sin, but they will be grieved by it and confess their sin to God for forgiveness.

## **2. WE KEEP OUR HEARTS RIGHT WITH GOD BY NOT GRIEVING THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

These verses are so important to understanding what it is to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. I think I could almost take a whole sermon to preach this subject alone!

Consider:

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

In this passage is a formula, for not grieving the Holy Spirit of God: I believe the sins that cause us to grieve the Holy Spirit of God in our lives is probably one of the greatest hinderances to our prayer life today!

Remember we cannot communicate with God without the Holy Spirit of God!

It is the Holy Spirit of God that dwells in our hearts that allows for communication with our heavenly father.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Apart from the Holy Spirit we have no ability to communicate with God.

Therefore we need to guard that spirit, because sin will grieve it and squelch it and hurt our prayer life.

### **How do we grieve the Holy Spirit?**

#### **A. USING CORRUPT COMMUNICATION WILL GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Jesus himself is called the WORD.

God uses words to communicate himself to us.

We need to guard our words, and not let our words be corrupted.

When we hang with the world soon we start talking like the world and using the language of the world. WORDS ARE A SACRED THING TO GOD.

I do not understand Christians who think they can use the language of the world and then call out to God in prayer and expect God to hear them.

The world uses our Lord's name in vain. A Christian should never use the Lord's name in vain. God, Jesus, Lord, Christ, these are sacred words not to be used as expressions.

The world uses crude vulgar words, Christians ought to never use crude and vulgar words in their conversation. Your words are to be sacred. Do you really think God is going to answer your prayers when your mouth is like the cesspool of the world?

I Peter 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Your language should be like the Bible in structure, not foul, not crude, etc, Such language will grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

### ***B. Bitterness will hinder your prayer life:***

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Bitterness, is expounded in this passage.

Bitterness breeds wrath and anger towards others.

You cannot come into the presence of God with bitterness, wrath or anger in your heart.

As sinfulness abounds in this world, we cannot help but get worked up and angry about some things. When you come into the presence of God put these things away from you, you are entering into the Holy of Holies, and at the throne of God dwells no sin, or evil. Leave the evil back here on this planet.

People that dwell in the presence of God have a sweet spirit!

Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Israel and Ahab's family. When Ahab died his son Jehoram became king. Ahab was wicked, and Jehoram was wicked.

Jehoshaphat loved the Lord but he got tangled up with Israel. They decided to go and fight against Moab and things were not going well for them and Jehoshaphat asked to enquire of the Lord over the matter. He asked if there was a prophet of the Lord they could go to for help. Jehoram says, yes there was Elisha nearby. So they went to see Elisha. Now let us read what happened:

II Kings 3:10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

II Kings 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

II Kings 3:12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

II Kings 3:13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

II Kings 3:14 And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

II Kings 3:15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

Notice Elisha was angry at Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and rightly so. But he needed something to calm his spirit in order to get into the presence of the Lord. So he called for a minstrel. The right kind of music should prepare our spirits to hear from God.

Anger, wrath, bitterness will hinder our communication with God.

These things dwell on earth not in heaven.

When we pray we pray Our Father who art in Heaven, let us not forget that.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

### ***C. Evil Speaking and Gossip and Clamor will grieve the Holt Spirit .***

Spend more time praying and less time gossiping.

This is why I am not on facebook I don't want to spend all my time listening to the complaints and the evil speaking, and the clamor on the internet.

Everybody knows everybody's business. I don't want o know everybody's business, I have enough problems of my own every day!

Evil speaking: Means to vilify people, cast accusations, constantly looking for their bad. The Bible forbids this:

Leviticus 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

This is what the Old Testament says, how much more should we do this in the New Testament. We are under the command to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This is the Evil speaking that is forbidden in the Bible and will hinder your prayer life. It will grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

These sins will hinder your prayer life. The Bible says, PUT THESE AWAY!

PUT THESE AWAY, WITH ALL MALICE.

People that are filled with malice are mischievous people, hurtful people, evil, naughty, injurious people!

IS GOD GOING TO ANSWER THE PRAYERS OF PEOPLE LIKE THIS?

NO. THESE SINS WILL HINDER YOUR PRAYER LIFE!

## ***II. NOT KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING GOD WILL BE A HINDRANCE TO OUR PRAYERS.***

### **CONSIDER THE GREATEST MIS-UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERSON OF GOD:**

- 1. Consider: Our God is not this harsh hard, unkind God: THE LORD IS WILLING TO SAVE ANYONE WHO IS SINCERELY REPENTANT AND WILL COME TO HIM FOR SALVATION!***

God is always desirous of hearing a prayer of repentance.

Ezekiel 33:10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

To know the Lord is to love the Lord,  
In fact the Lord first loved us before we ever loved Him.

That is what John 3:16 is all about!

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

People are lost already, under condemnation of death already, on a sinking ship already.

How is it that in a world that is lost and in a world that is sinking, that people get this idea that God is there to make their lives miserable? The gospel is their enemy? Doesn't make any sense at all. People like Adam and Eve are running and hiding from God when He has the only solution to their dilemma. Do we really think we can hide from God?

With all the power that God has, instead of squashing us, he has given us time to come back to Him. Yet, His longsuffering has been misconstrued and evil men despise Him for it,

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

We should love God for having not dealt harshly with us, but instead He has given us time to repent. Instead of repenting evil men do worse, and wax worse and sin yet more and more!

So a great hinderance to our prayer life is a misunderstanding of who God is. When we understand who He is and who we are this would cause us to be humbled before God and this humility is the first qualification for a person to receive answers to his prayers.

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

## **2. AFTER WE COME TO KNOW GOD, WE NEED TO GROW IN THAT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.**

As we grow in the knowledge of God our prayers can become deeper and more intimate and meaningful.

***Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!***

The greatest hinderance men have in their prayer life, is that they just do not understand God. They are idolaters in nature.

The essence of Idolatry is to form a God in the image of your imagination. Since that God is an invention of your own mind and will, that God can do nothing for you. You can pray to that God but in essence you are praying to yourself.

Do you want God to answer your prayers, PUT AWAY YOUR IDOLATRY AND SUBMIT TO THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible is the only book ever written that is given by God to get you to understand who He is, how He operates, what He wants from us, and how to be blessed and receive answers to prayer.

This is why we come here. This is why each service we spend about 45 minutes to 1 hour explaining this book. We could do as other churches spend 45 minutes singing music and 15 minutes on a sermon. That is not the answer. The Bible says this,

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

What are we seeking to do every service? We are trying to tap into His infinite wisdom, the unsearchable riches of God's Word, the infinite knowledge of the creator, looking into the ways of our God which are in essence past finding out. This is the God we preach, not one that we invent, not one that we conjure up in our minds. We preach the God of the Bible, the one who upholds all things by the Word of His power. We preach a God who is the way the truth and life. We preach and teach a God who revealed Himself to us through the dispensations of His working with His people through these thousands of years. God has had Holy men write down in this book an account of His dealings. We can read it, we can understand it, we can avail ourselves of all this. When we do so, it gives more meaning to our prayers. Our prayers have substance, our prayers do not hit the ceiling, we are praying to the real and living God. A God who is, and has been and ever more shall be. We are speaking to the God who was before all things, and by Him and through Him all things consist.

### **3. We misunderstand God's dealing in regards to time and prayer.**

God does not dwell in time. God is not limited by time. Our God dwells in eternity. When we pray to our God we must believe who He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

The greatest thing we can do to please God is to believe Him and wait on Him and not waver in that belief and trust.

***James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.***

***James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.***

***James 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.***

***James 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.***

Unwavering faith in our God is a prerequisite to answered prayers. Can we trust Him and believe in Him, and cling to Him with unwavering faith?

What can you give God? He needs absolutely nothing that we have!

What does He want? He wants our humble faith and trust in Him!

So this brings us to this matter of time. God's timing may not be our timing. There are some promises in this book that we will not receive on this side of eternity. We need to trust Him till the end.

Remember this: The lessor will wait for the greater. God is not our servant we are His servants. We wait on Him he does not wait on us.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

We are waiting for the blessed trump of God, but many of us may not receive that promise in our lifetime. Yet we believe and trust in Him anyway!

I am reminded of the faith of Meshach Shadrach and Abednego, when Nebuchadnezzar asked if their God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace; They said, "Our God is ABLE to deliver us, but if NOT.. we still will trust Him."

***Daniel 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.***

***Daniel 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.***

We serve God, God does not serve us, so what we know He can do, and what he will do are two different things. Nevertheless we trust Him and have faith in Him!

#### **4. THE BIBLE LIKENS THIS PROCESS OF KNOWING GOD AS ABIDING IN HIM WE WILL NOT RECEIVE ANSWER TO PRAYER UNLESS WE ABIDE IN HIM.**

Jesus gave abiding in Him as the key to knowing Him.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

**John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.** (this is answered prayer)

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

**John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**

Since God is infinite and we are finite, our knowledge of Him must be intimate, real, and the Lord says, that we must have a living relationship with Him. He likens this to a branch that is grafted into a tree. Like a branch that receives it's life from the trunk of a tree. We are the branches He is the vine. We need to be tapped into Him and abide in Him!

**5. IF WE OUR HINDERED IN OUR PRAYER LIFE BY NOT KNOWING GOD THEN TO KNOW GOD IS TO BE ONE IN SPIRIT WITH GOD**

Ultimately no man can know God unless he receives the spirit of God.

I Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

I Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

I Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

I Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

It is the Holy Spirit of God that helps us to know God.

It is the Holy Spirit that helps us to pray!

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Consider, so many people are hindered in their prayer life just because they do not know or understand God. If we want a deeper prayer life we need a deeper knowledge of God. This should be the greatest pursuit in our life. To know God!

The Bottom line: How do we get to know a person?

**A. We observe how he deals with others.**

In Old Testament we observe how our Lord reacts to people who please him and those who displease him. We learn about people who have done right and those who have done wrong..

**B. We observe how He deals with us in our own lives:**

Blessings.

Chastenings. When we get proud God humbles us, when we are humbled God helps us.

**III. Another Hinderance in prayer, is not knowing the Will Of God.**

**Condition #3 in having our prayers successfully Answered Is To Pray According To The Will OF God;**

The truth is the better we know God the better we will understand what His will is in the matters we pray about.

Jesus did much teaching on prayer. Consider what he said in Matt. 6:7 ff

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Matthew 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Matthew 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: **nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

Matthew 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Matthew 26:42 He went away again the second time, and **prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.**

Matthew 26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

Matthew 26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Matthew 26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

If Jesus prayed not my will but thine be done, how much more should we pray that way!

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

As we make sure we are not doing things that are an offense to God, and as we get to know Him better, then we can rightly judge for ourselves what is the will of God and do it.

All that we shared culminates in this truth. As we grow in the Lord, our will and our Lord's will become united. As this happens we will know we have the petitions that we ask, because what we ask is what He wants.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

This is the bottom line of all we learned:

What are the great hinderances to our prayer life:

- I. OUR PRAYERS ARE HINDERED BECAUSE OF OF SIN.**
- II. OUR PRAYERS ARE HINDERED WHEN WE DO NOT KNOW GOD.**
- III. OUR PRAYER ARE HINDERED BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW HIS WILL.**

Let us learn by His grace to be great prayer warriors for our God!