

YOU

Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus

To be used with: Intimacy with Jesus

Sermon Title Possibilities: Praying Like Jesus

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-46

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *“Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus,”* this sermon explores specific ways that Jesus prayed during an extremely difficult and trying time. The sermon will show an intimate connection between the Father and the Son during this time.

Introduction: It has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes. While very few have ever been in a foxhole, many of us have felt like our world and way of life have been in jeopardy. Who or what we turn to in these moments reveal a great deal about us. Jesus was in a difficult situation the night He was betrayed so He turned to the Father in prayer. Let’s look at His prayer and discover ways to embody the characteristics of His prayer life.

1. Jesus prayed in times of grief (v. 38)

The first thing that we learn from Jesus’ prayer life is that He turned to the Father in a time of great grief. The NLT says that Jesus was “crushed with grief.” The NKJV says that He was “exceedingly sorrowful.” What did He do during this time of great grief? “He fell facedown and prayed” (v. 39).

We could all learn a great deal from Jesus at this point. While none of us will have to face what Jesus faced that night, we have all had grief and struggle in our lives. This past year has been hard on many. Some have lost jobs. Some have had to overhaul the family budget because of personal economic uncertainty. Some have just come out of the holiday season without loved ones for the first time. No matter what our personal grief story might be, let’s learn from what Jesus did in His time of grief. He turned to the Father in prayer. The same Father who heard Him is ready to hear our prayers too.

2. Jesus prayed honestly (v. 39)

Jesus presented the Father with an honest request. “Let this cup pass from me.” The cup was not simply the physical and emotional pain of the cross. It was also Him personally experiencing the pain of the cross. Jesus lived a perfect life and the hour of Him experiencing suffering and pain had arrived and we see His humanity in this prayer.

We clearly see the intimacy and honesty between the Father and the Son in this portion of Jesus’ prayer. Since Jesus was being honest with the Father, we too can be honest. We do not need to be spiteful or angry, but we can ask the Father to change the situation or remove us from the situation. We will see shortly, however, that we need to submit to Him if He does not change our circumstances.

3. Jesus prayed consistently (v. 42 & 44)

An effective method of Bible study is to look for repeated terms or actions. We discover repetition in verses 42 and 44. Jesus found His disciples sleeping in verse 40. Upon waking them He returns a second time to pray the exact same prayer (v. 42). We see a repeat of this in verses 43 and 44. Each time Jesus went back and prayed the same thing.

Let's return to our first point. What is the thing that is causing you to be crushed with grief or to be exceedingly sorrowful? Whatever this might be, we need to pattern our prayer life after that of Jesus. He consistently went to the Father with the same request over and over. As we consistently go to the Father with our requests an intimacy between us and Him is established. While He may not change our circumstances, we do get to experience His presence in this midst of difficult times.

4. Jesus submitted to God's will (v. 46)

"Your will be done" (v. 46). This is a prayer of submission, no matter the cost. Jesus fully understood the cost of going to the cross. He knew the penalty that He was to pay for our sins, and He submitted to the Father. The Son submitted to the Father because He knew the Father's plans were good no matter the circumstances.

Let's return one more time to our first point. What is the thing that is causing us to be crushed by grief or to be exceedingly sorrowful? Can we pray like Jesus and submit to the Father's will? If anyone understands that this is difficult, it is Jesus. So, let's talk to Him about this and trust in His goodness no matter the circumstances.

Conclusion: As a means of invitation, encourage everyone to write down the thing that is causing them so much grief. It can be a pain that someone cannot seem to shake. It can be the fact that they don't know Jesus personally and realize that they are lost. Call each member of the congregation to be honest in the same way that Jesus was honest. Encourage the congregation to bring that personal grief to the altar as a symbol of praying, "Your will be done." Ask those who acknowledge that they do not have a relationship with Christ to let you know so that you can lead them to Christ.

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