

**Rooted: Prayer**  
**Matthew 6:7-13**  
**4/2/17**

Welcome to CrossPoint this morning. Thank you for joining us as we continue in our series of messages we've titled "Rooted" because we believe spiritually grounded people can change the world. Over the last several weeks we've looked at Spiritual Disciplines. Let's remember from the very first week that: Spiritual Disciplines = Intimacy with God. We looked at the disciplines of fasting, solitude, giving, study and witness. Each of these disciplines speak to a given need in our spiritual lives. They are meant to draw us close to God. For instance, fasting was all about learning to rely more fully on God. So those who gave up caffeine this lent may have become more holy than the rest of us who need our daily shot of espresso from the Perking Point. But seriously, each of these disciplines have forced us to examine our own lives and see how these disciplines can inform and speak into our lives so that we will draw closer to God.

To introduce our spiritual discipline today I'd like to share this video clip.

Thou Shalt Laugh Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HXzRwiIaC4>

I love this video, because it shares some very real emotions when it comes to prayer. Growing up, I sort of felt like he did whenever I was asked to pray out loud. It was an intimidating thought. What if I said the wrong thing or asked for the wrong thing? What if I didn't measure up to the others who heard my prayer and silently thought of me as an inferior Christian?

I know that this morning I'm talking to a diverse crowd when it comes to prayer habits. For some of you, prayer is your lifeblood. You have read books on prayer, gone to classes on prayer, learned different styles of prayer, and are the person that everyone seeks out for prayer. Some of you, however, are still trying to understand what prayer is all about, right? What is the purpose of prayer? What do I say? Let's be honest, prayer is one of those things like reading the Bible: we know we should do it, but sometimes we don't know what we're doing or we feel like we aren't getting anywhere and so we prioritize it near the bottom. We wonder if we're doing it right or if anything is happening. It is my hope this morning that we will begin to see prayer in a new light. That we will begin to see that prayer is essential to our life with God and is a bit simpler than we make it out to be.

**Prayer is essential to our life with God.**

Have you ever heard someone pray and you think to yourself that they seem to just know God and know his heart? For a lot of us there's one person who prays like they know God personally. They speak to God out of reverence and yet with a familiarity that shows their friendship with God. It's clear that after hearing them pray that you know they spend a lot of time in prayer. And you know what? Their lives show it too. They don't pray for show. Their love wells up from this consistent and almost constant communication with God. That is the core of prayer is.

**Prayer is communication with God.** *"Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'<sup>2</sup> And he said to them, 'When you pray, say...'"*  
*Luke 11:1-2*

So, when Jesus hears someone ask about prayer and knows that the heart of that person desires to know God, he does nothing to stop them from learning. He simply says, "this is how you should pray..."

And he tells them to pray like this and gives them what has become known as: The Lord's Prayer. What makes this prayer so important and why is it that Jesus chooses to teach his disciples this prayer? This is where we're going to focus for the remainder of the sermon.

Look how Jesus begins his lesson on prayer. He begins by declaring "Our father." I think we often rush to the next few lines, but this is an amazing point, isn't it? Jesus is declaring here that God is "our father." He is simultaneously saying that God is the father of all of us and loves us and that we are brothers and sisters with Jesus. Jesus begins by declaring our truest identity as children of God. This is the starting point for prayer, isn't it? When we realize our identity as children of God we come to prayer with this expectation of meeting with our father. When we believe wholeheartedly that our identity is rooted in God then we come knowing that prayer is about cultivating that intimacy. We also know as children of God that God deeply loves us and cares for us. Along with that we hear that we are sisters and brothers to Jesus. So, Jesus shows us here that prayer affirms that we are part of God's family. This should rock our world! The spirit with which we should approach prayer is that of children of God and brothers and sisters. Understanding that we

are part of God's family alters are prayers, doesn't it? I don't have to make my conversations sound good or try to impress. I can just be me. This is what it looks like when we approach prayer rooted in our identity in Christ. We are in fact able to come as we are in prayer.

**We come as we are in prayer.** *"Our Father in heaven" Matthew 6:9*

Now after Jesus declares that God is our father, he immediately says, "Hallowed be your name." This word hallowed means "sacred or holy." This statement acknowledges that God is not only our father, but he is the final authority and is far above us. His next statement reiterates this by declaring, that his will be done. It is a statement of submission and again an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty. The very next statement deals with this idea of submission again. "your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." This is statement of submission that not only speaks to God, but it reorients our desire, doesn't it?

When we say to God, let your kingdom come, we are also saying that it is his kingdom. It acknowledges that what we need to building God's Kingdom, not our kingdoms. So, when we say this we begin to remember that our desires should line up with what God wants and not necessarily what I want.

**Prayer reorients our desires.**

*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10*

Jesus then moves to the idea of God working in our specific lives. He gives us three more prayers that seem a bit more personal. The first is our daily bread, the second is forgiveness, and the third deals with resisting temptation.

This idea of our daily bread isn't always easy to understand. Many of us don't necessarily struggle with finding food and so praying for our daily bread seems a rather simple statement as opposed to the rest of the prayer. Yet this is one of the most important aspects of the Lord's prayer because it expresses our desire and need to put our faith in God for our daily needs. Food is a daily need for us. It helps us to function and stay healthy. We are saying in this prayer that we need to rely on God to meet our daily needs. It is also a reminder that it is in fact God who has given us everything already and therefore he is providing for our daily needs.

Then Jesus says that one thing that we really struggle with: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Now we can acknowledge before God that we have sinned, that actually seems like the easy part of this statement. The hard part is the forgiving others piece. Here is the thing though, they are connected. We ask for forgiveness based on the measure that we forgive others. If I had prayed this prayer, I probably would have wanted to say something like Forgive us our sins **better than** we forgive others. But, when we truly pray this prayer we are challenging ourselves to a level of forgiveness that is godly...not human. We don't forgive like we should but, in this prayer we're asking God to help us to forgive better than ever so that God's forgiveness for us is increased. Wow!

Jesus prays, "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." I'll admit the first part of this statement can be a bit confusing. What is Jesus really getting at? Let us remember that prayer reorients our desires. When we tell God that we don't want to be led into temptation, we are saying that we want to be led by God into good things rather than the tempting evil that is all around us. Let's be honest for a moment, how many of us lead ourselves into temptation? How many of us see how far we can go without actually falling? This statement then becomes a commitment between God and you.

While the first part of the prayer focuses on our identity and the glory of God, the last part focuses on being transformed. It is about becoming more of who we were meant to be.

**Prayer transforms our lives.**

*"<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:11-13*

Prayer is vital to our lives and it brings an intimacy with God that is not found elsewhere. Imagine if we committed to prayer today and every day. Imagine what our communities would look like if we prayed. We have that opportunity. We have that invitation this morning. I'd like end this sermon and prepare for communion by praying together the Lord's Prayer. Let us remember this morning that God has called us to be a community of prayer. Communion binds us together just as the Lord's prayer does. It reminds us of who we are in Christ and that we are all part of God's family.