

Before You Pray

(2 Chronicles 7:11-22)

Series: *Draw the Circle*

September 2nd, 2018

Something to think about:

Do you pray? What are your thoughts about prayer? What is it that prompts you to pray? When you pray, how do you pray? Do you only pray when you're encountering difficulty and trials? Do you pray in the good times too?

As we kick off a new series today, our minds and attention turn to prayer for the next several weeks. And, today we start in the Old Testament in a book called 2 Chronicles. Follow along with me today...

2 Chronicles 7:11-22 (NLT)

¹¹ So Solomon finished the Temple of the LORD, as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do in the construction of the Temple and the palace. ¹² Then one night the LORD appeared to Solomon and said,

"I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place for making sacrifices. ¹³ At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you.

¹⁴ Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. ¹⁵ My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. ¹⁶ For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart.

¹⁷ "As for you, if you faithfully follow me as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, ¹⁸ then I will establish the throne of your dynasty. For I made this covenant with your father, David, when I said, 'One of your descendants will always rule over Israel.'

¹⁹ "But if you or your descendants abandon me and disobey the decrees and commands I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, ²⁰ then I will uproot the people from this land that I have given them. I will reject this Temple that I have made holy to honor my name. I will make it an object of mockery and ridicule among the nations. ²¹ And though this Temple is impressive now, all who pass by will be appalled. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?'

²² "And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt, and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them. That is why he has brought all these disasters on them.'"

Here's the key point this morning...

Key Point: "Humility is the prerequisite of prayer."

What can we learn about prayer through this passage of Scripture today?

1. Prayers are fulfilled in God's timing.

Humble prayer prays consistently, persistently, and unwaveringly knowing that God always hears the prayers of the humble heart and will answer them according to His good will and purposes.

2. Prayer must be humble.

Prayer must be humble because we cannot approach God with pride, arrogance, or haughtiness, and think we will get a hearing from Him.

3. Humble prayer must come from a repentant heart.

Just as humility is a prerequisite of prayer, so is seeking God's face and turning from our wicked ways.

Seeking God's face is a change of perspective and focus. It means we turn from what we've been facing and face God in all sincerity and complete openness.

Turning from our wicked ways means taking a different path. Specifically, we must turn from the road we've been on that was leading us away from God, and turn and follow Him and His ways.

Then, He tells us He will hear from heaven and forgive our sins and will heal the land.

As much as this was a promise for the Israelites in the day of Solomon, it is still a timeless, hope-filled reminder to us that humble, repentant prayer is what gets God's attention.

Something to take home:

So, how do you pray? Are your prayers full of humility and sincerity? Do you truly seek God's face? Do you seek Him consistently and persistently (Jeremiah 29:13)? What path/road are you on? Are you still on a path of sin and destruction, or are you on the path that leads to a true, faith-filled relationship with God through Jesus Christ?

Truly, we must remember, we can approach the throne of God boldly, but never arrogantly or with pride.

Key Point: "Humility is the prerequisite of prayer."