

# YOU WILL PRAY, WHEN

Mt 5:5-7

## I. WHEN CRISES COME: we can't not pray, for by Nature, as humans, we're born to pray

- A. Not a question of IF but WHEN, so Jesus said "when you pray"
- B. Crises (Gk *krisis*: decision) inevitable,
  - 1. Continuous: beginning with shock/trauma of birth, ending with final breath
  - 2. Decisive moments, turning points
- C. Psalms (believers prayer book) filled with laments & praises

## II. WHEN YOU'RE HURTING: "help me"

- A. Physically: illnesses, aging
  - 1. Hezekiah —2 Kings 20:1-5;
  - 2. Prayers to Jesus for healing—woman touching hem of His garment; lepers; blind
  - 3. Craig Keener: *Miracles Today: The Supernatural Work of God in the Modern World*
- B. Emotionally: lost loves, dying hopes, evident failures, fears, tragedies, deaths
  - 1. Ps 42:1-3; Ps 61:1-2; Ps 56:3-4
  - 2. Abraham Lincoln in Civil War anguish
  - 3. Mass shootings—1984 San Ysidro MacDonalds
- C. Spiritually: conviction for sins, guidance for tomorrows
  - 1. Penitential Psalms—e.g. Ps 51
  - 2. Tax Collector vs. Pharisee—Lk 18;9-4
  - 2. Penitent thief on Calvary
- D. Adversarially: battles, conflicts, enemies, critics (Woodie Allen: "Even paranoids have enemies")
  - 1. Ps. 23:5
  - 2. Battlefield (foxhole) frankness
  - 3. Ukraine conflict
- E. Philip Melancthon: "Trouble and perplexity drive me to pray, and prayer drives away trouble and anxiety."

## III. WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY: "thank you"

- A. Nature's Splendor
  - 1. Ps 19:1-6
  - 2. Yellowstone—applause at Old Faithful
- B. Personal Pleasures: showers, naps, meals; skiing, running; building, fixing
- C. Personal Successes
  - 1. School—tests, degrees,
  - 2. Marriage—engagement, union
  - 3. Family—children, for most parents, greatest day; accomplishments; final days
  - 4. Career—choices, achievements
  - 5. Retirement—security
- D. Great Hymns embody praise—"praise God from whom all blessings flow"

## IV. WHEN YOU'RE FOLLOWING JESUS: disciplines of devotion

- A. Cultivating His Presence—Brother Lawrence: *The Practicer of the Presence of God*
- B. Doing His Will—Gethsemane Key; C.S. Lewis re heaven/hell difference in *The Great Divorce*
- C. Interceding for others—praying for rulers, for peace, for justice, for salvation
  - 1. John 17:6-26 model for intercessors
  - 2. I Sam 12:23—"far be it for me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you"
- D. Embracing a variety of effective ways—prayerful living, discipleship
  - 1. Special times—morning & evening
  - 2. Special events—meals, travels, dedications, weddings, funerals
  - 3. Special needs—health, wisdom
  - 4. Special models—e.g. Lord's Prayer, Jesus Prayer; devotional books (e.g. William Barclay's *Guide to Daily Prayer*)
- E. Ultimately: "pray without ceasing" (I Thess 5:17)