

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

Volume 1 – Number 1

September 2, 2012

Order of Services

Sunday, September 2, 2012

Song Leader.....Tom Dolan
 Prayer.....Lee Redd
 Preaching.....Bob James
 Lord's Supper
 Prayer for the Bread..... Brian Jeffries
 Prayer for the Cup.....Bob Celentano
 Prayer for the Collection.....Cameron Wydro
 Assisting at the Table.....Dan Lovell
 Closing Prayer.....Bob Wydro
 Announcements.....Ralph Ruggiero

Sunday, September 9, 2012

Song Leader.....Cameron Wydro
 Prayer.....Pete Ferencze
 Preaching.....Bob James
 Lord's Supper
 Prayer for the Bread..... David Osinski
 Prayer for the Cup.....Bob Wydro
 Prayer for the Collection.....Brian Jeffries
 Assisting at the Table.....Gennaro Ruggiero
 Closing Prayer.....Lee Redd
 Announcements.....Ralph Ruggiero

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

Misusing Prayer ...

Among the lessons contained within this parable is an example of the misuse of prayer in the day that men worshiped God in the temple at Jerusalem.

This parable presents two men, one who would be deemed among the highest of the nation, and the other among the lowest, offering their prayers to God. The nature of the two prayers is as different as the social status of the two men delivering them ... and the results of their trip to the temple are equally extreme.

One prayer provided no benefit, because the Pharisee had spent his time in self-praise, while condemning other men, especially the lowly publican. Although the Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, (Acts 26:5), and were considered authorities on Old Testament laws, (Matthew 2:2, 3), this one had failed to internalize the words of the prophet Isaiah...

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6 NKJV)

As a result his trip to the temple offered no reward. By contrast, the publican recognizing that he had no merits of his own, and through this recognition wholly submitted himself to the mercy of God, was justified.

We learn from this parable that man is able, and even prone, to squander one of his greatest spiritual blessings through misuse.

In prayer the Christian has an audience with the Great Creator and Ruler of the universe. His greatness should humble us, and cause us to bow down before the "Lord our maker" (Psalms 95:6). The Apostle Paul warns that "no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:29). When we petition God for the continuance of His blessings, which are so vital to our spiritual and temporal wellbeing, we must realize that we are in nothing

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14 NKJV)

self-sufficient, and it is from Him that we receive *“every good gift and every perfect gift”* (James 1:17).

James warns of another misuse of prayer to which men of our day are especially liable. Our generation is characterized by an insatiable desire for more and better things of a material nature. We are blessed above most all others in the world ... yet still many are greedy and covetous. Too often Christians, who have the privilege of prayer, are obsessed by these same greedy desires. When this happens, there may be a strong temptation to enlist the help of God to satisfy some selfish desire. Those who did so in the first century were reminded...

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:3 NKJV)

When we become anxious about some worldly object, which we probably do not need, rather than misuse our prayer selfishly, we should remember that our Heavenly Father knows (Matthew 6:32), and will supply (Philippians 4:19), all of our needs.

Another common misuse of prayer follows the example of Jonah, in that men who are not faithful to God and His Word when all is well in their lives, often pray to Him in times of emergency. A poet once wrote, *“lips cry Lord be merciful, which never say, Lord be praised”*. Christians are instructed...

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Philippians 4:6 KJV)

We must remember to thank God, and to praise Him in times of prosperity, as well as to call upon Him in times of trouble.

Perhaps the most flagrant misuse of prayer in our day is attempted by those for whom prayer is not intended.

FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE ON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ARE OPEN TO THEIR PRAYERS; BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.” (1 Peter 3:12 NKJV)

A person who is seeking salvation, and, who has not complied with God’s conditions for salvation, cannot substitute prayer for obedience to the gospel of Christ. Jesus instructed His Apostles...

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16 NKJV)

These men followed the instructions of our Lord, and preached these conditions of salvation, as every conversion documented in the book of Acts will clearly show.

The penitent Saul Tarsus, though he had been without sight, food, and drink for three days (Acts 9:9), and was praying (Acts 9:11), received no instructions to do so ... rather he was told to *“arise, and be baptized”* (Acts 22:16).

Prayer is a spiritual blessing, and all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), and in Him we are made righteous before God (2 Corinthians 5:21), whose ears are open to the prayers of the righteous (Peter 3:12). The publican in our earlier reference cannot be used as a precedent, or a pattern of justification for men who have not obeyed the Gospel having a right to pray to God.

The Old Testament, which governed temple worship, warned...

Thus says the Lord GOD: “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel. (Ezekiel 44:9 NKJV)

Since he was permitted to enter the temple, we can conclude that this publican was a worshiper of God under that Old Covenant.

Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. (John 9:31 NKJV)

The publican was not an example of conversion, but rather an example of the proper attitude in prayer. Just as Jesus has emphasized this vital lesson through this parable, He has also emphasized His conditions of salvation so clearly that we need not misuse the great privilege of prayer in an attempt to set them aside.

Prayer, Care & Attention...

On Our Sick List...

- ⤴ Georgia DeLorenzo is scheduled for surgery on this coming Thursday.
- ⤴ Mary Calentano is recovering from her medical procedure this past week.
- ⤴ Gerry Sandusky’s son Scott is recovering from a partial leg amputation due to a work related accident.
- ⤴ Glenn Montgomery’s father continues to have complications from cancer surgery.
- ⤴ Phyllis Smith is scheduled for knee surgery later this month.
- ⤴ Linda Davis, a member of West Point church, continues to recover from chemo treatment complications.

Those Traveling...

- ⤴ Bill and Sue Duryea
- ⤴ June Prince

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Noteworthy Items...

Our Gospel Meeting with Gerry Sandusky is fast approaching. As we plan for this event let us all pray daily that our efforts will be pleasing to the Lord such that He might bless our actions. Our meeting dates are October 5th – 7th.