



Men's Discipleship Class – Week 9
November 15, 2018

Verses:

Matthew 6:5-6

Luke 6:12-13

Matthew 14:10-13

Matthew 26:36-45

Mark 6:45-48

Luke 10:38-42

Isaiah 30:15

Nehemiah 2:4

Mark 1:35

Mark 6:46-47

My Aggie son sent me a cartoon that had a guy and his son talking. The boy looked at his dad and asked what a loser was. The dad said he did not know because he was an Alabama fan. (Laughter) We are going to talk about prayer today. When I first came to Christ and was serious, I read a lot of material on how to grow in Christ and quiet times. I preached it hard. You had to have a quiet time every day. You had to do this. You had to spend this much time. This is where I struggled. When you are a young preacher, you do not have the Bible to back yourself up. Where I really struggled was that it was not in there. We are going to look at what legitimate prayer is today. we will process this. It is probably going to be different.

I want to look at a few things in Jesus' life. When you read from the gospels on, there is nothing about a quiet time. Paul really does not address it. Peter does not address it. Jude does not address it. James does not address it. There is nothing in there about a quiet time. Yet, it is what we hear we have to have constantly. When you look at Jesus' life though, you do see an interesting set of circumstances that are a part of his own private prayer time.

We are going to look at a couple of verses. Look at Matthew 6:5-6. Here is the first place we are going. We are going to cover a little ground. I then want to come back and show you what we learned from all of these verses. Matthew 6:5-6. This is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Obviously, this is right before he does the model prayer. It is not the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is in John 17. This is the model prayer. Here is what he says.

5“*And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6But when you pray, go into your room and shut the*

door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

He says two things, right? He says there should be no loud prayers and that you go in a closet. You get alone. Now. When I go to the convention, my wife gets on me badly. Inevitably, at a convention, it is these guys five minutes of fame. They have a chance to pray. They just run the table. Generally, when they are done, I will say 'nice sermon'. At this point, my wife hates me. Your wife is going to hate you for something. It might as well be what you enjoy. You do not do it for yourself. You make sure you go in your closet. You get alone. There is the first thing he commands.

Look at Luke 6:12-13. We will come back to Matthew here. Look at Luke 6:12. I want you to begin to see what occurs in the life of Jesus. We are going to be mainly in the gospel. This should be fairly easy to find. Here is what it says.

12In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve

We have all night and disciples are chosen. Okay? Now go back to Matthew 14:10-13. You need to understand he is closeness with John the Baptist. John the Baptist had the most horrible calling from God that I think you can possibly have of anybody that was called. He spends his life if we are right with the Essenes. If you go to where they lived in Judea, it is just a barren, nasty, worthless landscape. He lives with a group of people who were legalistic. They were just crazy legalistic. They thought the world was coming to an end. They had all of these extreme ideas. He lives with them his whole life. Remember his parents were really old so they die young. He lives with them his whole life. He winds up preaching for maybe six months and then Herod kills him. I mean his calling was really tough. When he dies, it really impacts Jesus. Look at Matthew 14:10.

10He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, 11and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus. 13Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

So you have this deal right here. John is dead. So you have grief and Jesus get alone. Obviously, I think the clear implication is he has gone to be alone with the Father and to pray.

Now look at Matthew 26. We are not going to read the whole thing. We all know this. Matthew 26:36-45. You have his three times of prayer asking God to take the cross away from him, and so we have him there.

Go to Mark 6. Go right to the next book. Mark 6:45-48. Now listen to what he says.

45Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. 47And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.

So he is here just to be alone with God. Now. When you look at these aspects of his prayer time, they are probably the best examples we have of Jesus' own private prayer life. There are several things that come into play when you see this that need to be in your own prayer life. Number one,

his prayers are need driven. He prays out of a need he feels in his life. He prays all night because he needs to pick the right disciple. He prays here because he is grieving over a tremendous friend and man who is calling was extremely difficult. He prays here because of the cross he is about to face. He prays here because he simply needs to be in the presence of God. He has been with all the people. He gets rid of them. He ships the disciples off. He goes up on the mountain simply to be alone. His prayer life is driven by needs (and this is what I want you to understand) not programming. The quiet time material will program your prayer life. You do not pray out of programming. You pray out of the need in your life. It is interesting. He is God, right? He has perfect fellowship with the Father without sin. Yet it took him all night to figure out who he needed to pick out of the people following. He had to pick twelve. It took him all night in prayer to discover who that was. If Jesus who has perfection needed all night to pray and you have never spent all night in prayer, I would ask myself something. If he needs it and we do not think we do, that says something to us but not about him. He is driven by the needs that he feels in his life. When he feels a need, he goes here immediately. So, first thing is that it is need driven.

Number two. He is always alone. He never takes anybody else with him. Exactly what he said. Get into your closet. He finds a closet. He has no office. He finds a place where he can get alone. Generally, he is on the top of a mountain. Now, this is key. Let me say something here. This does not mean you cannot pray with others, but you are probably not going to be able with others to really develop any kind of intimacy with the Father. This is particularly true for us as men. Now, women can. They can really rip their feelings apart with other women. We do not do that well. It generally takes a number of years for us to actually develop some friendships. Particularly, we are not good at developing intimacy when we are alone. That is a key component.

I want you to look at Luke 10:38. Look at what happens.

38Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." 41But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

She listens. Martha serves. Now. Jesus is not against service, but there are times when you are to quit serving and listen. You cannot do that unless you are alone. Let me show you a verse in the Old Testament. Go to Isaiah 30. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel. Go to Isaiah 30 and listen to this great verse that fits exactly to where we are. Listen to Isaiah 30. Listen to what he says in verse fifteen.

15For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel,
"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."
But you were unwilling,

So he says to return that is come back to me. I want you to be quiet. I want you to trust. This is going to be your strength. He says you return to me, you get alone, you get quiet, you listen, and then you trust what I tell you. That is going to be your strength. That is what he says. What he says in Isaiah is exactly what you see Jesus doing. He returns to the Father. He gets quiet. He trusts whatever the Father tells him. He picks twelve men even though he knows one of the twelve is going to deny him. What Isaiah says is exactly that. To be able to do this, you have got to be

alone. This is the second thing you see in Jesus' life which is exactly what Isaiah states and what all these guys do.

Number three. I want you to look carefully. Listen. There is no set amount of time to pray. You read the material that says you need to pray an hour a day. It says go into your closet. He does not tell you how long to stay in there. He prays all night here. He prays quickly here. He prays really quickly here. It was probably ten to fifteen minutes each time. He prays here all night. He prays different times. Now, we will not go there, but in Nehemiah 2, when he is talking to the king. The Bible says he shoots a quick prayer up, and then he goes into the king. Nehemiah prays this prayer that is literally about ten seconds. This impacts the king. There is no set amount of time anywhere in the Word of God. You do not see it anywhere in the life of Jesus for how long you stay in prayer. That is going to probably depend on the depth of need. There is no such thing as a set amount of time.

Number two. There is no such thing as a set time. Now. Let me show you. Look at Mark 1:35. Go back to Mark. Look at Mark 1:35.

35And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

So, we have him in the morning here. If I am writing a discipleship material, I am going to read this and say Jesus got up in the morning. That is the best time to pray. You are not right with God unless you do that. Go over to Mark 6:46-47. Slide over just a couple of chapters. Mark 6:46-47. Listen to what it says.

46And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. 47And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.

Now we are at evening. We have Daniel in the Old Testament. Does anybody know how many times he prayed a day? Three. Morning, afternoon, and evening. So, what do we do? Do we pray in the morning? Do we pray in the evening? Obviously, there is no set time in the Bible for when you pray. I had some discipleship material we used to use that said the morning is the best time. You really are awake. You can hear God better. That is just complete bull. I get up every morning now at six, but I am telling you that when I was in college, this is not the time I was my sharpest. I was best in the evening, because you know how college life is. You are goofing around and playing. Morning is when you are trying to sleep in especially if you have an eight o'clock Greek class. So. There is no such thing as a set time to pray.

Now. I would use nature as part of my closet. Where is that in the Bible? It is in every one of these places. You would say that he did not have an office. That is true. We have lost the sense of this. The Bible says that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. I remember the first time this hit me. I love to deer hunt. If you like to deer hunt, you do not do a lot of killing particularly if you are going to have to clean the deer. You shoot maybe once or twice a year. I noticed one day, and I have shared this before in a sermon. I noticed one day I had seen it every time, but it just dawned on me. I love to get there early. I am watching the sun come up. I mean everything is coming alive. There is this gorgeous sunrise. I am watching it. I look down, and there are deer and cows. I am just telling you that if you love to deer hunt, you hate cows. They are set on fire by hell. I am watching these two groups of animals. I notice that I am enraptured by the sunrise. They are not even looking at it, because they are not made in his image like I am. You see lost people all over Bryan/College Station. You see a gorgeous sunset and that will be all over Facebook because even lost people appreciate God's painting each day.

Animals do not because they are not created in the image. I am in the image, so he gave me the capacity. I think we have lost this as a powerful thing in our life. I would try to make sure as best I can to find a closet that is outside. I think you get inside and you really do lose some of the benefit of God's beauty and what he has. I think we want to do that.

One last thing. You are driven. There is one need. Listen to me carefully. There is one need that God has programmed into your life that we actually ignore and that is the Sabbath. One day a week is the Sabbath. Was the Sabbath created before man sinned or after he sinned? Before. Which means what? He created us that we cannot go one week without him. When I do not take one day a week and get into my closet, I am not going to make it. The Sabbath is the key to a real need driven thing that I need time one day a week where I get in my closet whether it is all night or whether it is a few minutes. Whatever it is, I make sure one day a week God has programmed in me an intense need of who He is. If I do not take that Sabbath time, I am then in trouble. I told the ladies, for example when I walked them through last year, and shared with them that particularly if they have a Godly husband they need to go to him and ask for time to have a Sabbath. If you have a wife and have kids that are in preschool or younger, your wife does not have a Sabbath. You have to give her one. If you are going to lead your wife well, go home and tell her that you want her to have some time with Christ alone. You take the kids and tell her to take whatever amount of time she wants. Gentleman, this is fundamental. If you go a week with four weeks in a month and you do not have a closet time with the Father, you have failed. You have a need that He has preprogrammed into you.

Your prayer life needs to be need driven. Let me share with you real quickly what I think that entails so that we understand how to do this. There is an acronym that everybody uses called ACTS. It is Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. We have already been over supplication which is intercession. Supplication is his list not mine. How do I get his list without a Sabbath? I have to be able to hear him. I cannot find the supplication of his list unless I live out a Sabbath. Now. Adoration is obviously praise. I tell God and return to him who he is and how great he is. Then I confess. Now, I am going to give you something to do, but you better be ready if you do it. If you take a quiet time and you are alone, I would ask the Father to tell me what is in my life that I do not see that I need to confess to him. Confession is an interesting word. It is a Greek word $\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ (homologeó). We get homogenized from this. This is the same as 'to say'. In other words, it is literally the Greek word that means 'to agree'. So my confession is when I agree with what God tells me about my failure. So, confession would again require my ability to hear him. So what I would do is I would sit down and ask God to tell me where I do not see what I am doing wrong. Now if you do this and you really get quiet, it can get very painful because he will bring up things that you have not thought about.

Thanksgiving. You are going to thank him for what he has done for you that you can lose and what he has done for you that you cannot lose. I was with Paul Rieger. I was shooting with some of the officers the other day. The site on my pistol fell off which was so embarrassing. Rieger was telling me that his wife April was one of the greatest things to happen to him in his life. You do that God. Man, my wife has been a blessing. Thank you. So, you thank him for the things you can lose and the things you cannot lose. Then you pray his list.

Now, I want to add one thing here. It is not ACTS. I want to do this. We are going to add a 'P' that is Personal. This to me is the key to all the rest of this. If you throw this out and you do not take a personal walk with the Father, this becomes business. "God, you are wonderful." "I did not treat my wife right the other day." "Listen, thanks for the new truck." "What do you want me to pray about?" You do not want this to be business. You want this to be a holy moment in your life.

You want to make it personal. Here is what you are going to do. You are going to sit down with God. This is what I do. I start with the Word. I just read until I feel like I am focused on him. If you are like me, you have a million things you are thinking about in your life. You start in prayer life. You are thinking about millions things. I am going to stay here until I'm focused. Now. When I get focused, I am going to put this down, and this is what I am going to do. I am just telling you my own experience. This is what has worked for me. I am going to have a million things after I am focused that come into my mind. What I do I is I talk with God like he was my best friend. If I start thinking about my wife, I pray about her. If I start thinking about my job, I pray about the different things there. I just talk to him about everything that comes in my mind. It is interesting to me because there are times when I will start reading the scripture and I just feel this terrible unrest. I will shut it down, and I mean my prayer life will just pop. There are other times I will start praying and I just do not feel comfortable. I open this up, and I will read four or five books. There are days when you need more prayer than scripture. There are days when you need more scripture than prayer. I do not think you can put a schedule on that. I think that, too, is need driven.

The Holy Spirit is going to know what you need so he is going to direct you in that. You have got to start with a real, personal, 'just you and God' talking. Out of that personal thing, you then go into telling God how great He is and asking if there is anything you are not doing well. Thanks for everything you have given me. God, what do you want me to pray for today and for tomorrow. This, instead of becoming a business thing, flows out of a personal relationship with Him. Let me tell you how imperative this is. Probably the two biggest money making enterprises in America today are entertainment and counseling. Counseling. We pay billions of dollars to entertain ourselves. We pay billions of dollars to go to counseling. I think this (prayer) is the cure all if we do this correctly. I take my Sabbath. I take my other needs. I get in my closet. I become personal with the Father. These flow out of my personal walk with him. I think if you do this out of the needs in your life at least one day a week you will not need as much entertainment as you need. You certainly will not need as much counseling as we seek. It is interesting. I read the other day about Melatonin, which obviously is a natural substance a lot of us take to sleep, is being given too much to kids. What happened here? Kids are not outside enjoying God's creation. They are inside with their Gameboys and all there stuff. They are caught up in man's creation of entertainment instead of God's creation of beauty that his image in them resonates with. You let a kid spend hours outside, and he will go to sleep. His mind is so active off that Gameboy and that Xbox he cannot relax. We are now starting to drug our children to get them to sleep. Gentlemen, you are the ones that should be exemplifying this in front of your son and your daughter. This is key for us. I think you have to look at Jesus. I think you are need driven. If you have a business decision you face, then you get alone with the Father. Sometimes that may mean you pray all night. I think you get alone with the Father until he gives you an answer. If someone dies that you love, then you get alone with the Father. One day a week you get alone with the Father. This thing is critical for us. Somehow we have lost the understanding of it. I think we are not ever going to be the person we need to be until we achieve this. I want it to be Spirit led and not material led that you read in some Lifeway Bible study. I will tell you the richest thing in my life other than my family is when I hear Him speak in my soul. There is not anything richer. I think the saddest thing I heard after I preached on this in Midland is when I had a guy come up to me. He made an appointment. He came into my office, and he sat down. He told me he had been a Christian for 32 years and had never heard God speak. Gentlemen, you do not want to live that way. He will speak to you. It is the reason he put his son on the cross. It is not so that you can go to church but so you can have a relationship with him. Do not miss the purpose.