

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of January 8th, 2023

Sermon Series: Pray First

Sermon: A Practical Plan for a “Pray First” Year (Daniel 6, Matthew 6)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- Are you comfortable leading a group in prayer, or do you secretly hope someone else will do it? Why?

Discussion Questions

Introduction

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. (Daniel 6:10)

- Pastor Mike explained that prayer is simply communicating with God, an opportunity to build a relationship with the Lord. Is this how prayer was previously explained to you? If not, what were your previous thoughts about prayer?
- What does your prayer life look like? How often do you turn to God in prayer?
- Do you have the same level of interaction with God that you have with others?
- God bends down like a good father bends to hear his child speak. It doesn't matter what you have to say to him or how you say it. He loves listening to you pray to Him, just like a father loves to listen to his own child. He loves to just listen to you talk to Him and tell you about your day and is never distracted. Knowing this, what will you pray to God about?
- God loves it when you pray! He's way less concerned with how you say perfect things than He is concerned that you pray to a perfect God! What obstacle or excuse have you been using to keep you from

praying? What would happen in your life if you dropped those excuses and start to pray more?

- In Daniel 6:10, we see Daniel continue to practice his SPOT, SLOT, STRATEGY of prayer, even while knowing that doing so violated the law and could result in his own death. If Daniel could do this with such conviction, why don't we?
- Is prayer important to you? If you said that time is a reason you don't pray and you always find time for what's important to you, then why is prayer not important enough to make time for? Are you ready to prioritize it?

Find a Spot

- You need to FIND A SPOT to call your prayer spot! You don't need a mountaintop or anything fancy. Maybe it's your desk at work, a place in your house, a chair in your basement. It's about finding a place where you can be in the right frame of mind to talk to God. Where is your "spot" for prayer?
- How do you protect your space so that you're not interrupted in your prayer time?
- What interruptions or distractions do you need to silence so that you can have your time?

Pick a Slot

- What does God have to do to deserve a slot in your daily routine? Why does He have to earn it?
- Make a LITERAL APPOINTMENT with God! And KEEP IT! It doesn't matter when. Just set aside a time. Maybe even set an alarm on your phone to remind you. What time works for you?
- What things do you consider when deciding what time slot works best for you? (i.e. work hours, cooking dinner, etc)
- It doesn't matter if it's 10 minutes or 2 hours, God loves to spend time with you. There is no time requirement. Are you aware of the amount of time you need to feel fulfilled?

Work a Strategy

Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Model of Prayer

Reverence: *Our Father in heaven.*

Worship: *Hallowed be your name.*

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

Provision: *Give us this day our daily bread.*

Forgiveness: *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Protection: *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

Praise: *For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.*

- What does your prayer strategy look like now? Does it include any of the above elements?
- Could you develop a strategy to pray like this for the next seven days? What do you think that would do in your life?
- What is reverence and how do you do it?
- What's your favorite name for God and why?
- Describe submission for prayer.
- Is provision all about stuff? What else can we ask God to provide us?
- What do you feel like you need to be forgiven for? Who do you need to forgive?
- What are the different ways we can praise God?

- What is the difference between reverence and praise?

Now What?

Encouragement: God loves when we pray. When we pray, we bring our heart to God. We bring our lives to God so that we can be aligned with His will. Prayer is our invitation to be in relationship with the Lord of our lives. It doesn't have to be complicated, but we do need to make a plan. Just like with everything else, if you don't make a plan or prepare for interruptions, it won't happen. If we're going to lead a God first year, prayer has to become a priority. Make a spot, a slot, and a strategy and protect your time with God. If your spot or time slot gets interrupted, don't feel like you lost your opportunity to pray. Find time in another part of your day or even throughout your day to spend time with God. Whether it's two minutes or two hours out of your day, God will take it and will rejoice for it. He loves you, and He's already made you first. So today, make the decision to put Him first and make this year the best year of your prayer life yet.

Ask: What does your prayer life look like now? Do you understand the importance of prayer? What are some old ideas or misconceptions that you need to let go about prayer? Are there any barriers in your prayer life? Do you need to switch it up? Which of the three (spot, slot, strategy) will be the hardest for you to implement? What do you need to take to God in prayer right now and why haven't you done it yet? What excites you the most about this fresh start in prayer? What will be the most challenging?

Challenge:

Commit to one week:

Find your SPOT to pray. Decide on a location today.

Pick your SLOT to pray. Set an alarm on your phone and follow it.

Follow Jesus' STRATEGY to pray the way The Lord's Prayer does.

Grab a copy of our PRAY FIRST guide.

Grab Pray First: The Transformative Power of a Life Built on Prayer by Pastor Chris Hodges.

Pastor Mike shared that there are so many different names for God that we can use in prayer (Jehovah Rapha (healer), Rohi (Shepherd), Shalom (My Peace, etc.)) If you always open your prayer the same way, find a new name for God and focus your prayer time around that change.

Closing Prayer

God, we're thankful that you made it possible for us to be in relationship with you. Thank you for the opportunity to spend time with you all day, every day. Help us realize how precious of a gift prayer is and the importance of using it. Thank you for bending over and lending us your ear, that when we pray, you stop everything to be present with us. Lord, we acknowledge the challenges that we've allowed to affect our prayer lives and repent of them. Let nothing else take away our opportunity to spend time with you. We drop those excuses today and pray for a reignited spirit of prayer. Help us make prayer a top priority in making 2023 a God first year. Show us the spot or location that we can dedicate for our God time. Reveal openings in our daily lives where we can schedule time with you. Father, we know that if we don't make a plan, everything else will take precedence. Help us create strategies for prayer that work for us. We want to grow in relationship with you, and we know prayer will help with that. Help it become a lifestyle. We look forward to all of the amazing things you're going to speak to us and all of the new things we're going to learn from you as we lean into this new time of prayer. Amen.

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of January 1st, 2023

Sermon Series: Pray First

Sermon: Building a "God First" Year

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Icebreaker

- How did you celebrate New Year's Eve/Day?

Discussion Questions

Introduction

- Who or what do you consult when making decisions? What's the first thing that you do when you have to make a choice?
- Where do you think God wants to be first in your life? Is there something you've been struggling to hand over to Him?

God First in Devotion

- What does your Bible reading look like now? How can you make it better?
- What are your thoughts about fasting? Fasting is about denying yourself for a season while devoting yourself to prayer and studying of God's Word and should be a normal part of our lives.
- In what ways do you struggle with prayer? How can we help you as a group?

God First in Finances

- How we steward our money is a direct reflection on our heart towards money and our heart towards God. How do you view money?
- What's the difference between managers and stewards? Which one do you identify with right now?
- What would it look like for you to put God first in your financial decisions?

God First in Serving Others

- Do you have a “God heart” for others? Are you able to serve others without grumbling? Why or why not?
- What is something that you’re really good at? How could that be helpful to others?
- God’s plan is to use you as a blessing to others. How does that make you feel?

Now What?

Encouragement: Make 2023 the year where God comes first. Let’s do a reset and start seeking God first before we move. There’s nothing wrong with having things, goals and dreams, but God’s heart has always been that He is in first place in our lives. Decide to make God first and say yes to what He is calling you to do.

Ask:

- Where do you need God first in your life in 2023? And are you willing to pay the price it takes to put God first?
- Where do you need to deepen your devotion? Reading scripture, prayer, fasting, church attendance, worship, journaling, small groups, serving or something else?
- How can you put God first in your finances this year?
- How has God gifted you to be a gift to others?

Challenge:

- Commit to deepening your devotion in one of the areas mentioned above during the 21 Days of Fasting for Hope.
- Find a Bible reading plan.
- Decide to get on a budget for the new year so you can steward your resources well.

- Go through Next Steps and figure out how you can best serve others.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for bringing us another new year. God, we're believing in You that this will be our best year so far because we're inviting You back into the beginning of everything again. This year will be a God First year. Thank you for this message that reminded us that there's nothing that comes before You. This year, we're committing to growing in our devotion. We pray for rededicated, passionate prayer lives. Guide as we grow in devotion to reading Your word. We trust you to be our true provider and to help us refocus our finances so that we become good stewards of what you provide for us. Lord, show us the way you've gifted us to be a benefit to your Kingdom and to serve others. Lord, help us commit to making you first not just in these areas of our lives, but in all parts of our lives. Whatever you call us to do, we say yes. Thank you again for the best year yet. Amen.