

# **PRAYER: LEARNING FROM JESUS**

## *REFERENCES*

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Throughout the series there are various quotations and references from the Bible, and from other sources. The main ones are acknowledged and highlighted on screen, but the nature of film necessarily makes such references scarce and brief.

The benefits of an online resource though are that supplementary materials can be easily made available with minimal effort and no cost – so this document is akin to the 'footnotes' of a book, for those who are interested in following things up. The same references are also included in the e-book version of the series, as more traditional footnotes.

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# **Chapter 1:**

## **WHY PRAY?**

*Main Bible text - Luke 11v1-13*

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- *In the film David mentions that Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer twice – for those interested in why Matthew and Luke record slightly different versions of the prayer, there is an "Extra Essay" on the series page of [burningheart.org](http://burningheart.org)*
- *One element of the passage that is skipped over in this film is the parable in vv5-8. This is partly because it will be explored in more depth in Episode 3*
- *The episode does also look at the feeding of the 5,000 – which is in Matthew 14v13-21, Mark 6v32-44, Luke 9v10-17 and John 6v1-15,*
- *The episode also looks at Jesus' promises around prayer in John 14v12-13 – a passage which will be explored more in the next episode.*

# Chapter 2:

## WHAT'S THE POINT OF PRAYER?

*Main Bible text – John 14-15*

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- *The episode uses the illustration of an Ambassador to explore what it means to pray "in Jesus' name." Of course the idea of us acting as God's ambassadors is not original though – Paul got there a few thousand years before me in 2 Corinthians 5v20-21 and Ephesians 6v20! This illustration is slightly different to what he says, focusing on how we are God's ambassadors to the world, rather than prayer – but I think the illustration works and is valid in both contexts.*
- *In the film I mention that a call to obedience is repeated 5 times in just 31 verses, they are:*
  - John 14v15, "if you love me, keep my commands"
  - John 14v21, "whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me";
  - John 14v23, "anyone who loves me will obey my teaching";
  - John 15v10, "if you keep my commands, you will remain in my love"
  - John 15v14, "you are my friends if you do what I command."
- *The film mentions that the word "love" is used 20x in just these two chapters. In the Greek the words are αγαπεω (19x) and φιλεω (1x).*
- *The film mentions different types of prayer that we find in the Psalms – there are lots of examples that could be given, including:*
  - Thanksgiving – Psalm 136
  - Praise – Psalm 150
  - Trust – Psalm 23

- Lament – Psalm 137.
- The film quotes Irenaeus famous words “*the glory of God is a person fully alive.*” Irenaeus lived c.130-202 AD, and was an early Bishop of Lyon (in France). The quotation is from his *Against Heresies* 4.20.7.

The exact quote is “Gloria enim Dei vivens homo” which is literally translated “the glory of God is a living person.” The popular expansion of ‘living person’ to “person fully alive” comes from the context, which is clearly not talking about simply being alive, but something more. It seems to me to be a fair and accurate rendering of Irenaeus’ meaning, even if fairly loosely translated.

Some readers may be familiar with the more old-fashioned version of the saying as “the glory of God is a man fully alive”, but either is a valid translation of the Latin.

It is also worth saying that there is no definite article (“the”) in Latin, so this is less exclusive than it might appear in English – it is not that this is the limit of the glory of God, but part of the glory of God.

- In the film I say “God *does* change his cosmic plans and purposes to do what *we* want when we ask for it in prayer – which is pretty mind-blowing!” – it does also pose some philosophical questions about God’s fore-knowledge and goodness. For those interested in exploring that more, I have written an “Extra Essay” that is available on our website.

## **Chapter 3:**

# **WHY DIDN'T GOD ANSWER?**

*Main Bible texts –*

*Matthew 27v46 (the cross)*

*Matthew 26v36-46 (Gethsemane)*

*Luke 11v5-9 (the parable of persistence)*

*Isaiah 53v3, Matthew 28v20, Job 19v25-27 (in David's testimony)*

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- This episode touches on some huge themes around pain and suffering and unanswered prayer. I am very aware that it only really *begins* to do so though, and so would love to recommend two great resources for those wanting to explore further – both are excellent both pastorally and theologically. They are:
    - Tim Keller *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*
    - Pete Greig *God on Mute* (also available in film form as *The Prayer Course II – Unanswered Prayer*)
  - The film talks of the 'struggling Psalms' where the Psalmists struggle and question. If you just read through Psalms from the start, you will quickly come across lots of examples, such as:
    - Psalm 6 (How long?)
    - Psalm 10 (Why?)
    - Psalm 13 (Where are you?).

- In the film I mention how Jesus knew the answer to his question “why?” on the cross, having “taught and prophesied it countless times” – for those wanting an example, Mark 8v31-32 is a good one.
- The film mentions various reasons that the Bible gives us for why God may not answer our prayers. The examples given in the on-screen graphic are:
  - Ephesians 3v20 (God having better plans than we know)
  - Psalm 66v18 (sin blocking us off from God)
  - James 4v3 (wrong motives blocking us off from God)
  - Daniel 10v12-13 (spiritual warfare causing delays)
  - James 4v2 (us forgetting to pray at all)

There are also lots of other reasons though, and I am aware the film doesn't cover them – our feeling was that the deeper questions were more important (as mentioned early on in the episode), and we didn't have time to cover both aspects adequately.

However, I do recognise that they are important – for those wanting to explore them further, I would highly recommend the *Good Friday* section in Pete Greig's *God on Mute*.

- When exploring the famous verse “Ask and it will be given to you...” in Luke 11v9, I mention the Greek words are in the “present continuous” tense. Technically they are present imperatives, which in Greek are used for continuous actions (as opposed to Aorist imperatives, which we don't have in English, and which are used are for ‘one time’ actions). The actual Greek words are **αἰτεῖτε, ζητεῖτε, κρούετε**.
- In the film interview, Pip shares some of the amazing answers to prayer that she and her family have seen in recent years. For those wanting to discover more, do visit The Big Church Festival website at [bigchurchfestival.com](http://bigchurchfestival.com), David's Tent's website at [davidstent.net](http://davidstent.net), and the local church's website at [chanctonbury.org.uk](http://chanctonbury.org.uk). There is also a third festival, called Wildfires ([wildfiresfestival.com](http://wildfiresfestival.com)), and

there have also been amazing answers to prayer in the ways in which God has led Pip and her family in managing their land, particularly around their vineyard (one of England's first and best - [wistonestate.com](http://wistonestate.com)).

I can personally testify to some of that too – when I stepped down from leading a church in London, and founded Burning Heart, we moved close by to Pip and her family. We now go to the same church – and it's wonderful!

- The quotation from Betsie Ten-Boom is recorded by her sister Corrie in *The Hiding Place* – I have a kindle version, so don't have a page number, but it is close to the end of chapter 14.
- The first verse I quote in my final testimony about God's presence with me when my Dad died is Isaiah 53v3 – that Jesus was “*a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*”. The eagle eyed may have spotted it is not the NIV translation that we usually use. The reason is that it is from a previous version of the NIV (the 1984 translation), and I learned it in that translation. I don't think it makes much difference to the meaning (both are valid), but I chose to use the version I know for this episode.
- The final quotation is from Job 19v25-27. Some scholars question whether Job is actually talking about eternal life here though, or whether he actually means that he has hope *in this life*. As an OT believer, there are questions about whether the Redeemer he speaks of is indeed Jesus. I believe that it is clearly about eternal life, and prophetically speaking about Jesus – and that is how I understood it on that awful night when my father died. For those who are unconvinced though, the theological points can all be made perfectly well (and more indisputably) from John 11v25-26.
- For those who don't know the aria I mention, based on Job 19v25-26, it is part of Handel's *Messiah*, and it is called *I know that my Redeemer Liveth*. Google will quickly show it to you!

# Chapter 4:

## HOW DO I PRAY?

*Main Bible text – Matthew 6v5-13*

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- The film mentions lots of different ways in which we see people praying in scripture. Examples of each are:
  - Walking about – 2 Kings 4v33-34
  - Sitting down – 2 Samuel 7v18
  - Standing up – Luke 18v13
  - Kneeling – Ephesians 3v14
  - Dancing – 2 Samuel 6v14
  - Written prayer - Ephesians 3v16-21
  - Acted prayer – 2 Kings 13v18
  - Silent prayer – 1 Samuel 1v10-13
  - Shout – Matthew 27v46
  - Whisper – Isaiah 26v16
  - Sing – Psalm 95v1
  - Talking normally – John 17v1
- The film talks about how corporate prayer is one of the early church's main activities in the book of Acts. Examples include: Acts 1v14, 1v24, 2v42, 4v24-30, 8v15, 12v5+12, 13v1-3, 14v23, 16v25, 20v36, 21v5.
- I love Adrian's whistlestop explanation of *Lectio Divina* in the film, but as he says he didn't have time to go into detail. For those wanting to explore further, there are lots of places to turn.
  - 24-7 Prayer have produced the *Lectio 365* app,
  - their founder Pete Greig has also made a film series about it - *the Lectio 365 course*.



- There is also a great guided podcast that uses many of the techniques of contemplative and scriptural prayer – *Pray as You Go*.
- Adrian mentions how in *Christian* contemplative prayer “you don't go to zero, you go to one.” This of course is the big difference between Christian contemplation and non-Christian forms of meditation (such as in Buddhism). The two may appear outwardly similar but are actually fundamentally and hugely different – the Buddhist seeks emptiness, the Christian seeks fullness in God.
- Adrian also mentions St. Teresa of Avila's analogy of God's presence being like water. The relevant text is St. Teresa of Avila, *The Book of her Life*, 11.10.
- David mentions that Paul tells us to “pray continually” – the reference is 1 Thessalonians 5v17.
- The film mentions how Jesus frequently prayed on his own – some examples of that are Luke 5v16, Matthew 14v23, Mark 1v35, Luke 6v12, 9v18.
- The comments in the film about how it is us who need to pray, not God remind me of a famous saying attributed to Martin Luther that “I have so much to do that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer.”

Having researched it more, I have disappointingly come to the conclusion that he probably didn't say those exact words – but that they are very much in line with his words and practice elsewhere.

There is a fuller analysis here:

<https://beggarsallreformation.blogspot.com/2009/07/luther-i-have-so-much-to-do-that-i.html>

- A classic example of an “arrow prayer” would be Nehemiah 2v4-5
- This whole passage in Matthew 6 is a good example of Jesus' teaching about the importance of setting aside time to prayer, and some examples of him doing so are given above. An example of

Jesus praying an "arrow prayer" would be John 11v41-42, while Luke 21v36 is an example of him teaching us to pray all the time.

- The film references how Martin Luther used to pray through the Lord's Prayer, using each line as a springboard to further prayer. The is main focus of the first half of his classic work *A Simple Way to Pray*. That is also the source for the quotation given from Luther (coming at the end of the section on the Lord's Prayer), and included as a graphic in the films. The full quote is: "*make room for such thoughts...under these conditions the Holy Spirit is preaching, and in his sermon one word is better than a thousand in our prayer. I have learned much more from this kind of listening than I could have from much reading and reflection.*"
- Most of us would add a final line to the Lord's Prayer that is not mentioned in the film – "*for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, Amen.*" Most scholars agree that this final line isn't in the earliest versions of the gospels, and so wasn't part of Jesus' original prayer. It is a great prayer though, and very much in line with what the rest of the Lord's Prayer and Bible says – so do please continue to use it! I always love how the English reformers resolved the issue of whether to use it or not in the Book of Common Prayer – it gets prayed twice during Holy Communion, once with the final line and once without.
- The film mentions the importance of Thanksgiving as a type of prayer in scripture. Many examples could be given, but a good one is Philippians 4v6.
- I got the idea (and most of the substance) for the abbreviation of the different types of prayer from Tim Keller *Prayer*, p67.