

Relationship Revealed by Prayer

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[0 : 00] They greatly value their relationship, and they see the value in taking a step back and evaluating their relationship and retune and refocus where they need to to make the most of their marriage relationship.

Now, since Bill is out this morning, we'll shift gears from his expository review of Luke, and we're going to see how we're doing with our most important relationship.

So let's say that you discovered that the most honorable, interesting, and attractive person on the planet had heard about you and was actively seeking relationship with you.

They'd already purchased a plane ticket to come see you. What would you do? Well, I think you would be very honored, and you would reach out to them in earnest to establish that relationship. Our opportunity for relationship is with somebody infinitely more wonderful in every respect, the creator of the universe.

[1 : 04] God himself has chosen us for relationship. Even more than that, he specifically created us for relationship with him. His desire for relationship is even more amazing, since throughout our lives, we have ignored and rejected him.

We've done things that brought dishonor to him. Yet he still wants to fellowship with us. I think that's just absolutely amazing. To prove this to us, God covered himself, covered his power and majesty in flesh, and came to dwell among us in a way that wouldn't scare us in the manner in which we deserve.

He taught us about his character, and he taught us about our character. Then he himself suffered the price of our eternal separation so that we could have eternal relationship with him.

And as we talked about before when we studied the Trinity, this is only an image. Physical death. The real price that he paid was behind the scenes.

The eternal separation from God. Only God can do that. And that's to our benefit. We often hear the complaint of how a good God can allow bad things to happen to people.

[2 : 29] Makes sense, right? But I think the real question is, why would a perfect and fully self-sufficient God create imperfect people for relationship, knowing that he would have to sacrifice himself to preserve his holiness and justice in order to create and maintain those relationships?

To me, that's the big question. And the answer is to glorify himself. And we are the beneficiaries of his sacrifice. At his core, God is about relationship.

And this relationship that we need to carefully consider and explore for refocus and tuning this morning. My goal is to take you through my recent journey in the hopes that you can see the observations and become more aware of your relationship with him and experience the joy that he intends.

I want to honor God with my life, not acting out of obligation, but thanksgiving. I see the church under assault.

I see our church under assault. Many are stepping away from God's word and withdrawing from meeting together. These people are letting their relationships with God and each other atrophy.

[3 : 59] Bad is accelerating and darkness is swallowing our country. I want us and our families to be part of the remnant.

So it's critical that we examine our relationship with God. And we need a diagnostic tool. I think you would agree that the key to relationship in any context is communication.

So this morning we're going to focus on our communication and examine our prayer life. I want to take you on the journey that I have recently taken and show you what I've learned.

So let's pray and we'll dig in. Lord God, we thank you and praise you for revealing us to yourself and drawing us to faith in you. Thank you for the community that you have led us to.

Thank you for the Holy Spirit that you have given us to reveal your word. Please help us to be quiet and listen to the still small voice that you have given us to seal our relationship with you and tune our hearts to yours.

[5 : 06] Please reach beyond the words that are spoken this morning and reveal the places in our hearts that serve as barriers to our relationship with you. Show us your truth.

And in doing so, lead us to fully embrace the joy that we have in being known by the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. In Jesus' precious name we pray.

Amen. I think it's kind of interesting that Zach chose the same verse that we're about to read again here this morning. Because God has given us instruction about how to properly communicate with him, how to properly pray with him.

So our text this morning again is Matthew 6. And we're going to read verses 5 through 15. So please stand in honor of reading God's holy and errant word.

So Matthew 6, 5 through 15. 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.

[6 : 15] Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But 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. And when you pray, do not heap empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for their father knows what you need before you ask him. 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 have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.

[7 : 19] So reads the word of God. Please be seated. So this is a very familiar passage. And it's even more familiar in that we read it like 10 minutes ago.

So we learned that we need to speak to God for the sake of solely communicating to him, not as a show to men.

We need to be direct. God knows what we need before we ask. So prayer is in large part honoring God by recognizing that he's the source of everything.

We must treat God with respect and honor that he deserves. We must recognize that he is sovereign. We recognize that he is the one that provides our needs.

And we acknowledge that he alone has forgiven our transgressions against him. And this makes us responsible for forgiving others in the same manner.

[8 : 18] We can't be hypocrites and accept the gift from God and not pass that gift along to others. We recognize that there is evil and we ask God to protect us from it.

And we see that God's forgiveness is contingent on our forgiveness of others. Now, Bill has... You can go back in the archives and see his prayer or see his sermon on the Lord's Prayer.

Very detailed, very wonderful. And that's really not the focus of what we're going to get into this morning. We're going to use this as our foundation to look at our prayer life.

Communication is the key to relationship. So what does our communication, our prayer, say about our relationship with God? Well, about a year ago, I came across a Desiring God article that John Piper had written back in 2017.

The title of the article was, Did Christ Die for Us or God? Think about that for a minute. Did Christ die for us or for God?

[9 : 30] It's kind of an interesting question, I think. And I thought about how many would answer this. And more importantly, how our answers reveal what we think of God and ourselves.

Who's really in control? In a broader sense, my thoughts expanded to a relationship question. Do we exist for God or does God exist for us?

The answer reveals whether God is the center of our universe or if we are. As Christians, our lives should reflect our relationship with God.

The secular world has a very different perspective. So our starting points are very different. Or are they? They should be.

But the world we live in has a way of warping our view. The tension between light and darkness can blend into a comfortable gray.

[10:34] My goal this morning is that we would study the differences. And we would examine ourselves to ensure that the leaven of this world is revealed and purged.

And that our focus is on the blessing of our relationship with God that gives us true joy and true peace. So let's take a look at some worldviews.

The secular worldview is based on focus on self. Everything and everyone revolves around them. They don't want anything to interfere with or taking advantage of what the world has to offer.

Or even if their positions make no sense. And I think as we're seeing today, especially when they make no sense. They live in the dark.

They seek to avoid God's law and condemnation for disobedience. So let's look at 2 Timothy 3, 1-5 briefly. I don't know, Grayson.

[11:37] Can you put that up, Grayson? Okay, great. Excellent. Otherwise, I was going to give folks time to look it up. So 2 Timothy 3, 1-5. See if this sounds familiar.

But understand this. In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal and not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.

Never avoid such people. That sound familiar to you? I know my friend that's in the state legislature. I think he probably sees that every day.

He goes to work. These blind people have their hearts tuned into WIIFM. What's in it for me?

They believe in God to the extent that he can do things for them. He's like a cosmic vending machine that if they pray the right words long enough, they'll get what they want.

[13:02] And what they want is always best. The only acceptable answer is yes. And they're upset when they don't get what they want.

When they want it. They trivialize God Almighty into someone who can give them stuff. Stuff that will rust and fade away as this world will fade away.

But that's their goal. Relationship with God is not their goal. Still, God has revealed himself whether we recognize it or not.

And I agree with the premise that we don't find any atheists in foxholes. God has crafted us for relationship with him. And try as we might, we are drawn to that purpose.

When our abilities and strength are spent, we naturally turn to God to bail us out of trouble. But the secular minded don't reach out to build relationship.

[14:00] They just want to escape the problem. Let's consider for a minute the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16. So we're looking at Luke 16, 19 through 31.

And I know this is a familiar story to you. There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed from what fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

And in Hades, being in torment, he, the rich man, lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he called out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me. And send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this flame.

[15:12] But Abraham said, Child, remember that in your lifetime you received good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things.

But he is now comforted to hear, and you are in anguish. And beside all this, between you and me, a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to there may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.

And he said, Then I beg you, Father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.

But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. And he said, No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said to them, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will I be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. Notice throughout this entire story, the rich man is only concerned with his punishment and his brothers to avoid torment.

[16:26] There's no humility. There's no recognition that God is sovereign. There's no desire for relationship. I earnestly pray that this story is not representative of us.

So let's switch gears. Let's look at the Christian worldview, which is completely the opposite. God, not man, is at the center.

And he is the recognized source of light and life. Let's look briefly at 1 John 1, 5 through 10. So 1 John 1, 5 through 10.

This is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son cleanses us from all sin. And if we say we have no sin, then we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[17:39] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.

I think that gives a pretty good summary of what the Christian life is like. Christian followers seek to live in the life and he has called us to relationship with him.

God has given us his Holy Spirit to seal the relationship that we have with him. As Christians, we want to honor and glorify God. The Christian focus is well described in the first question and answer of the 1647 Westminster Shorter Catechism.

And for those of you who've been in the Presbyterian Church, you've heard this before. So the question, what is the chief end of man? And the answer is man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Our faith is all about relationship. And as we take stock of our relationship with God, it's important to understand how we communicate with him.

[18:50] And that is through prayer. Prayer should include a number of things. Acknowledgement of who God is, praise, thanksgiving, expressions of humility, confession of sin, making requests for discernment, wisdom, strength, health, and provision.

It's about protection and growth in our faith. It's about requesting intercession for others. On and on and on. We can focus on how we honor God with the life that he's given us.

But at its foundation, prayer is us talking to God. So what does your prayer life look like? How would you compare the way you communicate with God with the way you communicate with your family and friends?

Let's explore five diagnostic questions related to our prayer life together this morning. So the first one is, let's start with who do you pray to? Well, obviously God.

But who is this person that we pray to? And how is recognition of his character reflected in our prayers? When you build a relationship with someone, are you not careful and thoughtful about how you communicate to them?

[20:04] If lack of respect doesn't work for your spouse, how much more important is it to come to Jesus with care and humility? When Jesus instructed his disciples on how he should pray, his first message was to recognize who they were speaking to and to interact with them with the respect that he deserves.

If we dial back to Matthew 6, 9 through 10 that we read earlier, the Lord's Prayer, the prayer starts with our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. This grounds us in who we're speaking to. God spoke the universe into existence.

He created everything we see, touch, hear, taste, smell, and a zillion other things that we don't understand. He is all-powerful, all-holy, jealous of his name and reputation.

God put away his scary attributes and his infinite power and his fiery intolerance of sin when he clothed himself in flesh and came to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

[21:19] But I think that's kind of interesting because it kind of dials down in our minds who God is. Because Jesus is relatable.

He's vulnerable. He seeks relationship based on love and forgiveness, not coercion and fear. Jesus is resistible.

You can turn your back on him, disrespect him, and ignore him without fear of instant judgment. But make no mistake, he's still the King of kings and Lord of lords, and judgment will come.

So when we pray to him, do we give him the respect that he deserves? Let's look at the second question. What do we pray for? Christians recognize that the God is the source of everything.

So in the main, we pray for ourselves. We also pray for a lot of things we want, not just the things that we or others need.

[22 : 25] It's easy to find ourselves in that comfortable gray between light and dark focused on asking for things. So think about this. How would your spouse feel if the majority of the way that you communicated with him or her was asking for things?

Honey, can you get me something to drink? Honey, can you make me dinner? Honey, did you go to the store? And on and on and on. What would this type of communication say about our relationship?

It would say it's very one-sided. Now, I'm not suggesting that we don't ask for things because if we look at Philippians 4, 6, and this is familiar too, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

So I'm not suggesting that we don't ask God. What I am suggesting is we take time to think about how we're speaking to God.

I tried an experiment, and I would encourage you to do this too. I tried praying to him without asking for anything. And you know it was revealing.

[23 : 46] First, I found out it was difficult because inevitably when we pray to God, we're always asking for stuff. asking for things seems to be my default position.

Being intentional about not asking for things opened my eyes to blessings in other areas. It made me better appreciate God for who he is and what he's done.

I thank him for things. The beautiful sunrise in the morning, a clear mountain stream, the echo of the train whistle in these hills around here, a clear night sky, my wife's laugh, the comment that someone made that reminded me of something that I've forgotten, which is increasingly more important in my life, a photo of my granddaughter's tea party, and the salvation of my kids and their spouses.

There is so much to thank God for if we can just take our mind off ourselves and not focus on what we want, but focus on what he has done.

We pray to encounter the living God too, but do we really take advantage of the opportunity that we have, the opportunity that he's purchased for us?

[25 : 08] Now I think back to a verse that we read last week in Luke, and this really kind of struck me as I was chewing on the sermon this morning, but let's look at Luke 6, 17 through 19 for last week.

Luke 6, 17 through 19. And he came down with them, this is Jesus, and stood on the level place with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came down to hear him and be healed for their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him, and he healed them all. So they all were healed, but did they miss the true blessing?

They had an encounter with God in the flesh and asked for and received a worldly gift, physical healing. They felt better in this life, but they still passed away to face eternity.

How many of these people, and the text really doesn't tell us this, but this is the question in my mind that popped up last week. How many of these people only touched him and went away without a relationship with Christ?

[26 : 40] I don't know. But I do know I want a full encounter and a true relationship with the living God. I don't want to squander my opportunity for a gift that satisfies my flesh and leaves my soul unfulfilled.

I want the priceless and eternal gift. But this requires that I ask for things that point to God, not myself. So let's take a look at the third question.

Do we take time to ensure the things that we ask for are in alignment with his will? Hmm, that's interesting. I know I don't always do that.

Let's look at Matthew 6, 25 through 33. Matthew 6, 25 through 33. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

[27 : 56] Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to the span of life? And why are you curious about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field and how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. But I tell you, even Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you?

Oh, you of little faith! Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and their heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. The secular world says, what shall we eat?

[28 : 59] What shall we drink? What shall we wear? Christians should appreciate that our heavenly Father knows that we need them all and instruct us to seek his kingdom first and his righteousness, knowing that God will care for us if we honor him.

So what constitutes a good life? Well, the world says stuff, right? The one who dies with the most toys wins. Yep.

But they die. And the toys are gone. And if their relationship is not there, they're going to be forced to deal with that lack of relationship for eternity.

God says for us to run our race to honor him. He promises to take care of us. He does not promise us to make us successful in the eyes of men.

So for some reason, we're programmed to think that what we know, that we know what's best for us, right? And we tend to be upset when we don't immediately get what we prayed for.

[30 : 17] Now, I talked to that, we talked about that earlier with regard to the secular world, but that's a thing that I can fall into as well. And there's that comfortable gray again, right?

I'm getting out of the light and seeking after myself. As Christians, as a Christian, I should know better. We know that the answers to our prayers can be yes, no, and my very favorite, wait.

And the answer to our prayer that we need to realize is not just about us, but the answer to our prayer inevitably affects other people too.

Romans 8.28, let's look at that. This is another familiar verse to us all. Romans 8.28 says, And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those are called according to His purpose.

I would argue that this is one of the most misinterpreted verses in Scripture because secular-leaning people interpret this as all things work together for my good.

[31 : 33] No. That's not what it says. It says, for those who love God, all things work together for good. And the focus is on those who have a relationship with Him.

That the all things work together for good. Now, what about the all things? That's another kind of sticky point with this. All things. Not just the yes answer to my prayer, right?

All things. Successes, failures, trials, triumph, everything works together for good. And who defines good? Well, I do.

No. God defines good. And it's what glorifies Him, not what glorifies men. And for those who are called according to His purpose.

In other words, it says that God is sovereign and works all things that each of us experience to the benefit of His kingdom. God knows that we may not be the obvious recipients of the good or even see the good.

[32 : 40] We know that good will always result because God is in control. God many times tells us no because He knows what we ask is not good for us or others.

and yet we still resist His answer. Let's look at Luke 11. Luke 11, 11 through 13.

I think this puts things into a nice perspective for us too. So Luke 11, 11 through 13. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish, give him a serpent?

Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

We pray for things that God does not give us because we can't see the big picture. We're asking for snakes and scorpions.

[33 : 50] But rather than being upset when we didn't receive what we wanted, wouldn't it be nice to not be anxious, make our requests known to God, and rest in His sovereign judgment?

But I want that snake. I want that scorpion. Now, if Abby was here, we all would understand why Abby would want the snake and the scorpion because that's what she gets into. But the point I'm trying to make, obviously, is we don't see the big picture.

And we're upset about things that we don't get. And we're told no. Just like parents, those of us who are parents, we know our kids want stuff sometimes. Dad, I sure would like to play with that blowtorch.

Wouldn't that be fun at three years old? No, I'm not going to give you that because you're going to hurt somebody or you're going to hurt yourself. You're going to burn my house down. This is not good for you. Wouldn't it be better to thank God for the answers that we get and recognize that He's working to protect us from ourselves?

How would we respond to trials? How we respond to trials is impactful to a lost world, too. who's seeking for truth. This is not just about us.

[35 : 08] Okay, let's look at our fourth question. When do we pray? When do we pray? For many of us, prayer is a scheduled event.

We set aside time to pray or we pray when we need something. certainly nothing wrong with either approach, but then again, how would this look like if you interacted with your spouse at home?

I will speak to you in the morning between 7 and 7.05. I will speak to you when I need something. Something tells me that's not going to play very well.

I guarantee you it will not play well at my house. So, if we don't deal with, interact with people and have relationships with the people that we know that live in our home, why would we do the same thing with Almighty God?

I believe there's an overlooked nugget of truth that will help us in our relationship with God buried in Ephesians 6, 11 through 18. And you will instantly recognize these verses as how to put on the armor of God.

[36 : 22] But there's a special instruction that we always seem to miss at the end of that. So, let's read that together. This is Ephesians 6, 11 through 18.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Period. We're done. No, we're not. Praying at all times in the Spirit with prayer and supplication.

[37 : 47] Seems like we missed that. For some reason, we always end with the sword of the Spirit, but that final instruction we shouldn't miss, the Holy Spirit is with us.

He's a seal that God Almighty has given us for the relationship that we have with Him. He is our constant companion. So my question is, why don't we enjoy our life together with Him and feed the relationship with a constant communication and a constant conversation?

That, I believe, is what this means. Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. And supplication is humbly asking for something. So if we seek the light of every minute of every day and enjoy fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit, what does that look like?

To me, it looks like I walk through life and I say, thank you, Lord, for this opportunity that I had to visit with my friends. I walk out that door and I say, thank you, Lord, that I live in this beautiful place and it's a beautiful day.

And James didn't get the answer to his prayer and we don't have 36 inches of snow on the ground. Every interaction that I have, I can thank God for.

[39 : 19] that's really the relationship I have with my spouse. We enjoy things together. We're constantly communicating together. It's not something structured.

Why don't we do that with God? Lastly, and I think this is, this is an important thing for me, is do we pray with confidence?

Now, we see two obvious camps in the Christian community. On the left, we have the American gospel approach. Name it and claim it.

After all, we are the center of God's universe and he wants what's best for us. He wants us to be rich. He made the world and everything in it for our benefit.

That's why he did that. Wow, that seems a whole lot more like darkness than gray to me. They also say, if we just have enough faith, we can get anything we want.

[40 : 21] I would argue the scripture says not so. Paul was never able to get rid of the thorn in the flesh that he had. And it wasn't because he didn't have enough faith, but it was because God put it there to keep him from being conceited and to learn to leverage God's ability and power and not to leverage his own strength.

Interesting. So let's look at 2 Corinthians and I wrote this wrong in my outline. I got dyslexic on you this morning. 2 Corinthians 12 verses 7 through 10.

So let's look at Paul's situation. So to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh.

We don't know what that was. We just know that it was a problem. A messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[41 : 48] For the sake of Christ then, I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, he is strong.

So wait a minute now. You mean God intentionally gives us pain and suffering? Yes. Think back to Romans 8, 28. Why?

Why? To glorify himself and to protect us and others and to build us up so that we can do what he needs us to do later.

How many of you have gone through a really tough time, a trial, a loss of something or someone, pain, health issues? And that was a rough time that God brought you through.

Yet now you have an experience that you can share with others to build them up. It's really not about us, is it?

[42 : 53] In the end, it's about his glory, not ours. And our blessing is derived from him, not the other way around. So, let's move away from our friends in the American gospel over to the right.

To the frozen chosen. When we pray, we ask respectfully. We ask quietly without confidence that we're going to get the answer that we're hoping for.

We know that God can respond with yes, no, and wait. But we really don't think that we're going to get the response that we hope for, so we're kind of timid in how we're praying. Christian brothers and sisters, we worship God Almighty who created the universe with a word.

He can do anything. He can fix anything. He can break down barriers to anyone's heart. Lord, and he sacrificed himself to come to us, to enable us to come into his presence with confidence and boldness to make our request known to him.

Let's look at Hebrews 4.16. Hebrews 4.16. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[44 : 26] God can do anything and we need to be confident in him, yet we need to trust that he's sovereign. At one point, I want to hit on that I know is near and dear to our hearts is there are no more important prayers than we pray than to beg God to draw those that we love to himself.

And the response to that question many times is to wait. So the most important prayer and the answer that we don't like. Waiting is hard and we know that in our heart the time is short and we know the consequence is eternal.

So we keep asking. So let's look at the parable of the persistent widow for a second in Luke 18. So 18.1-8.

I think this is one that's misinterpreted too and we'll talk about that here too after we read this. Luke 18.1-8. And he told them a parable to the effect that they always ought to pray and not lose heart. He said, in a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary. [45 : 56] For a while he refused but afterward he said to himself though I neither fear God nor respect man yet because this widow keeps bothering me I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continued coming.

And the Lord said hear what the unrighteous judge says and will not give and sorry and will not give God justice to his elect who cry to him day and night will he delay long over them I tell you he will give justice to them speedily nevertheless when the sun comes will he find faith on earth so the first part of that is yeah I bug the judge bug the judge bug the judge get what I want I bug the judge and that last sentence kind of turns that whole thing on its head doesn't it because I want what I want I want what I want I want what I want if I bug you you're giving me what I want but yet Jesus ends this with nevertheless when the son of man comes will he find faith on earth he rolls that back to a relationship question now I think a lot of people say you know if we just pester God enough we'll get what we want no I

I don't buy that if animated dust could compel the creator of the universe to do something yeah that'd be great I don't see that happening given the character of God so why do we persist why are we asked to persist I believe it's because we recognize only God can solve the problem and we keep coming back to him because the thing that we're asking for is important so if we plead by confidently going to the light and in doing so honor God that he alone holds the key to our loved one's rescue and relationship I think that's important and I think that ties in with the relationship that he's talking about in the last verse because faith is talking about relationship our prayers are how we communicate with God and we ask for things that we need and we need to be thoughtful about asking for what we want because this life that we have here even though the world and the mud puddle that we live in tells us otherwise with everything that it says everything that we hear and see this is not just about us this is not about stuff this is about faith and relationship and God is looking for those who want relationship with him so something to think about so in summary how is your relationship with God and how is that expressed in your prayers

Matthew 6 19 through 21 says do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is your heart will be also don't settle for temporary things focus on the eternal treasure and communicate with the Holy Spirit that lives in you let's pray together Lord God we thank you and praise you for our time in your word this morning we thank you for revealing yourself and your truth to us let us take advantage of the joy that comes with true relationship with you help us to enjoy our constant conversations with your Holy Spirit and open our eyes and hearts to know you more each day amen amen