

Pray Anyway

March 22, 2020



Purpose: To help you reflect on your experience of prayer.

Focus text for this week: *John 9:1-41*

Related texts: Psalm 23, 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Ephesians 5:8-14

In “Prayer: the Hidden Fire”, Tom Harpur states, “In the final analysis, the spiritual path, particularly the way of prayer, is an experience rather than a theory.” (43) What do you think Tom means by this?

- ☛ If a skeptic challenged you about the validity of your prayer life, how would you respond?

Some people share their experience of praying and “of getting what seemed to be a wrong, evil, or ‘non-answer’, from an immediate point of view. And then in time coming to realize that the ‘right’ answer was there all the time... “Do you think Samuel felt this way about choosing David?

- ☛ Have you ever had this kind of experience? What were your thoughts, feelings, or reactions when you thought your prayer was being ignored, or when you thought you were getting a “wrong” answer? How did you work these out?

Tom also says, “One of the greatest weaknesses of a good deal that passes for spiritual nurture today is found in the fact that it involves, in reality, a sort of ‘junk food’ approach. It’s too easy and too superficial.” (p. 185) “The life of prayer is not always one constant wrestling. An over-emphasis on the struggle for its own sake could become a kind of deadening, spiritual masochism.” (p. 188)

- ☛ Do you spend more time wrestling with God, or relaxing in God? Why do you think that is?
- ☛ If you would like more balance in your spiritual life, how might you achieve it?

The blind man in the reading from John 9:1-41 does not ask to be healed. In fact there is no record of anyone asking that he be healed.

- ☛ Do you believe God knows our needs even before we ask?

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Opportunities to respond:

- 1) Take one of the psalms or another prayer that is short and meaningful to you. Try to commit it to memory, adapting it where you feel necessary. Pray it daily for a month and journal your thoughts and feelings each day. Look for changes in your writings in your journal.
- 2) Are there unresolved issues in your life? Make a list of these using the most honest, specific and searching words you can. Bring these into the “light”. Wrestle with God over them in an effort to bring out the whole truth between you and God. Do not look for a specific answer, but rather the illumination or strength you will need to move forward. End with prayer of thanksgiving remembering what Paul said today, “for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and pleasing to the Lord.”
- 3) Write down parts of your inner life that you feel need to be changed. Acknowledge them fully as your own. Bring them before God in prayer and see God’s divine light flooding through you to your very extremities. Picture this light (or fire) consuming the dark things of your life you identify. Let the light flow out beyond your fingers, toes, head and face. See the unwanted things being completely pushed out, destroyed, cleaned up, or wholly changed by God’s transforming light. Give thanks to God for the immediate or gradual change you expect in your life.

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020,

Worship Service @ 8:15, 9:30 and 11:00 am

Wednesday Healing Service

April 8, 2020, Worship Service @ 6:15 pm

Maundy Thursday – Seder Feast

April 9, 2020, @ 7:00 pm, Bayless Hall

Good Friday

April 10, 2020

Worship service @ 7:00 pm

Holy Saturday Baptism and Baptismal Renewal Service

Saturday, April 11, 2020 Worship service
4:00 pm

EASTER SUNDAY @ WUMC

April 12, 2020

Sunrise service Holy Communion 6:30 am
Breakfast to follow @ Crossroads Church

Holy Communion Worship service
8:15 and 9:30 am

Holy Communion Praise Service 11:00 am