

061321 PASTOR WALLY'S SERMON: "PRAYER."

>> Pastor: MAY WE PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OF PRAYER.

LORD GOD, WE THANK AND PRAISE YOU FOR THIS TIME WE CAN BE TOGETHER AS YOUR PEOPLE, THIS TIME OF WORSHIP, LORD.

WE PRAY THAT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT WILL OPEN UP OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO RECEIVE FROM YOU YOUR WORD, LORD, THOSE NUGGETS OF WISDOM, OF TRUTH, OF STRENGTH FOR OUR LIVES, LORD, AS WE FOCUS NOW ON A VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT OF OUR LIVES.

WE PRAY THIS IN JESUS' NAME.

AMEN.

AMEN.

THIS MORNING I WANT TO FOCUS ON SOMETHING EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR WHO WE ARE AS A PEOPLE OF GOD, SOMETHING VITAL TO EVEN OUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH, OUR WELL-BEING AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST, AS A PEOPLE NAMED CHRISTIAN, AND THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER.

THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER.

WHEN I WAS AT SEMINARY, AND THAT WAS JUST A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, WE HAD -- I HAD A HOMILETICS TEACHER, DR. HOWSER.

I LOVED HIM.

BECAUSE DR. HOWSER KIND OF WORKED OUT OF THE BOX.

I MEAN, HE KNEW THE EXTENT OF LIBERTY, IF YOU WILL, IN TERMS OF APPLYING OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH, THE EXTENT OF HOW DO WE APPLY CHRISTIANITY AND ITS TEACHINGS TO OUR DAILY LIVES.

SO WHEN I WENT THROUGH HOMILETICS, WE HAD THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SERMONS. AND ONE OF THEM I'M GOING TO DO TODAY IS CALLED A TOPICAL.

A TOPICAL SERMON WHERE I'M GOING TO FOCUS ON AN ISSUE, AND THAT IS PRAYER, SOMETHING VITAL AND VERY ESSENTIAL TO WHO WE ARE AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

THERE IS A STORY FROM A "GUIDE POST" MAGAZINE THAT I WANT TO INTRODUCE US TO, OR SHARE WITH YOU TODAY, AND IT IS TITLED "WHAT PRAYER CAN DO: GOD HAD BEEN THERE ALL ALONG."

THIS IS BY DIANE STARK, POSTED MAY 27th, 2021.

SHE HAD BEEN ASKING GOD FOR HELP WITH HER YOUNG SON'S ISSUES, AND THEN A SIMPLE MOMENT REMINDED HER HE WAS ALWAYS THERE.

DYSLEXIA, PROCESSING DISORDER, LEARNING DISABILITY -- NOTHING IN MY ONLINE SEARCH MATCHED THE ISSUES MY 6-YEAR-OLD SON, NATHAN, WAS HAVING IN SCHOOL.

NATHAN -- WELL, THERE WERE SOME DIFFICULTIES.

WHEN HIS TEACHER HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT HIS PROGRESS, I SHIFTED INTO OVERDRIVE, TRYING TO PINPOINT THE PROBLEM.

BUT DESPITE SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES AND TESTS, WE STILL HAD NO CONCLUSION. NATHAN KEPT FALLING FURTHER BEHIND AT SCHOOL. MY INTERNET SEARCHES WEREN'T TURNING UP ANY ANSWERS, NOR WERE MY DAILY PRAYERS.

WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING ME, GOD, I THOUGHT, AS I SWITCHED OFF THE COMPUTER ONE EVENING AND PICKED UP THE LAUNDRY BASKET.

AND THEN I HEARD, "MOMMY," NATHAN CALLED AS I PASSED BY HIS ROOM, "I CAN'T FIND MY DINOSAUR JAMMIES."

YOU ALL HAVE THOSE, DINOSAUR JAMMIES?

THOSE ARE FUN.

"THEY'RE IN THE DRYER," I CALLED BACK TO HIM ON MY WAY DOWNSTAIRS.

"I'LL GO GET THEM FOR YOU."

THIS, AT LEAST, WAS A PROBLEM I COULD FIX.

I UNLOADED THE DRYER, FOLDING THE CLEAN LAUNDRY IN THE BASKET AS I WENT, AND I MADE SURE TO PUT NATHAN'S FAVORITE DINOSAUR PAJAMAS ON TOP, AND I CARRIED THE BASKET UPSTAIRS.

FIRST STOP, NATHAN'S ROOM.

HE WAS SITTING ON HIS BED, BUT HE WAS CRYING.

"HONEY, WHAT'S WRONG," I SAID.

"I ASKED YOU TO HELP ME FIND MY PAJAMAS, BUT YOU DIDN'T ANSWER."

NATHAN OBVIOUSLY HADN'T HEARD ME CALL OUT TO HIM FROM THE STAIRS.

"WELL, I CALLED FOR YOU OVER AND OVER," HE SAID, "BUT YOU DIDN'T HELP ME, MOM."

"OH, I'M SORRY, NATHAN.

I WAS DOWN IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM AND COULDN'T HEAR YOU.

BUT "LOOK," I HELD UP THE DINOSAUR PAJAMAS STILL WARM FROM THE DRYER, "AND I WAS HELPING YOU THE WHOLE TIME."

NATHAN WIPED AWAY HIS TEARS, "THANK YOU, MOMMY," HE SAID, AND THEN HE GRINNED AT ME, "I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D HELP ME BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS HAVE."

NATHAN'S WORDS STRUCK A CHORD WITH ME.

MAYBE MY SON WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO NEEDED TO LEARN A THING OR TWO ABOUT TRUST.

SO I STOPPED MY INTERNET SEARCHES AND SPENT THE TIME HELPING NATHAN WITH HIS HOMEWORK INSTEAD.

SOMETHING CLICKED IN HIS BRAIN.

AND BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, HE HAD CAUGHT UP WITH HIS CLASS.

GOD HAD BEEN HELPING HIM AND ME ALL ALONG.

THAT MOM SOUGHT HELP AND WISDOM.

THAT MOM SENT PRAYERS TO GOD REGARDING HER SITUATION.

AND WE KNOW THAT GOD WAS PRESENT AND GOD WAS THERE TO HELP.

AND SO JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS THING WE CALL PRAYER?

THE BIBLE IS FILLED WITH SO MUCH ON PRAYER, WE COULD DO A WEEKEND SEMINAR JUST HAVING A PRAYER SEMINAR.

THERE IS SO MUCH IN THERE.

SO I'M GOING TO TRY TO FOCUS AS MUCH AS I CAN IN THIS NEXT 15, 20 MINUTES.

I ASK YOU: IS IT REALLY IMPORTANT TO PRAY?

H'MMM...IS IT REALLY IMPORTANT TO PRAY?

GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING, AND SO WHY DO I NEED TO PRAY?

I MEAN HE IS OMNIPOTENT; HE IS OMNISCIENT;

HE IS OMNIPRESENT.

I MEAN HE IS -- WHEW, HE IS OUT THERE.

BUT THE BIBLE TALKS A LOT ABOUT PRAYER AND REVEALS IT IS VERY BENEFICIAL FOR OUR LIVES, AND TO BE BENEFICIAL, THOUGH, FOR THAT BIBLE, FOR THE WORDS ON THE PAGES TO COME INTO US, IN OUR HEARTS AND OUR MINDS, WE MUST VIEW PRAYER AS A VERY NECESSARY PART OF WHO WE ARE AS CHRISTIANS.

HOW ABOUT THIS QUESTION FOR YOU THIS MORNING: CAN A CHRISTIAN BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST WITHOUT PRAYER?

H'MMM...THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE A SEMINARY CLASS ON THAT SUBJECT AND WE WOULD SPEND 50 MINUTES ON IT.

I DON'T KNOW.

WE WOULD ANALYZE THE WORDS, THE ROOT MEANINGS AND ALL OF THAT, AS PART OF THAT LEARNING PROCESS.

BUT TO NOT PRAY IS TO TELL GOD HE ISN'T NEEDED.

WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

I THINK SO.

TO NOT PRAY WOULD BE LIKE SAYING TO GOD, I CAN HANDLE EVERYTHING, LORD.

I CAN DO IT MYSELF.

AFTER ALL, YOU'RE JUST WAY OUT THERE, AND I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS ON MY OWN.

AND THAT'S WHERE PRIDE COMES IN, I THINK, WHERE WE THINK WE DON'T NEED GOD, OR GOD IS JUST SO FAR OUT THERE HE DOESN'T EVEN CARE ANYWAY.

BUT TODAY I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT GOD DOES CARE.

AND IF PRIDE GETS IN THE WAY OF OUR PRAYER LIFE, WE NEED TO HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE GOD, AND WE NEED TO ASK HIM TO BREAK DOWN THAT PRIDE SO THAT WE CAN FLEE TO HIS PRESENCE IN PRAYER AND LIFT UP THOSE THINGS WE NEED TO HIS THRONE OF GRACE.

SO AS CHRISTIANS WE MUST BE A PEOPLE OF PRAYER.

PRAYER IS TO CHRISTIANS AS WATER IS TO THE EARTH.

WE KNOW THAT, ESPECIALLY HERE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

WE'RE GOING THROUGH ANOTHER DROUGHT.

WE HAVE SERIOUS WATER ISSUES AGAIN.

AND SO WE TRUST OUR WATER WORKERS AND THOSE ENGINEERS AND THE POWERS THAT BE TO BE WORKING ON IT, AND WE THANK YOU FOR THEIR WORK.

BUT MAYBE WE NEED TO PUT MORE PIPELINES IN UP NORTH MAYBE BECAUSE THIS IS AN AREA THAT IS VERY DRY, VERY DRY, AND SO WE'RE GOING TO GO THROUGH THESE TIMES.

BUT THE EARTH NEEDS WATER.

WE NEED WATER TO DRINK.

AND SO PRAYER IS THAT WAY FOR OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES AS WELL.

WE NEED PRAYER.

WE NEED TO CRY OUT TO GOD.

WE NEED TO SPEAK OUR HEART TO GOD.

LUTHER, THE CHURCH REFORMER, THE ONE WHO HELPED FORMULATE PROTESTANTISM -- WE ARE PROTESTANTS, WE ARE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE.

TO BE A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT PRAYER, HE SAYS, IS NO MORE POSSIBLE TO BE ALIVE WITHOUT BREATHING.

YESTERDAY I WAS AT EL CAMINO MEMORIAL PARK THERE IN MIRA MESA, OFF MIRAMAR ROAD, A GREAT PARK.

I WAS VISITING A RELATIVE, A GREAT AUNT FROM YEARS AGO.

AND I WAS ALSO WALKING AROUND THE MEMORIAL PARK.

ONE THING I NOTICED THERE: THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO NO LONGER BREATHE.

THEY'RE GONE.

THEIR LIFE HAS ENDED.

IT IS INTERESTING, I WAS LOOKING AT DIFFERENT THINGS, AND AS I WAS WALKING ALONG AND WORKING ON THE MESSAGE AND FORMULATING IT AND THINKING ABOUT IT AND TRYING TO INWARDLY DIGEST IT, I SAID, LORD, IF THERE IS SOMETHING HERE YOU WANT ME TO SEE, SHOW ME.

I JUST SAID THAT IN MY MIND.

AND SO I'M WALKING AROUND, AND I WAS ENJOYING THE GROUNDS.

THEY'RE ALWAYS SO BEAUTIFUL.

I WAS READING THE GRAVE MARKERS, AND THINGS LIKE THAT, INCREDIBLE HISTORY OF PEOPLE THERE, I'M SURE.

I WENT TO THIS OBSCURE CORNER, THIS BUILDING, AND I WAS WALKING ALONG, AND IT WAS WAY OFF IN THE CORNER.

NOBODY WOULD EVER SEE IT.

AND I LOOKED UP THERE, AND THERE WERE TWO MARKERS: RAY KROC AND JOAN KROC.

YOU REMEMBER THEM?

AND I THOUGHT, WOW, WHAT GREAT PEOPLE THEY WERE TO SAN DIEGO.

AMEN?

THEY DID A LOT.

AND, OF COURSE, MRS. KROC SUPPORTED CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN A HUGE WAY, AS MANY OF US KNOW.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SAID: "WORK AS IF YOU WERE TO LIVE 100 YEARS; PRAY AS IF YOU WERE TO DIE TOMORROW."

THERE IS AN URGENCY FOR PRAYER.

THANK GOD FOR OUR FOUNDING FATHERS.

THEY KNEW GOD AND THEY KNEW HOW PRAYER WAS SO IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF THE FORMATION OF THIS LAND, THIS LAND OF LIBERTY, THIS LAND OF FREEDOM.

IN PROVERBS 15:29, IT SAYS: "THE LORD IS FAR FROM THE WICKED, BUT HE HEARS THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS."

IF YOU'RE DOUBTING GOD IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE, PUT THIS VERSE ON A PIECE OF PAPER AND PUT IT ON YOUR MIRROR.

"THE LORD IS FAR FROM THE WICKED, BUT HE HEARS THE PRAYERS OF THE RIGHTEOUS."

HE HEARS THE PRAYERS OF BELIEVERS, AND YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST IF YOU HAVE CONFESSED HIM AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR.

IN THE BIBLE, WE HAVE MANY EXAMPLES OF GOD'S PEOPLE TAKING THE TIME TO PRAY, OF PEOPLE PRAISING GOD OR CRYING OUT TO GOD OR SPEAKING THEIR HEART TO GOD.

MOSES, HOW OFTEN DID HE HAVE TO INTERCEDE FOR THE ISRAELITES WHO WOULD GET OFF TRACK AND MOVE AWAY FROM GOD?

AND GOD WOULD COME DOWN, AND OH, YOU BAD PEOPLE, AND HE WOULD THEN BRING HIS JUDGMENT UPON THEM.

AND THE GOAL WAS TO BRING THEM BACK TO GOD AS THEY CONFESSED THEIR SINS AND TURNED BACK.

BUT MOSES WOULD GET IN THERE, TOO, AND SAY, "LORD, HAVE MERCY ON YOUR PEOPLE. STOP, LORD."

WE'RE GOING TO CONFESS SIN.

WE ARE GOING TO GET OUR LIVES BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

AND MOSES WOULD INTERCEDE.

WHEN READING THE PSALMS -- ANYBODY, LIKE, USE THE PSALMS AS DEVOTIONALS?

THEY'RE GREAT.

THEY EXPRESS THE HEART OF PEOPLE, THE MIND.

AND I'VE READ THEM AND I GO THROUGH THEM, AND, MAN, I CAN FEEL THAT.

THAT'S HOW I FEEL,

YOU KNOW, TIMES OF WE NEED THIS, OR TIMES OF PRAISING GOD.

THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE.

THEY'RE GREAT PRAYERS.

DAVID, IN PSALM 27, CRIES OUT TO GOD FOR HELP AND MERCY.

HE SAYS, "HEAR, O LORD, WHEN I CRY WITH MY VOICE, AND HAVE MERCY ALSO UPON ME AND ANSWER ME."

GREAT PRAYER.

DAVID PRAYS IN PSALM 51, THAT GREAT PSALM OF CONFESSION, WHERE HE KNEW HE BLEW IT, HE DISAPPOINTED GOD.

HE WASN'T THE LIGHT THAT GOD WANTED HIM TO BE IN THE WORLD, AND HE MADE MISTAKES, AND HE SAYS, "HAVE MERCY ON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, ACCORDING TO YOUR GREAT COMPASSION, GOD, BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS, WASH AWAY ALL OF MY INEQUITY, AND CLEANSE ME FROM ALL MY SIN."

THAT'S A GREAT PSALM TO READ WHEN WE'RE FEELING THAT WE'VE MESSED UP AND WE'VE BLOWN IT.

LORD, HAVE MERCY ON ME AND FORGIVE ME.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE HAVE TO DO THAT, OUR GOD IS A LOVING AND JUST GOD AND UNDERSTANDS OUR CONDITION AND SAYS, "I FORGIVE YOU."

AND WE COME TO THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION, WE COME THERE INDIVIDUALLY AND WE COME TOGETHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, AND WE ALSO RECEIVE THAT FORGIVENESS.

WE TASTE IT, WE INWARDLY DIGEST IT, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT WE'RE NEVER GOING TO BE PERFECT IN THE EYES OF GOD.

THAT COMES LATER.

BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T TRY.

IT DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T STRIVE TO BE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.

WE ALL ARE MEANT TO DO THAT.

SO GOD'S PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE OF PRAYER.

FOR PRAYER IS BENEFICIAL FOR OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS, TOO.

SOMETIMES WE GET SO CAUGHT UP IN OUR OWN PRAYERS, WE FORGET ABOUT OTHERS.

SO REMEMBER, TOO, OTHERS BENEFIT BY OUR PRAYERS AS WE INTERCEDE FOR THEM, SCRIPTURE SAYS.
WE'RE INTERCEDING FOR THE SAINTS ON BEHALF OF GOD, LIFTING UP THEIR CONCERNS.
PRAYER IS ALSO BENEFICIAL BECAUSE WE PRAY TO THE ONLY TRUE GOD, THE ONLY REAL GOD WHO CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.
THAT'S AWESOME.
THAT'S MAJESTIC.
OUR GOD IS SOVEREIGN.
OUR GOD IS POWERFUL.
I'VE HEARD THE PHRASE, AND MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD IT, TOO, ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO THE SAME GOD.
INTERESTING, HUH?
WELL, I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.
AND I WAS THINKING, HOW IS THAT TRUE?
IT IS NOT TRUE BECAUSE THE CHRISTIAN GOD IS THE ONLY ONE, TRUE GOD, ALIVE, RIGHT? PRESENT.
OTHER GODS ARE JUST THESE LITTLE IDOLS AND STATUES THAT SCRIPTURE TALKS ABOUT, WOODEN THINGS OR STONE THINGS OR MAKE-BELIEVE THINGS.
SO WE'RE BLESSED BECAUSE IT IS A HUMBLE BLESSING BECAUSE WE WORSHIP THE ONE, TRUE GOD.
THEN AGAIN, I WAS THINKING PHILOSOPHICAL: DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO THE SAME GOD? IN ESSENCE, NO MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, THE BIBLE SAYS WE'RE ALL GOING TO APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, RIGHT?
SO THAT MEANS NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, YOU ARE GOING TO STAND BEFORE GOD ONE DAY.
SO I THINK ABOUT THAT.
YEAH, THAT'S KIND OF TRUE.
ONE DAY, WHATEVER YOU BELIEVE, YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT BEFORE GOD, AS THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT THAT.
BUT AS A CHRISTIAN, A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, WE'RE TAKEN CARE OF.
WE ARE BLESSED BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO GOD, AND THAT IS THROUGH OUR ONE MEDIATOR, JESUS CHRIST.
AMEN?
AMEN TO THAT.
1 CHRONICLES 29 SAYS: "YOURS, O LORD, IS THE GREATNESS, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, THE VICTORY AND THE MAJESTY, FOR ALL THAT IS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH IS YOURS.
O LORD, YOURS IS THE KINGDOM.
O LORD, YOU ARE EXALTED AS HEAD OVER ALL."
THINK OF THOSE WORDS, MAYBE SOMETHING CAME TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORDS "POWER, GLORY, YOURS IS THE KINGDOM."
DOES A PRAYER COME TO MIND?
AT THE END OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, "YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY, O LORD."
OUR GOD IS GREAT AND MIGHTY, AND NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH HIM.

I WANTED TO SHARE THIS ONE ABOUT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE.
THIS IS WHERE I GET THIS TEACHING.
A YOUNG MAN -- A MAN CAME TO JESUS AND HE ASKED, "TEACHER, WHAT GOOD THING MUST I DO TO GET ETERNAL LIFE?"
JESUS SAID, "WHY DO YOU ASK ME ABOUT WHAT IS GOOD?
THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO IS GOOD.
AND IF YOU WANT TO ENTER LIFE, OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS."
"WHICH ONES," THE MAN REPLIED?
WELL, "DO NOT MURDER; DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; DO NOT STEAL; DO NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY;
HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; AND LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."
THE YOUNG MAN SAID, "ALL OF THESE I HAVE KEPT.
WHAT DO I STILL LACK?"
JESUS ANSWERED, "IF YOU WANT TO BE PERFECT, GO AND SELL ALL OF YOUR POSSESSIONS AND GIVE TO THE POOR AND YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN.
THEN COME FOLLOW ME."
WHEN THE YOUNG MAN HEARD THIS, HE WENT AWAY SAD BECAUSE HE HAD GREAT WEALTH.
WE DON'T KNOW THE END OF THAT.
HE COULD HAVE CHANGED LATER.
SCRIPTURE ISN'T CLEAR.
HE COULD HAVE APPEARED LATER IN SCRIPTURE.
I DON'T KNOW.
HE COULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND CHANGED.
BUT THEN JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES: "I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT IS HARD FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.
AGAIN, I TELL YOU IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD."
SO WHEN THE DISCIPLES HEARD THIS, THEY WERE GREATLY ASTONISHED, AND THEY SAID, "O LORD, WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED IF IT IS THAT DIFFICULT?"
AND THEN WHAT DID JESUS SAY?
"WITH MAN, THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."
SO WHEN WE'RE PRAYING, WE'RE PRAYING TO THE GOD OF POSSIBILITIES, THAT HE IS REAL, HE IS THERE, AND HE WANTS TO HEAR FROM US.
HE IS THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA.
HE IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END.
OUR GOD REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST, WHO SHOWED THE WORLD INCREDIBLE THINGS.
THIS IS GOD IN THE FLESH.
SOME PEOPLE SAY, SHOW ME GOD, WHO IS HE?
HE IS RIGHT THERE IN JESUS.
WE HAVE ALL OF THESE EXAMPLES, CASTING OUT DEMONS, HEALING THE SICK, CONTROLLING NATURE, RAISING THE DEAD, AND TELLING PEOPLE THEIR SINS WERE FORGIVEN.
AND HE ALSO SAYS HE CAME TO GIVE LIFE, AND TO GIVE IT ABUNDANTLY.

THE NEW LIFE THAT GOD GIVES TO US THROUGH CHRIST, THAT STRENGTHENS US AND EQUIPS US FOR LIFE.

AND THAT LIFE, THAT ABUNDANT LIFE, IS OURS BY FAITH IN HIM,
BY BELIEVING IN JESUS, AND BY LIVING ACCORDING TO HIS TEACHINGS.

THE BIBLE SAYS, IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH JESUS IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED.

BEING SAVED BY TRUSTING IN JESUS IS THE ESSENCE OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE.

THE ABUNDANT LIFE COMES THROUGH JESUS BRINGING THAT FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND RENEWAL OF OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO BE CHRIST-LIKE.

WE ARE CHRIST-LIKE.

WE ARE CHRIST FOLLOWERS; WE ARE CHRISTIANS.

AND TO THE CHRIST-LIKE CERTAINLY INVOLVES PRAYING.

SO A QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT TODAY IN OUR WALK, AND I THINK ABOUT THIS, TOO, IS: ARE YOU PRAYING?

AND HOW MUCH OF YOUR DAY IS SPENT IN PRAYER?

ARE YOU PRAYING?

AND I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS, HOW MANY HOURS IN A DAY?

24 HOURS.

I COULD USE IMPROVEMENT.

OH, MY GOODNESS.

LUTHER, IT IS SAID, PRAYED HOW MANY HOURS A DAY?

THREE HOURS.

THREE HOURS, WOW!

SOME OF YOU MAY BE ABLE TO DO THAT.

THAT IS AWESOME.

KEEP AT IT.

BUT SOME OF US, WE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR PRAYER LIFE.

24 HOURS, MAYBE I NEED TO SET ASIDE THIS HALF HOUR EARLY TO SPEND TIME IN PRAYER, SPECIFICALLY IN PRAYER.

OR 15 MINUTES, START SLOW, AND LET THAT GROW AND BLOSSOM, BUT PRAYER IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR OUR LIVES.

WE NEED TO BE PRAYING.

THERE ARE SO MANY CHALLENGES IN THE WORLD TODAY THAT WE NEED TO PRAY ABOUT, TOO.

AND GOD CALLS US TO PRAY.

OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST SPENT A LOT OF TIME IN PRAYER BECAUSE HE NEEDED THAT.

HE NEEDED THE STRENGTH THAT GOD GAVE HIM.

HE EVEN HAD TO LEAVE THE CROWDS TO GO AWAY SO THAT HE COULD THEN FOCUS ON PRAYER.

AND SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO DO THAT, TOO.

WE'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM EVERYTHING AND GO TO THAT QUIET PLACE.

AND WE'RE GOING TO SPEND TIME IN PRAYER, TALKING AND VISITING, COMMUNICATING WITH GOD.

IN MARK 1 IT SAYS: "BEFORE DAY BREAK, THE NEXT MORNING JESUS GOT UP AND WENT TO AN ISOLATED PLACE TO PRAY."

I MEAN, THINK OF JESUS, THINK OF THE CROWDS, THE THOUSANDS, THAT WOULD GATHER AROUND HIM.

JESUS HAD HUGE FOLLOWINGS, FOLKS.

REMEMBER THE ONE MIRACLE, THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 THAT WAS REALLY 25,000 PEOPLE? YOU KNOW HOW OVERWHELMING THAT COULD BE?

SO HE HAD TO LEAVE.

I'VE GOT TO BE RENEWED AND REFRESHED.

I'VE GOT TO GO PRAY.

SO THAT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO DO, TOO.

WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT TIME TO PRAY.

PRAYER WAS HELP FOR HIM, IT WAS RESOLVE FOR JESUS AS HE PRAYED TO HIS HEAVENLY FATHER, AS HE KNEW HE WAS SAVING THE WORLD FROM SIN, THE RAVAGING EFFECTS OF SIN, FROM, ALSO, DEATH, SAVING THE WORLD FROM DEATH, PROMISING LIFE, AND ALSO SAVING THE WORLD FROM THE DEVIL, THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD, AS HE DEFEATED SATAN.

REMEMBER THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, RIGHT BEFORE JESUS WAS BETRAYED, JESUS PRAYED, TOO.

HE SPENT TIME IN PRAYER BECAUSE HE WAS CARRYING YOUR SIN, MY SIN, UPON HIMSELF.

HE FELT THE WEIGHT OF BILLIONS UPON HIMSELF, AND HE PRAYED SO MUCH HE WAS SWEATING BLOOD, IT SAYS.

THE CAPILLARIES BURST.

THAT'S INTENSITY.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN AN INTENSE SITUATION LIKE THAT?

OH, MY GOODNESS.

HOW ABOUT YOU COME UPON AN ACCIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME OR SOMETHING, AND IT JUST HAPPENED AND YOU'RE, LIKE, OH, WHAT HAPPENED?

AND YOU HAVE TO GO VISIT OR HELP THAT PERSON, AND YOU ARE INTENSE.

AND YOU GET THROUGH IT, AND THEN AFTERWARDS THIS WHOLE, LIKE, RUSH HITS YOU.

AND THIS THING CALLED SHOCK.

I MEAN, THINK OF THE INTENSITY THAT OUR SAVIOR WENT THROUGH BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE, HIS PURPOSE FOR US FOLKS.

THANKS BE TO GOD FOR THAT VICTORY THAT HE WON FOR US.

JESUS LIFTED UP HIS HEART TO GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, AND HE NEEDED HELP.

HE NEEDED STRENGTH.

HE NEEDED RESOLVE TO BE VICTORIOUS.

AND SO WHAT DO YOU NEED TODAY?

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE?

HAVE YOU ASKED GOD TO HELP?

HAVE YOU ASKED GOD FOR WISDOM?

HAVE YOU ASKED GOD TO MAKE THE PATH STRAIGHT?

GOD WANTS YOU TO DO THAT.

TAKE THOSE PRAYERS TO HIM.

WHAT SITUATION ARE YOU DEALING WITH THAT YOU NEED WISDOM FOR?
LORD, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT MY FUTURE.
OH, MY GOODNESS.
LORD, GUIDE ME, SHOW ME, OPEN DOORS.
DO YOU NEED HEALING FOR SOMETHING?
TAKE IT TO THE LORD.
OUR LORD GOD HAS ANSWERS THAT WE NEED.
HE IS PRESENT AND WILLING TO HELP US.
JAMES 1 -- JAMES IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE BIBLE BOOKS.
MANY OF YOU PROBABLY HAVE READ IT.
BUT IT HAS GOT SOME VERY PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY.
HOW DO YOU WANT ME TO LIVE, LORD?
BOOM!
RIGHT HERE.
READ JAMES.
READ THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.
MATTHEW 5, 6, 7, AND 2.
BUT IN JAMES, BEGINNING AT VERSE 5: "IF ANY ONE OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, HE SHOULD ASK
GOD, WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY TO ALL WITHOUT FINDING FAULT, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO
HIM."
LORD, I'M A SINNER.
LORD GOD, I'VE BLOWN IT.
LORD GOD, HOW CAN YOU LOVE ME FOR WHAT I'VE DONE?
C'MON, I CAN'T PRAY TO YOU.
I'M EMBARRASSED.
I HAVE SHAME.
I HAVE GUILT.
AND SO WE COWER IN THE CORNER.
BUT LISTEN TO THIS WORD: "IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, HE SHOULD ASK OF GOD WHO
DOESN'T FIND FAULT."
THAT'S YOUR GOD.
THAT'S MY GOD.
HE KNOWS WE'RE IMPERFECT, BUT HE WANTS US TO PRAY TO HIM.
SO PRAY TO HIM, FOLKS.
TAKE HOLD OF THAT PROMISE.
HE SHOULD ASK OF GOD WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY TO ALL WITHOUT FINDING FAULT, AND IT
WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM.
BUT WHEN HE ASKS, HE MUST BELIEVE.
HERE IS THE FAITH THAT COMES IN.
WE HEARD IT IN THE SCRIPTURES THIS MORNING.
HE MUST BELIEVE AND NOT DOUBT BECAUSE HE WHO DOUBTS IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA,
BLOWN AND TOSSED BY THE WIND.
THAT MAN SHOULD NOT THINK HE WILL RECEIVE ANYTHING FROM THE LORD.
HE IS A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN, UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS.

OUR LORD HEARS.
HE ANSWERS OUR PRAYER.
HE WANTS US TO PRAY TO HIM.
PRAYER IS BENEFICIAL ALSO BECAUSE IT HELPS US TAKE THE FOCUS OFF YOURSELVES AND
FOCUS ON THE ONE WHO CAN HELP.
AND THAT'S IMPORTANT FOR PRAYER.
BECAUSE, LORD, I'M LIFTING THIS TO YOU.
YOU CAN HELP ME.
YOU ARE THE GREAT, MIGHTY GOD, AND YOU WANT ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU.
PRAYER IS BENEFICIAL BECAUSE GOD WANTS US TO TRUST HIM AND NOT OURSELVES.
COME UNTO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.
GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO TRUST IN HOROSCOPES.
I'M AMAZED AT HOW MANY CHRISTIAN PEOPLE READ THE DAILY HOROSCOPE.
OR TO TRUST IN THE WISDOM THAT COMES OFF TELEVISION.
WOW!
THERE IS SOME GREAT WISDOM THERE.
HE WANTS US TO TRUST HIM TO HELP.
HIS WORD IS VERY CLEAR ON THIS.
AND SO IN CLOSING, PHILIPPIANS 4, IT SAYS: "DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN
ALL PRAYER, WITH PETITION AND THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO
GOD, AND THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING WILL GUARD YOUR
HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS."
YOU WANT A FORMULA FOR PRAYER?
RIGHT THERE.
DO NOT BE ANXIOUS.
HOW MANY OF US WORRY ABOUT SO MANY THINGS?
OH, MY.
WE WORRY.
AND SCIENCE -- MEDICAL SCIENCE SHOWS THAT THAT AFFECTS US.
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, IT GETS US IRRITATED, WHATEVER THE CASE MAY BE.
IT MAKES US UNCOMFORTABLE.
BUT GOD SAYS DO NOT WORRY.
AND SO WE GIVE IT TO GOD.
WE LIFT IT UP TO THE LORD.
WE STAND IN FAITH, FOR WE KNOW GOD IS IN CHARGE.
DO NOT WORRY, ALSO, LIFT UP THOSE PETITIONS TO GOD.
TALK TO HIM.
HE IS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER.
THESE ARE SOME PRAYERS.
LORD, GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING.
LET HIM WORK THAT.
LET HIM GIVE YOU UNDERSTANDING.
LORD, SHOW ME WHAT PATH TO TAKE.
LORD, WHO SHOULD I WORK FOR?

LORD, PROVIDE FOR MY NEEDS, MY FAMILY'S NEEDS.
ALL OF THOSE ARE GREAT PRAYERS.
AND WATCH GOD WORK.
AND REMEMBER THIS, TOO, GOD DOESN'T ALWAYS ANSWER LIKE...HE IS NOT A COSMIC
BELLHOP UP THERE.
OH, I NEED SOMETHING, RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY HOW GOD WORKS.
CERTAINLY HE CAN IF HE CHOOSES, BUT GOD WORKS PATIENTLY OVER TIME.
AND I'VE SEEN THIS MANY TIMES IN MY LIFE.
WHERE I'M WANTING SOMETHING, I'M NEEDING SOMETHING, GOD, WHY AREN'T YOU
HELPING?
AND THEN THREE MONTHS DOWN THE ROAD, AND THEN FINALLY.
YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?
GOD WORKS.
HE MOVES HEAVEN AND EARTH.
HE KNOWS OUR NEEDS.
AND SO IT MIGHT BE 20 YEARS LATER, BUT HE ANSWERS.
BUT WE'RE PATIENT; WE'RE TRUSTING.
BECAUSE GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED RIGHT NOW; HE KNOWS WHAT WE NEED 50 YEARS
DOWN THE ROAD, TOO.
OUR TASK IS TO BE FAITHFUL.
ALSO AN IMPORTANT PART OF PRAYING IN THIS LITTLE FORMULA IS PRAY WITH
THANKSGIVING.
GRATITUDE IS HUGE.
IN FACT, I BELIEVE GRATITUDE -- THIS COULD BE A WHOLE SERMON ITSELF -- LIFTS OUR
SPIRITS.
WHEN WE'RE FOCUSING UPON ALL OF THIS WHOA, WHOA, PAIN, DAH, DAH, DAH, WHOA IS
ME,
OUR SPIRIT, WHAT DOES IT DO?
DOESN'T IT GO WAY DOWN?
BUT WHEN WE'RE THANKING GOD FOR THOSE OTHER THINGS, WE'RE LIFTED UP, AND OUR
FAITH IS ACTIVE.
WE'RE STRENGTHENED.
THINK ABOUT THIS PRAYER: "LORD GOD" -- SOMEONE PRAYED THIS -- "THERE IS NOWHERE I
CAN GO THAT IS BEYOND YOUR PRESENCE.
IN YOUR PRESENCE, I AM BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE.
LORD, THANK YOU THAT YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE ME NOR FORSAKE ME.
LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR RICH, HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, ESPECIALLY ETERNAL
LIFE."
GRATITUDE, HUGE, GIVING THANKS TO GOD.
THANK YOU, LORD, THAT I HAVE BREATH.
THANK YOU, LORD, THAT I CAN STILL BE YOUR LIGHT IN THIS WORLD AMONGST MY FAMILY
AND FRIENDS AND TOUCH THEM IN WHATEVER WAY I CAN WITH THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

ANOTHER PERSON PRAYED THIS: "THANK YOU, GOD, FOR THIS NEW DAY THAT YOU GIVE ME TO LIVE IN FAITH.

I DO NOT KNOW EVERYTHING THAT WILL COME, BUT YOU KNOW I REST IN YOU, IN YOUR CARE, AND I MOVE ON."

SO LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD.

HE WILL HEAR.

AND AS YOU DO THAT, BE THANKFUL.

REMEMBER TO BE THANKFUL.

BECAUSE I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS, HOW MANY BILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?

WHAT'S THE NUMBERS NOW?

I THINK IT IS OVER SIX -- OVER SIX BILLION.

HOW MANY CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD?

OVER TWO BILLION.

THERE'S A LOT OF CHRISTIANS.

I WAS THINKING, MAN, LORD GOD, YOU HAVE A BIG JOB, BECAUSE EACH ONE OF US, EVEN ME, I PRAY TO GOD.

HOW DO YOU HEAR ALL OF THOSE PRAYERS, LORD GOD?

BUT GOD KNOWS HOW MANY HAIRS ARE ON YOUR HEAD.

THAT'S HOW BIG OUR GOD IS.

ISN'T THAT AMAZING?

AND I HAVE MORE HAIR THAN SOME OF YOU I CAN SEE.

[LAUGHTER]

>> Pastor: A LITTLE BIT.

BUT GOD HEARS.

THAT'S OUR AWESOME GOD.

THAT'S FAITH, FOLKS.

TAKING WHAT GOD WRITES AND HAS REVEALED RIGHT HERE AND LIVING IT.

BELIEVING IT.

AND THAT'S WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO.

AND YOU KNOW THE BENEFIT OF THAT, IN THAT LAST PART OF THE FORMULA, THE PEACE OF GOD WILL BE WITH YOU.

BECAUSE YOU'RE REALIZING I CAN'T DO IT.

I'M NOT GOING TO BE THE ONE, GOD IS.

HE'S GOING TO SHOW ME THE WAY.

AND I NEED TO HUMBLE MYSELF.

I NEED TO LET GO OF MY PRIDE.

I NEED TO TRUST HIM.

AND THEN HE WILL GUIDE ME.

HE WILL HELP ME.

SO MAY GOD HELP US IN OUR PRAYER LIVES TO BE STRONG, TO BE A PEOPLE OF PRAYER.

AND MAY WE WATCH, AND MAY YOU SEE, THE AMAZING THINGS THAT GOD WILL DO FOR YOU, AND EVEN FOR OTHERS THAT HAVE PRAYED AND HELPED YOU ALONG AS WELL.

IN JESUS' NAME.

AMEN.

AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING GUARD YOUR
HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.

AMEN.