

“Calling on the Name of the Lord”:
Praying the Promises of God
Sermon Notes

➤ **Prayer is *calling on the name of the Lord* which sends us soaring up into God and pouring out into others**

→*Up*: **Genesis 4:26**; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; Psalm 80:18; 116:4, 12-13, 17

→*Out*: 1 Kings 18:24; Psalm 79:6; Jeremiah 10:25; Psalm 105:1; Isaiah 12:4; Joel 2:32; Zephaniah 3:9; Zechariah 13:9

***Jesus says: “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7)**

***So pray the promises of God - all of which are “yes” in Jesus (Genesis 3:15; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Romans 8:32)**

1. Pray the promise of God’s pardon (1 John 1:9)

2. Pray the promise of God’s presence (Hebrews 13:5)

3. Pray the promise of God’s power (Isaiah 41:10)

4. Pray the promise of God’s pleasure (Psalm 16:11)

5. Pray the promise of God’s people (Matthew 16:20)

Next Sunday: Genesis 18:22-33 - “Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What is Just?”:
The Intercession of Abraham

Community Group Study Questions

For the Week of May 2nd-8th

Getting Started

1. What sort of shape is your prayer life¹ in these days? You have permission to speak freely :0) Take some time to talk with one another about the state of your conversation with God. On the continuum from very encouraged to very discouraged...where are you and why?

Digging Deeper

2. P.T. Forsyth (a Scottish theologian from a hundred years ago) once wrote that: "Prayer is the highest use to which speech can be put." Furthermore, Alistair Begg and Derek Prime have said: "Anything worth talking about is worth praying about." Consider both of those statements. Ponder them carefully, and discuss them together. Presuming that they are each on the right track, what radical, practical implications flow from these two truths?

Open Your Bible to Genesis 4:25-26...

3. One author has described Genesis 4:26 as "the day that prayer began".² It's a stunning observation, but it's simply true that Genesis 4:26 is the first clear evidence of human beings 'calling on the name of the Lord' in prayerful conversation.³ What's so special about this moment of time in Genesis 4:26? Take a look at the surrounding context. Why is it the case that: "At *that* time people began to call upon the name of the LORD"?
4. One of the initial claims in this week's sermon (and of our entire summer preaching series) is that prayer - calling on the name of the Lord - sends us *soaring up* into God and *pouring out* into others. Consulting the texts referenced in that section of the sermon outline, have you found this to be true of prayer in your own life? Why or why not? Considering that *pride* is essentially thinking much of and about ourselves, why ought a four-month emphasis on prayer to spell such good news for our congregation into the

1 Though I don't know the source of it, someone once said: "Don't develop your 'prayer life', develop a life of prayer". Why is that a healthy corrective to the notion of having a 'prayer life'? What's better about the latter way of phrasing it? Consider the wisdom of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in this connection.

2 Gary Millar, *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer*. IVP Academic: Grand Rapids, MI. 2016. p.20.

3 Note that the conversation between God, Adam and Eve (in Genesis 3) really falls into a separate category than prayer as it takes place face-to-face in the garden. Neither is it marked by *any* of the traditional biblical markers of prayer, including: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession for others, etc. Thus, it's proper to conceive of prayer as a phenomenon essentially 'east of Eden', or as John Piper has wonderfully said, a 'war-time walkie talkie' with heaven.

days ahead? How does prayer tend to foster self-forgetful humility? Why is this virtue of such supreme value to us in our church's mission?

5. Charles Spurgeon once said: "What is prayer but a promise pleaded?" Scan back over the five promises from the five main points of Sunday's sermon. Which one(s) is / are most precious to you? Why? Do you consciously pray the promises of God? If so, which are some of your favorites to pray? Share chapter and verse if you're able to do so. If you don't tend to pray the promises of God, does this intrigue you to get started?
6. Jesus says: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). On one level, Jesus's words here fuse together the two horizons of Psalm 1:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Do you believe John 15:7? If so, how have you "proved him 'ore and 'ore" on this one? If you're struggling to believe it, how might you begin to take steps of trust toward what he's saying? How might your life, our church, the Westonka area, the broader Twin Cities and beyond begin to be transformed if more and more Christians took these words of our Lord at face value?
7. Think of how many areas of your life would be utterly transformed if you began to take hold of God (Isaiah 64:7; 66:2) in prayer in the ways we've discussed in this study. If you need some help getting started, consider: your walk with the Lord, your ability to suffer well, your pride, depression, anxiety, addiction(s), sinful anger, your relationship with your spouse, children, parents, siblings, extended family, church family, significant other, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, the salvation of the folks on your 'List of 5', the exercise of your spiritual gifts, discipling of other believers, the development of greater degrees of compassion, wisdom, humility, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and...