

Jesus a Man of Prayer

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Jesus Christ gave the world a perfect example of walking with God and talking to God. No man can walk with God who does not talk to Him and hear (obey) His word. Most people today look upon prayer as a tool for the poor, hungry, suffering, diseased and hopeless. People who have reasonable health and security, a good job and comfortable home surroundings have little use for prayer except for the common ritual when they "go to church" and occasionally just before a meal. Jesus Christ was a man of prayer while he lived among men. He taught his disciples to pray in his great sermon on the mount (Matt. 6:5-13; Luke 11:1).

How did Jesus pray?

1. He prayed with thanksgiving. He often expressed thanks to His Father. (Matt. 11:25-26). When he established the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:24-25).
2. He prayed that the will of God be done, even in death (Matt. 26:39). ". . . if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
3. He prayed with "strong crying and tears." "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared . . ." (Heb. 5:7).
4. He prayed with confidence and humility. At the tomb of Lazarus he said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always . . ." (John 11:41-42). His disciples believed the Father heard him when he prayed: "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (John 11:21-22). Jesus acknowledged that his Father always heard his prayers. ". . . Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always . . ." (John 11:42).
5. Jesus prayed earnestly and fervently the night before his death. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).
6. He did not use the power that was available to him through prayer that he might do the will of his Father: He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26:53-54). Twelve legions of angels comprehend a numberless host. Angels did minister to him on occasion. After his temptation by Satan angels ministered to him (Matt. 4:11), and in the garden just before his betrayal, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43).

When did Jesus pray?

He prayed upon many different occasions until his death on the cross. He prayed longer and more often when he was alone. He prayed alone before day (Mark 1:35). He prayed alone at evening at the close of a busy day (Matt. 14:23). He prayed alone before choosing the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13). He prayed alone after a busy day healing the sick (Luke 5:15-16). He prayed alone three times before his betrayal in the time of his agony. Three times he prayed alone, "Thy will be done." (Matt. 26:39-44; Luke 22:39-46).

Jesus prayed in his anguish before his betrayal and crucifixion. He went with his disciples to the mount of Olives; "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (John 12:27; Luke 22:39-46).

He prayed on the cross in his dying hour. The rulers who staged his crucifixion derided him. The soldiers who crucified him also mocked him, and offered him vinegar. As the closing moments of his earthly life approached, and his painful humiliation was at its pinnacle, Jesus expressed his last prayer to his Father: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

For whom did Jesus pray?

1. Jesus prayed for Peter: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).
2. Jesus prayed for himself: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee . . . And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:1-5).
3. Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world . . . "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil . . . Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:6-17).
4. Jesus prayed for believers through his word: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).
5. He prayed for those who ridiculed, mocked him and crucified him on the cross. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus taught us conditions for successful prayer

He taught his disciples to pray with reverence, for the kingdom, in humility, that God's will be done, make requests for our needs, forgive as we desire forgiveness, and pray for deliverance from temptation." (Luke 11:2-4).

He taught us to abide in him and let his word abide in us (John 15:7). To pray with persistence to Him who is able to grant our needs and desires (Luke 18:1-8). We must be holy (1 Tim. 2:8). We must be humble in prayer, not self-righteous (Luke 18:9-14). We must pray in the name of Christ (John 14:13-14), and according to the will of God (1 John 5:14).

As Jesus Christ stood at the threshold of death, he could have with one short prayer called the legions of angels from the Omnipotent Father to deliver him, but he chose rather the will of his Father, and gave up the ghost as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The man of prayer stopped praying and passed into the realm of paradise. This divine Person prayed and taught us to pray to the Father in heaven.

Fellowship necessitates communication. Walking together means agreement. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

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Preacher of the Word (Vol. 1, January 8, 1996, #2)
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