"WHY SHOULD I PRAY? (Part 3)" Judges 6:11-40
John 14:12-14

INTRO: A.-Poem--"Willing To Pray"?:

1-Sometimes I have so much to do
I think it must be done
I'll work so very, very hard
From morn till set of sun.
But here is something I have found:
This really doesn't pay,
I always found I've weaker grown
If I have failed to pray.

Sometimes "twas something for myself,
Sometimes it was for God,
Sometimes it was for other folk
That many steps I trod.
But 'tis no matter who 'twas for,
I truthfully must say,
My faith and trust had smaller grown
Because I failed to pray.

So am trying hard to learn
That nothing's really great
If it must take my praying time,
So praying has to wait.
It's praying makes me fit to work:
It is my staff and stay,
And work will never be my best,
If I have failed to pray."

2-Indeed, "Not a service God can give us
Will a richer harvest bear,
Than this one of intercession,
This blest ministry of prayer."

B.-Definition Of Prayer:

1-Phillips Brooks:--"A prayer in its simplest definition is merely a wish turned heavenward. We should remember that prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness."

2-Prayer is COMMUNICATION--Talking with God
--Asking from God
--Receiving from God

3-PROP:--See reasons from the Scriptures as to "WHY I SHOULD PRAY?"
--Become sufficiently convinced to actually pray

I.-PREVIOUS REASONS------"WHY SHOULD I PRAY?":

A.-DUTY--God Commanded It:

1-Lk. 18:1--"...men ought always to pray, & not to faint
2-1 Th. 5:17--"Pray without ceasing"
3-Col. 4:2--"Continue in prayer, & watch in the same with thanksgiving."

4-Duty of communication with our God

B.-DEPENDENCE-------God's Method:
1-James 4:2b--"...yet ye have not, because ye ask not"
2-John 16:24a,b--"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive..."
3-Dependence is developed thru prayer

C.-DELIGHT-------Fullness Of Joy:
1-John 16:24c--"...that your joy may be full."
2-Prov. 10:22--"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."
3-Rom. 8:32--"He that spared not (even) His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"
4-Delight in the believer's life is experienced thru answered prayer

D.-DISTINCTIVE---------God Hears:
1-Ps. 65:2--"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."
2-Heb. 11:6--"But without faith it is impossible to please Him,: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."
3-Ps. 34:17--"The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth..."
4-Distinctive of our God is that HE HEARS when we pray

E.-DELIVERANCE-------------God answers:
1-Ps. 34:17--The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."
2-Ps. 34:4--"I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."
3-Ps. 34:6--"This poor man cried and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."
4-Phs. 4:6-7--"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
5-Ps. 55:22--"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."
6-1 Pet. 5:7--"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."
7-Deliverance is as a result of Prayer

II.-LAST REASON-------"WHY SHOULD I PRAY?"
DEMONSTRATION----------GOD PROVES:

A.-Argument of Doubters:
1-Modern science is based on UNIFORMITARIANISM
--"all things continue as they were from the beginning"
--NO CHANGE
2-Devastating implications--No miracles
--No incarnation
--No second coming

3-Doubters & scoffers deny the supernatural
4-Every opponent of christianity opposes it on the point of MIRACLES
5-HOW can believers counter this?
6-Argument of doubters is best answered by.....the

B.-Argument Of Demonstration:
1-Only absolute argument acceptable to the doubter is that in answer to prayer God supernaturally intervenes in man's affairs
2-Christianity stands or falls on its miracles
--Christianity is a MIRACLE RELIGION
--Miracle of Virgin Birth
--Miracle of bodily resurrection
--Miracle of new birth
--Miracle of God indwelling sinners
--Miracle of God using sinners in His service
--Miracle of the preservation of the Bible
--Miracle of the second coming of Christ
3-PROVE that there is a God WHO ANSWERS prayer when unmistakable answers are seen
4-Doubt is DISPELLED by demonstration in life
5-ILLUS--Situation in 1 Kings 18:17-36 (summarize
--Prayer--18:36-37
--Divine Demonstration--18:38
--Reaction of belief by ALL the people--18:39
--We ought to pray, as Elijah did, because the answer to prayer demonstrates God's power and drives people to belief
6-ILLUS ----Judges 6:12-13 ** Call to Gideon
** Gideon's questions
--Why are we tributaries?
--Where are the miracles?
** Gideon's conclusion--"But now the LORD hath forsaken us"
--Judges 6:14--Gideon's commission
--Jud. 6:16--Gideon's promise
--Jud.6:17--Gideon's desire for PROOF--"Show me a sign"
--Jud. 6:20-21--** FIRST SIGN
** Sacrifice prepared & presented
** "there rose up fire out of the rock & consumed.."
--Jud. 6:36-38 ** SECOND SIGN
** Faith strengthening desired for confirmation
** Fleece set & to be WET
** "And it was so"
--Jud. 6:39-** THIRD SIGN
** Asked the HARD WAY now (dry wool)
** "Is anything too hard for God?"
** "And it was so"
--Not a WISE thing to ask several signs of God. Ought to be ready to BELIEVE the first
--Is it any wonder that with these DEMONSTRATIONS of God's power, Gideon was willing to go to

battle with the Midianites, even when God thinned the ranks of Gideon's army to 300 against 132,000
--God PROVES His power in answer to Gideon's prayers and then demonstrates HIS SUPERIORITY over the enemy

7-ILLUS--Moses before Pharoah for Israel
--Demand to "LET MY PEOPLE GO"
--Pharoah's refusal----------repeatedly
--Series of plagues ** Rods made into serpents (7:10-12)
** Waters of river turned to blood (7:20
** Invasion of frogs (8:6)
** Dust turned to lice or sand flies (8:16-18)
--Magicians' evaluation: "THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD" (8:19)

8-ILLUS--Acts 13:6-10--Description of Elymas or Bar-Jesus
13:11--Demonstration of Divine Power
13:12-Decision of faith in Sergius Paulus
--What brought this decision?
--Miraculous power intervention
--Wm. Ramsay--"You must make up your own minds to accept or to reject it (the miraculous); but you cannot cut out the marvellous from the rest, nor can you believe that either Paul or Luke was a mere victim of halucinations." (P.87)
--Paul & Barnabas PRAYED
--God intervened in power
--Elymas was blinded
--Sergius Paulus was "astonished at the doctrine of the Lord"=="STRUCK TO THE HEART"
--Conviction led to believing
--Conviction was "INFLICTED" in response to believing prayer (which is implied in the passage)

C.-A Word Of Clarification:
1-Not talking about the GIFT OF MIRACLES
2-That went out with the early stages of the Church age
3-Even in apostolic times it was never true that every saved person worked miracles or had signs following him
4-We are talking about Divine intervention in the affairs of human life TO DEMONSTRATE His miraculous power in answer to prayer--Drunkards converted
--Harlots purified
--Hippies transformed
--Bodies healed
--Loved ones saved
--Jobs provided
--Revivals experienced
--Lives revolutionized
--Peace brought to troubled lives
5-Such answers to prayer will capture the attention of unsaved friends so that they give hearing to our life transforming message of Christ

D.-Specific Examples Of Divine Intervention:
1-ILLUS--Little boy was ill & ready to die

--Parents & older brothers were believers
--Round of prayer for several days & nights around the clock
--Each taking turn between field work & chores
--Finally raised up & healed
--Known to us all--Dwight David Eisenhower

2-ILLUS--One of the many interesting incidents that come out of the annals of old England is that of the conversion of two great men who were skeptics.

One was the eminent Gilbert West. The other was Lord Littleton, famous English jurist & a light in the literary world

They were agreed that Christianity should be destroyed, but they further agreed that in order to destroy it, two things were necessary.

They must disprove the resurrection of Jesus and explain the conversion of Saul in a way that met the demands of skepticism. There was a task for each of these master minds, and each accepted his task.

WEST assumed the task of getting rid of the resurrection, and LITTLETON would dispose of the Scripture that had its setting on the Damascus road. They took ample time, a year or more, and then came together to compare notes.

When they met BOTH WERE CHRISTIANS, each confessing to his conversion as a result of his own research. The resurrection fact withstood the test of unfriendly, but honest, investigation, as did also that of Saul's conversion. BOTH FACTS STILL STAND.

3-ILLUS--Some years ago Charles E. Fuller was holding meetings in the tin-roofed tabernacle in Waterloo, Iowa. That roof literally "ROARED" with rain that was driving down on it, when Dr. Fuller stepped to the microphone to pray:

"LORD, IF YOU DON"T STOP THE RAIN, the Old Fashioned Revival Hour won't be able to go out over the air. For Jesus sake, please stop the rain."

Within 3 minutes the rain stopped abruptly & the program was broadcast without interference. But 5 minutes after the program was over, a downpour drenched the homegoing crowd.

4-ILLUS--Arrangements were made on one occasion for a lecture to be given by the agnostic lecturer & forceful orator, BRADLAUGH. It was feared by a small group of believers in the city that his visit would do great spiritual harm to the youth of the place.

They covenanted together that they would take hold of God for the hindering of the meeting. The evening came, however, & Bradlaugh appeared on the platform before a capacity audience

Was the prayer of that earnest group to go unanswered? After the introductory remarks by the chairman, the infidel stepped to the front and began to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, & passed his hand over his forehead. A 2nd & a 3rd time he repeated those words, and then, turning to the chairman, he said, "FOR SOME REASON MY MIND IS ALL CLOUDED. I AM UNABLE TO CONTINUE. I am sorry to disappoint the audience."----Bradlaugh never returned there.

5-ILLUS--There was a Chinese boy who was just a new christian. His mother was not a believer, and she often persecuted him. One night on his return home, she told him he could not go to the church on the morrow, and threatened him with punishment if he opposed her.

Poor LING WEI was in great trouble. He went to his room and moaned: "What shall I do? My teacher will think that I have gone back to my idols if I do not go to church."

Just then the door opened and his friend in the faith, CHENG, entered. He told Cheng, "My heart is so sad. When I came home, my mother told me I must give up my faith, & she has hidden my clothes so I cannot go to church tomorrow."

Cheng replied: "A chinese boy or man must mind his parents, but we can PRAY and get help from Jesus. Let us pray to Him."

The two friends poured out their prayers to the God who hears the prayers of His children. As time passed they prayed both for LING WEI to be able to attend church, but also for the conversion of his heathen mother.

SUDDENLY the door was opened & Ling Wei's mother stood in the doorway. "Oh, my dream. My Dream!" she cried. The True God you talk to told me in a dream to let you alone, or He would punish me. Here are your clothes. YOu may go to church whenever you desire, I will hinder you no more.

E.-How To Get Such Answers?:

1-By prayer--Many passages & promises in the gospels
--Some are dispensationally for Israel
--Therefore their applicability to us may be questionable
--ONE is clearly "CHURCH TRUTH"

2-John 14:12--"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."
--A promise of MIRACLES
--Promise to "he that believeth on Me"
--No limitation to disciples or Apostles
--Jesus did supernatural things to demonstrate God's power
--That same avenue is open to us!!
--HOW ??
--John 14:13-14--"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it."
--OBJECTIVE of such prayer is "that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
--Whenever we can ask in Jesus' authority, for God's glory, and in accord with Jesus' will.....
--THEN "I will do it", says Jesus, in answer to your prayer

3-The formula is simple
4-The principle is clear
5-As Phillips Brooks said: "We should remember that prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness."

CONCLUSION:

A.-Six Reasons Why I Should Pray:

1-DUTY----------God commanded it
2-DEPENDENCE----------God's method
3-DELIGHT----------Fullness of joy
4-DISTINCTIVE----------God hears
5-DELIVERANCE----------God answers
6-DEMONSTRATION---------God proves
7-Therefore.....I OUGHT to pray !!

B.-Results From Real Praying:

1-ILLUS --Billy Sunday told of an old Blacksmith who had boasted that he could meet any argument that a Christian could make to him. An old Deacon heard this boast and he & his dear wife spent the night till 3:00 a.m. praying for the blacksmith, that he might be saved.

The next morning the Deacon went over to see the blacksmith. As he entered the shop, the blacksmith was hard at work. The Deacon said: "My wife and I prayef for you until 3:00 a.m. this morning." Then his eyes filled with tears, & he turned away, & left the blacksmith standing at the forge.

When the Deacon arrived back home, he said to his wife. "I've made a fool of myself; it was all for nothing. When I saw him, I just broke down, & couldn't talk to him at all.

In the meantime, the Blacksmith went home. He said to his wife: "I heard a new argument this morning. The old Deacon drove in to see me & he told me that he & his wife had prayed for me until 3:00 this morning. Then he sobbed & went away."

The blacksmith said to his wife: "Let's take a ride out & see him. I'd like to talk with him."

AND IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS AFTER THEY MET, THE BLACKSMITH WAS ON HIS KNEES with the old Deacon to receive the Lord as His very own.

2-Prayer will reach through to hard hearts
--Miracle power of God
--Miracle life transformation
3-Therefore.....
I WILL pray-----Will you?

Westbrae--8/3/69--"Near To The Heart Of God"--------336
"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"--384
"Take Time To Be Holy"----------374

BOORUM & PEASE "NOTEAR" ®

"JEHOVAH-SHALOM"=="The LORD Our Peace" Judges 6:24

INTRO:

A.-Occasion Of The Revelation:
1-200+ years since Israel entered Canaan under Josuah
--Land conquered & divided
--But no national unity
--No central government or worship
--"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"
2-Israel FORGOT GOD--Turned to the gods of the pagans round about them
--Idolatry
--Moral abominations
--No longer "SEPARATE" unto God
--Forgot their sense of "mission"
--Settled for MATERIALISM
3-Cycle of God's dealing:

Cry of Repentance
Misery
Deliverance
Bondage
Idolatry
Restlessness
Backsliding

4-Planted without reaping
Alternating prosperity & adversity
5-Time of severe Midianite oppression

B.-Call Of God To Gideon:
1-Where Gideon was--Judges 6:11
2-Call of God--6:12
3-QUESTION--6:13
4-Commission--6:14
5-Excuses or Humility ??--6:15
6-Answer of the LORD--6:16
7-Reassurance needed--6:17-18
8-Sacrificing ALL FOR GOD--6:19-20
9-First sign--6:21
10-Gideon's realization--6:22
11-Jehovah's Promise--6:23
12-Gideon's Response--6:24

I.-THE MEANING AND USE OF "Shalom":

A.-Various Shades Of Meaning:
1-"WHOLE"--Deut. 27:6
2-"FINISHED"--Dan. 5:26
--1 Kings 9:25
3-"FULL"--Gen. 15:16
4-"MAKE GOOD"--Ex. 21:34; 22:5-6
5-"WELFARE" and "WELL"--Gen. 43:27
--2 Sam. 20:9

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6-"RENDER" and "PAY"--Ps. 50:14
--Deut. 23:21
7-"PERFECT" about 20 times--1 Chron. 29:19
--1 Kings 8:61
8-SO--Harmony of relationship or reconciliation based upon the completion of a transaction, payment of a debt or giving of satisfaction.

B.-Major Use & Meaning:
1-"PEACE"--Over 170 times
--Expression of the deepest desire & need of the human heart
--Contentment & satisfaction in life
2-In Solomon's day--1 Kings 4:25
3-In reign of Messiah--Jer. 23:6
4-In Name of Messiah--Isa. 9:6
5-As PEACE OFFERING--Lev. 3; 7:11-21
--Restoration of fellowship
--Satisfaction of the broken law
--Accomplished by a BLOOD OFFERING.

II.-JEHOVAH---THE SOURCE OF ALL PEACE:

A.-His Own Person Is Perfect Peace:
1-His NATURE is "peace"
2-Not disturbed by sin & corruption in the world
3-His possesses and IS "PEACE" in order to be able to give "peace" to others
4-This is our hope and assurance

B.-His Attitude Toward Man Is Peace:
1-Source of our peace--Jer. 29:11 — Contrast Isa. 57:21; 48:22
--Isa. 48:18 — Read 48:16-18
2-Blessings to Israel--Lev. 26:3, 6
--Ps. 29:11
--Isa. 26:12
3-Future peace--Isa. 66:12
4-Priestly benediction culminates with PEACE--Num 6:24-26

III.-THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH IS PEACE:

A.-Israel's Experience
1-Jehovah appeared to Gideon:
--Speaks "PEACE" to Gideon (Jud. 6:23)
--Gideon responds with an altar named JEHOVAH-SHALOM
--Striking manifestation of Jehovah to Gideon
** Of Othniel it is stated that the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him (3:10)
** Of Ehud it is said that the Lord raised up another judge (3:5)
** Barak is called thru the prophetess Deborah (4:6)
** But to Gideon Jehovah appears HIMSELF, and speaks "PEACE"

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2-VERY APPROPRIATE revelation to Gideon for a time of declension, restlessness, bondage & misery:
--After the conquest of Canaan, Israel should have entered into its rest, typical of that rest spoken of in Hebrews 4
--Moses spoke of this rest
--Deut. 12:9--"For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you."
--WHERE is such rest to be found?
--Never in the wilderness wandering
--Only in that "OVER JORDAN" experience (12:10) where there is victory & rest in the midst of conflict
3-2 Chron. 15:1-5a
4-How thankful & faithful I ought to be for the "better" promises given to the Church age believer:
--Mt. 28:20
--Heb. 13:5

B.-Church's Experience:
1-"God of Peace"--Frequently-used name of God in N.T.
--Rom. 15:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 13:20
2-Jesus speaks of "MY PEACE"--John 14:27
--John 16:33
--Matt. 11:28-29
3-Prophecies related to Jesus Christ as "PRINCE OF PEACE" (Isa. 9:6)--Luke 1:78-79
--Luke 2:14
4-Frequent greeting of Jesus was "PEACE be unto you" (Lk. 24:36)
5-Jesus provides us PEACE--Rom. 5:1
--Col. 1:20
--Col. 3:15
--Phs. 4:6-7
6-Church's message:
--PETER--"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all:)" (Acts. 10:36)
--PAUL--"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." (Eph. 2:17)

C.-Warning:
1-Thru Jesus Christ we have Peace WITH God
2-He is to us the Peace OF God
3-There is NO HOPE OF PEACE apart from Him
--In salvation
--In daily fellowship
--Isa. 32:17--"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."
4-PROMISE--"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Isa. 26:3)