

Persistence in Prayer and George Floyd

Presented By Pastor Scott Walters on 06-07-20

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Not long ago, I met with a couple preparing for their wedding, along with the soloist – preparing the musical part of the wedding.

One solo was agreed to and then the bride suggested a version of The Lord's Prayer – Soloist was unaware of what The Lord's Prayer was.

Many people just assume the significance of The Lord's Prayer; worship; musical settings; devotional life; a prayer into the heart of Jesus.

A model prayer; In Luke one of the disciples says basically, "Hey, can you show us how to pray like John did for his followers?"

Jesus is the ultimate of what it means to live faithfully and being spiritually connected to God.

But sometimes we look elsewhere.....

Sports figures I modeled myself after:

Baseball: Sandy Koufax and Carl Yastrzemski;

Football: Bart Starr;

Golf: Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicholas.

As admirable as many of these sports figures are; they don't always make for great models;

Some of you will recall the initials WWJD. "What would Jesus do?"

Schmaltzy: stuff to buy – t-shirts, wrist bands, books, etc.

Great money-maker done by a great marketer.

Easy to roll ones eyes.

But it was a good place to start: doesn't ask for specific verses or incidents from the Bible. Just asks for the general spirit of who Jesus was and how he would go about things.

The same with The Lord's Prayer. Jesus prayed. And in the Lord's

Prayer we see less about the specific doctrines in which Jesus

believed and more about the relationship Jesus had with

God and the world.

Which brings me to Luke's version of The Lord's Prayer:

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shorter (5 petitions to Matthew's 7); grittier

Luke's prayer is followed by a parable about a friend seeking bread which speaks to the spirit of prayer – namely persistence in a good cause.

Persistence in and of itself; may or not be good.

Robert Service: "He was nursing his wrath to keep it warm."

But persistence in a good cause is something else.

Men & women of color and Black Americans in particular have for centuries been persistence in seeking to live in a country that has not lived up to its ideals of justice, fairness, and equity.

An Black man who was a member of the Brookfield Church I served shared with the men's group how uncomfortable it was for him to attend worship, even though he came most Sundays.

I remember a couple that we know telling us the account of having to have "The Talk" with their adopted black son who was getting to the age when he would be out with his friends and what he needed to do to be safe, if the police approached him.

When we saw an officer's knee on George Floyd's neck for 8' 46" all the people in our nation and around the world saw what those talks were all about between parents and their black children.

Matthew's Lord's Prayer was given near the beginning of Jesus ministry while giving his Sermon on the Mount.

Luke's version of The Lord's Prayer is understood to be later when Jesus had to turn and make his way for the final time to Jerusalem.

That says to me that prayer is more than offering some good thoughts to God and feeling you've done your duty.

Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer tells me that sometimes we need to be able to listen to the experiences, and testify and act out that for which we prayed.

I think Crossroads' prayer speaks to that need to act on our prayer when it says, "We stand at the crossroads of your hopes and the lives of your people. Breakthrough Crossroads UMC and our community that we may "walk in a good way," to bring your kingdom closer to reality on earth."

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It is time now for all Americans to become persistent – persistent in the good cause of seeing that the good society (with justice and fairness and equal opportunity) we say is available for all is really for all

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