



SERIES: July Series “OFF ROADING”

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Monday, July 19, 2021

Scripture: Ephesians 6:12-13

TITLE: Praying For People

When serving as a pastor at a local church, I was surprised by how many people weren't outreach minded. I served with a staff of 9 pastors and about 15 or so ministry directors and employees. Like many churches, they viewed outreach as the job of the preaching pastor or an outreach pastor. I served as both, but I quickly reminded people that no matter what your job title is, it should have outreach in it.

You see, we are all called to everyday outreach. No matter if you work in the marketplace, or in a church, you can do outreach. It doesn't matter if you're a student or a retiree, we all can do outreach. It doesn't matter how busy you are, we are all called to outreach. And there is no better place than praying for the lost.

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12-13 (NIV), “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Paul reminds us the battle for the soul is a spiritual battle.

Many people will say the key to outreach is “love.” But friend, you can't love anyone into the Kingdom of God. Pastors and professors may say that “apologetics and theology” are the key to outreach. But, as much as those are important, you can't debate anyone into Heaven. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3, we can scatter seed and water, but the Spirit is the one who harvests them. Effective outreach – everyday outreach - begins on our knees praying for the lost by name.

Charles Spurgeon said, “The condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings. So is the prayer meeting a grace-ometer and from it we may judge the amount of divine working among people. If God be near a church, it must pray. And if He be not there, one of the first tokens of his absence will be a slothfulness in prayer.” (–Charles Haddon Spurgeon *Everything by Prayer*, Fred Hartley, page 120)

So here's what I want you to try today: try a triple five prayer. I don't want you to worry about memorizing a whimsical presentation. I don't want you knocking on your neighbors' doors. I want you to pray for five people, for five minutes, five days this week. That' a triple five prayer: Praying for 5 people, for five minutes, five days this week.

What should this prayer be like? That's between you and God. And here's a common prayer I have with God:

"Father, I pray for "Joe". You know how much he needs you. You also know what barriers are in place from Him knowing you through your Son. I pray you will remove those barriers. I pray for open ears to hear the Gospel. I pray for a softened heart to receive the Gospel fully. Show me how I can reach him. Amen."

Try this triple five prayer and see what God does.

As Jesus said, the harvest is ripe. Where are the workers? Send the workers! So before we go, let's pray