



SERIES: July Series “OFF ROADING”

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Scripture: Psalm 34:15 / Isaiah 59:2

TITLE: Praying With People

“I’ll pray for you.” If you’re like me, you almost hate to hear this, because it’s a nice sentiment, but I assume it’s just a passing comment. Why would I say that? Because I’ve done it. A lot. Even as a pastor, I will tell people “I’ll pray for you.” But then I walk off and forget. So knowing my own deficiencies, I’ve decided to not just pray *for* people, but pray *with* people.

And here’s what I’ve discovered: praying with people is a powerful outreach tool to reach the lost. This is true for two reasons: Effectiveness and authenticity. What do those mean?

Well, effectiveness refers to the power of the one praying. A while ago I was in a text chain and someone said, “Sending positive vibes and happy thoughts.” First off, I don’t know what that means, but regardless how you define those vibes and thoughts, that’s the best a non-believer can spiritually offer on behalf of a hurting person. You see, the Bible is clear about effective prayer.

Psalm 34:15 (NLT) says, “The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right [In other words righteous]; his ears are open to their cries for help.

Isaiah 59:2 “It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.”

Though God hears the prayers of a non-believer, he is not inclined to answer them. They are not His children. They are not righteous through Jesus. This is why James (5:16b) said, “The prayers of a righteous person can accomplish much.”

So we can offer effective prayers for the lost. But the second reason praying with people is a powerful outreach tool is because it shows we are authentic in our offer and belief. We don’t want to offer up lip service, when we hold keys to effective prayer. So when someone is sharing about their pain, sorrow, or troubles, just ask, “May I pray for you?” I can only think of one time when someone said, “No, thank you.” I even do this at restaurants from time to time. I’ll simply say, “I’m going to pray for my meal. May I pray for you or any trouble you’re facing?” I have never been told “No”. It has opened big doors for long-term relationships and Gospel opportunities.

Outreach is really simple. It’s inviting others into our daily, Spirit-filled activities. It’s not expecting them to come to church. It’s us bringing church to them. Every one of us who is a believer desires revival. But if we really want it, it begins with us and prayer. R.A. Torrey said, “Our sorest need today is a deep, thoroughgoing, Spirit-wrought, God-sent revival. Such revivals

as far as man's agency is concerned always come in one way—by prayer.” (*The Power of Prayer and the Prayer of Power*)

Everyday outreach for everyday people. That's you and me. So let's go and pray with others and then watch the Spirit work.