



SERIES: LOOKING BACK – MOVING FORWARD

SPEAKER: Jacob Wirka

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Scripture: Thessalonians 5:16-18

TITLE: When to Pray

This week we've been exploring the topic of prayer. Prayer is when we communicate with God, it's talking to Him and connecting with Him on a deeper level. I believe prayer is meant to draw us closer to the Lord and help us to begin to desire what He desires. But even when we understand what prayer is and how to pray, sometimes it isn't clear when we should pray.

As I think about my own life there appear to be times and places where it is appropriate or normal to pray. It seems good to pray before a meal or to pray at church at the beginning and the end of a service. It seems like a good thing to pray before going to bed. All those times easily fall into part of the routine. And there are other times, maybe when we feel particularly anxious about the outcome, and it was an event where we feel inclined to pray. Like before sporting events, or performances of some kind. Before a big presentation, or job interview, or test.

All of those times and many more are great times to pray. But what does God's word say? In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV) we read:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul is trying to show them what the Christian life is supposed to look like, and he says that in our Christian life, we should pray without ceasing! This means never stop praying! We should always be communicating with God because He wants to communicate with us and build that relationship!

As a teacher, I have an open-door policy, and I want my students past and present to come in my room and talk to me whenever! But obviously, there are times I can't talk. If I'm in the middle of the lesson or busy with other things, it makes it tough to talk with other students. But we don't have this problem with the God of the universe. He doesn't have business hours or office hours. He is all-powerful, He's everywhere, He's all-knowing. He wants to hear from us, and we have access to Him through Jesus every minute of the day!

So maybe the question isn't when should we pray, but rather when shouldn't we pray? If prayer is our way of communicating with God, and our relationship with Him is more important than anything else, we should always be communicating with Him! Prayer also has the effect of focusing our intentions and our desires in our hearts and our minds on the Lord. So we should be beginning our days in prayer, end our days in prayer, and all in between we should be taking time to refocus ourselves and recenter ourselves on the God who created us—remembering that

this world and even our lives are about Him! We should pray when we're happy and rejoicing; we should pray when we're sad and overwhelmed. We should pray when we don't know what's going to happen and when we should pray when we find out what the results are, no matter what they are. This might mean praying at the end of the game, too, even if you lost. This might mean praying when you found out you didn't get the job you wanted.

As we look to the Bible, I believe that prayer should become a natural rhythm of the Christian life. Praying, communicating with our creator should be as natural to us as breathing; that's what I think it means to pray without ceasing.