Sermon 4

Outward: Praying for others

John 17:

1 Thessalonians 1:2-9

By Mat Wilson

**Introduction**



3 basic kinds of prayer to God.

**Upward** – prayers of praise and thanksgiving that focus on God himself. – Prayers of awe!

**Inward** – prayers of self-examination and confession that bring awareness of grace and assurance of love

**Outward** – praying for others…

1. All Christians to find new life in their relationship to Jesus Christ. Grow in personal faith and discipleship. Joy in times of gladness and comfort in times of sorrow. Renew their passion for Jesus.
2. ***All those you meet and are close to – family, friends, colleges….that they might see something of Jesus Christ in you and are drawn towards Jesus and learn of his love.***
3. For the church to be a place full of life and joy of Jesus Christ. To be a place that overflows with the reality of the presence of spirit of Jesus together and wherever it overflows to. In service, in love, in compassion, in working with poor.

**Justin Welby video 3 mins**

A gift we can all afford – to pray for someone.

Persistence

Praying for someone…to be a follower of Jesus

**Readings today**

* Prayer life of Jesus

John’s Gospel – chapter 17 is an amazing account of the prayer life of Jesus.

More will be said later in our series on prayer about Jesus’ prayer life (Andrew on 20th May) so I won’t go in to detail here but the end of John 17 we catch a glimpse in to what Jesus prays for – or who Jesus prays for.

Vs 20 *‘my prayer is not for them alone (them being his disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in me.’*

That is us! You and me!

Deeply moving to know this…

Jesus had in mind – his vision – was for us

Ill – Like a mountaineer gazing out from an eminence across the expanding vista as range succeeds range into the distant horizon, so Jesus gazes out across the rolling centuries.

He is praying for every nation, people, language and culture – he is praying for everyone!

* Prays for people to be one – in united with the Father and with one another
* Prays this because then the world will believe – (be persuaded). Jesus years for people to believe in him.

The heart of Jesus is as wide and as broad as the heart of the God who so loved the world that he gave…

Ill - Kings Norton 6th form – ‘God’s Existence’

* Question – we can’t see God. Why doesn’t God just show up?!
* Answer – he has in the Holy Spirit and through the lives of his followers. Evidence of God is through people of faith.
* Prayer life of Paul, Silas and Timothy - 1 Thessalonians

**Part 1 - Prayer is central**

Vs 2 *– ‘We* ***always*** *thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.*

Vs 3 – ‘*We* ***continually remember*** *before God you work by faith, your work by love and your endurance inspired by hope in Jesus.*

Paul, Silas and Timothy – are praying for people like Jesus prayed for people. This is the pattern of prayer. To pray for people to come to faith and see that faith change their lives.

Who is this Mr Men character? – Of course, it is Mr Forgetful!

* Praying is remembering (it is better than a diary!
* Praying overcome our forgetfulness

 **Part 2 – Power of God at work**

*Vs 4 – ‘The Gospel came to you not simple with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit*

*Vs 5 – ‘You know how we lived among you for your sake’*

*Vs 6 – ‘You saw us and became imitators of us – in spite of suffering – you welcomed the message with joy through the Holy Spirit*

**Part 3 – Presence of the gospel through their life**

*Vs 7 – ‘You became a model (an example) to the other believers in Macedonia*

*Vs 8 – The gospel message rang out from you. Your faith in God has become known everywhere*

*Vs 9 – People are saying how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God*

Model here is

* Pray for people
* Power of God at work in people
* Presence of the gospel through people

**Story**

* Alison – running. Stacey an atheist at prayer
* It has never been about football. Friend with Cancer. Friend is need of hope when he attending funeral of his God son who committed suicide. Prayer is offered. Prayer matters.
* Pray for people close to you / Pray for people who you are going to meet that day / Pray for people after you’ve met them / Pray for your family /

No magic formula here just an attitude of faith, love and hope in Jesus that the Spirit is at work in those around us. Pray for people.

Illustration – VIDEO by Pete Greig D.L Moody – Praying for his friends.

The challenge

* Tie a knot – remember – and pray for these people daily / Persistence