

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Teach Us to Pray: Prayer as Struggle
Pastor Gabe Kasper
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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What's the most outrageous thing you asked your parents for when you were young?

Reading: Matthew 26:36-46

Outline: We struggle well when we...

- I. Come honest in request (v36-39)
 - a. In his sorrow, Jesus provides an example of raw, honest prayer that we should follow.
 - b. It is biblical and effective to come to God with gut-wrenchingly honest prayers.
Q: What is Jesus' first move when facing a difficult and scary situation?
- II. Come clear in relationship (v39)
 - a. We are to pray with humility knowing that He is God and we are not.
 - b. At the same time, we can pray boldly because of our relationship with our Father.
Q: What does Jesus request in his prayer? How does he respond to the answer?
- III. End in relinquishment (v42)
 - a. We may discover in prayer that God's will for us is not what we want or what's comfortable for us.
 - b. We should surrender to the will of God in our prayers, as Jesus surrendered and accepted his crucifixion as the sacrifice for our salvation.
Q: Where else does Jesus instruct us to pray "Your will be done"?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How is your prayer life going?
- 2) Do you find yourself holding the "ugly parts" back when you pray?
- 3) How do you remember that God is God when he answers your prayers with a "no"?
- 4) What does it mean to surrender?
- 5) What is most difficult for you to let go of? What might happen if you surrender control of it to God?

Suggestions for further study:

- Psalm 79 **Q: How does the Psalmist both recognize God's authority and appeal to him as a loving Father?**
- Luke 22:39-46 **Q: In Luke's depiction, how does God respond to Jesus' prayer?**
- Hebrews 5:7-9 **Q: What resulted from the Father's "no" to Jesus' prayer?**

Closing Prayer: *"Lord God, we thank you for the gift of prayer. We thank you that you let us come to you in any and all circumstance, and yet, it is a struggle to use this gift sometimes. God, we pray that you would teach us to come honestly to you and not hold things back, to be real with what's troubling us and know that there's nothing we need to hide because you are our Father who loves us. From that place, teach us to submit to your will. Teach us to surrender what you would have us surrender. We pray that you would teach us to relinquish the things on our hearts, trust in your will, and follow after you so that we can live more fully. We thank you that Jesus submitted to your will, and that it led him to the cross for our salvation. We praise you for that gift today and always. It's in his name we pray, Amen."*