

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

February 24, 2019

Scripture: James 5:13-18 (NIV)

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the Church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Congregational Prayer: “Our Father”

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespasses, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: “Prayer 8: Locks and Keys of Prayer: 2”

Introduction:

- A woman was at work when she received a phone call that her small daughter was very sick with a fever. She prayed as she left her job , and stopped by the pharmacy to get some medication. She was still praying when she got back to her car and found that she had locked in her keys. She didn't know what to do. The woman prayed again, and then looked around and found an old rusty coat hanger that had been left on the ground. She looked at the hanger and said, “I don't know how to use this.” She prayed to God and asked Him to send her help. Then a beat up

old motorcycle pulled up, with a scruffy, bearded man got off of his motorcycle was ask if he could help her. She said, “Yes, my daughter is very sick. I stopped to get her some medication and I locked my keys in my car. I must get home to her. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?” He said, “Sure.” and he walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the door was opened. She said, “Thank you so much! You are a very nice man.” The man replied, “Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison today. I was in for car theft and have only been out for about an hour.” The woman thanked the man again and with tears said, ”Oh, Thank you God! You even sent me a professional! “

- The moral of the story: Always trust in God. Always pray to Him. And learn to be patient. He will help us from sources which we never could have imagined.
- We began a journey in understanding prayer in January, and today we are about to talk about the keys to a successful prayer life with Christ your Saviour.

Part 1: Four reminders of Locks and Keys to prayer:

- 1. Prayer is not about religion, or a ritual, but a relationship.
- 2. If we want to pray effectively we must approach God on His

terms, not our terms.

- 3. Prayer's effectiveness is hindered (locked) by certain things (as found in scripture).
- 4. There are keys to prayer where God is pleased and willing to be more active in our lives.

Part 2: Keys to Effective Prayers

- 1. Persistence: Matthew 7:7-8 says: *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."* When Tim was a boy he really wanted a Nintendo Gameboy. He asked and asked, and because he asked so much, I pretended that I did not know what such a thing was, even though I had found one for him already. He was so delighted to receive it that Christmas, but I knew it to be true before I even gave it to him because he asked for it enough. Can we learn to ask God for the things we need? Can we cry out to the God of life, the God of creation, and implore Him to give to us the delights and desires of our hearts? We live in a world where we want something

yesterday. Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow, as recorded in Luke 18:1-18 where a widow needs a request that can only be granted by the judge who is indifferent and who is, in fact, corrupt. But because she keeps praying, she gets her request granted. Who in your family needs to come to Jesus? Who in your home needs to be healed? Who is at work that is grieving? Who is at your school that is feeling emotionally lost? Is there someone here at the Church that needs a heart-lift from God? Keep praying. Don't stop. There are forces of evil, forces of spiritual warfare, there are egos and attitudes that God is turning, and you need to stand in the gap, praying for yourself and for others with persistence.

- 2. Pray in faith. Hebrews 11:6 says: *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."* We need faith to grow in faith. We need faith to have a foundation of belief. We need faith to be pleasing to God. So says Hebrews 11:6, (NIV) which ends with the reason: *"...because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."* What is faith? Many would say that faith is believing without seeing. Some would say that faith is trust

on a spiritual level. The Bible says that faith is (Hebrews 11:1 NIV):

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Confidence in what we hope for. You do not hope for what you already have, so hope is always for the future. And yet the strong word “Confidence” is used here. And the second part of the Bible’s definition of faith has to do with what we cannot see. You can try to run scientific experiments to prove that there is a God. You can try to prove Him historically. You can attempt to show God with facts and figures. But belief in God comes down to you taking a mighty step in faith and walking with God for the rest of your life, and into eternity. Prayer needs faith, and faith will grow in your prayers.

- 3. Pray in secret, not in selfishness for an audience. In Matthew 6:6 Jesus gives us a warning: *“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”* God is not so much pleased with your heart of SHOW as He is your heart of GROW. God wants to hear your prayer, and if you are with others,

pray out loud. But don’t get caught in the trap of the Pharisees who always did their acts of faith for an audience, for the crowd. If you receive your rewards on earth, you will only get it here. But Matthew chapter 6 starts with Jesus reminding us that If you ask in secret, God sees and rewards eternally. Our God sees all. Our God knows all. Our God knows when you are praying for show. Our God knows when you are praying to grow.

- 4. Pray according to God’s will. In 1 John 5:14 (NIV) says: *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”* The confidence we can have in prayer. The confidence from praying in approaching God. The confidence in asking according to the will of God. It’s all here, in God’s Word. How then, similarly, would we know what is the will of God? Two ways: 1. Read His Holy Word. He left this great book for us. While it looks pretty sitting on your shelf, you would be amazed how much more beautiful the Bible is in your hands. There are words of excitement, and words of peace. Hope and joy leap out of this book. There are words to keep you on the straight and narrow path, and words to get you off the couch and into the streets, working for Him. And yet,

2, God can and will speak to you directly in prayer. If you want to know His heart, give Him yours. If you want to know His heart, speak from your heart to His. If you want to know His heart, then talk to the Living God, and listen for His leading, His guidance in your life. If you want to know the heart of God then pray all day long, every day, all the time, and your prayers will line up with God's. We tend to pray the opposite way, "Oh, Lord, I really want to date that person. Make it so!" Or, "Jesus, help me get into this job." Or "God, I really want to wealthy. Bring it on!" And God may want that person for your life, or that job for you, or that wealth, but may I say rarely. Our call as believers in Jesus Christ is to line up our lives with the will of God. Our joy in being a disciple is to learn how the master wants us to walk, where the King of our lives wants us to go, where the ruler of our souls wants to lead us. "Lord, teach me your will, and help me live in it."

- 5. Pray in Jesus' Name: Jesus said in John 14:12-14: *"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in*

my name, and I will do it." We come to God according to Christ's righteousness, sacrifice, authority, reputation and name. And His name is power. *"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* – Acts 4:12. *"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow."* – Philippians 2:10. *"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* – Romans 10:13. The name of Jesus is powerful. The name of Jesus is wonderful. The name of Jesus is healing. The name of Jesus makes demons tremble and angels sing. His name will bind up evil and release the good. When you use the name of Jesus get ready for great things to happen. When you pray in His holy name, the power that flows.

- 6. Praying in agreement with other believers. Jesus said (Matthew 18:19): *"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven."* When two or more pray in agreement, wait for the walls to come down, the flood water to stop flowing, the bully to be silenced, the bills to be paid, the car to start, the things in your life to line up with God's will. When we believers fight, Satan smiles.. When we Christians are in harmonious symphony with each other, Satan runs. Satan lingers in

every Church, in every home, in every opportunity he tries to discourage, to harm, to divide. And when Satan divides homes, when evil ruins churches, when demons destroy the harmony of believers being in unity together, ruin happens to our society, our world. Grab a friend. Dare to stand together in unity and pray for this world here and now. There is power in the prayers of agreement being before the Lord.

- 7. Pray from a clean and right heart: If you want a clean heart, pray for it. If you want to be cleansed, only the precious blood of Jesus will do it. If you want your heart to be made right, get out of the way, and let Jesus cleanse and remake you in His precious image. And if you want your prayers to be effective, come to God cleansed and restored. Last week we read the last part of James 5:16 (NKJV): *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”* The seventh key to effective prayer is come to God cleaned. We need a clean heart to come before a holy God. We need clean lips to speak to the God of eternity. To be effective, not only be fervent, but be clean.
- 8. Pray while fasting: Decisions in the early Church were made often by fasting - by stopping to eat, or stopping something else of importance, such as in Acts 14:23: *“So when they had appointed elders in every*

Church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” You do not need to starve yourself, hurt yourself, or put yourself in harm’s way as a follower of Jesus. But the value of fasting cannot be underestimated. Fasting, removing one food from your plate, or one meal, or fasting from your phone for a whole hour, or fasting of your car for the day, or giving up anything important to you for Jesus. It’s a discipline. It is you taking the time to consciously give a gift to God as a sacrifice, much like the weekly offering here at Church. Fasting goes with prayer.

- 9. Pray from an obedient life: 1 John 3:22 says: *“And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”* Can I ask God for anything if my life is soiled? Can I request or demand from God one thing if I am doing evil, living for myself, and walking away from God? Think about it: if you have been disrespecting your boss. If you have missed your shifts, if you have been shirking your job responsibilities, and then you go to your boss for a raise, what do you expect the answer shall be? If you want to ask a Holy God for anything, walk first in obedience to Him. If you expect God to hold you up, lean on Him, and Him alone. Don’t be

a “Carrie Complainer” then expect God to jump like a trained monkey at your command., Instead, walk a worthy walk as a believer in Christ Jesus, making mistakes, and praying for forgiveness, and your obedient heart will be like a bouquet of fresh flowers in a stale and messy world. Pray with an obedient heart.

- 10. Praying while abiding in Christ and in His Word. Jesus said (John 15:7 (NIV)): *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”* May we all learn to pray with a heart that is held closely by King Jesus our Lord. May we learn to pray while struggling to get past ourselves to determine the one and true heart of God. May we continue to be prayer warriors in the kingdom of a Holy God by taking God’s Word and abiding with Him in everything in our lives. Our intimacy with God, our surrendering, our closeness is to conform us to the image of God. In this, God delights. And when we so we have the 10th and final key to effective prayer.

Conclusion:

- It is time to unlock your prayer life. What is the common theme to these 10 keys to unlocking your prayer life: Get your heart right with a Holy God. Trust in Him. Walk with Him. And listen for Him in your life.

What are the keys that you need today to unlock your prayer life?