

“Why the Devil Doesn’t Want Us to Pray”  
(Exodus 34:29-35)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning, we saw

That prayer is more than simply

Asking the Lord for things:

It’s fellowship with the Lord –

Taking time to develop our relationship with Him:

By expressing our love –

How much we love Him and why –

Our thankfulness –

For what He’s done and does –

Confessing our sins –

For how we’ve behaved in light of His love –

And then asking for what we want –

In His name –

On the basis of what Jesus has done –

His obedience and love to the Father,

His death on the cross for sins –

Putting His concerns first –

That His Father be glorified,

That His kingdom continue to grow,

And that all would obey Him.

And then asking for what we need –

Our daily bread –

So that we can continue His work –

It's asking in faith –

Without faith,

We can't please Him

And we'll receive nothing –

According to His will –

Consistent with His promises –

In love –

With a real desire to see Him glorified,

Because He's worthy –

And with a forgiving heart –

Knowing that if we harbor unforgiveness towards anyone,

The Lord will not forgive us;

And if He doesn't forgive us,

He also won't hear us.

## B. Preview.

What we want to consider tonight

Is what will happen when we pray this way –

More particularly,

Why the devil tries to keep us from this kind of prayer.

It's because,

When we spend this kind of time with the Lord,

It changes us.

And when we pray,

From a transformed life,

Putting His concerns first,

It brings about the downfall of Satan's kingdom:

James writes, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).

## II. Sermon.

### A. First, prayer changes us.

We read in our passage,

When Moses spent time with the Lord –

Both on Mount Sinai,

And in the Tabernacle –

It had an effect on him:

His face began to glow

With a similar visible glory

As the One in Whose presence he stood,

To the point he had to put a veil over his face

Because it frightened the Jews.

Paul tells us there was another reason:

Because that glory was fading.

"Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech, and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away" (2 Cor. 3:12-13).

This fading glory was a type/picture

That was meant to teach that the OC was only temporary –

It was pointing to the NC

And the greater glory Jesus would bring.

Paul goes on to say,

The veil over Moses' face was also a picture

Of the blindness the Jews were experiencing

Who continued to hold on to the shadows of the OC –

This is the blindness of sin with which we came into the world,

But was taken away when we turned to the Lord.

“But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (vv. 14-16).

Once it's removed in Jesus,

And we see His unveiled glory,

It transforms us into His image,

In a similar way to Moses.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (vv. 17-18).

Where do we see this glory?

The Spirit reveals it

Through the Word, worship, sacraments –

Which is why it's important

We meet together for worship.

But He also reveals it

When we spend time with the Lord in prayer –

The more we fellowship with Him,

And deepen this relationship –

The more we see His glory –

Who He is,

What He's like –

And the more it changes/transforms us into His image.

Jesus tells us that prayer is one way we can get more of the Spirit:

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).

But prayer is also where the Spirit works

To make us more like Jesus.

The more time we spend in prayer,

The more we see His glory by His Spirit;

The more we see His glory,

The more we love Him;

And the more we love Him,

The more we'll become like Him –

Jesus' life was one of pure love and devotion to the Father;

This is the life we're called to:

But to become like this, we need to pray.

This is the “secret” of spiritual growth/maturity –

Those used most powerfully by the Lord

Were those who sought Him the most.

It was said of Luther

That he regularly prayed two hours each day,

And on those days he had a lot to do,

He prayed three.

Don Whitney, professor of Biblical Spirituality

At Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,

Writes this about Jonathan Edwards,

In his address at the 2003 Desiring God National Conference

Entitled, “Pursuing a Passion for God through Spiritual Disciplines:

Learning from Jonathan Edwards:

“Edwards was so devoted to prayer that it is hard to find a daily routine for him that wasn’t permeated with it. He prayed alone when he arose, then had family prayer before breakfast. Prayer was a part of each meal, and he prayed again with the family in the evening. He prayed over his studies, and he prayed as he walked in the evenings. Prayer was both a discipline and a part of his leisure.”

“It was inconceivable that anyone could know the God he knew and not be compelled by the sweetness, love, and satisfaction found in God to pray. It seemed contrary to Edwards’s understanding of Scripture that anyone could be indwelt by the Spirit who causes God’s children to “cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15; compare with Galatians 4:6) and yet not cry out to the Father in regular private prayer. Edwards testifies that when a person has a passion for God, he prays.”

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/pursuing-a-passion-for-god-through-spiritual-disciplines-learning-from-jonathan-edwards>

Do we share this passion?

Then we will pray.

The more time we spend with Him,

The more we'll be like Him

And so the more He will use us –

That's why the devil doesn't want us to pray,

And why he'll do everything he can to keep us from it.

B. But there's a second reason

The devil doesn't want us to pray:

Because prayer destroys his kingdom.

Especially when it comes from one

Who is in close fellowship with Him.

Remember James, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much"  
(James 5:16).

What if such a person

Prays as Jesus calls us:

That His Father would be treated as holy.

That His kingdom would come with power.

That all would obey Him?

If these things were heard and answered –

Which the Lord can do with infinite ease –

What would happen to Satan's kingdom?

The one built on the dishonoring of God?

It would come to an end.

We need to remember,

That God works through prayer:

The Lord said to Solomon

In answer to his prayer at the dedication of the Temple:

“If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:13-14).

Why does Jesus teach us to pray

As He did in the Lord’s Prayer?

Why do we need to pray at all?

It’s because we’re part of the process:

He’s chosen us to do the work;

He’s told us to pray for the work;

And He’s promised to answer our prayers.

Satan doesn’t want this work to move forward,

And so will either keep us from prayer altogether,

Or keep us from praying as we should:

As long as our prayers are wrapped up

In our own needs, comforts, and pleasures,

We’re not going to threaten him.

But once we begin to pray

From a heart devoted to Him;

To pray for what Jesus tells us;

To subordinate even our own needs

To this one great end;

And with the kind of faith

And desire for these things

That spending time with the Lord will bring;

We will become a real threat.

“The Roman Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, is reputed to have said, ‘I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.’”

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/give-me-scotland-or-i-die/>

Satan fears ours as well,

When we come to God’s throne

In His power and for His glory:

Again, Cowper writes,

“Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

Can you think of a greater argument

To the importance of prayer

Than that Satan tries to keep us from it?

We need to pray.

Maybe we won’t be able to pray

As a Luther or an Edwards to start –

Maybe we’ll only make it 10 or 20 minutes –

But the more we do,

The more we’ll want to,

The longer we will,

And the more effective our prayer will be.

Mueller wasn't able to pray believing  
That the Lord would change the weather  
Toward the beginning of his ministry,  
But he was toward the end.

May the Lord give us the grace we need  
To grow into men and women of faith  
Who have this kind of power with God,  
That we might believe with John Knox,  
“One man with God is always in the majority.” Amen.

<http://www.gcmoesto.org>