

Main Text: 2 Chr. 20

Main Point: What prayer IS and IS NOT...

Introduction: (Open with Gladwell's story of the fake kouros statue.) [koo-ros]

One of my favorite authors is a man by the name of Malcom Gladwell. In his book, BLINK, he tells the story of a **kouros statue**. **This is an ancient Greek statue of a youth that came on the market and was about to be purchased for just under 10 million dollar by the Getty Museum in CA. After 14 months of investigation to determine its authenticity, they museum was ready to write the check...then someone said let me make a call. They call a art historian name Federico Zeri, and within seconds he determined it was a fake. More investigation later revealed that the statue was a fake and that it has been forged by men from Rome in the 1980s.**

Sometimes it is difficult to know when something IS REAL and when it IS NOT.

Today we are entering week 3 of our Study entitled "TEACH US TO PRAY". The title of the message is...WHAT PRAYER IS AND IS NOT...

Series Overview: Teach Us to Pray according to the Bible.

WEEK 1: What makes prayer effective...

WEEK 2: How to pray through difficult seasons of life...

TODAY: What prayer IS and IS NOT...

WEEK 4: The RIGHT and WRONG way to pray

WEEK 5: The proper response towards to Lord when his answer is NO...

By the end of this series on prayer we will be at a better place of understanding not only how to pray, but how to enjoy an effective prayer life in any season that you find yourself in.

Please go with me in your Bibles to the Old Testament book of **2 Chronicles 20**. Today we are going to learn what prayer IS and IS NOT.

In today's passage of Scripture, we are going to learn what prayer IS and IS NOT from one of the most famous Kings of Judah, Jehoshaphat.

Some quick context: Jehoshaphat was the King of the southern kingdom of Israel, Judah about 900 years before Christ. He was a good and righteous person, not without his flaws but a good man nonetheless.

- He led a revival and worked to turn the people back to God.
- He ordered the removal of false idols throughout the land.
- He began sending the best Levites throughout the land to teach the people the word of God.
- He sent wise and good judges to each major town so that justice would prevail.
- He was arguably the best king in Judah's history since Solomon.

And as we come in to chapter 20 we find Jehoshaphat on the cusp of invasion by a foreign army and he is powerless in the face of the attack. **The irony of the enemy...** verses 10-11

Today's message is for anyone who has ever been in the midst of an attack/trial that was over your head, above your paygrade, beyond your reach. It is for anyone who has ever...

- Gotten a bill that your bank account couldn't handle.
- Gotten a disease that your doctor couldn't cure.
- Had a spouse that you just couldn't change.
- Had a kid that you just couldn't figure out.

If you have ever been in the middle of a rock and hard place with no way of escape, then you are going to like today's message!

20:1-2

After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar." (This was another name for En-gedi.)

20:3-4

Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help.

- True prayer IS birthed out of your sincere feelings.
- True prayer IS the FIRST RESPONSE
- True prayer IS not just an individual response but ALSO a community event.

20:5-9

Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. He prayed, "O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. They said, 'Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us.'

- True prayer IS a declaration of our total dependence on God.
- True prayer IS a declaration of God's sovereignty over the storm.
- True prayer IS a declaration of God's Word back to God.

20:12

O our God, won't you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”

- True prayer IS a reminder that the problem might be impossible for us BUT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.
- True prayer IS truly admitting that God is BOTH PLAN A AND B.

2 Chronicles 20:13-14

As all the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their little ones, wives, and children, the Spirit of the LORD came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph.

- True prayer IS empowered by the Holy Spirit and brings God's word to us.

20:15-17

THE RESPONSE

He said, “Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow, march out against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD's victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!”

- WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED when God answers our prayers.
- God will always remind you that the battle is not yours to fight.
- God will always ask you to march.

God's answer for us when we are in a rock and a hard place??? MARCH!

- When they were between Pharaoh and the Red Sea...MARCH
- When they were stuck between their past and the Jordan River...MARCH
- When they were stuck between the river and Jericho...MARCH
- What did Jesus say to Peter when he was staring at the waves...MARCH
- What did he say to Lazarus after he was in the grave for 4 days...MARCH

IF YOU WANT THE SEA TO PART or THE WALL TO FALL you have got to MARCH.

We do not walk by sight! We walk by faith!
A faith without action is a dead faith!

So when you go to God and ask him for a miracle don't be surprised when he asks you to march!

Conclusion: How do you know you are looking at the real thing and not a fake? How do you know a real prayer from a fake prayer?

Jesus give a great lesson on FAKE PRAYER. IT IS...

- Prayer to be seen by men (Mt. 6:5)
- Prayers that are recited or babbled as though they were incantations. AS if we could just "say the right words the right way and God will have to do things for us." (Mt. 6:7)

Recap:

- True prayer IS birthed out of your sincere feelings.
- True prayer IS the FIRST RESPONSE
- True prayer IS not just an individual response but ALSO a community event.
- True prayer IS a declaration of our total dependence on God.
- True prayer IS a declaration of God's sovereignty over the storm.
- True prayer IS a declaration of God's Word back to God.
- True prayer IS a reminder that the problem might be impossible for us BUT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.
- True prayer IS truly admitting that God is BOTH PLAN A AND B.
- True prayer IS empowered by the Holy Spirit and brings God's word to us.