

Pray Like Jesus

Today's Message: "The Prayer on The Cross"

Message Study Guide

Introduction

The last prayer of Jesus that we are going to take a look at in this current series on "Praying Like Jesus" is the first prayer that He prayed from the cross as He was being crucified; "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). One reason this prayer is so difficult for us to comprehend is because it is diametrically opposed to what our human nature tells us to do when we perceive that we have been wronged. Our natural inclination is to get even and to do unto others as they have done unto us. The single hardest thing that we will ever do in life is to forgive someone with no strings attached even if the individual has not asked us to forgive them. Furthermore, they may not even know what they have done.

When Jesus prayed this prayer, He was merely following His own example that He had set at the beginning of His own ministry, In the Sermon on the Mount, He made a startling statement in Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you". To the hearers on that day, that must have been a hard pill for them to swallow.

If we are going to "be" like Jesus, then we must also learn to "pray" like Jesus. If we are going to pray like Jesus, then we must be willing to pray and forgive and leave the results with God. Stephen, as he was being stoned to death in Acts 7 must have remembered this teaching because the Scripture records that as he was dying an undeserved death, he was able to look up to the heavens and pray like Jesus, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Discussion Points

The most amazing thing about this prayer is that Jesus had never spoken these words before. Throughout the gospels, He always had the authority to say to people, "thy sins be forgiven". As He was being crucified, He literally was "becoming" sin for us, not just forgiving sin.

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus indicates in this prayer that the people who were crucifying Him are completely ignorant of what they are doing. What light does Leviticus 5:15,16 and Numbers 15:22-25 shed on being ignorant when committing a sin?
2. This prayer of Jesus gives us a great example of "when" we should pray. Make a list of the times when you know you should pray.
3. As Jesus was praying this prayer, who was He asking the Father to forgive? Was it just the Roman soldiers? Read Isaiah 53:12 for help with your answer.
4. Forgiveness is what all of us need and forgiveness is what all of us need to practice. What light does Psalm 103:12; Ephesians 1:7; and Acts 13:38,39 shed on the importance of forgiveness?

Think About It

Jesus as God would have been perfectly just and right if He had allowed the earth to open up and swallow them and cast them into hell for what they were doing to the Son of God. Yet, He asked His Father to "withhold" or to "save" His wrath for another day and to forgive them.

Do Something About It!

While reconciliation takes the agreement of two people, forgiveness only takes one person. You! Can you think of any individuals that you need to forgive? To be like Jesus, you must forgive them - the sooner, the better.

Be Willing To Change

"Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him: and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3,4)