

love God - build the Church - reach the World

Introduction

- Core Value#1: Love God
- by pursuing God in the Word (Scriptures, Gospel, Jesus)
- by pursuing God in prayer
- Prayer is the engagement of our hearts and minds with the Almighty...the interaction between finite/created beings with the infinite/uncreated God.
- We considered how spiritual inclinations and orientations affect how we think about prayer.

Tension #1:

God's complete knowledge and sovereignty vs Our genuine participation in history and God's work

Tension #2:

The presentation of petitions to the Holy God vs A pursuit of intimacy with the Personal God

God separate - God near

God majestic - God intimate

Dutiful servant - Enraptured lover and child

Monologue - Dialogue

Practical - Communal

Battlefield - Homestead

- Often a tendency toward one or the other
- Also can be affected by various periods of our life and circumstances
- The maturing in our walk with God includes both
- Appreciating where we are, but also pressing in to what we aren't naturally comfortable with
- No better place than the Psalms as God's inspired and exquisite variety of the full spectrum of experience in prayer
- Look at examples, not mutually exclusive
- Petitions to the Holy God (highness)
- Psalm 2
- Psalm 7

God's holiness carries a sense of loftiness and purity and awe-inspiring wonder and perfection. It is awe-inspiring, but it also can be intimidating and even terrifying. Sure, we worship the holy God for his holiness, but the more we see of him, the more we're reminded of how unholy we truly are. It's not a comfortable thought. The way we think — even subconsciously — about God's holiness will likely impact our worship on Sunday morning. *Is God too Holy for You?*, Adrien Segal

- Intimacy with the personal God (nearness)
- Psalm 63
- Psalm 139

Our experience of God's nearness or distance is not a description of his actual proximity to us, but of our experience of intimacy with him. Scripture shows us that God is intimate with those who trust him. The

more we trust God, the more intimately we come to know him. A felt distance from God is often due to a disruption in trust, such as a sin or disappointment. How to Have Intimacy with God, Jon Bloom

- Under the New Covenant, this relationship is made even more intimate
- Jesus' brings us to the Father in Sonship
- 15x in OT
- 65x by Jesus in Mt/Mk/Lk, 100x in Jn
- 40x in Paul, etc.
- That sonship is made not just objective, but also subjective by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit -

Romans 8:14-16 - John 14

- Through Jesus, even the throne is now a place of bold approach
- Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)
- This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. (Ephesians 3:11-12)
- Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. (Hebrews 10:19-22)
- Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:8)
- Jesus as that perfect expression of the mixture
- Never did he interact with the Father's presence irreverently or flippantly
- Yet, there is a kind of familiarity in His prayers

- Familiar (root: family) - well known from long or close association, in close friendship, intimate
- By virtue of our oneness with Jesus as the Son, we can have both the sense of God's holiness as well as Fatherly familiarity reflective of Jesus'
- Thus as we walk in Sonship, we have Jesus as our model and example of intimacy with God

Psalms, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Prayer does not mean simply to pour out one's heart. It means rather to find the way to God and to speak with Him, whether the heart is full or empty. No man can do that by himself. For that he needs Jesus Christ.

If [Jesus] takes us with Him in His prayer, if we are privileged to pray along with Him, if He lets us accompany Him on His way to God and teaches us to pray, then we are free from the agony of prayerlessness. But that is precisely what Jesus Christ wants to do. He wants to pray with us and to have us pray with Him, so that we may be confident and glad that God hears us.

The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.

Application

- What did you learn that was challenging to you from the Word this morning? What "friction" points of mind or conscience?
- How does God want you to respond to those things?
- Have a conversation with someone this week as to what is your "default" disposition in prayer.
- What in your personal experience may make it challenging for you to mix both God's holiness and intimacy with God?

- What biblical truths could you meditate on to help bring that balance to reflect more of the image of Jesus?

- Who do you know who prays that is from the other end of the spectrum?

- What tends to be your attitude toward them?

- What can you learn from them? What questions could you ask them to become more fully balanced?

- Remember, you never pray alone

love God

build the Church

reach the World