

Monday, April 4, 2011

I'm sure you've noticed how rapidly and radically communication is changing in our world. With technology, contact can be made almost instantly with almost anyone on the planet...except the person who is isolated, either by circumstance or by intention. Think about that a moment. Do you know anyone who is intentionally distancing themselves behind walls that prevent you or others from communicating with them? We understand that with presidents or kings, but what about normal folks living in isolation? That's dangerous.

From the beginning of time, people in every part of the world, in every generation, have desperately pursued communication with God. At the same time, God has pursued communication with humanity! Have you noticed how often the Biblical accounts indicate that God took the initiative in the conversation with a person? Isn't that what happened with Abraham and Noah and Moses and Zechariah and Mary? We can be sure that God loves communication with the species He has created in His image...us. Consider Jeremiah 29:12,13 or 2 Chronicles 15:1,2. Do you see God's invitation?

This week, let's wrestle with God's invitation to significant communication between you and Him, the Creator, your Savior, the King of kings. Of all the things Jesus did that fascinated His followers, it was His communication (prayer) with God that most amazed them! It wasn't patterned or written or artificial...He was really in two-way, personal communication with God! That's why they asked Jesus to teach them how (Luke 11:1). What do you notice about Jesus' response (note also Matthew 6:5-15)?

First, it's about relationship! Jesus invites us to use the term "Father" when talking to God!! That's one of the most significant human relationships, right? John 1:12 and Romans 8:14-17 speak clearly to our "adoption" by God when we trust Jesus Christ to be our Savior...thus we have the privilege of calling God "Father," and He has the right to expect us to value and pursue that special, unique relationship. Are you?

John 17 is perhaps Jesus' most powerful prayer recorded for us. I urge you to read it slowly. What do you see?

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Throughout history, contact with God has been a fearful thing to almost everyone. Humanity has done lots of things to make it special but less ominous...quiet prayer chapels, memorized prayers, meal time or bed time prayer songs, etc. But no matter how you slice it, when a normal person has a true encounter with God in communication...it's frightening, awesome, and holy! Consider Exodus 3 and Moses' burning bush experience or Isaiah 6 and Isaiah's worship encounter with God. Contrast those with Acts 4:23-31. Do you see the courage of "relationship" in the Acts prayer meeting? These people had been friends of Jesus. They'd seen Him ascend from the earth a few weeks earlier. They had been in prayer meetings before (Acts 1:14; 1:24; 2:1-4; 2:42). They had learned both the privilege and power of two-way communication with God...they both spoke to God and expected Him to respond!

Jesus taught His friends that God loved them dearly and that prayer was a love conversation! Because of God's outrageous love for us, when we remove intimacy from our prayer communication with Him and we formulate it, or pre-package it, or treat it as insignificant and inauthentic...what does that say about the authenticity of the love relationship we have with "our Father?" How do you feel when one of your close friends or family members starts 'formalizing' or minimizing communication with you? What do you need to do to take your conversations with God to a whole new personal, intimate level? Do you believe God loves you so much He is interested in absolutely everything about you and would welcome conversation on any topic that's important to you?

Have you noticed we tend to pray when we need something, feel pain, or when we feel we are supposed to pray, like before a meal? I wonder if that's because we tend to view prayer as selfish...asking God to BE God in our needs, rather than building our relationship with God through conversation?

Most of the Psalms are prayers, especially the ones David wrote. Consider one or two and look closely at how David used prayer to build His relationship with God: Psalm 139 or 25. Now try Psalm 116. Have you written a prayer? I urge you to try it.

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

"Prayer is not for the purpose of getting God to help us...but for getting us in line with what God is about to do. Prayer is God's invitation to enter His throne room so He can lay His agenda on our heart." (Blackaby; [Experiencing Prayer with Jesus](#))

Have you noticed Mark 1:35-39 or Matthew 14? In both cases Jesus went to private prayer exhausted by the demands of people and needing a fresh perspective from His Father about what was next. How often do you and I do that?

Life is exhausting and none of us knows what the next day (or hour) will bring. God invites us to seek Him in prayer, inviting Him to inform us, teach us, guide us, and prepare us for what is coming in life. More than that, God longs for us to live our lives trusting Him as our King, our Savior, and our Father.

God is always active in our world. Jesus made it clear He was here on purpose, saying what the Father wanted Him to say and doing what the Father wanted Him to do...always (John 14:10; 5:17; 17:4)! God accomplishes His purposes through His people...right? That means God is most able to accomplish more of His purpose through His people who LISTEN and SUBMIT their lives to what God is doing. I suggest prayer is much more about LISTENING than talking to God! Grasp this friends...whatever you and I have to say to God is insignificant compared to what He has to say to us, right? Both people can't talk simultaneously in a good conversation...so how much of your prayer time is spent LISTENING to God speak to you? How do you do that? For me, worship is one way...I put in my earphones and have some favorite worship music that lifts my heart and mind into the presence of God and with my mind free from the distractions around me, it's not difficult to sense God's presence. Then His Word, the Bible, Holy Spirit anointed and 'living and active,' (Heb. 4:12) speaks God's heart to me. What about you?

Repeatedly in the early chapters of Acts, God's people gathered to pray primarily for the purpose of discerning what God wanted them to do next! Could you find some quiet time today to worship and listen rather than pouring out your long list of needs...and be ready for God to speak to your heart?

Thursday, April 7, 2011

Have you ever considered how difficult His earthly life was for Jesus? From His birth in an animal stable, to His frequent ridicule or outright rejection by the people He was trying to help, to His betrayal and denial by two of His disciples, to His Passion weekend of abuse and crucifixion...rarely was Jesus' life fun or what the King of kings should expect. So how did He find the strength needed to keep going? Have you noticed how often Jesus prayed? Long conversations with His Father seemed to be very significant in Jesus finding the courage and strength to keep going...what about you?

The Apostle Paul had a similarly difficult life. 2 Corinthians 11:22-28 is one of his listings of the challenges he faced in life. Yet, writing from one of those dungeons, Paul says *"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now...what has happened to me has served to advance the Gospel. It is clear I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains most of my brothers have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly"* (Phil. 1:3-14).

Would you agree that we have an expectation of God that, if we are prayerful life will be painless, or at least much less difficult? But the pattern of Jesus and millions of Jesus followers is clear...the closer we walk with Jesus, the more God is working in us to accomplish His significant purposes in our world, the more difficult life will likely become! Why? Because God's purposes are in stark contrast to the world in which we live, which is under the strong influence of the devil (1 John 5:19). *"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world"* Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:33.

If prayer is primarily my hearing from God so I can adjust my life to be more in line with what He is trying to do IN and THROUGH me, that likely means my prayer life will be a strong motivation for me to change, since my nature as a human is NOT God-honoring! That's when my prayer life takes on a different power...the strength of God in the battles and pain of life! Consider Acts 16. Do you see prayer "power in pain?"

Friday, April 8, 2011

Who is the most important person you've ever had an audience with? CEO of a large corporation, mayor of a major city, governor of the state, president of the nation, or a king? How did you anticipate the encounter, and feel as you were escorted into the room where you met with them?

What do you suppose the 'throne room of heaven' is like, where God Himself reigns over everything and all time? *"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven"* (Heb. 1:3). What do you see in your mind's eye when you read that? 1 Kings 6 & 7 have a detailed account of the magnificent temple and palace King Solomon built. It's amazing... and it may help you image Heb. 1:3.

"For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary...He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Therefore since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 9:24; 10:19,22; 4:16). Do you hear the invitation of God for you to enter His throne room? Jesus Christ has earned your invitation! As you approach, you are welcomed by name and the Majesty has full understanding of everything going on in your life. He is coordinating His global purpose through all time and would like to involve you in what He is doing! So when you enter, no matter what the issues in your life, He is interested... but He's even more anxious to see you interested in what He would like to tell you about what He's been planning in His throne room for you!

Look at another picture...Revelation 4 & 5!! WOW! Almost takes your breath away doesn't it? Now one final picture...a future day in that Throne Room of Heaven (Rev. 7:9-17), when the throne room is filled with those who have trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior, from everywhere in the world! Will you be standing there with us? Will that throne room be familiar because of your frequent prayer visits?

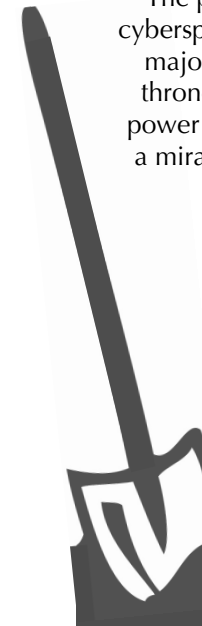

Pastor Doug Anderson

April 4 - 8 2011



"The King's Throne Room...privilege and power in Prayer"

The power and privilege of global social networking through cyberspace is reshaping how we communicate and even bringing major change to nations. But what about access to the King's throne room and the King of kings Himself? The privilege and power of prayer...communication with Sovereign Jesus Christ, is a miracle with monumental potential! What is it like for you in the "Throne Room of Heaven"?



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