

Unsolved Mysteries

The Mystery of Prayer- Session #4

Small Group Notes

Introduction:

In the sermon we heard how there are some mysteries that happen in our everyday lives. For example, what happens when I close the refrigerator? What happens to my missing socks?

What are some mysteries that you experience in your everyday life?

What are some mysteries or even misconceptions that we see regarding prayer?

When it comes to understanding prayer, we see both the sovereignty of God and our faith interacting. Yet there are these moments where we see prayers go unanswered and it's in those times that we can struggle in understanding both the effectiveness of prayer while building our faith.

Read Ephesians 3:13-20

Discuss: Solving the Mystery of the Unanswered Prayer

1. Check Your Posture!

- Read Ephesians 3:14-15
- The proper posture in prayer involves our awe and surrender.
- Until our "yes" is on the table, God may remain silent!

Explain: Paul resumed the prayer that he began in verse 1. In this prayer, he asked that believers might be blessed with inner strength, with insightful understanding, and with spiritual excellence. Verse 15 shows God's role as Father and Creator of all peoples. Therefore, it is not only Jews who can "kneel before the Father" (v. 14) and expect to gain audience, but people from every race and nation.

Ask: When we consider how prayer involves the posture of our hearts, what are things that want to hinder our posture? How does remembering the character of God help us to stay in awe?

When God doesn't immediately answer your prayers, how does your posture change? What can help you to change your posture today?

2. Check your priorities!

- Read Ephesians 3:16
- We tend to pray about **our** kingdom vs **the** Kingdom!
- We often don't hear from God because of conflicting interests.
- We are mostly concerned with our outer man and God is most concerned with our inner man, read Philippians 2:13
- Praying God's priorities allows us to see God's power

Explain: Paul prayed for inner power, which is the result of God dwelling in the hearts of believers. He asked for believers to be strengthened... rooted, and filled via the work of the three Persons of the Trinity: Spirit, Christ, and God the Father. Furthermore, Paul wanted something to happen within the believer's inner being (heart, spirit, true inner self) that only God's Spirit can accomplish. The Spirit is indwelling every Christian from the time of conversion, but day by day we can grow in the Spirit of God's power.

Ask: What is the impact according to these verses of being strengthened on the inner being first? How is this view contrary to the things of this world? How have you seen this truth displayed in your life?

What are things that sometimes act as "conflicting interests" that can impact how you pray? What would be one difference in your life today to begin to live for God's kingdom instead of your own personal kingdom? Who would see that difference the most?

3. Check for "posted places."

- Read Ephesians 3:17a, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Explain: Love for God and for others in the body of Christ is the intended outcome of experiencing the Spirit's strength and Christ's indwelling. This

love will not be superficial but rather deeply ingrained. Paul used two images for this love. One is agricultural (rooted); the second is architectural (grounded). A well-rooted tree and a well-built house will stand through trials. In both images, the soil remains largely unseen; nevertheless, the cause of the stability in both images is the same.

Ask: How have you seen realizing the love that God has for you provided you strength in your weakest moments?

Why can we be tempted to think that our prayers don't matter? How does today's discussion help us to understand that God desires to bless us through our times of prayer?