

“The Difference Prayer Makes”

Luke 3:21-11

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Introduction: Read the four Gospels and you will see that Jesus was a mighty preacher. Even the officers who were sent to arrest Jesus said, “No man ever spoke like this man” (John 7:46). As mighty as Jesus was as a preacher, He was mightier in prayer.

- The disciples never asked Jesus to teach them to preach.
- No, they said, “Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1).
- Jesus was a man of much prayer.
- Much of Jesus’ praying was preparatory prayer.
- When Jesus faced major decisions, special service, or suffering we find Him praying.

T.S. This morning I want us to look at some of Jesus’ preparatory prayers. We will begin with His first preparatory prayer.

Text: Luke 3:21-22

1. Prayer prepares us for the battle.

- Luke’s Gospel tells us that as Jesus was being baptized that He prayed (Luke 3:21).
- “While He prayed” (Luke 3:21).
- His prayer prepared Him for the battle He would soon face—forty days of temptation by the devil.

- Notice how Jesus' prayer prepared Him for the battle He would face.
- Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit came on Him and He heard the voice of God the Father (Luke 3:21-22).

Illustration: The Bible tells us to draw near to God and He will draw near to us (James 4:8). Prayer is how we do that.

Application: Prayer will not only give you a conscious presence of God, but a special endowment of the Holy Spirit to serve God. More prayer, more power to serve God!

Another of Jesus' preparatory prayers was choosing His twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13).

- Jesus had been with these men and He knew them.
- Why did He not just choose the ones He thought best?
- He knew their character, their fitness, their abilities.
- He wanted the Father's guidance.

Application: We have brains to think and we need to use our brains to think. We have family and friends to seek counsel, and the Bible tells us this is the right thing to do (Proverbs 15:22). The more you pray about something the clearer God's opinion on the matter becomes.

Another of Jesus' preparatory prayers was His transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29).

- Do you want to reach a higher level spiritually?
- The way is open to you; it is the way of prayer.

Illustration: Prayer is where spiritual digestion is done. Prayer is where you advance spiritually. An hour of prayer will do you more good than a month of sermon-hearing!

Application: To grow spiritually, pray. Grow your prayer life.

Conclusion: Life is a battle. The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking who can destroy next (1 Peter 5:8). Your prayer life prepares you for that battle.

Question: Why do Christians not pray more? I do not think that it is because they do not love God. I think it is because they do not think that prayer makes a difference. The Bible says that prayer does make a difference (James 5:16).

Here is what I have learned about prayer. I have learned that in prayer I will experience things that I would not experience had I not prayed. Two recent examples:

1. In prayer, God made clear to me and to Jon “Beyond these Walls.”
2. In prayer, God gave me more to preach today than time will allow. (To hear this testimony, listen to the sermon on the church web page www.fbp.org).

Invitation: Some of you have been asking God about your salvation. Some of you have been asking God about your baptism. Some of you have been asking God about your church membership.

If you have not, what about asking God now about your salvation. About your baptism. About your church membership. You can pray now. God will hear your prayer and God will answer your prayer. He will make it clear what you need to do.