**St Martins C3 – May 8, 2022**

**Persevering Prayers**

**Sermon Summary:**

Today is Mother’s Day. There may be a lot of things that we will thank our Mum for today. But one of those things that we are likely to overlook is the prayers your Mum has prayed for you over the years.

So, today we are interviewing some Mum’s in our church family about their experience praying for their children. In doing this, we are not suggesting that the Mum’s we are interviewing are the perfect models of this. (Although they may be) Rather we are seeking to gain some real-life insights from their experience. We hope you will find the question-and-answer time insightful and helpful.

Of course, we don’t have to be a Mum or have children, to pray for those around us. The fact that Christian Mum’s pray for their children, ought to inspire us to appreciate the power of persevering prayers for the world around us.

**Ephesians 6:18**

*Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

There are some important insights God is revealing to us in this short verse:

1. **Prayer is important**

God is actively involved in the world around us. One of the ways we engage with God in what He is doing is through prayer. It is in that place of prayer where He helps us see those around us through His eyes. It is also where He gives us insights as to how we are to partner with Him and His purposes.

1. **Our praying ought to be Spirit-led.**

We never pray alone. God’s Spirit is right there with us, inspiring and leading us into God and His purposes. When we engage in praying for others, God is joining us through His Spirit to bring His wisdom, power and presence into us and the situation we are praying for.

1. **There are many things we can bring to God in prayer**

Paul is encouraging us here to always pray at every opportunity. Prayer for the Christian ought to be like breathing. It comes from an awareness of God and a desire for His Kingdom to be extended around us. Let us make prayer a continuous habit.

1. **Persevere in prayer**

There may be some, but I doubt there are many Mum’s who have given up on praying for their children. They persevere in prayer, because they care about their children. May we care enough about seeking God’s purposes fulfilled in those around us, that we persevere in prayer.

**Suggested Questions for Connect Groups:**

*Why is praying for others and situations around us so important?*

*What are some of the things you pray for regularly?*

*What have been some of the triumphs and some of the challenges in your journey of persevering in prayer?*

*How has God changed your heart as you have prayed?*

*What might be the next step in prayer look like for you?*

**Monday’s Devotion – A Purposeful Partnership**

**Genesis 1:28**

*God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*

**You rule:**

We live in God’s world. It isn’t ours. However, God has chosen to share His sovereignty with us and with it the responsibility to rule over His creation. Therefore, God has no issue with us making decisions for the world He has placed us in. This was His purpose back at the beginning and it hasn’t changed. The problem comes when we seek to rule outside of a partnership with God. We were meant to rule WITH God, not without God.

**Reconnect:**

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, humanity is disconnected from God. Only in Christ is that connection re-established. We cannot fulfill God’s purposes in this world, without reconnecting with Christ. We need Christ. We need the closeness of the Holy Spirit in us. The place this all comes together is in PRAYER.

**Prayer is the key to partnership:**

Why make prayer a priority? Because in prayer we reconnect with God. In prayer we hear what His purposes are and how we are to fulfill them. In prayer we pick up our creation mandate, to rule with God in His creation.

**Tuesday’s Devotion – The Abiding Place**

**John 15:4**

*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

When I was young, I thought prayer was all about me. Now that I am a bit older, I have realised that prayer is all about Him. As we abide with Christ, we move from prayer being about getting God to do what we want, to getting ourselves to do what God wants.

Nothing of any substance will be achieved without prayer. It is in the quiet place, where we take hold of what God has for us and those around us.

It is in that place where we abide and spend time with God, that we meet with Him, and He shares His heart with us.

It is in that place of abiding prayer that the Holy Spirit guides us and leads us as to how to pray and how to partner with God in prayer. (Romans 8:26)

Yesterday we saw that the purpose of prayer is to partner with God in bringing His Kingdom. The context in which that purpose is fulfilled is the place of abiding prayer. Not a quick download of a prayer list. Rather a place of waiting on God. A place of hearing from Him. A place of abiding in order to act with clarity.

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Release life, restrain evil**

**Ephesians 5:18**

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*

**We are in a fight:**

The broader context of the verse above is Paul making the Ephesians aware of the spiritual battle that they are in. His point is that it is in prayer where the victory is enforced, and evil is restrained.

We have already seen this week how prayer leads us into a partnership with God, which He always intended for us. We have also seen how it is in this place of abiding with God where He reveals His will to us. However, prayer isn’t just the place where we gain knowledge of God and His ways, it is also the place where we bring God’s life and power to situations around us. It is in prayer that we tear down strongholds of evil and establish strongholds of righteousness.

For us to discover the power and depth of prayer, we need to put into practice what Paul is talking about here. Take every opportunity you can to pray. Pray under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Pray on all occasions. Pray all sorts of prayers.

Prayer isn’t meant to be boring and predictable. It is meant to be living and active. God may lead us to pray one way to release His life at one moment and pray another way to bind Satan the next. **The question is, how is God leading you to pray at the moment?**

**Thursday’s Devotion – Pray for revelation**

**Isaiah 65:1**

*I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me.*

**God found you:**

We think we find our way to God, but when we receive a revelation of who He is, we look back and discover that God was the one seeking us out, rather than the other way around. Of course, we still needed to respond positively to His invitation, but it is always God that makes the first move.

**Pray that God finds others:**

Once we understand that our purpose is to partner with God in prayer. Also, that in that place of abiding prayer is where God meets with us and guides us, we are then in a place to pray for ourselves and others. But what are we praying for?

**Revelation leads to life:**

The primary thing that God will often lead us to pray for is revelation. (Not the book, but the person) We pray that God will reveal Himself to those who don’t know Him. Because it is through a glimpse of God that we receive the life of God. Without revelation those around us are blind and in darkness. However, there will be a light that will pierce the darkness. Let us pray for that light piercing revelation of Christ to come to those around us.

*Who is God leading you to pray for today?*

**Friday’s Devotion – Standing in the gap**

**1 Corinthians 13:6-7**

*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.****7****It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

**Jesus is the one standing in the gap for you. Who are you standing in the gap for?**

The gap is the distance between what God wants for us and what we actually do. Christ intercedes on our behalf. Or, to put it another way, Christ has taken the initiative to represent us before God and fulfill in Himself what God expected of us. I am not suggesting that our righteousness can make up for someone else’s sin, (only Christ can do that), but we can follow Christ’s example and intercede in prayer for others. We can agree with God in prayer for God’s purposes to be fulfilled in their lives.

**Care, Protection and Provision:**

The devotions this week have emerged from our focus on prayer on Mother’s Day. Good parents want to care for, protect and provide for their children. As parents we can do this in prayer. We can intercede that our children would know God’s care for them, that they would be protected from the evil one and that God would provide what they need to fulfill His purposes. However, we don’t need to have children to pray these sorts of prayers for those around us. God will listen as we stand in the gap for others.

**Persevere:**

One way love is expressed is through perseverance. *Are we persevering in prayer for those around us?*