

Introduction

We are going to be thinking about what true prayer is and how we can move towards this

- Listen to the short reflection – track 2 on the CD – click the link on the website
- Read the Bible passages
- Have a go at answering the questions – if you would like to discuss your answers please phone Mary German on 01562 720393.

Matthew 26:47-54

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Luke 22:31-34

³¹ "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

³³ But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

³⁴ Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

John 12:23-33

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up^[a] from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

John 16:19-28

¹⁹ Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? ²⁰ Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

²⁵ "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on

your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

Hebrews 5:7-10

⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Questions

1. Re-read Matthew 26:53-54. Why did Jesus choose not to call on his Father? Are there times when we should choose not to do so?
2. Re-read John 12:27-28. What is happening here?
3. “Father save me from this hour,” is something we have all prayed (or something like it) many times, when confronted with disaster, suffering, disappointment etc. Does John 12:27 mean that it is wrong to pray it? What is the difference between this prayer and the prayer in verse 28?
4. Re-read Luke 22:31-32. Jesus didn't pray for Peter to be spared from Satan's sifting. Why didn't Jesus do this? What does this teach us about prayer?
5. Re-read John 16:19-28. How should this passage affect our praying?
6. Hebrews 5:7 says, “⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with **fervent cries and tears** to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” Wrestling with prayer is something Jesus did. What can we learn from this?
7. In the reflection I mentioned some of the things we might pray for
 - Praying for healing from minor ailments
 - Providing parking spaces
 - The right questions on an exam paper

Can you think of any others? What are the rights and wrongs of these prayers?

Further Thoughts

Reflect this week on both how you pray and what you pray for.