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This morning, we will explore Luke 5:12-16 as part of our ongoing study of the prayer life of Jesus.

[Luke 5:12-16 ESV]

12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." 13 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And he charged him to tell no one, but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them." 15 But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

Luke's narrative often focused on Jesus' ministry to the marginalized. Takes place north of the Sea of Galilee. Luke highlighted Jesus' humanity and compassion for the downtrodden. And lepers were at the top of the list of outcasts in Jesus' day. Leprosy was a destructive, wasting disease. In Palestine there were two kinds of leprosy: one which was rather like a very bad skin disease and one in which the disease, starting from a small spot, ate away the flesh until the patient was left with only the stump of a hand or a leg. It was literally a living death.

Jewish laws and customs treated lepers as despicable outcasts.

According to Jewish tradition, one had to keep 6 feet (2 meters) from a leper. If the wind blew toward a person from a leper, they had to keep 150 feet (45 meters) away. Remember the 6 feet rule imposed on us during the Corona virus lockdowns? It created crippling sense of isolation and separation. The only thing *more* defiling than contact with a leper was contact with a dead body. For these reasons leprosy was considered a picture of sin and its effects. It is a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts its victim and makes him essentially dead while alive. Therefore society and religious people scorned lepers. Rabbis especially despised

them, and believed they were under the special judgment of God, deserving no pity or mercy.

The man full of leprosy found Jesus.

He knew how terrible his condition was. Luke, a physician, noticed that leprosy covered this man.

He knew most everyone thought his condition was hopeless.

He had no one who would or could take him to see Jesus.

He had no previous example of Jesus healing a leper.

He had no promise that Jesus would heal him.

He had no invitation from Jesus or the disciples.

He had no standing in society or in the synagogue.

He had no one and nothing left to lose.

The leper believed Jesus could heal him but doubted He was willing to take the risk. Jesus could have healed him with a word. Yet He healed the leper with a *touch* to show compassion to this man thought to be untouchable, and to show that the touch of the Messiah makes men clean instead of receiving their impurity. He showed the leper more than His power to heal; He also revealed His willing and compassionate heart to heal. It is common for people to doubt the *love* of God more than His *power*. The former leper's life was changed forever. He was not only healed, but as he had requested he was cleansed.

Jesus often commanded people to be quiet about a healing or some miraculous work that he had done for them. He did this because He wanted to calm the excitement of the crowds until the proper time for His formal revelation to Israel. In addition, Jesus' miracles were not primarily calculated to make Him famous or a celebrity (though they certainly did give testimony to His ministry). More so, Jesus healed to meet the needs of specific individuals and to demonstrate the evident power of the Messiah in the setting of love and care for the personal needs of humble people.

Jesus commanded the man to give a testimony to the priests, and what a testimony it was! The Mosaic Law commanded certain sacrifices upon the healing of a leper, and when the man reported it to the priests, they had to perform ceremonies ([Leviticus 14](#)) that were rarely (if ever) practiced. Healing from leprosy was rare. In fact, the Scriptures record only Miriam (Numbers 12) and Naaman (2 Kings 5) as having been healed of

leprosy. It would have been extremely unusual for a person to present himself before the priest and offer the sacrifices for cleansing. The fact that a man would go to the priest claiming healing from leprosy would alert the religious leaders that something new was afoot in Israel. "There's a new sheriff in town."

Going to the priest also helped to bring the former leper back into society. Jesus wanted the healing of the man's disease to have as much benefit as possible.

"This gift a leper would present for his cleansing would include *two living, clean birds, some cedar wood, with scarlet and hyssop*, [Leviticus 14:4](#), which were to be brought *for his cleansing*; and, *when clean, two he lambs, one ewe lamb, three tenth deals of flour, and one log of oil*, [Leviticus 14:10](#).

The news of the remarkable healing of the leper became widely known. Luke doesn't specifically tell us that the leper himself was responsible for this, but Mark does. He told many despite the command of Jesus to *tell no one*. It's a strange fact that the one Jesus commanded to tell no one told everyone, and we who are commanded to tell everyone often tell no one. Jesus had a great following as a healer, but He never seemed to promote or encourage it. The crowds came to hear, and he also healed them. The Messiah's ministry as a healer was prophesied:

[Isaiah 35:5-6](#)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Jesus withdraws into the wilderness for prayer. The demands of life pushed Jesus *toward* prayer, not away *from* it. The Greek construction in this one verse indicates repeated action. He made it a frequent custom to withdraw from the multitudes to spend time in prayer, teaching hereby ministers of the Gospel that they are to receive *fresh* supplies of *light* and *power* from God by prayers, that they may be the more successful in their work; and that they ought to seek frequent opportunities of being in private with *God* and their *books*.

Notice that this passage does not directly deal with prayer. However, it does reveal powerful truths about Jesus that fuel worship-based praying. With that in mind, here's our Big Idea: **We engage in biblical praying when we pray in response to who Jesus is, as revealed in God's Word, the Bible.** Let's look at four foundational truths this passage reveals about Jesus that will fuel worship-based praying.

1. Jesus is **Lord** who is worthy of our sincere worship.

[Philippians 2:9-11 ESV]

*9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

His name is above every name – this signifies his supreme authority.

One day, even those who in life rejected Jesus' lordship will recognize his authority and right to rule. We will all confess Jesus as Lord. May we now willingly acknowledge his Lordship and not wait until we are forced to acknowledge Him as Lord when he returns.

The Leper addressed Jesus in Greek as Kyrie eleison. "Kyrie" means "Lord" or "Master." In the New Testament, this title refers to God or Jesus Christ, highlighting their authority and divinity. The term conveys respect and reverence. "Eleison" comes from the verb eleeo, meaning "to have mercy" or "to show compassion." The imperative "eleison" directly urges a person to show mercy, reflecting an earnest and heartfelt request for relief from suffering or wrongdoing. The leper addressed Jesus as "**Lord, have mercy!**"

By invoking "Kyrie," worshippers recognize God's lordship and deity, as well as their dependence on his grace. The plea for mercy ("eleison") reflects human fallibility and the constant need for divine compassion and forgiveness. It also reflects our understanding of Jesus' holiness – He is other than who we are.

Jesus is Lord. May we marvel at Him as the Lord of mercy for broken people like us.

2. Jesus is our **Savior** who is willing and able to help us.

[Titus 2:11-14 ESV]

*11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our **great God and Savior Jesus Christ**, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

Jesus redeemed us – a ransom was a price paid to release a slave in ancient times. Jesus paid a ransom for us because we could not pay it ourselves. We owed a debt we could not pay, and He paid a debt he did not owe. Some of Jesus' followers hoped that by His power, he would release them from the grip of the Roman empire. Instead, Jesus' death, burial and resurrection saved us from the penalty and power of sin, an even greater enemy.

The leper represents all of us because we need him to cleanse us. He saved us for a relationship with God, who loves us. By saving us from our sins, Jesus made reconciliation with God possible, allowing us to approach God as our heavenly Father.

Jesus' death, burial and resurrection purifies us from all sin. He saved us from the penalty and power of sin. Purification carries the same weight as cleansing. We receive a cleansing much like the leper. Jesus cleanses us from sin, making us presentable to God His Father. Because of Jesus, we can enjoy unhindered access to our Heavenly Father. When we submit to Jesus, confessing our sin and trusting Him, we receive eternal life, an intimate relationship with God, and grace to cover all our sins, past, present, and future

Jesus is our **Savior. May we express to Him our heart-felt thanksgiving as we pray.**

3. Jesus is our **Shepherd** who guides us in righteousness.

[Hebrews 13:20-21 ESV]

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

By the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, God has raised us to new life, given us a new purpose and equipped us to run a new race.

As our Great Shepherd, He tells us what to do next just as He did in his earthly ministry:

- *John 2:5 – Mary told the servants at a wedding to do whatever Jesus told them to do.*
- *Luke 19:28-32 – Jesus instructed his disciples to retrieve a colt for him to ride into Jerusalem.*
- *Matthew 4:18-22 - Jesus called Simon and Andrew as disciples by promising to make them fishers of men.*
- *Mark 6:7-13 – Jesus sent the 12 disciples to go into surrounding villages and preach. He gave them specific instructions on what to take and what not to take with them.*
- *Matthew 28:16-20 – Jesus commissioned the disciples by giving them their last and lasting assignment: to make disciples by baptizing and teaching people.*

Jesus gave clear commands and instructions to his disciples, and He will do the same for us. As our great Shepherd, Jesus tells us what to do next! He does what a good shepherd would do – he leads us and not just in a general way. Hebrews 13:20-21 tells us that he also equips us with everything we need to do God's will. This means:

- He gives us just enough light to take the next step.
- He gives us turn by turn directions. No more guessing!
- He can untangle our mess by helping us step into obedience, one step at a time.

Here's something you may not know about me. I do not have a very good sense of direction. So, I rely on turn-by-turn voice commands from Google or Apple maps to arrive at unfamiliar locations. I even follow the turn-by-turn guidance system to take Max to the groomer every six weeks. I just have a mental block on how to get there and many other places. I just do what the lady on my iPhone tells me to do!

So, how do we experience Jesus as our Shepherd. Take your questions and challenges to Him. Ask Him what to do next, and wait to hear from Him. Respond to the truth revealed in His word. He is our great Shepherd. *"This is the way to go – walk in it (Isaiah 30:21).* He will give you turn-by-turn directions. The only problem is we don't like to be told what to do. We love DIY living (do it yourself). We must be willing to submit to Jesus our Shepherd in order to follow Him.

Jesus is our great Shepherd. May we seek Him for guidance and direction as we pray.

4. Jesus is our **Teacher** who leads us by example.

[Luke 11:1 ESV]

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

The disciples noticed that Jesus would often withdraw to desolate places to pray. And they observed His pattern of praying to the Father followed by demonstrations of His power. Demonstrations of His power usually followed His times of praying. Jesus first *taught* the disciples to pray by prioritizing prayer in His own life. Can you imagine if Jesus endeavored to teach His disciples to pray, when He Himself rarely prayed? Jesus was not only fully God but also fully human. And He modeled for us what it looks like for a man to connect with God in dependent prayer. Jesus made it clear that He only did what He saw His Father in heaven doing – He regularly abided in His Father through prayer.

Jesus prioritized prayer. The gospel of Luke records more instances of Jesus praying than any other gospel account. Here are a few of those instances:

- *Luke 3:21-22 – Jesus prayed after his baptism, and God audibly and visibly affirmed Jesus as his Son.*
- *Luke 6:12-13 – Jesus prayed all night on a mountain before choosing the 12 disciples the next day.*
- *Luke 9:16-18 - Jesus offered a prayer of blessing before miraculously multiplying the five fish and loaves.*
- *Luke 10:21 – Jesus thanked His Father after receiving an encouraging report from 72 disciples whom he sent into surrounding villages.*
- *Luke 22:31-32 – Jesus told Peter that he had prayed for him.*

These instances of Jesus praying reveal that...

- Jesus prayed privately and he prayed publicly.
- Jesus prayed during the day and he prayed at night.
- Jesus blessed food and he also blessed the people who ate the food.
- Jesus prayed before he performed miracles and he also prayed after he performed miracles.
- Jesus prayed with people and then also prayed for people.

Jesus modeled a lifestyle of prayer in his earthly ministry. No wonder the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.

“Far more important than where He prayed, when He prayed, and in what position He prayed is the fact *that* He prayed.”

Jesus is our good Teacher. May we treasure and meditate on his Word as we pray.

Conclusion: Cultivating a Worship-based Prayer Life

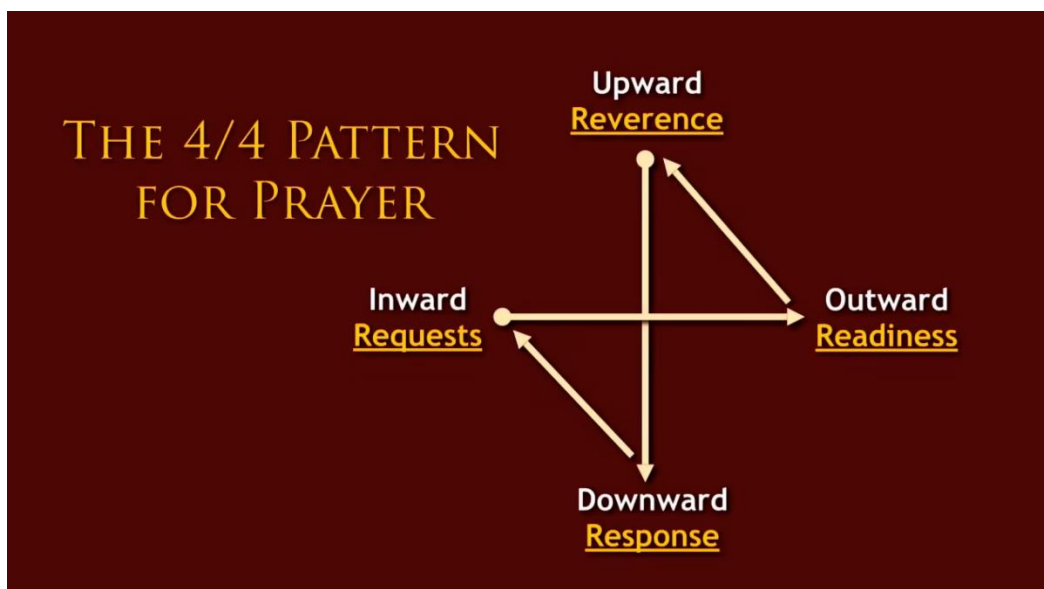
Consider what the author of 21 Days of Transforming Prayer (Daniel Henderson) writes about what he describes as worship-based prayer:

“Worship-based prayer” seeks the face of God before the hand of God. God’s face is the essence of who He is. God’s hand is the blessing of what He does. God’s face represents His person and presence. God’s hand expresses His provision for needs in our lives. I have learned that if all we ever do is seek God’s hand, we may miss His face: but if we seek His face, He will be glad to open His hand and satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts. This approach to prayer always begins with a focus on Biblical, Spirit-empowered worship.”

Four aspects of worship-based praying:

- **Worship-based praying begins with reading and meditating on God’s Word.**
- **Worship- based praying oftentimes involves journaling.**
- **Worship-based praying is modeled in the 4/4 format Pastor Titus introduced to us.**
- **Worship-based praying happens best in ‘*desolate places*’, away from distractions.**

I am currently reading a book by Daniel Henderson, 21 Days of Transforming Prayer. This resource gives a template for worship-based praying called the 4/4 pattern:



1. Look up in **reverence** – “Who is God?”

2. Look down in **response** – “How should I respond?”
3. Look inward with **requests** – “What should I pray about?”
4. Look outward with **readiness** – “Where do I go from here?”
5. End where you began by praising the Lord for who He is.



This Week: Read Psalm 62 and practice worship-based praying, using the 4/4 Pattern of Prayer. Email me at info@fbcmi.com to let me know about your experience. I'd love to hear from you! Just title it **Psalm 62**.

We engage in biblical praying when we pray in response to who Jesus is, as revealed in God's Word, the Bible:

- **Jesus is Our Lord who is worthy of all our worship.**
- **Jesus is Our Savior who is willing and able to help us.**
- **Jesus is Our Shepherd who leads by telling us what to do next.**
- **Jesus Our Teacher who leads by example and in his power.**

And that's why we pray!

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