

**Union United Methodist Church**

Sermon Outline: **Spiritual Growth Part 2: Prayer & The Victorious Christian Life**

August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 1:1-14, Matthew 14**

**1. Jesus, The Christ - the "Anointed One"**

- **Jesus is the Christ - "Christ" is Greek for "anointed one."** The Hebrew word translated Messiah in English also means the same thing - "the anointed one"
- **Recall: Jesus was fully human** - what made the difference in his life and ministry was the anointing - the power of the Holy Spirit who was on and in him.
  - At his baptism, the Holy Spirit came on Jesus  
"When Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and **the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove**. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3: 21-22 NRSV

After that,

**"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness"** Luke 4:1 NRSV

- It is important to remember that Jesus was fully human - he gave up his divine power:  
**"Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross."**

Philippians 2: 5-8 NRSV

- **Jesus's Manifesto:**

In Luke 4, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 and declared that that prophetic utterance was fulfilled in him - that is His ministry. I have heard some call this the Manifesto of Jesus - this is what Jesus was and is about:

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."  
Luke 4:18-19 NRSV**

- **Witness affirmation: Peter's sermon in Acts 10**

"36You know the message he [God] sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. 37That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: **38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39We are witnesses** to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem."

- **Jesus is both our Savior and Example.**

If the Anointed One needed to spend time in prayer, we must spend time in prayer too, to see and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. When he washed his disciples' feet, he had this to say to them:

**John 13:13** You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. **14So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done** to you. **16Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.**

## 2. **The Prayer Life of Jesus in the Gospels**

Jesus, the Christ, spent much time in prayer during his time on earth as a human. A few examples:

- **After great ministry:**

After cleansing a leper, Luke records: "now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. **But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.**" Luke 5:15-16

- **Decision Time: Before choosing his disciples,**

**"Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them,** whom he also named apostles"  
Luke 6:12-13 NRSV

*A great example to us. What do we do when it's decision time in our lives?  
How much time do we spend in prayer, waiting on God for direction?*

- **Toward the end, just before the cross:**

**"Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives,** as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple."  
Luke 21:37-38 NRSV

- **Clues: How Jesus gained strength to overcome temptations**

Mark 14:32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, **"Sit here while I pray."** 33He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

**35And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.** 36He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." 37He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, **"Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is**

**weak.”** 39And **again he went away and prayed**, saying the same words. 40And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.” Mark 14:32-42

Here we see:

- Persistent prayer
- Strength gained through persistent prayer
- Consecration - a willingness to do God’s will no matter how difficult
- “Watch and Pray” - important for overcoming temptation:  
**“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”** Verse 38 NIV

*Note that, though he said the flesh is weak, Jesus did not yield to the desires of the flesh.*

### 3. **A Day in the Life of Jesus the Christ - Matthew 14**

- Bad News - John the Baptist beheaded  
Remember that John was Jesus’ cousin. The news must have really shaken him. What was his reaction?

**“Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself.** But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and **he had compassion for them and cured their sick”** Matt 14:13-14

Another great example: *How do we react on hearing bad news? What do we do? Do we focus on ourselves only, and how we feel?*

- All night in prayer, followed by power manifestation

After feeding the 5 thousand:

Matthew 14:22

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,** <sup>24</sup>but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. **25And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.**

#### 4. Prayer & The Victorious Christian Life

- Jesus set an example for us, showing us how to live the anointed life - it is a life bathed in prayer.
- Jesus taught us to pray without giving up - Luke 18:1
- We are to pray without ceasing- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
  
- Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit, the same anointing that was on Him. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and is still with us. He told the first disciples:
  - **“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come”** John 16:12
  
  - **Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.** <sup>5</sup>For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.  
**... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”** Acts 1:4, 5, 8 NIV
  
  - **“They all joined together constantly in prayer ...”** Acts 1:14 NIV

- We cannot be successful, victorious Christians and witnesses of Jesus on our own power. We need the anointing of Jesus, the Holy Spirit.
- How did the first disciples wait? In prayer...

Ephesians 5:5 Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, 16making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

**18Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, 19as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, 20giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Ephesians 5:15-20 NRSV

"1Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you.

6So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober

And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of

them. 15See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. **16Rejoice**

**always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit."**

1 Thessalonians 5:1,6, 14-19 NRSV