

The Content of Prayer

Matthew 8:2-3; 5-8; 14-15.

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Introduction

One day, by accident, I heard a woman's prayer. She was one of our church members. I did not pay attention to her before because she was very silent and she was not active in our church. She was just an ordinary church member. But when I heard her prayer by chance, I realized that her prayer's content is wide, deep and very spiritual. At that time I felt ashamed as a pastor. Actually, my prayer's content was very narrow and I always concentrated on my problems.

Through this event I realized that the deeds of prayer are not so important but the content of prayer is very important in our prayers. Today's passage is speaking to us about the three basic contents of prayer. I want to share these three basic contents of prayer with you this evening.

The Main Discourse

In today's passage we can find the events of three restorations. We can learn the contents of prayer by these events.

The first event is the restoration of the leper.

"A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.'" In verse two the person with leprosy confessed that "Lord! if you are willing, you can make me clean." He emphasized that "Lord! you can make me clean." The person with leprosy asked about his restoration. He sought healing for his leprosy. He prayed for his personal problem. The content of the prayer of the person with leprosy was his own personal problem. Especially, he prayed for becoming clean. Through the leprosy events we can know that the first content of our prayer is our own personal problems—especially to become clean from the unclean elements.

In verse three when Jesus heard the person with leprosy asking, Jesus touched the person with leprosy. In the era of Jesus the persons with leprosy were viewed as unclean people. So they were separated from their family, friends, and village. So it could not be imagined that Jesus touched the person with leprosy. But when the person with leprosy asked Jesus to make him clean, Jesus touched him even though the person with leprosy was unclean. It was great grace to the person with leprosy.

The content of our first prayer has to be restoration of our own personal problems. We have so many problems in our personal life. And the most important thing is to clean our mind and spiritual life every day.

Now, I want to ask you: How about your spiritual life? How about your life? How about your thought? Are you living a holy life? Are you living the life of sanctification before God? We have to be clean before God. We have to be restored before God. Like the person with leprosy, when we ask God to be clean and restored, God will touch us. And then God will restore us. This is the first content of our prayer.

The second event was the restoration of the Centurion's servant.

In verses 5-8 the Centurion knew that his servant was sick and he came to Jesus asking for the healing of his servant's sickness. Jesus wanted to go to his house, but he did not want Jesus to come to his house because he was a man under authority. Finally, the Centurion asked Jesus just to say the word. He believed that Jesus could heal his servant by saying the word. His faith was very great faith.

The content of prayer of the Centurion was not his problem, but his neighbor's problem. The Centurion prayed for the other person's problem. His prayer content was the restoration of the other person.

What is our ultimate ministry? What is our main ministry? That is to restore other persons before God. To restore other persons before God is more difficult than to restore ourselves before God. So we need greater faith to restore other persons.

If we are not healthy, we can not help other persons. At first, we have to be healthy to help other persons. If we are healthy, we can help other persons. The Centurion's faith was very healthy according to Jesus. So Jesus praised his faith in verse ten. "I have not found anyone in Israel with such a great faith."

The second content of our prayer is to restore other persons by our prayers. But to restore other persons, we have to have great faith in God.

How long do you pray for restoring other persons? How long are you praying for your church members? How long are you praying for your country's restoration? This is our ultimate ministry in this world. This is our main job in this world. Through the prayer of the Centurion, God healed the Centurion's servant. Our second content of prayer is to restore other persons.

The third event is the restoration of the mother-in-law of Peter.

In verses 14-15, nobody prayed for the restoration of the mother-in-law of Peter; but Jesus saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever and Jesus touched her hand for healing. And then the fever of Peter's mother-in-law left her. Even though no one prayed for her healing, Jesus healed her. It was Jesus' ministry. In the time of Jesus, healing was Jesus' ministry. But now is the era of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised us to send the Holy Spirit. In this era though we do not pray for our circumstances; the Holy Spirit knows all our circumstances. So the content of our prayers have to be the work of the Holy Spirit for us. We do not know about our life in the future. We don't even know what will happen one minute later than now.

Therefore, we have to ask the Holy Spirit for our every day life, because the Holy Spirit is working for us. It is very important that the Holy Spirit works for us. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we can live the holy life, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, we can love other persons. Through the Holy Spirit we can do our ministry for Jesus Christ.

So to ask the Holy Spirit is very important in our every day life. We have to pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in our life. Also, this is a very important content of our prayer.

The Conclusion

We can learn the three main contents of prayer in this passage. The first content of our prayer is to make ourselves clean every day before God. The second content of our prayer is to restore our neighbors. The third content of our prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit in our life.