

Liberation

1. Warm-up Question: The weather is really starting to warm up this past week and COVID restrictions are lightening up. Did you get outside? What did you do?
2. On Sunday we talked about our desire for God using the Rich Young Ruler's encounter with Jesus. Read Matthew 19:16-22, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. What do you think motivated the Rich Young Ruler to approach Jesus?
 - b. The young ruler's question in verse 16 and his response to Jesus in verse 20 seem very different. He is asking Jesus what "good deed can he do" to have eternal life in verse 16, and then asking Jesus what he "lacks" in verse 20. Why the difference? What changed?
 - c. When Jesus tells the young ruler to "Come, Follow Me," in verse 21, we learned that the Greek word for "Come" is "opisō." It means to "come after," marking the one who speaks as the leader and those who come behind as followers. The emphasis of this word is more on the relationship with the leader than accomplishing a task. How do you think the Rich Young Ruler felt, not just being told to sell his possessions, but also that he was no longer in charge? How do you think he felt about being invited into a relationship, rather than being told to do one more thing?
 - d. Have you ever been in a situation where you were in charge, then you were working for someone else? What did that feel like?
3. Pastor David shared some thoughts from Aiden Tozer from his book, "The Pursuit of God." Tozer felt that the church had fallen short in connecting people in relationship with God. He thought that some of the issues causing this were the church's disconnect with our Christian spiritual ancestors over the centuries, and portrayal of God as angry.
 - a. Does this resonate with you? Why or why not?
 - b. Were you ever part of a church like that? If so, how did that affect you? Does that impact your prayer life today?
4. Pastor David shared prayer wisdom from Macrina Wiederkehr, who was a Benedictine Nun, who wrote the book, "The Flowing Grace of Now." In her book, she guides users to read the scripture slowly, and "just sit with it." She also uses characters in the Bible stories, or events in the stories, to be "your teacher" for the week. This means that you are to let that character or principle guide your thoughts and learn something by paying more attention to it for the entire week. According to Macrina, sitting with God in this fashion has helped her in her Christian walk and her own self-awareness. What do you think about this form of prayer that she describes? How does it stretch your notion of prayer?

5. Pastor David mentioned his “unwritten book” called, “Pray The Way You Are Wired – That Is God Inspired.” He used Psalm 139:13, “For you formed my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother’s womb,” to indicate that God wires all of us differently, so prayer and relationship with God will be different for each of us.
 - a. Do you agree with that? Think about some of the spiritual people you’re closest to. What’s their favorite way to pray?
 - b. What have you done in your prayer life that works well for you? What have you done that has not worked well?

6. Pastor David introduced many different ways of intersecting and communicating with God during the “Retreat” part of the sermon.

Creating Art, Using Art, Baking, Decorating, Waterfall/Nature, Candles, Journaling, Scrapbooking, Other’s Prayers/Poetry, Music, Imagining the Word

 - a. Did this segment of the sermon open you up to more possibilities for how we can commune with God? Did anything he suggested especially resonate with you?
 - b. Do you think having more options and being creative will help you spend more time with God?

7. Pastor David referred to Paul’s passage, Phil 4:7 “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus,” when saying that prayer should help us to feel liberated (help us to feel free, freedom in God). Do you associate prayer with freedom? Have you found prayer to be liberating? If so, how?

8. We have completed the 7-week series on prayer. What insights, strategies, and lessons are you taking away from this series?

9. Some of us might like to covenant together with others in our Oasis to spend a certain number of times in prayer each week for the next month, or a certain number of minutes in prayer each week for the next month. We can share our personal prayer goal, then check in with each other at Oasis over the next four weeks. Please feel no pressure, but who would like to? If you want to participate, state your goal and your Oasis leader will write it down, then each week for four weeks we’ll have a brief check-in during Oasis. Who would like to participate?

The Rich Young Ruler

¹⁶ Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷ And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸ He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ²⁰ The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.