

“You’re Invited To...Pause & Pray” (Prayer: The Extraordinary Invitation – Pt. 2)
(Psalm 8)

- **The Necessity of Prayer**

- We’re putting our focus this entire month on *The Extraordinary Invitation* of Prayer. Let’s begin by picking up right where we left off last week and pray *The Lord’s Prayer* together: ***Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***
- Last week we challenged our entire Connection Church Family to spend time in prayer *every day* this May, and we shared a simple tool to help us grow in our prayer life: **P.R.A.Y. P: Pause & Praise, R: Repent, A: Ask, Y: Yield**. Today, we focus on **P: Pause & Praise**. We’re going to talk about what that means and walk through Psalm 8 as an example. But before we do, let me just say a little more, in general, about *how vital prayer is for us*. One of the things I want to do in this series is just *stir up a greater hunger for prayer* among us! I want you to see the amazing possibilities, I want you to feel how extraordinary the invitation is.
- I love this quote from Leonard Ravenhill in *Why Revival Tarries*—writing in the 1950’s: ***“No one is greater than their prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.”*** (Leonard Ravenhill)
- *Pray-ers, clingers, wrestlers, intercessors, praying through tears*. Have you ever been *stirred* to pray *like that*? In PA, I served with a wonderful retired pastor who led our congregational care. I learned so much from Carvel. Once he shared a story about the first church he served, a small congregation in rural PA. He was there several years before he even realized there was a prayer group that met *every single week*! So, he showed up at this church member’s home one night. A handful of people gathered around the kitchen table, and he noticed something odd: the table was covered with worn, aged pieces of paper. The pages were filled with the names of *every member of the church*, all marked up with notes, but that wasn’t the strangest part. The papers were covered with *stains* that smudged the writing. He wondered what the stains were from—and then they started praying. This humble little prayer group began to *cry out to God*, as they’d been doing for years without fail. And as they sought the Lord, lifting up the names of their church family, their praises and blessings, their victories, failures, struggles, needs, and praying for the lost—*the tears began to flow*. Before he knew it, Pastor Carvel looked down, and all those pages with all those names *were covered with the stains of their tears*, including his own.

- That's where it's at, folks! You can bet this group of prayer-freedom-fighters also had pages of stories, of miracles, scars, and blessings, because they took God at His Word, and they saw Him move. Sooner or later when you see a life of prayer like that, you start to want it too, and you'll find yourself asking like the disciples in Luke 11: *Lord, teach us to pray!* Jesus gave us this model in the Lord's Prayer to build our prayers and our lives on. That's why we're looking at this "P.R.A.Y." tool, because it helps us model our prayers with the same elements as the Lord's Prayer. And that's why today starts with: **Pause & Praise**.
- **Psalm 8: Pause & Praise**
 - Whenever you pray, as often as you pray, the best way to begin *is to pause and praise*. Fill your days with prayer and fill your prayers with praises! Start there. How do we do that? Since the Psalms are basically *the prayer book of the Bible*, these are some of the best examples we can find. Psalm 8 is a great example of *pause and praise*, and it actually has a lot of overlap with the Lord's Prayer. This poetic prayer of David begins:
 - **"LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens." (Psalm 8:1)** Kinda like, *Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Pause...Praise.* David begins his prayer in Psalm 8 by *looking up*; once he looks up, he has a *new perspective* on everything around him. Prayer begins with a change of focus: we stop for a moment dwelling on what's in front of us—whether it's a distraction, preoccupation, a project, a worry, a blessing or a burden—we turn back to God, we look up. To do that, you have to *pause*. The ways of this world cause so many people to walk through life as digital zombies, never stopping, never sitting still, never turning off the noise. Prayer invites us to just *stop for a moment*, or several, and pay attention *differently*, to Someone other than yourself, Something other than your stuff. *Oh, there you are God!* And once you finally pause from everything else and look to God again, you *can't help but praise*. Beholding something *majestic* always inspires awe and praise.
 - *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!* Notice in your Bible how the first "LORD" is all capitals? That's our English translation's way of showing where the O.T. uses the formal Name of God, YHWH. The Name that was first revealed to Moses at the burning bush, it means, *I AM WHO I AM*—the One Who Is, the One Source of *all*, God. Simply to *speak His Name* is to praise! And David says in this Psalm, *Lord, I see the majesty of your Name everywhere I look—in the heavens above, and the earth below*, so he continues his prayer:
 - **"Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas." (8:2-8)** First,

he sees God's glory in the heavens above—now, he sees it in the works of His hands. By turning His attention to God and praising Him, he gains a whole new perspective on everything around him, on his own life, everything it means to truly be human. God is so great, He's glorified in the highest heavens by the flaming tongues of angels, and He's glorified on the earth below, by the most vulnerable, little infants, whose mouths can only make the sounds of babbling and nursing. Even here, God's Name is hallowed, even here, God's glory is present, and it's enough to silence the lies of the Enemy. Because God delights to show His power and majesty through the weak and the lowly.

- In the beginning, He created all this glory in the heavens, the skies above, all the creatures of the Earth, but then He made *us* out of the dust and filled us with His Life and gave us His Image, and put *us* in charge of it all! That's why Jesus' teaches us to pray, *Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven*. Because we were made to help *bring about God's will on this planet*, to join Him in the work, serve as His ambassadors—that's what it means to bear His image. Jesus saves us from our sin and death to restore us to this glorious calling. So, we praise Him and we pray, in all the work He calls us to: in the home, at work, at play, inside, outside, we bring Him glory and seek His Kingdom.
- **“LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (8:9)** It ends the way it began. As you seek His Kingdom on this earth and live a life of prayer, you will need to ask for help with all kinds of things, to repent and forgive, to listen and obey, a praying life will take you on all kinds of journeys—but don't ever lose sight of *the glory of it all!* Don't ever stop *praising God*. This whole creation is one big stage for God's glory, you can find it *everywhere*. Make sure, before you do anything else, *you pause and praise*. *Our Father...Hallowed be your Name...O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your Name...*
- Let's do it right now! It doesn't matter what you're going through, how good it is or how hard it is, *if you stop and pay attention, you'll find His glory is all around—sometimes, even in the broken things*. So, *pause...stop...be still...be quiet...breathe deeply...and turn your attention to the Great I AM, the Name above all. And just begin to praise Him...Adore Him for all that He is...Thank Him for all that He's done...Let's put this into practice right now, let's PRAY.*