

091221 Sermon "**I will pray as long as I live**" Psalm 116: 1-9

There are four kinds of work in the world: what we want to do, what we don't want to do, what we have to do, and what we shouldn't do. No one can make a living ONLY doing what they want to do. A person's life will surely be different depending on how they make the things that they don't want to do into something that they want to do. How wonderful it would be if the things that we didn't want to do match the things we shouldn't do! Unfortunately, most of the things we don't want to do are often things we should do. However, if we experience the joy of starting and ending something we don't want to do, we will do the work that we originally didn't want to do. We will become less affected by how we feel at the moment.

In today's scripture, David is saying that there is something that he wants to do in his whole life. What was it? It's praying! He is determined to pray throughout his life. The prayer he is talking about here is not about missing a prayer before a meal. Sometimes, when we hear the word "prayer," we are burdened by it and sometimes consider it as something we don't want to do. However, David realized the true value of prayer, so he is proclaiming that he will not miss out on praying in his life.

Fanny Crosby, who lived 94 years blind exemplified many praises and prayers. This is one of the many hymn lyrics she wrote. "I Am Thine, O Lord" In verse 3. "Oh, the pure delight of a single hour  
That before Thy throne I spend,  
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God,  
I commune as friend with friend!  
Refrain: Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
To the cross where Thou hast died;

Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
To Thy precious, bleeding side."

You see, Fanny likened prayer to approaching the throne of grace. She was singing that she couldn't help but be happy when she prayed. What a beautiful testimony! Ah... Crosby, who could not see anything with her physical eyes, was singing that God was friendly because she always saw the face of God through prayer! I hope we will be able to see the face of the Lord in a friendly way, through prayer.

Psalms 116 contains the story of when David's son Absalom had a rebellion and David was running away, seeking God's help. The son, who was considered the best among his children, eventually tried to kill his own father. How unfortunate is this. In the midst of such grief and suffering, David appeals to God for help and guidance. Not only that, but there is appreciation and praise for God's salvation. If you look at David's life, he is not praising because the situation is good, but David always praises to God despite the unfortunate circumstance. "If I was David, could I really praise and pray to God during those times?" I can't help but ask myself.

Prayer is a significant part of Christian life, as Jesus referred to the temple as the "house of prayer for all peoples", taught his disciples directly, and set an example of direct prayer in every important ministry.

But in today's market economy, money is needed to solve the most basic living problems. Christians are no exception. We spend a lot of energy in our lives to make money and to spend money well. Not only that, today's society is a highly specialized, so in order to become a critical member of society, it is necessary to constantly develop and keep up with advanced information

and knowledge. In addition, cultural and artistic life is essential. We are living in a time when our own hobby and leisure life are indispensable. (Of course, it has changed a lot because of the pandemic. Since these things are not satisfied, people's minds are insecure.) In this busy world, even if the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, Christians also fall into the thought that they can get by without praying or push off prayer for tomorrow or for the next time.

The Bible reminds us that Christians can do nothing without prayers, and we should not do anything without prayers. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. In addition, Paul taught at Romans 12:12, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." I'm SO glad, we do have prayer chains here at Fairfield Grace. I hope that more of you will join us in prayer.

There are so many important things in our lives, but Christians are those who put their priorities in life elsewhere. When we talk about prayer, we often think of Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Living Bible translated this verse as: "You give God first place in your life." Christians are those who put the kingdom of God and God's righteousness in the most important place in life, as the highest priority. Only then can we live in this world of desire without recklessness, live not as slaves to things in the world, and go forward without losing our direction toward God as children of God.

In today's scripture David says that it is not only about the "experience" of being answered in prayer, but also about "love" from a personal relationship with God! So, prayer is an indicator of the distance between God and you.

In the book <Pathway to His Presence of John Bevere>, there is a chapter titled, "The Impossible Task – On Our Own" (When I first read this book, I read it in Korean, so English expressions and words may be different.) (Quote) "He who obeys my commandments loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him." I used to accept John 14:21 in this way. "John, prove that you love me by keeping my commandments." So, this became another law for me. But one day, the Lord told me to read this again. So I read it again, but the Lord said again, "You still do not understand this. Read it again." Only after reading about 10 times, I said, "Lord, forgive my ignorance. Please let me know the true meaning of these words."

The Lord replied to my despair. "John, the meaning of this verse is not to prove that you love me by keeping my commandments. This means that if you love me with all your heart, you will be able to keep my commandments. I already know whether you love me or not!"

Nevertheless, many people today live their faith with that idea of God. Instead of establishing a relationship with God, they cling to "seven ways to heal disease," "four steps to salvation," and "five biblical principles to enjoy prosperity." They think of God as the one who opens the box of promises and nag him to open the box of blessings based on our needs. They wonder why it is so difficult to keep God's commandments.

A relationship with God is not a set of rules or regulations. The relationship with God is 'the journey of the heart.' Jesus wants to share his intimate love with all his children. It is impossible to keep His commandments unless this close relationship is established. Is your first love with Jesus fading away? Mere hearing of the name Jesus used to excite you, but how quickly did it

become lukewarm? If so, pray earnestly for the restoration of your first love. The Lord who loves us always, regardless of our state of mind, will answer your prayers. (End quote)

In order to live a life of faith in this world, we must rely on God every day through prayers. Romans 8:26 tells us something amazing about why we should pray. "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

The verse tells us that we don't know what we should pray. We have to pray but we don't, and we miss the prayer that is absolutely necessary for our soul. There are many times when we don't pray because we are busy, and when we are praying, we leave out the most important thing to pray about and instead ask for something vain. "...but the Spirit intercedes for us through wordless groans."

Do you know why you should pray? Because the Holy Spirit is helping our weakness during the time that we pray! Despite our weakness, the hope for us Christians is that the Holy Spirit helps us! Do you believe this? The Holy Spirit also helps our weaknesses (v.26). That is why we should pray! That's why we should keep praying!

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, do you love God? David says the prayer is a matter of love. I hope that you offer God a prayer of sincerity and love, rather than a long and impressive one. The reason why David was David is that he prayed all his life. As David confessed in today's psalm, "I will pray for my whole life," I want you to pray and confess. Although we do not always know what to pray for, I believe that the Holy Spirit will help you and guide

your life as you pray. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace and peace and blessing be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.