

Introduction:

- Who was at the service in the School hall last Sunday?
- Who prayed with Pastor Fred as he led us in prayer at the end of the service?
- Can anyone remember what we prayed?

In summary, we prayed as follows:



Who has experienced change in their lives this week as a result of that prayer?

• What were some of those changes?

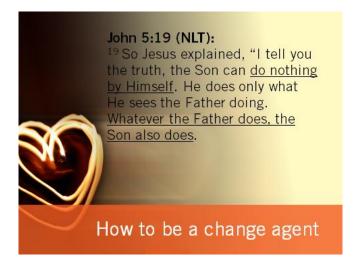
Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Ps Fred to lead us in that particular prayer?

The terms of the prayer speak of us giving ourselves to the Lord in service and submission, of a giving of ourselves to His will, and to experience what is happening in the world as He does so that we can pray effectively.

During his sermon Ps Fred spoke of how we need to grow into a place of maturity where we stop being "me" focussed and focus on serving the Lord. He also said that it is the <u>servant</u> Church that makes a difference in our world. It may therefore be seen this prayer was a response to his message.

<u>Should</u> we serve the Lord? Or should we just enjoy life on our own terms and hope that praying a "sinner's prayer" at some point in our lives is going to result in an eternity reigning with Christ in Heaven?

I think that we are often guilty of displaying an attitude of entitlement - "the world owes me a living" or "I have my rights" or "God should..." That was certainly not the attitude of Jesus, the Son of God. And He modelled for us the way that we should live. He did ONLY what He saw His Father doing - we need to do the same.



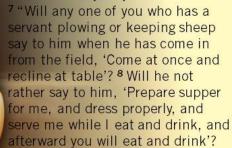
Jesus does <u>only</u> what He sees the Father doing - He acted in perfect obedience and served His Father implicitly (without doubt or questioning). How did the Son know what the Father was doing? He was filled with the Spirit - remember the occasion of His baptism where this took place?



This Scripture tells us that it is as we submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit that we <u>are</u> sons of God. That implies that if we disobey the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are not behaving as true sons would. Bear in mind that a true son will <u>serve</u> his father, even as his father trains and prepares him for his future.

Now I want us to read a Scripture where Jesus teaches His disciples about the attitude of a servant (keep in mind that Jesus modelled this for us).

Luke 17:7-8 (ESV):



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Luke 17:9-10 (ESV):

⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, '<u>We are unworthy</u> <u>servants</u>; we have only done what was <u>our duty</u>.' "

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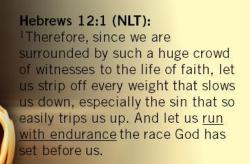
All of us need to come to the point of realising that we are not our own. The Lord owes me <u>nothing</u>. We actually deserve nothing, but the Lord in His wonderful grace sees fit to provide for us anyway. The servant in this Scripture is provided for by his employer - he has a place to live, clothing to wear and food to eat - no doubt he also has days off work and spending money to use as he pleases. The Lord provides for us at every level of our need, on the next slide we can look at the second part of how He trained His disciples to pray - it covers our own physical and spiritual needs:



What motivates us to serve and submit to the Lord?

Gratitude and love! Gratitude for what He has done for us - He has saved us from eternal damnation - love because it is the only appropriate response to someone who loves us so very much. We will touch on this again as we go along this morning, but it is important to know that if I am not thankful, or do not love, I can ask Him to give me a revelation of what He has done for which I should be thankful, and to teach me how to love, and He will!

Jesus went to the cross with a very clear understanding of what it meant to Him in terms of suffering, but He had a revelation of what His personal sacrifice would mean to you and me - and that was His joy and motivation - see the following Scripture...



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Hebrews 12:2 (NLT):

² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

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We live in an age where people expect and demand instant gratification - the ideas of self-control and perseverance (endurance) have largely been lost in our society. Even in the area of sporting competition, people cheat and use performance-enhancing drugs instead of putting in the work needed to achieve a good performance, and accepting that their best is all that they need to have given.

When we give our best to the Lord in an honest effort to obey Him, we may be assured that He will fill up what we lack.

We need to trust the Lord, to accept Him as He is, and that He knows best in every situation! It is so liberating to stop fighting and to simply rest in the truth - there is no greater joy or fulfilment than being in His perfect will.

TESTIMONY of Holy Spirit inspired prayer, and of the joy of seeing lives changed.

If I do not see joy set before me, I can ask the Lord for a revelation of the joy that He has set before me.

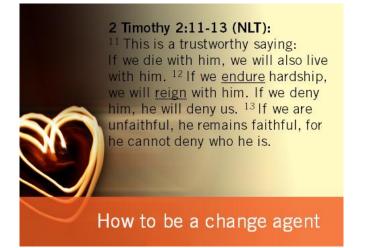
Remember - we do not and cannot earn our salvation - our obedient work is in loving response to the One Who saved us by His grace. Any work that we do that is not done in obedience to Him is useless.

So now that we have established that we should submit to and serve the Lord, what does this mean practically?

We saw in the Lord's prayer earlier that He taught us to ask that the Lord's Kingdom should come. We all know by now that the Lord's Kingdom is where He reigns. So how does His Kingdom come on the earth? How does He reign here on the earth? See how Paul expresses it...



So Paul sees himself (and by implication, us) as ambassadors for Christ, who reigns in the Kingdom of God. The term agent is a synonym for ambassador, hence the title of this message. Look at what Paul says to Timothy...



Just in case you were unaware of it, see in the next Scripture how the Lord tells Adam and Eve to reign right back when He created them - so we can see that when we reign we are fulfilling the Lord's creative purpose for us as the human race.



Now <u>why</u> would the Lord have us reign? Is it not because He really does want "everyone to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4, we'll read it later on) and we are His agents in this process?



Why did He do that (come to seek and save the lost)?



He came "to seek and save the lost" because His character and nature are love.

You and I have been saved because we have responded to His love for us, now we have been given a mandate by the Lord - see the following two Scriptures:

Matthew 28:16-18 (ESV): ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV): ¹⁹ Go therefore and <u>make disciples</u> of all nations, <u>baptizing</u> them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ <u>teaching them</u> to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, <u>I am with you</u> always, to the end of the age."

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...and...



Mark 16:17-18 (NLT):

¹⁷ These miraculous signs will accompany those who <u>believe</u>: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. ¹⁸ They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they <u>will be healed</u>."

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An agent cannot have an effect unless it is brought into contact with that which is to be changed - think catalyst. An ambassador sitting at home in his home country will not achieve anything at all, it is only as he actually engages with his host nation that he has any effect at all. You and I are the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit is brought into <u>contact</u> with the world. There are two ways in which this is achieved - first through prayer, second through serving - both motivated by love for the Lord and His creation.

Now it is very important to note that there is more to seeing everyone saved and discipled for the Lord than by simply preaching the Gospel - there is a very real and active enemy out there who is doing everything in his power to stop everyone from becoming disciples of Christ, and this is where the prayer for the Lord's Kingdom to come is applicable. Part of our task of reigning is to establish the "spiritual climate" - see this Scripture quoting the Apostle Paul...



Remember that Jesus spent a great deal of time in prayer. Prayer has been the first step in revival down the centuries - it began before Pentecost with the disciples.

Every one of us affects and influences the world that we live in, whether willingly or intentionally, or not. Should we not <u>choose</u> to be an influence that promotes the Kingdom of God on the earth? What we do in intercession changes Piketberg - TESTIFY.

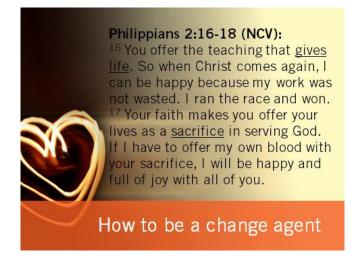
Look at what Paul says about how we should live our lives in this world:

Philippians 2:12-13 (NCV): ¹² My dear friends, you have always <u>obeyed</u> God when I was with you. It is even more important that you <u>obey</u> now while I am away from you. <u>Keep on working</u> to complete your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ because <u>God is</u> working in you to help you want to do and <u>be able to</u> do what <u>pleases</u> Him.

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What does this mean practically?

Instead of adding to the doom and gloom around the braai fire, we need to spend time with the Lord on the subject evoking the doom and gloom. Instead of agreeing with those who are complaining, we need to encourage them to pray. A powerful tool in motivating this is testimony as to the Lord's heart for people, and as to answered prayer.

One of the wonderful things about this is that we are blessed by the Lord as we love and serve people in response to His leading - what I call a collateral blessing.



TESTIMONY about the course of the fire, the promise and the wind - also the witness who saw it happen.

To grow, we need to serve. It is a general truth that unless we serve, we will not grow in our personal relationship with the Lord. That is why the Church has so many people who remain immature and ineffective. TESTIMONY about Kbv cell group doing all of the Foundations and Bible School together as a group, then facilitating the Foundations. The core group still going strong. The <u>servant</u> Church makes a difference to the world that we live in. It is when we have a revelation of the truth that we are meant to live our lives in a Christ-like way, ie. to love as He loves, that we begin to serve Him by serving the people around us in practical ways including by praying under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We are effective change agents when we: • make ourselves available to God • actively listen for and respond to His leading and inspiration • ask Him to show us what He feels and sees • speak blessing, not curses • persevere in whatever the Lord calls us to • pray at all times How to be a change agent