

**Worship 22**  
**Prayer As Worship (4)**  
1 Kings 8:12-61

Introduction:

1. We have been studying concrete examples of prayers prayed by the people of God.
2. We have studied the prayer of Abraham's servant in the selection of Isaac's wife Rebekah.
3. We have studied the intercessory prayers of Moses after the Golden calf and the people's rebellion at Kadesh-barnea which led to their 40 years wandering in the wilderness.
4. We have observed David's prayer after God promised to bless him with a kingdom lasting forever. And we studied David's prayer after the people gave so graciously as he prepared for Solomon to build the temple.
5. One of the longest prayers in the biblical record is Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the new temple after the Ark of the Covenant had been brought into it.
6. It must have been a magnificent experience. The pillar of cloud, representing the glorious presence of God, filled the house so that the priests could not stand to minister.

Discussion:

I. Reading of 1 Kings 8:12-21.

- A. It is this covenant relationship that gives shape to Israel's relationship with God.
- B. Prayer to the covenant God whose presence is real and who dwells among His people is appropriate.
- C. Not only is God real He is actively involved with His people.
  1. He communicated with David (20).
  2. He promised David a son who would sit on his throne, and Solomon sat on that throne just as God had promised and now, he had built a house for the name of the Lord.
  3. The fulfillment of these promises traced all the way back to God's covenant that He had made with our fathers when He brought them from the land of Egypt.
  4. The whole set up reminds us again that prayer is associated with our covenant relationship with God and with the fulfillment of His promises.

II. Solomon's prayer (22-55).

- A. Note that he stood before the altar of the Lord and spread out his hands toward heaven (22). Verse 54 says, "He arose from before the altar, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven."
  1. 2 Sam. 7:18 says David, "Sat before the Lord" as he prayed.
  2. While posture in prayer may be significant it is the attitude of humility reflected in one's posture that is critical.
- B. In verses 23-26 Solomon praises God as the one who "keeps covenant and shows lovingkindness" to those who walk before Him with all their heart.
  1. This temple is a manifestation of God's covenant and His lovingkindness.

2. The promises made to David and the promises made to the fathers (21) come together as part of God's covenant relationship with His people.
  3. Solomon prays as one intimately involved in the unfolding of the plan of God. Do your prayers reflect your intimate involvement in the plan of God. When you pray "let not my will be done, but yours," are you recognizing you are being used in the plan of God? Is this what it means to pray "in faith?" Is this what it means to pray "according to the will of God?" Or does praying "according to the will of God" mean "This is what I want, but if you don't want me to have it, OK, I guess I can live with it"????
- C. In verses 27-30 Solomon acknowledges that God is greater than this house he has built. But the house does represent God's presence and so he says, "When we pray toward this place, listen and hear in heaven."
1. Solomon's first concern is for forgiveness (30).
  2. His second concern is for justice (31-32).
    - a. Condemnation of the wicked.
    - b. Justification for the righteous.
  3. His third concern is for forgiveness when defeated before an enemy (33-34). Notice the reference to "turning to You," "confessing and making supplication." He even anticipates their being taken off the land and asks that they be brought back. Such is the prayer of those who recognize their sin and God's lovingkindness. Cf. 2 Kings 19:14ff.
  4. His fourth concern is a lack of rain because of sin (35-36). It too is a concern for forgiveness. "When they pray toward this place, and confess Your name, and turn from their sin, hear and forgive. Teach them and send rain." Notice how different this prayer is than that described in James 4:2b-3. Cf. 1 Kings 18:36ff.
  5. His fifth concern is famine, pestilence, etc. as consequence of sin. So, the concern here also is for forgiveness (37-40). Knowing their hearts indicates that God knows their penitence, their sorry for their sin and their desire for mercy. Thus, Solomon asks, "When they pray, hear and forgive."
  6. Solomon's sixth concern is a recognition that all the peoples of the earth should fear the Lord (41-43). Thus, he prays that the foreigner who responds to God faithfully be heard.
  7. Seventh, when you send your people to go out to battle against their enemy and they pray toward this place then hear their prayer and maintain their cause (44-45).
  8. Eight, when they sin and are taken captive, if they repent and make supplication, confess, and return to you with all their heart then forgive them and make them the objects of Your compassion (46-53). Cf. Dan. 9.
- D. You cannot study this prayer without recognizing that it is the compassionate nature of God that motivates it. You cannot study this prayer without seeing that there are consequences to sin. You cannot study this prayer without recognizing the need for repentance, confession, returning to the Lord with all one's heart and praying for forgiveness. You even see an emphasis on all mankind responding to God in faithfulness.
1. These same emphases are inherent in the N.T. teaching.

2. John the Baptist and Jesus both called on men to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.
3. When the people on Pentecost asked, "What shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent" (Acts 2:38).
4. When Simon sinned, he was told to, "Repent and pray that the intention of his heart might be forgiven" (Acts. 8:22).
5. James said, "The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed" (4:15). (I take this to be spiritual sickness.)

Conclusion:

1. Read 1 Kings 8:54-61.
2. Solomon's dedicatory prayer reminds us that the temple was a manifestation of God's presence among the people.
3. It reminds us of the lovingkindness that generated this covenant relationship.
4. It reminds us that there are consequences to sin and calls for hearts wholly devoted to the Lord that walk in His ways and keep His instructions.
5. It reminds us of a God of forgiveness who extends His compassion to the repentant.