

Planning for Prayer

Devotional:

Most of us are familiar with the narrative of Legion, and the astute will realize this passage mentions nothing about, or involves prayer in any way. However, the reason why the Spirit led me to this passage is because if we are going to have a thriving prayer life, there is something which must happen first. It is my hope that by the end of our time here today, we will have a clearer understanding of what that is.

(Read Mark 5:1-20)

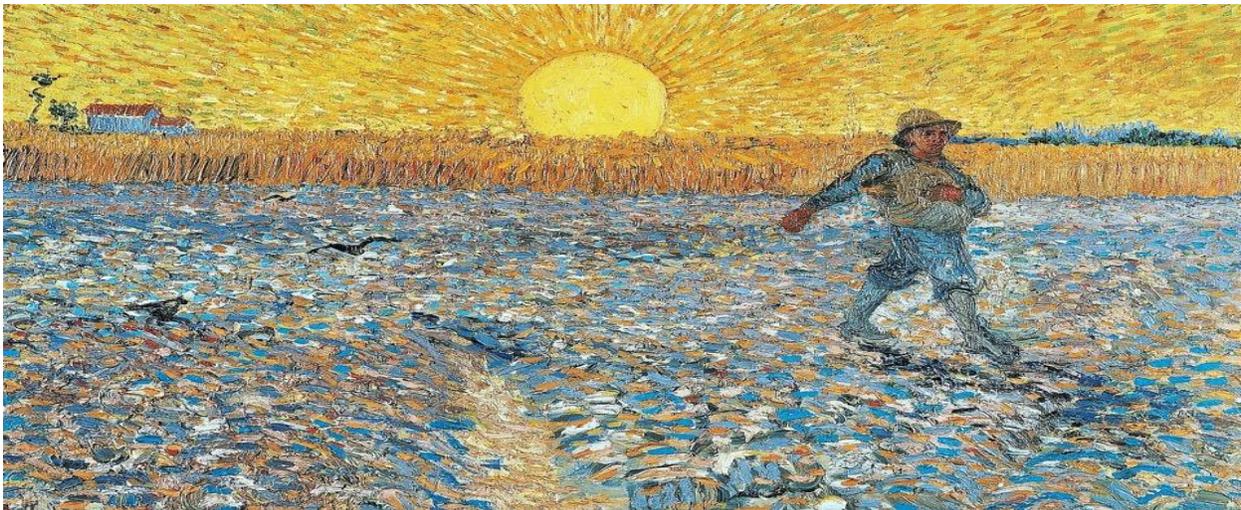
What has Jesus done for you? Were you once bound? Out of control? Wounded? Broken? Lost? We'll take a moment to reflect on this. What has Jesus done for you?

Now, with our hearts and minds set on Christ, let's press forward with the deep matters of the soul – like meaning and purpose.

Why are you here? I'm not talking philosophically, but practically. Why are you here? Out of all the things you could be doing, why were you led to this? Well, hopefully you are here to learn something about being intentional with prayer. So...let's get to it!

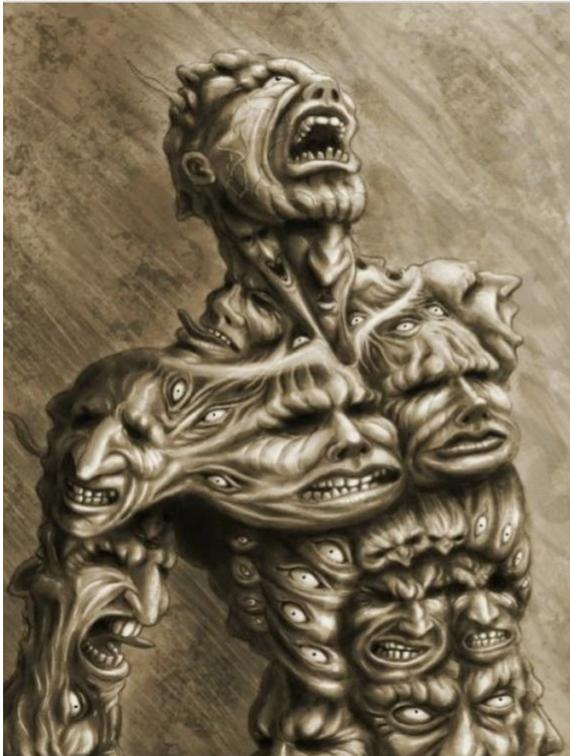
What is the purpose of prayer? Are we communicating anything to God which He doesn't already know? I propose the purpose of prayer is to be in, and to cultivate relationship with God. He is here. Right now. The Living God is always present with us. The question is: Are we listening? Are we communicating? Are we responding?

As we communicate, God cultivates. How is your relationship with Jesus? Right now, in this very moment? Is it thriving? Honestly? Or are you merely surviving? We must start with questions like this because the truth is, we can plan and create opportunities for prayer until the cows come home, but if you're not walking in the Spirit, if your mind is not set on Christ, and if you don't have the heart of Jesus, then you are not ready. Now, don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not saying that we need to become perfect saints before God can use us. God meets us where we are. But it's important to know where our heart is. How is your spirit? How is the spiritual heart of your Kairos community on the scale of Surviving to Thriving? This is important because the matter of the heart is the heart of the matter!



What you see above is a painting called *The Sower*. Can you guess who painted it? Yes. Vincent Van Gogh. At the age of 37, Vincent tragically took his own life. Vincent, like Legion, was a man who experienced great suffering. They were both men with troubled hearts. Looking at *The Sower*, there is much wisdom to be gleaned with regard to our spiritual readiness. What do you notice about the painting? Where is the sun positioned? Which way is the sower facing? Which way are you facing? Is your gaze fixed on the Son, the S-O-N, or is it fixed on something else? You know your distractions and proclivities. Are the cares and deceitfulness of this world making you unfruitful? Has the Evil One snatched away what God has sown? Has your joy been crushed by trials and persecution? Or is your heart ready to be **faithful** to the Lord, in what He is calling you to *be*, and in what He is calling you to *do*?

Let's go back to Legion, or rather, to the man formerly known as Legion. When was he thriving? When did he serve Christ? Before or after his encounter with Jesus? While he was intimate or far away? When he was bound or freed? Wounded or healed? You see, it is only in the wake of a divine encounter with Jesus, when the Living God manifests Himself and we experience His love and forgiveness, where we can *fully* engage in matters of the Spirit, like prayer. Can you pray before encountering Jesus? Sure. Can you survive before encountering Jesus? Most do. But if we're seeking a vibrant, thriving life of prayer...we need Jesus, we need the Holy Spirit.



Look at this slide. Do you see the divine exchange? Do you remember yours? It's important to *remember* what Christ has done for you. For it is the power of the Gospel, which equips our feet with the readiness we need.

I say everything up to this point, to ask this... How often are we given opportunities to pray and we don't? How many of us woke up this morning and planned for prayer? Why is that? Are we too busy? Too distracted? Is there too little time? What's your reason? Take a moment and seriously think about that. Maybe it's because we don't fully expect to see God manifest Himself in and through our daily living? My prayer for us, is that we would always be a community who carry an expectancy for God to move *in us, through us, and around us.*

When it comes to prayer and kingdom work, it has been said, "Prayer is not preparation *for* the greater work, prayer *is* the greater work!" Now, with that said, let us pray, and be led by the Spirit; and see, as He manifests Himself, here and now, how He is calling you and your community, by engaging the greater work that is prayer! Let us seek the Lord in silent prayer.

As I've said, when it comes to prayer, if we and our communities are not spiritually ready to engage God in prayer, then we won't. This is why I've spent all this time addressing everything we've talked about so far. This is why maintaining spiritual health is the first Strategic Objective of KPMI. So, the million-dollar question that remains is, how do we become a community who is spiritually available, to be faithful to the calling of our Lord? This process happens in KAIROS. Allow me to illustrate what I mean: It begins with...

- **Knowledge:** We must first have knowledge of who Christ is, and who we are in Him. Once we understand where we stand in Christ, then the Holy Spirit gives us an...
- **Awareness:** He who leads us into all truth begins to shine light onto the dark areas of our life. As the Holy Spirit reveals and we become aware of the unhealthy things in our life, the Spirit will give us an...
- **Invitation:** Invitations to confess, to repent, to forgive, to surrender, and to obey. As we die to self and surrender our will to Christ in this process, we will begin to experience...
- **Renewal:** As we are cleansed of criticism, cynicism, gossip, unforgiveness, stinkin' thinkin', etc., we will receive healing for our wounded hearts. As we live into the refreshment of this renewal, we will begin to experience...
- **Overflow:** Out the abundant grace of God, we experience the abundant life that God desires to give to each of us. From this position and posture of abundance, as we live and walk with a submitted life and as we present ourselves to accomplish His will and purpose, we will discover...
- **Spiritual Empowerment:** To the extent with which we engage this process; to the extent that we are able to remain in relationship with Jesus through prayer; to the extent with which we remember how much Jesus has done for us; to the extent that we are able to *Listen, Listen, Love, Love;* to the extent through which we do all of this, we will be transformed and empowered, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, in our daily walk with Christ.

Note: This is not a once and done process, but a continual one.

Where are you in this process? Where is your community? As our communities become spiritually healthy and ready, everything else will follow and bear fruit. So, I ask again, how is the spiritual health and readiness of your Kairos community? Do you have a thriving, vibrant prayer life? Or is it more of a barren land with people who are surviving? An honest assessment is important. Begin where you are, not where you're not! Regardless though of where you are, I encourage you to engage the process, and see what God, through His grace will do!

Now we are ready to discuss the nuts and bolts of planning for prayer!

(Discuss the tactical slides.)

Remember Expectancy:

Expect to see the grace of God manifest in your life and in your community.

The LORD bless you and keep you.

May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May His countenance be upon you, and give you peace.