

## Cavy Bap - Prayer & Self Denial 2016 - 'Everybody in 1 canoe with no exception'

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### Week 1 - 12-6-16 - 'Prayer (Inoi)' - [Matthew 6:5-13](#)

*(Everybody in 1 canoe praying for global mission with no exception)*

- Video 'Intro - Prayer and Self Denial 2016' - theme 'He waka eke noa' = 'Everybody in 1 canoe with no exception' (3min 24s).

#### **Introduction**

Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> week of our NZ Baptist Mission 'Prayer and Self Denial'. This is our annual event to focus for a few weeks on physical and spiritual needs of the world beyond NZ. NZ Baptists have been working in overseas mission since about 1885. Currently we work in India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Macau and East Asia. The purpose of 'Prayer and Self Denial' is to raise support, prayer and funds for overseas mission.

Our theme this year is 'He waka eke noa' = 'Everybody in 1 canoe with no exception'... all working together for global mission. For the last 20 years, we've used a different container each year to collect funds. This year it's a 'cardboard waka'. May it remind you to keep paddling for mission.

- 2 Our focus for Week 1 is Prayer (Inoi). The handout is this beautiful conch shell - used for calling people to worship / prayer in various cultures. On the back is a wonderful scripture... [Psalm 116:2](#) 'Because He bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!' (CEV). A beautiful picture of God bending down and coming near to us, so he can hear our prayer. God made you, God knows you, God loves you... and he wants you to pray / talk to him. Let's listen to some kids...

- Video 'Week 1 - To Pray' - Bangladesh and NZ Baptist children talk about prayer (3min 44s).

- 3 [Matthew 6:5-13](#) - Jesus spoke of prayer...

<sup>5</sup> And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

- 4 <sup>9</sup> This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, <sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

(Some late manuscripts: for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.)

A few general comments about prayer... (my opinions)...

- 5 **Prayer is a mystery**

We don't know everything about it. We don't really know how it works... God knows...

#### **Personal approach**

I think that prayer is a very personal thing - the way we pray, what we pray about, the results we expect etc. I'm no more skilled at prayer than any of you... maybe less skilled. But, prayer isn't about a skill, a method or an approach. It's about connecting with God in some way. Each of the children in the video, whether Kiwi or Bangladeshi connected with God in their own way.

### **The flipside of action**

I think prayer is the flipside of action (coin). A good example is BMF (Baptist Missionary Fellowship / Be Mission Focused). On one side of the coin: Overseas mission workers sweating it out, surviving sickness, struggling with language, and trying to do meaningful mission activities. On the other side of the coin: Faithful NZ BMF folk praying for overseas workers and their work. >> Flip some coins into the audience... are you a prayer person or an action person?

Referring to the prayer passage we've read...

### **Lord's (Jesus) prayer or disciple's prayer?**

Often referred to as the 'Lord's prayer', but actually Jesus' prayer model for the 'disciples prayer'.

### **Individual or group?**

Jesus uses personal pronouns, 'our, us, we, you / your - plural'. He's speaking to a collective body of people, not to individualistic Westerners. Jesus said: [Matthew 18:19-20](#)<sup>19</sup> ... that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.<sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. Prayer is about 'us talking to God'.

### **Part of something larger - context**

Matthew places this prayer text in the middle of the 'The Sermon on the Mount' Matt 5 to 7. Jesus is teaching his disciples about how they / we should live in the Kingdom of God. Topics include: [Matt 5: The Beatitudes \(blessed are the poor, the meek, the peacemakers etc\)](#), Salt & light, Fulfilment of OT law, Murder, Adultery, Divorce, Oaths, Eye for eye, Love for enemies. [Matt 6: Giving to the needy, \*\*Prayer\*\*, Fasting, Treasures in heaven, Do not worry.](#) [Matt 7: Judging others, Ask-seek-knock, The narrow & wide gates, True & false prophets, True & false disciples, The wise & foolish builders.](#) In the midst 20 topics he includes prayer. Prayer is important, but part of something larger - our witness, behaviour, worship, giving, lifestyle, how we treat the poor etc.

Tony Campollo told the story of being at a wealthy women's meeting, sharing about world poverty - the need for clean water, food, education, health etc. There response was 'we need to pray that God will supply their needs'. Tony responded, 'why pray... just write out a large cheque'.

### **The Lord's Prayer / Disciple's Prayer**

6 v5-6: Do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others...

Don't pray in a vain or showy way. Don't pretend to be more spiritual and holy than we really are. That's hypocrisy which God and many people will see through. Lucy keeps me in check...

v7-8: Do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ... your Father knows what you need before you ask him...

No need for lots of repetition. God already knows what we're praying about. However, we still should try for good habits of regular prayer. For example... [Luke 18:1](#) Jesus told his disciples a parable (about a Persistent Widow) to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

7 v9: This, then, is how you should pray... Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...

We pray to God. This describes the relationship between God and his people. God is creator, we are the created. God is eternal, we are mortal. God is in heaven... he is 'transcendent', far away, over and above us. He's not our mate or Father Christmas, he is the supreme creator. He is 'hallowed' or holy - set apart from his creation. Don't fool with God. But, on the other hand, he's

come close to us, 'immanent', allowing himself to be our Father, a loving parent. He loves you and me, he loves Dunedin, and he loves Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Macau and East Asia.

>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [seeking God's relationship for all with no exception](#)'.

8 v10: Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus preached the **Kingdom of God**... the 'rule and reign of God' - one of his most common topics. God's kingdom was initiated by Jesus on earth, but is not yet fully complete (already / not yet).

Saying: 'Be careful what you pray for.' If the 'Kingdom of God' came suddenly to earth in its fullness - our lives, our churches, our societies, our world would be tipped upside down, and not always in a way that would suit us. In my mission-talk last year '[13 years in Bangladesh](#)' I asked a question: [What could the Kingdom of God look like today? How do we recognise / describe it?](#)

I suggested... the Kingdom of God would be like a group of people living as follows...

- 'System of belief' about Jesus (salvation) and 'way of life' showing God's values (Kingdom).
- Beliefs and values expressed through words, actions and prayer (word, deed and sign).
- Demonstrate the love, justice and healing of God to others. Includes: Restoration, wholeness, peace, freedom, shalom, sufficiency, equality, poverty free.
- Missional, a signpost pointing to God the King, the source of all that is good.

We're called to live and demonstrate the love, justice and healing of God throughout the world.

- Restoration - people and the planet in relationship with God.
- Wholeness - repairing broken people and their communities.
- Peace - working to stop conflict and war, and restore people's lives and communities.
- Freedom - help people become free of bad habits, addictions, unhealthy behaviour and poverty.
- Shalom - peace and wellbeing for people and their communities.
- Sufficiency - people's basic needs are met, not more luxuries for the wealthy.
- Equality - equal opportunity for all humans regardless of gender, culture and religion.
- Poverty free - helping people in NZ and overseas escape dimensions of poverty and experience a decent life - income, relationships, skills, jobs, confidence.

9 ODT quotes / paraphrases (Fri 10 Jun 2016)

- Political column: [Chris Trotter - Teaming up for a fair NZ](#): '*We're in a battle not between Left and Right, but between simple human decency and self-centred social indifference*'.
- Faith & Reason column: [Ian Harris - Common good decays as rich avoid paying their tax](#): '*When high-fliers move their wealth around to evade taxes, they avoid contributing their fair share to essential public services. Then wealth, instead of strengthening community, weakens it*' ... '*What is morally wrong with paying a living wage to those who have the least?*'

A church community or society or country living by Kingdom values, will look radically different. Jesus is calling us to pray and work for God's kingdom, to be on earth as in heaven. This involves our prayer and actions here in Dunedin and in overseas mission. *Be careful what you pray for...*

>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [seeking God's kingdom on earth with no exception](#)'.

10 v11: Give us today our daily bread.

**Daily bread** is about sustenance, basic needs to live - water, food, clothing etc. Jesus is speaking to a pre-modern rural subsistence agricultural society - like much of the developing world today.

People didn't / don't have big salaries, super markets and fridges. They were / are very dependent on weather / seasons for their basic food needs. A key issue of climate change, is its impact on the world's poor in low lying agricultural places like Bangladesh. It's estimated up to 25 million Bangladeshi may migrate north from the southern coastal regions, due to sea level rise and increased salinity (salt-water) - creating drinking water and irrigation issues. Climate change, won't really affect us in the same way - although I might have to get a 'floating mortgage' for my house in St Kilda. For the world's poor, hunger is only ever 1 failed crop away. That's why historically they have worshiped nature gods and fertility gods. Keep the gods happy, the right amount of rain will come, and there's enough food for all. For this reason, the prayer 'give us this day our daily bread' is critical to the rural subsistence agricultural people. For most Westerners, working class and upwards, this prayer may seem irrelevant. We may understand it intellectually, but we haven't experienced life on the edge of poverty. We just go to the fridge or super market to get our bread. We've lost our critical dependence on God for life. Of course when we face a tragedy, or a health issue, we very quickly become dependent on God again. But otherwise, almost all risk has been removed from our lives. But, for poor and marginalised people living in our NZBMS mission countries, they are very dependent on God for their daily bread.

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>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [seeking daily bread for all with no exception](#)'.

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v12: And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

The basis of our relationship with God, is that God **forgave** our sins / debts by the death of Jesus on the cross. This has enabled us to turn to God in a loving relationship. It's the same model for us towards others. We need to offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us, and receive forgiveness from those we have hurt (if offered). However, I think forgiveness is part of a larger picture... Victims of prejudice, poverty and war - need to experience a sense of justice and goodwill, before they can offer forgiveness. Our NZBMS mission works for justice and forgiveness overseas.

>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [seeking forgiveness for all with no exception](#)'.

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v13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Greek - temptation / testing).

I'm a frail human being, prone to sin, doing bad stuff, and neglecting to do good stuff. I suspect you're the same. Even if we keep away from the cliff edge of temptation today, there will be another cliff edge soon. Some people talk of the 'strong and the weak', I tend to think of the 'weak and the weak'. Let's admit it and call out to God for **deliverance**. It's the same for a Bangladeshi.

>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [seeking deliverance for all with no exception](#)'.

Some later manuscripts: for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

I think this returns to where we started, in terms of our **relationship** with God. It's God's kingdom, God's power, and God's glory. We worship him.

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The Lord's Prayer / Disciple's Prayer has given us the prayer model. Jesus referred to: **relationship, Kingdom of God, daily bread, forgiveness and deliverance...**

Will you pray / speak to God over the 'Prayer & Self Denial' time in support of overseas mission - to bring about: **relationship, Kingdom of God, daily bread, forgiveness and deliverance...** for all?

>> Response: 'Everybody in 1 canoe [praying for global mission with no exception](#)'. End