



Sermon 20th June 2021

Act 2 v 42 & Colossians 4 v 2-6

A Cowboy Named Fred

A cowboy lay sprawled across three entire seats in a posh Theatre.

When the usher came by and noticed this, he whispered to the cowboy, "Sorry, sir, but you're only allowed one seat."

The cowboy groaned but didn't budge.

The usher became more impatient: "Sir, if you don't get up from there, I'm going to have to call the manager."

Once again, the cowboy just groaned. The usher, realizing he's dealing with an 'impaired' individual, marched briskly back up the aisle, and in a moment, he returned with the manager.

Together the two of them tried repeatedly to move the cowboy, but with no success.

Finally, they summoned the police. The Texas Ranger surveyed the situation briefly, then asked, "All right buddy, what's your name?"

"Fred," the cowboy moaned.

"Where ya from, Fred?" asked the Ranger.

With terrible pain in his voice, & slowly pointing one finger painfully toward the ceiling, Fred replied, "...The Balcony..."

Effective Communication is essential in some circumstances, but communication with God is essential in every circumstance.

So how do we communicate with God? By prayer. It is one of the things as Christians we are told to do because if there is no communication between you and God, how are you going to hear or obey what he says? All relationships need us to communicate with each other, otherwise they are dead. And a question that

This morning we come to the final piece of looking at the four things that the disciples did while they were in the upper room, Prayer.

One of the things that we are told to do as Christians is to pray.

The dreaded word of prayer. Yet do we know the supernatural power we have when we pray? Prayer is the strength of the believer's fellowship with the Lord and the source of power against Satan and his angels (cf. Eph. 6:18). Through prayer, believers confess their sin, offer praise to God, and intercede for each other. Prayer from a pure heart (Ps. 66:18) is to be directed to God (Matt. 6:9), consistent with the mind and will of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:18), in the name of Christ, and for the glory of the Father (John 14:13).

As children we were shown how to pray. When I went to my aunt's to stay, we would always say prayers before bedtime. I would put my hands together and thank Jesus for the day and for my family. How many of you used to do that? At school we had assembly, we would sing hymns and we would pray. It was where I learned the Lord's Prayer. Today in schools there is none of that, because of our multi-cultural and multi faith society. Which personally I think is a shame. I remember when working at a primary school in Stanground we had a new headteacher come and he couldn't believe that the children didn't know the Lord's prayer, so he made it be known that the children should learn it.

So, who likes prayer meetings? I don't always. It can be a very intimidating place to be. It depends on the people who are there.



Let's take a look at some of the characteristics people who attend. There are those who I tend to call holier than thou they like to hear the sound of their own voices and also liken themselves to God as if they are the only person that God will listen to.

Then there are those whose words are so literary. They pray long prayers using all the jargon or the now words, and don't seem to make a lot of sense sometimes.

Then you get the spiritual war-farer. The one who speaks the loudest and demands that God do something with whatever situation is prayed about. Especially when it comes to praying against Satan.

Then there are those who are quiet, they don't like speaking out loud for fear of being ridiculed about how they pray or have feelings that their prayers are not as good as the others around them. These are just some broad outlines of different types of people who pray. and I am sure that in your own prayer life you could mention a few more definitions, but the thing is God doesn't really care how you pray it is that you do it. Because that is what builds the relationship with Him.

Now I'd guess if I were to ask most Christians what they find hard in the Christian life, this would be one of the most common areas of difficulty. We all find it hard to pray. There are always so many pressing demands on our time and attention. It seems so much more important to be sharing the gospel with people than to be praying about it. And Satan works hard to divert us from this activity. That's why Paul says we should devote ourselves to it. Not just think about doing it more often but set our minds to doing it as a first priority.

Prayer is a vital part of everyday life; it changes your perspective and the way that you look at yourself and the world. Throughout the New Testament Peter, Paul and the disciples always tell the believers of the early church to watch and pray. Acts 2 v 42 **"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."** In Luke 18:1, **The Parable of the Persistent Widow, Jesus told his "disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."** Paul is saying, **"Always be ready to break into prayer, and do it instantaneously, at all times."** That's precisely the warning in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 **where we're encouraged to "pray continually."**

Prayer is the first thing that should be done. We are told not to just jump in and do something that we think we should be doing, the bible tells us that we should pray about it first, because God might not want you to do it.

How often as a church do we find ourselves looking for different ideas to bring people through the doors? I find church meetings are the most places that ideas come through to the church. The time when we all have a voice on the direction the church should be going.

However, If the most exciting and greatest thing in the world is, that Jesus is alive and you can have Salvation and eternal life and its free, can't get them through the doors then why should your ideas? The thing is without using our supernatural weapon the power of prayer all our ideas are just that ideas. So, it stands to reason that before you do anything it must be surrounded by prayer but like in your personal needs don't think that the answer will come immediately although it might do if that is what God wants it to, In 4:2, Paul touches on an often overlooked aspect of prayer, that of perseverance. Continue Steadfastly/Devote yourselves means to "adhere to," or "persist in, we have to be prepared to wait and keep on praying. Which in our hurry to get things done and sorted is not always the answer we want to hear.

Relationships take time to gel together this is so with our prayer life. Its is something that should be as natural to us as making a cup of tea/coffee. Its having a conversation with God and then listening for the answers. So let us consider our prayer lives and ask God for forgiveness when we haven't given Him the time in our lives he deserves.

Amen