

Sunday, Aug. 19:

Message Title: "They Need You"

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:20 "So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, 'Be reconciled to God!'"

Text: Revelation 8:4 "The smoke of the incense offered for the prayers of the saints rose up before God from the angel's hand."

Scripture: Exodus 32:7-14

Blurb: "Brighten the corner, where you are!" God has placed you in this world in a certain place, at an intentional time, and with specific people: all on purpose. Part of the work that God has for you to do is to touch the lives of the people that God places within your sphere of influence. God is orchestrating connections to people in your life, because they need your prayers! This Sunday we'll work on our prayer lives to deepen our prayers for others. It is important, daily, God-given work for you!

Opening Song: *Hymn Sing*

Welcome: -Pastor David

Memory Verse: "We are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, 'Be reconciled to God!'" -2 Corinthians 5:20

Worship Music Set: - Sanctify

Glory to Glory

We've a Story to Tell to the Nations

God of This City

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Devote Yourselves* -Sanctify

Serve Moment: St. Andrew's Homeless Shelter - Paulette

Message: Transformed: Praying in a way that changes your life. Father, You are Good. I Need You.

Message Bumper

PP#1: Transformed: Praying in a way that changes you.

"They Need Your Help."

"The smoke of the incense offered for the prayers of the saints rose up before God from the angel's hand." -Revelation 8:4

Transformed: Praying in a way that changes your life. "They Need Your Help." Revelation 8:4, "The smoke of the incense offered for the prayers of the saints rose up before God from the angel's hand."

PP#2: *Image of Charlton Heston playing George Taylor in Planet of the Apes.*

This month the Forest Lake theater started hosting again Thursday Night Fright Night. From now until Halloween, every Thursday evening, Chris Costello, owner of the local Renaissance Gym, brings in old-time, drive-in, sci-fi or horror movies. This month it's all five of the original *Planet of the Apes* movies, honoring the 50th anniversary this year of the original film's release.

Now, I hadn't seen these movies in decades, and I had forgotten that the main character in the first two of the movies is played by the legendary Charlton Heston.

PP#3: *Image of Charlton Heston playing Moses.*

I have to tell you, it was rather hard for me to get my head around Moses from the Bible traveling into space and into the future and talking to the apes. Heston's greatest role was the blockbuster epic Cecil B. DeMill's *Moses*. Then he was *Ben Hur*. And then he was *John the Baptist*. But for me, Moses will forever look like Charlton Heston.

At the same time that Charlton Heston is again on the big screen, we here at church launched our summer series on prayer. We are seeking God's plan for our church, God's future for us. We want to be the church God wants us to be. And so we're diving deep into prayer, listening to God, asking for His leading.

PP#4: Biblical "Pocket Prayer" Outline:

Father, You are good.
I need your help.
So do they.
Thank you. Amen.

That means we also have to grow in our prayer life as people of this church. We're seeking to mature in our praying, and learn to pray in a way that transforms our lives.

To do that, we're using Max Lucado's *Pocket Prayer*, an outline for prayer that he found when he studied all the prayers of the Bible. It is a biblical prayer structure that we can use to pray transformative prayers. On it's own, it is an acceptable short prayer. But the value really comes when we pause after each phrase, and add our own personal prayers as we pray.

Let's try it together: **Father, You are good. I need your help. So do they. Thank you. Amen.** Pray this prayer every day through the end of the month, okay?

It starts with addressing God as our Heavenly Father. This shapes how we understand the God we're praying to, and it transforms our prayers as we pray in the personal, intimate, familial relationship we have with Him. Turning our focus from us onto God transforms us.

The prayer teaches us to start praying by first telling God how good He is. This transforms us as we place ourselves and all that we bring to Him, in the right perspective. It builds our trust and confidence in God, and lifts up our value and identity.

Only then do we bring our list of requests to God. But now, rather than being just our selfish wants, we ask because we admit that we need help, that we cannot go it on our own, and we place God as our help and our salvation. This transforms everything, including what we ask for, for it makes us ask for what God wants for us, not just what we might like.

So today, we come to our fourth movement of prayer: intercession, praying for others. It is after we name who God is, and declare how worthy He is, and how we need His help, that we can pray honest prayers for others.

PP#5: *Image of Charlton Heston as Moses standing before God, with the people behind.*

As I've been thinking about Moses, because of Charlton Heston, it dawned on me that Moses can teach us a lot about praying for others. God's people were enslaved in Egypt, and God appointed Moses as their leader to get them out. That changed Moses' life dramatically, for he had been tending sheep as an introvert for the previous 40 years. Now he was responsible for the millions of God's chosen people. And as Moses timidly stepped into this role, it caused him to create a two-way prayer bond that made all the difference. Moses became the pivot point of prayer, as he engaged the people on one hand, but then took them and their needs to God in prayer on the other. Moses became a prayer channel. And I think that can help us see how God intends us to be as well.

PP#6: They Need Your Help

1. It's good to do. (Mission)

Luke 11:5-10 (The persistent neighbor)

God is about a big work. With Moses, He was taking the people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. In Jesus, we see that God comes to all the people of the world, and wants to take them out of their individual slavery to whatever entraps them, and take them into the promised land of living in joy and peace with Him. God is about a big work. That's one of the key reasons we join together in a church. We come together to join God in the bigger work God is up to in our world. We believe God is shaping our church in new ways to do this. We can't just sit around having a good time. We join in the mission that God is doing in our world. That's one of the main reasons you're here. We come to be equipped and charged to do God's work in a way we cannot do on our own.

It is good to pray for others. It is part of our mission. We are called like Moses to care for God's people around us. Now, you may not be charged to lead millions of people, but God is placing people around you, in your path, in your sphere of influence, because He wants you to be the prayer channel for them. Do you see? Each of us is specialized in our prayer mission. We have our own unique experiences, and personalities, and giftings, but we also each have our own connections with certain people in certain ways.

On the notes side of your bulletin insert, I want you to start a list of the people that God has placed in your "sphere." It can be a family member, a friend, a coworker, someone you know casually. Each day, add one name to the list, and pray for that person. Keep adding a new person each day for a year. I bet you'll be surprised at how you won't run out of names. Start today with one person here today, sitting either in front of you or behind you. That's your first name.

When Jesus taught His disciples about prayer, He told them the parable of the persistent neighbor. In the middle of the night, friends arrived, but the person had no food to serve. So, he goes to his neighbor and knocks on the door until he gets up and loans him some food. "Be persistent like this," Jesus says, "when you ask God for blessings for others!"

And, we are most like Jesus when we pray for others. Even when Jesus was being crucified, do you remember?, He prayed for His tormentors (Luke 23:34). He asked God to forgive them.

PP#7: They Need Your Help

1. It's good to do. (Mission)
2. It's good for them. (Blessing)

2 Corinthians 5:20 (We are ambassadors to others)

So, it's good to do. And, I guess obviously, it's good for them. The people Moses was leading really didn't know God, and Moses interceded for them, time and time again, praying in a way that they couldn't. Without Moses and his prayers, They would have floundered.

I think this is one of the main reasons God chose Moses: because Moses would come to love the people, care for them, pray for them, and put them before himself. The Bible says in Numbers 12:3 that Moses was the most humble person on earth. This didn't mean that he was spineless or weak. It meant that he was quickest to put the needs of others first. This caught God's eye.

When we pray for others, we pray as ambassadors of Jesus, our King. We have the privilege and responsibility to ask our King to act on behalf of others: 2 Corinthians 5:20. We need to take this very seriously! You may be the only person that someone has to provide them prayer cover. If you feel a nudge about someone, or someone comes to mind, or you find yourself thinking about someone, that is the Holy Spirit telling you to put that person on your prayer list. As a prayer channel, we walk around all day long, listening to see who it is that we are to pray for. There are people in need, who are struggling in some way, and God has you find out about it NOT so that you know, and have more information, but instead precisely so you can actively pray about it. They need you! God is placing you as their prayer champion.

I want to push you a bit on this. Throughout the days, you talk with people who share needs and problems. I want you to start recognizing that this conversation is on purpose. God is in that, calling you to prayer. So, here's your challenge. Tell that person that you have a prayer list going, and that you are going to add their name to your list. That's right, tell them, to their face, right then and there, that you will add them to your prayer list.

Wait, I'm not done! We seek to pray in a way that transforms our lives, right? Okay, here goes. Then, before you walk off, ask them if you could pray with them about the need, right then.

I mean it! We need to stop being so shy and start shouldering our calling! If they say, "No," then add them to your list anyway. But if they say, "Sure," then pull them over to a corner and quietly pray with them...a SHORT prayer.

Don't know what to say? You're in luck! You learned the Prayer Outline. Put it to use! "Father, you care about Sally. And you are good and want to help her. I need your help in my life, because I have things too big for me. And so I ask you to help Sally, who is really struggling with her problem she just shared with me. I thank you for being such a good God. Amen." Done!

Here's my challenge: I want you to set for yourself a goal to pray out loud with someone at least once a week. I mean it! At first it'll be hard and seem weird. But then it will get easier. And you'll find yourself doing it more than once a week! And you will hear people start telling you what a blessing you are to them! Will you do this, church? Will you?

PP#8: They Need Your Help

1. It's good to do. (Mission)
2. It's good for them. (Blessing)
3. It's good for you. (Growth)

1 John 3:3 (We are purified when we pray.)

It's good to do. It's good for them. And, it's good for you. Praying for others changes things. It changes them, and it changes you. It grows you. This is one of the key ways that God transforms us. When we pray for others, God blesses us. Moses grew to love those stiff-necked people!

God grows love in us. He gives us hearts that love others. We develop compassion, and empathy, and awareness as we start to see others as in need of God's help rather than whatever they

are doing against us. It trains us to be others-focused. It calls us to live into our mission. We cannot truly grow in God's agape, self-giving love, if we don't learn to live for others. We need opportunities to love, and grow in our selfless giving. We need people to push us to practice our love and to live it out in our daily lives. Think about it this way: we need others in order for us to grow spiritually, and in faith maturity! Learning to pray for others shapes and changes us!

And God can then do miracles in us.

My daughter told me on one of our walks this past week about how God did this in her. She went on a mission trip with the music department at school this summer. And although she was excited about most of the people on the trip, there was one girl, who was a difficult person, that she dreaded being with. And of course, she got placed on the same team as this girl.

Well, Rebekah decided before the trip to pray for this girl, and help make their trip go well. Rebekah knew she had little tolerance for her attitude, but prayed for God to bless her anyway.

On the walk, Rebekah told me, "You know, Dad, it works. You remember the girl I didn't like on the trip, and how I was sure she was going to ruin the trip for me? Well, I started praying for her, for God to give her a good week. And you know what? Once we got on the trip, we started talking. She wasn't so bad! In fact, we became friends. And now, I'm looking forward to seeing her at school this fall."

Wow, praying for others is good for us! It changes us!

PP#9: They Need Your Help

1. It's good to do. (Mission)
2. It's good for them. (Blessing)
3. It's good for you. (Growth)
4. It make a difference (Effective)

James 5:16 (Prayers cause change.)

One more: prayer makes a difference. In the Book of Revelation, in chapter eight, there is a scene that gives a glimpse in the backroom workings of heaven. At the altar an angel holds a gold bowl of incense. The incense, it says, as it burns and the smoke rises up, is the prayer offerings of God's people. The prayers rise like the smoke of incense, into the very presence of God. Then, another gold bowl is filled with God's answers, described as fire, and thunder, and voices, and lightening, and earthquakes, and the angel throws the bowl's contents back down to earth.

God answers the prayers of His people.

Let's go check in with Moses. Turn to Exodus 32.

Two weeks ago we heard the story of how when Moses came down the mountain with the 10 Commandments, he found the people worshipping an idol. Well, in Exodus 32, we hear about God's reaction. The chapter begins with Moses on the mountain talking with God for 40 days. They're having a grand time, and God is telling Moses all what is to come.

PP#10: Exodus 32:7-14 (CEB)

7 The Lord spoke to Moses: "Hurry up and go down! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, are ruining everything! 8 They've already abandoned the path that I commanded. They have made a metal bull calf for themselves. They've bowed down to it and offered sacrifices to it and declared, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" 9 The Lord said to Moses, "I've been watching these people, and I've seen how stubborn they are. 10 Now leave me alone! Let my fury burn and devour them. Then I'll make a great nation out of you."

Then, there is a slight pause in the conversation, and when God speaks again, His tone of voice becomes very different, very tense, very angry. Verse 7, “The Lord spoke to Moses: ‘Hurry up and go down! Your people, [Did you catch that? God calls them Moses’ people. It’s kind of like when I’m mad at my kids, I say to my wife, “Guess what YOUR children did!” *Your* people,] whom *you* brought up out of the land of Egypt, are ruining everything! They’ve already abandoned the path that I commanded [and we haven’t even really started yet!]. They have made a metal bull calf for themselves. They’ve bowed down to it and offered sacrifices to it and declared, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” The Lord said to Moses, ‘I’ve been watching these people, and I’ve seen how stubborn they are. Now leave me alone! [Step to one side.] Let my fury burn and devour them. Then I’ll make a great nation out of you.’ I’m going to go down and vaporize them, and then I’ll just take you and start over with your family and kids.

And here we see Moses do something amazing. This is why God chose Moses! For Moses goes to prayer on their behalf...the very people that have been complaining and resisting and rebelling even against Moses. *Moses prays for them!*

PP#11: Exodus 32:7-14 (CEB)

11 But Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, “Lord, why does your fury burn against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and amazing force? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘He had an evil plan to take the people out and kill them in the mountains and so wipe them off the earth’? Calm down your fierce anger. Change your mind about doing terrible things to your own people.

Verse 11, “But Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, “Lord, why does your fury burn against *your* own people, whom *you* brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and amazing force? [It’s about your power, not what they do.] 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘He had an evil plan to take the people out and kill them in the mountains and so wipe them off the earth’? [Won’t this ruin your reputation among the Egyptians?] Calm down your fierce anger. Change your mind about doing terrible things to your own people.”

Wow, Moses is giving God quite a talking to! Calm down! Change your mind! Yes, they are wicked and stiff-necked people. But this is not about what they deserve, but about your character!

PP#12: Exodus 32:7-14 (CEB)

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, whom you yourself promised, ‘I’ll make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky. And I’ve promised to give your descendants this whole land to possess for all time.’” 14 Then the Lord changed His mind about the terrible things He said He would do to His people.

Then, Moses goes on to persuade God to change His mind. Verse 13, “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, whom you yourself promised, ‘I’ll make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky. And I’ve promised to give your descendants this whole land to possess for all time.’ [And then there is that amazing verse, one of the most shocking in the Bible.] Then the Lord changed His mind about the terrible things He said He would do to His people.”

Wow! God changed His mind when Moses interceded for others! This is amazing! It means that we can ask God to change what’s coming!

Now I can’t resolve this perfectly, but I can say that God’s plan didn’t change. His will never wavered. But the punishment the people deserved, God decided not to deliver. So, what I can say

is that I see here an opportunity for us as God's people, to go to God in prayer. Remind Him of His faithfulness, His mercy, His promises, and ask for blessing. Moses did it, and God accepted it.

Prayer changes things...even God's mind!

PP#13: They Need Your Help

1. It's good to do. (Mission)
2. It's good for them. (Blessing)
3. It's good for you. (Growth)
4. It make a difference (Effective)

I don't think there's really anything more I can say here. We need to pray for others. It's a good thing to do, it is our mission. It's good for them, it's their blessing. It's good for us, it's our growth. And it makes a difference, it is effective.

Prayers: -David

So, I have again saved our prayer time until after the message, so we can do the praying that we feel called to do. Let's spend some time praying for others. Take out your bulletins. There is a prayer section on the back. There are the names you've listed on the "notes" insert. There are people sitting here around you. There are people you are concerned about. There are people God has placed in your sphere of influence.

PP#14: Biblical "Pocket Prayer" Outline:

Father, You are good.

I need your help.

So do they.

[Pause for personal prayers.]

Thank you. Amen.

We're going to go back to our Pocket Prayer again, and we'll pause after this phrase, and give you an opportunity to pray prayers of intercession for specific people that God has placed on your hearts. And remember, prayer is transforming! It changes you. It changes things, even the heart of God! Let's pray together

Closing Song: *Those Who Trust* - Sanctify

Memory Verse: "We are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, 'Be reconciled to God!'" -2 Corinthians 5:20

Announcements: St. Andrews Family Shelter Signup

Benediction: -Pastor David