

## INTRO

### - SOLOMON'S "PASTORAL PASSION"

- Solomon's Call ... 1Ki 3:5-9 His heart conviction is that the task is BIGGER THAN HE IS and that the task has ULTIMATE IMPORTANCE

- Solomon's Concern ... 2Chr 6 Prayer from a leader that is Eager to Secure God's Favor, Blessing, and Covering for the people he is to lead

### - PIPER'S "PASTORAL PASSION"

### - Our PASTORAL PASSION

*Prophetic Word* – Sunday Service - April 25, 2004

*"You cannot shoulder the mantle I desire for you in the future. Therefore ...*

*... I am renovating and rebuilding*

*... I am laying foundations for a building of the kingdom that you haven't dreamed of*

*... I am realigning confidence*

**Jer 17:5-8** Thus says the LORD, " Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD. 6 "For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant. 7 " Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD. 8 "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit.

*... I am causing you to cry to me and reach for me .... though I am not far from you.*

We Cannot Build Higher without Building Deeper. .... We cannot become what God is calling us to be without changing our prayer lives.

**" What matters most in life cannot be produced by man, but only by God"** **John Piper**, "Sweet Our of Prayer", Jan 4, 1987

## The Great Doorway to a Prayer Life

"Humble Themselves"

- This is the Soil of This Passage. Without biblical humility, we will not pray, seek His face, or turn from our ways.

HUMILITY IS A RESPONSE TO 3 CONTRIBUTORS

- 1. Seeing & Encountering God Accurately**
- 2. Seeing & Encountering Yourself Accurately**
- 3. Seeing & Encountering God's Purposes Accurately**

*“ Humility is not something that we bring to God, or that He bestows; it is simply the sense of entire nothingness that comes when we see how truly God is everything. When the creature realizes that this is a place of honor, and consents to be – with his will, his mind, and his affections – the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and manifest themselves, he sees that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as creature and yielding to God His place.”* (p. 17) **Andrew Murray**, “Humility”

**Why is This Critical to PRAYER?** ... because I believe Genuine Humility is the Soil of Prayer. I don't believe we could build prayer lives without humility

*“ That which brings the praying soul near to God is humility of heart. That which gives wings to prayer is lowliness of mind. That which gives ready access to the throne of grace is self-depreciation. Pride, self-esteem, and self-praise effectually shut the door of prayer. He who would come to God must approach him with self hid from his own eyes. He must not be puffed-up with self-conceit, nor be possessed with an over-estimate of his virtues and good works. ... Humility is just feeling little because we are little.”* **E.M. Bounds**, “The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer”, p. 87, 89

*“ Humility, though, is much more than the absence of vanity and pride. It is a positive quality, a substantial force, which energizes prayer. There is no power in prayer to ascend without it.”* **E.M. Bounds**, “The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer”, p. 89

**(A) Seeing & Encountering God & Ourselves Accurately** (Yields Humility, which yields Prayer)

*“ First, he is exalted, supreme, sovereign (“high and lofty”). As long as our eyes are fixed downward on the earth and our own achievements, we tend towards self-exaltation. We remain content with ourselves and our churches. We feel generally comfortable, even worthy. But lifting our eyes to the high and lofty One, our complacency dissolves. ... Beholding God in his exalted majesty and seeing ourselves in our sinful vileness, here in this moment of insight, humility— that is to say, realism— is reborn in our hearts.”* **Raymond Ortlund, Jr.**, “When God Comes to Church”, p. 200

*“ Here then are powerful truths about God, clearly taught in Holy Scripture but too often overlooked in our giddy Christianity of today. We have too little sense of the loftiness of God and we think too well of ourselves. We think we know him better than we really do. .... God is in another category from us. The word “holy” does not reveal what God is as much as it declares what he is not. He is not down on our level. He is superior. We are not in his league. No one is. The term “holy” alerts us to the distance between God and ourselves.”* **Raymond Ortlund, Jr.**, “When God Comes to Church”, p. 201

“ we must infer that man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God’s majesty.” **John Calvin**, (quoted in “When God Comes to Church”, p. 200)

## ! God as SOVEREIGN CREATOR, SUSTAINER, & SUPPLIER

**Ex 3 & 4** .... Moses debating with God over whether he can accomplish God’s Assignment. Moses argument is about who man is.... God’s is about who He is  
**Is 40**

**Heb 1:3** He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

**Seeing God Accurately Inspires Me to Go to Him Full of Faith!!**

## ! Us as NEEDY, INADEQUATE, & ULTIMATELY POWERLESS

Rev 3:15-21

– Man is quite capable of seeing himself inaccurately — here the church is depicted as feeling like it has no need, but Jesus description is quite different

“ To be humble is to have a low estimate of one’s self. It is to be modest, lowly, with a disposition to seek obscurity. Humility retires itself from the public gaze. It does not seek publicity nor hunt for high places, neither does it care for prominence. Humility is retiring in its nature. Self-abasement belongs to humility. It is given to self-depreciation. It never exalts itself in the eyes of others nor even in the eyes of itself. Modesty is one of its most prominent characteristics.” **E.M. Bounds**, “The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer”, p. 86

**2 Cor 3:5** Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

**2Ch 20** ... “We are powerless

**1 Cor 3:6-7** I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

— **BEWARE! Of (PCA)** — “Prayerless Christian Activity” .... Sun Celeb’s w/o prayer support, CG’s w/o prayer support, Alpha w/o prayer support, Youth/Children’s Ministry w/o prayer support, Orphanage Ministry w/o prayer support, Family Ministry ....

Remember ....

“ However, brethren, whether we like it or not, remember, asking is the rule of the kingdom. "Ask, and ye shall receive." It is a rule that never will be altered in anybody’s case. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the elder brother of the family, but God has not relaxed the rule for him. Remember this text: Jehovah says to his own Son, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" Ps 2:8. If the royal and divine Son of God cannot be exempted from the rule of asking that he may have, you and I cannot expect the rule to be relaxed in our favour. ... If you may have everything by asking, and nothing without asking, I beg you to see how absolutely vital prayer is, and I beseech you to abound in it.” **Charles Spurgeon**, “Ask and Have” – James 4:2-3

**John 15:5** "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

**John 5:19** Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

### ***Being Convinced of My Need & Inadequacy Launches Me Away From Myself!!***

*“The root of all virtue and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship, is that we know that we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it.” (p.34) Andrew Murray, “Humility”*

**Prayerlessness is THE Revelation of the Presence of Self-Sufficiency**— NOT Our Opinion of Ourselves as to Whether we are Self-Sufficient or Not. We are quite capable of thinking more highly of ourselves than we should.

*“When we attempt to live & minister without humble dependency, we highlight a (perhaps hidden) high opinion of our own abilities to make a contribution. We believe our words, our personality, our history, our position, or authority can accomplish much. .... by contrast God highlights that it's the prayer of the righteous man that can accomplish much.”*

— “Apart from me you can do nothing”

**! PASTORS** .....

*“The young preacher has been taught to lay out all his strength on the form, taste, and beauty of his sermon as a mechanical and intellectual product. We have thereby cultivated a vicious taste among the people and raised the clamor for talent instead of grace, eloquence instead of piety, rhetoric instead of revelation, reputation and brilliancy instead of holiness.” E.M. Bounds, “Power Through Prayer”, p. 74*

*“After Torrey died, Mrs. Torrey said, "My husband was a man of much prayer and Bible study. He denied himself social intercourse with even his best friends, in order that he might have time for prayer, study, and the preparation for his work." Torrey said, "Pray for great things, expect great things, work for great things, but above all pray." He told church members, "Do you want a new minister? I can tell you how to get one. Pray for the one you have till God makes him over." He believed, "Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power.” (Quoted in The Master's Seminary Journal, vol 2, p. 44)*

— **Are We Using the Key?**

**! BUSINESSMEN** .... Are You Driven by Today's Agenda Into a Day Full of Activity Rather Than Securing God's Blessing Upon What You're Attempting to Do?

**! FATHERS** .....

Do you Eagerly Pursue Wisdom to Lead? (Or just assume you're familiar with your family and with life?)

**! MOTHERS** .... Do you Agonizomai for Your Children's Hearts & Behaviors? (Or just depend on personal experience, biblical techniques, etc.) Is Housework a Greater Need than Heart Work in Prayer?

**! STUDENTS** .... Do you pray about the Chalkboard Jungle? .... @ Today's Temptations? .... @ Living a Full Life (Spiritual Life, school, friends, family)

**! CG LEADERS & MINISTRY TEAMS** ... Have You Grown Familiar with What to do?

## (B) Seeing & Encountering God's Purposes Accurately

### 1. Our Vision of What's to be Accomplished is Too Small

- "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained"
  - How many Christians have "**Wandering Prayer-lives**"? — Hit and miss, lacking Agonizomai, optional compared with eating, sleeping, relating, relaxing, recreating, etc.

#### - The Kingdom Agenda is HUGE!!

WE MUST AVOID OUR TENDENCY TO DOWNGRADE THE TASK TO HUMAN SIZED.

- ! VISION for EVANGELISM .... Is it that a few people or even a few dozen are saved each year?
- ! VISION for PARENTING .... Is it merely to **minimize hostility** (between parents and teens)? To raise **moral kids with good grades**? ..... Or are we Preparing Our Children for WAR— to Mightily Advance the Kingdom for the God That They Passionately Love
- ! VISION for DISCIPLESHIP .... Is it merely to get saved and invite a relative (the same one) to a Cantata once a year?
  - " **Heb 5, 6** ... "by now you ought to be teachers"
  - " **Jesus Sized Discipleship** (Jesus Calling Disciples)

## **2. Our Understanding of Spiritual Opposition is Biblically Uninformed**

- " **Eph 6**
- " Acts .... the opposition Paul encountered
- " **2Co 2:11** ... we are not ignorant of his schemes
- " 2Tim 2:26 ... "having been held captive by him to do his will"

### **SUMMARY**

1. God is the Great Sovereign Source who Requires Us to Ask
2. We Are Needy, Vulnerable, and Inadequate and Must Go Outside of Ourselves to Get What's Needed
3. The Kingdom Agenda for God's People is HUGE