

June 20, 2021

Willerup United Methodist Church

Sermon Notes

Brother Ron Dayton

Gratitude for Gifts from our P.A.P.A: Pastors and Prayer

***A Message Of Gratitude For
The Gift of Pastor Marvin and Nalini Singh***

**Prayer: A Gift To Cherish
From Our P.A.P.A. Father**

This is a message, not a Sermon. A Message to consider “GIFTS”! The Greatest of GIFTS that **Our Father** has GIFTED us with. **Prayer!**

FIRST: A message from our Lord and Savior:

Matthew 6:6

*“But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in secret. Then your **Father**, who knows all secrets, will reward you.”*

THEN: Please know this at the start. Today will be different. Today will be interactive. Be prepared for moments of meditation. Moments of reflection. Moments of interaction.

BACKGROUND: Being asked to give this message is a “gift.”

A gift from a friend and brother in Christ, it came. The gift asked; to share thoughts from time spent with P.A.P.A. A gift can very much be a blessing and a burden at once. A blessing of opportunity. A burden to do justice to the gift.

The GIFT REQUESTED: To share the gift of a book read.

On Father’s Day. To Honor the gift of our time and our learnings from our Pastor Marvin and Nalini.

The book: *The PAPA Prayer: The prayer you’ve never prayed* by Dr. Larry Crabb, noted Christian author speaker and trained psychologist.

Several FORE-THOUGHTS:

(Please bear with the never-ending passions of a career profession that just keeps desiring to make a difference.)

_ Why? (*Start With Why* by Simon Sinek)

*The Golden Circle:

What>>>How>>>Why **NO!**

Why>>>What>>>How **YES!**

“WHY” is your purpose, your cause, your belief in why you “do” (pray)

“Begin With The End In Mind” (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey)

*Habit 2: It is about “the right direction” [a quick reading]

“The Seed of Faith, The Power of Positive Believing” (*Seeds of Greatness* by Dennis Waitley)

*The 7th Seed: Faith. Believing! [again, a quick reading]

_ A quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes:

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

*The capacity for prayer was placed within us by our Father! Do we engage?

PAUSE TO PONDER:

Take a moment. What if any of these “Fore-Thoughts” caught your Attention. What was one take-away?

Be Still For A Moment. Meditate On What You Read and Heard

Write a Thought if You Will:

Share that Thought ‘Next Door’ if you will.

NOW... “THE P.A.P.A. Prayer” Considered:

“P.” #1: “Present yourself to God without pretense.”

“Be a REAL person in the relationship. Tell Him whatever is going on inside you that you can identify.”

The title of the adult Sunday School class I have so enjoyed teaching has been “Prayer: A Conversation With God, A Relationship With A Purpose”. Notice Dr. Crabb uses the word “relationship” in this first “P”. Relationship as a term is crucial to this first “P”. It presumes we are in a relationship with God, our Father. Relationships assume a shared experience.

Time to **PAUSE TO PONDER** again:

What is your take-away from this? Especially the meaning of the word “pretense” in Crabb’s target 1.

Be Still For A Moment. Meditate On This Prayer Idea.

Write a Thought if You Will:

Share a Thought ‘Next Door’ if you will.

“A.” #1: “Attend to how you’re thinking of God.”

Again, no pretending. Ask yourself, “How am I experiencing God right now?” Is He a vending machine, a frowning father, a distant, cold force? Or is He your gloriously strong but intimate Papa?”

PAUSE TO PONDER

#Write the first thought that comes to your mind.

#What is that telling you? Keep it to yourself this time.

#BUT, record from that thought what you might sustain, enhance, or abandon in your prayer attitude as you approach God in prayer.

“P” #2: “Purge yourself of anything blocking your relationship with God.”

“Put into words whatever makes you uncomfortable or embarrassed when you’re real in your relationship with Him. How are you thinking more about yourself and your satisfaction than about anyone else, including God and His pleasure?”

PAUSE TO PONDER:

#This a tough one for me. For any number of reasons. Pride. Foolishness. Selfishness.

_____ishnesses there are many. Too many and too often. The mental image for me is the grade school chalk board I experienced and, when assigned, trying to erase words the teacher had intentionally made semi-permanent.

#So no writing this time. And no sharing.

#Try this instead. RIGHT NOW, picture yourself on your knees. Lean forward if that helps. Eyes closed. Now, share a moment with The Lord, YOUR Lord, and offer an honest appraisal of a “Purge” you know must be made. Be still before Him.

#Ask His help. Ask Him to show you how. Ask Him for guideposts.

“A.” #2: “Approach God as the ‘first thing’ in your life ...”

“...as your most valuable treasure, the Person you most want to know. Admit that the other people and things do matter more to you right now, but you long to want God so much that every other good thing in your life becomes a ‘second-thing’ desire.”

DON’T PAUSE TO PONDER:

#Right away, identify at least one thing that remains in “first place” that you need to move to second place. One thing! We all have one, don’t we?

#Write away: _____

#Now consider 'How will I transform this first place item into a second place item. If inclined write one idea driver:

That is IT!

Present - Attend - Purge - Approach

Give thought to How Dr. Crabb describes this approach to prayer: (A final reading)

MY FINAL THOUGHTS:

The S.E.A. of Change -- IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

•Sustain that which is working and you know it is from evidence.

• Enhance that which is good but could be greater and you know it can.

• Abandon that which is not working and is best abandoned. Difficult!
Necessary!

Be WHELMED!

What is The One Thing?

Take a moment. Share your one thing, and your hope for it.

Pastor Marvin – Nalini IS OUR PASTOR

- The BRUSH – Your words
- The PAINT – Your Thoughts
- The PALETTE of COLORS – Your Sermons and Your Acts of Love
- The CANVAS – All of those you have “gifted” with your Love

We are about to experience change. Change is certain. But, Pastor, Nalini, your GIFT of what to Sustain, Enhance and Abandon will be with us ALWAYS! That is the “IS” that will be “ALWAYS” with us!

PSALM 46:10 *“Be still and know that I am God.”*