**Intervening Prayer, Part One** May 22, 16

Coffee/Question:

Talk with another person and list as many different types of conversations as you can think of.

* Sharing of facts
* Requests

Feedback

* sharing of facts
* requests
* expressing of hopes and dreams
* making decisions
* making promises

Just as we have different types of conversations with others, so we also have different types of conversations with God.

\* There is the conversation when we talk with him as we would a friend – “that is a beautiful tree God;” “oh, the sunset is so beautiful;” “God you are so good;” etc.

\* Then there is the conversation when we talk with God as our Father - asking him for his help or advice – for ourselves and/or for others.

Today and next week we want to dig into a different kind of conversation - the prayer of intervention.

When many followers of Jesus finish praying they will say, *“In Jesus’ name, amen.”* This phrase is part of the prayer of intervention.

But we need to be clear on what we mean when we say it.

Let’s start with “amen.”

“Amen” is an ancient Hebrew word that was transliterated.

When a word is transliterated it is taken from one language and used in another language without translation.

Take for example – ‘feliz navidad.’

At Christmas time if we greeted one another with “feliz navidad,” instead of “merry Christmas,” feliz navidad would be a... transliteration.

This is what happened with amen.

What does ‘amen’ mean? It means **“Yes! So be it! Let this be done!”**

What do we mean when we say, “In Jesus name...”

Picture in your mind a court room.

After a judge has stated their ruling, they then use their gavel.

This action is meant to emphasize the weight of the words spoken by the judge - they are binding because they have been spoken with the authority of the court behind them.

Saying, **‘in Jesus name’** is like a judge striking their gavel.

John Eldredge says when a person prays in Jesus’ name, *“[They] are using the authority of [Jesus] the Ruler of all...” (*Moving Mountains, chapter 5) to speak into and to address specific situations.

Do you remember this scene from Lord of the Rings?

Gandalf is deep in the mines of Moria, accompanying the group of hobbits, dwarves and men who are travelling with Frodo as he carries the ring of power to be thrown into the fires of Mordor.

Inadvertently, they awaken a balrog, a dark and horrifying creature who pursues after them in order to destroy them. After crossing a bridge, Gandalf tells the group to run and he stays behind to deal with the balrog.

When the creature tries to cross the bridge, Gandalf stands his ground and says, “You shall not pass.” Here Gandalf uses his authority to confront and to stop this creature.

The prayer of intervention is like this.

In order that we don’t over-emphasize or under-emphasize, or end up down a rabbit-hole, because that can easily happen, we need to state some basic truths this week that are foundational to what it means to pray in Jesus’ name, using his authority.

What happens when a person invites Jesus into their lives?

* their sins are forgiven; their guilt is removed
* they are made alive spiritually (that is, they are born of the Spirit)
* they are adopted by God
* the Holy Spirit comes to live in them
* can you think of anything else?

There is one thing that hasn’t been mentioned yet.

Look at **Colossians 1:13**.

All of us here in this room, live in the dominion of Canada.

The kind of prime minister Canada has and the decisions made in Ottawa by him and other leaders, impact the kind of country Canada is.

A good leader causes a nation and its people to flourish; just as a bad leader will cause a nation to languish. Example of North Korea on the film “Our Beautiful Planet.” Picture from space of North and South Korea at night.

Let’s try and carry this understanding over into the spiritual realm.

When Adam and Eve did what God said not to do, they not only opened the door for sin and death to enter into human experience, they allowed the leader of the fallen angels to usurp them and become the ruler of this earth.

The dark one’s rule has been malevolent.

He has brought and continues to bring ruin and devastation upon the earth.

He is the thief Jesus spoke of in John 10:10, who *“steals, kills and destroys.”*

Through his rule, Satan has enslaved humanity.

Hebrews 2:15 explains; *“…he holds humanity in slavery by their fear of death.”*

2 Corinthians 4:4 adds: *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of Jesus…”*

Humanity needed a rescuer…and God sent Jesus.

1 John 3:8: *“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”* Jesus, days before he died, said in John 12:31, *“…now the prince of this world will be driven out…”*

Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus *“...disarmed the powers and authorities [of darkness]”* and *“...triumphed over them by the cross.”*

Hebrews 2:14 says that *“[Jesus] by his death destroy[ed] him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – [in order to] free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*

Acts 26:18 says that Jesus opens a person’s spiritual eyes. When we invite Jesus into our life, according to Colossians 1:13, God *“rescues us from the dominion of darkness...”* AND *“…bring us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”*

This verse describes a remarkable change that happens to us and is central to what it means to pray in Jesus’ name. If you follow Jesus, you are no longer part of the dominion of darkness; you now are a part of Jesus’ kingdom and rule.

Jesus told his followers, after his resurrection, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* Matthew 28:18

We need to link this remarkable statement to something equally remarkable done by Jesus years earlier.

Look at **Matthew 10:1**.

Jesus gave his 12 disciples authority.

Whose authority were they given?

Jesus’ authority.

Sometime later Jesus did something similar in **Luke 10:1**.

Now look at **verse 17a**.

When the 72 returned, why were they filled with joy?

**Verse 17b.**

Because they had discovered that the authority given to them was real.

Now look at **verse 21a**.

What was it that filled Jesus with joy?

Jesus had given the seventy-two (v.19*) “…authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy.”*

 And as the seventy-two went out and used Jesus’ authority Jesus said, **verse 18**,

*“I saw Satan fall like lightening from heaven.”*

Satan, the fallen angel who had held authority over humanity, was now struck down by those he had formerly enslaved, as they acted in Jesus’ name, using Jesus’ authority.

Talk about a reversal!

That said, after the victory of the cross and the resurrection, why does it look like darkness still rules? Why does it appear like Jesus is not the Ruler over all; the One who holds all authority in heaven and on earth? And why do our prayers, in his name, seem so ineffective at times, as if we’re speaking into the wind?

Psalm 110:2 and 1 Corinthians 15:25 explain what is happening in this present time.

Psalm 110 is a messianic psalm which spoke in advance of what the rule of the Messiah would be like. Look at **verse 2**.

*“Rule in the midst of your enemies.”*

Let that phrase sink in.

This explains our present time.

The enemies of Jesus remain active.

But why?

Look at **1 Corinthians 15:25**.

*He must reign.*

In spite of how things look, Jesus reigns - he is in control.

The way things are at present is not how things are always going to be.

Do you know how we know that?

Because of that little word which comes next - UNTIL.

For he must reign in the midst of his enemies... until... he has put all his enemies under his feet.

**The victory of Jesus continues to unfold.**

This is what we are to remember every time we listen to the news.

It is not over yet.

Back up to **verse 24**.

*Then the end will come.*

There will be an end to human history.

But right now the kingdom of God continues to advance.

In this war, it’s not about taking back ground.

It’s about rescue.

The fact that Jesus rules in the midst of his enemies, was and is a decision, made by the members of the Triune God; that demonstrates their wisdom.

When Jesus walked out of the tomb, God the Father could have brought human history to an end and began the time of the new heaven and earth.

But if God had done so, countless millions of people, including many of us here this morning, would not have been born and given the opportunity to respond to the grace of God.

God has waited in order to include.

Jesus ruling in the midst of his enemies is how God’s grace continues to be extended to fallen humanity who live under the power of sin (Romans 3:9)

Back to Matthew 28:18.

Jesus holds all authority.

As he did with the 12, and then the 72, he now does with all of his followers.

To pray in Jesus’ name is to use the authority he has delegated to us.

For what purpose?

For our ease and comfort? No.

For his ongoing work of rescue? Yes.

That’s the point of Matthew 28:19-20 and Colossians 1:13.

Why did Jesus do this?

Why does he delegate to us his authority to go, to pray and to act in his name?

Our mission – to be God’s catalysts for a spiritual awakening in Sooke and beyond.

We live in a spiritually resistant area.

There are many things that distract; smother.

How can we possibly hope to realize our mission?

As we learn to pray using the authority of Jesus.

This is how we will say, “You shall not pass.”

“You shall not be allowed to function unchallenged.”

The One in us is greater.

We believe he died for the world.

We believe he destroyed the devil’s work and continues to do so.

Whether or not people choose to believe is up them.

But we will not stand by and do nothing.

In Jesus’ name we will go.

The enemies of Jesus, though they oppose him, cannot overcome him.

But there is more to it than this.

The “more” connects to the incredible destiny yet to be realized for Jesus’ followers; but a destiny we’re already living in.

In CS. Lewis’ book, ‘The Horse and His Boy,’ the lost prince of Archenland is returned to his father, the king.

But before Shasta can assume his responsibility as a prince, he has to be trained.

Shasta laments to his two horse companions, *“I am going to be educated. I shall be learning reading and writing and heraldry and dancing and history and music while the two of you will be galloping over the hills of Narnia.”*

John Eldredge compares Shasta’s situation to what God is doing in our lives in this present time.

He writes: *“We really thought this life was simply about getting a nice little situation going for ourselves and living out the length of our days in happiness. I’m sorry to take that from you, but you and I shall soon be inheriting kingdoms, and are almost illiterate when it comes to ruling. So God must prepare us to reign. How does he do this? In exactly the same way he grows us up – he puts us in situations that require us to pray and to learn how to use the authority that has been given to us. How else could it possibly happen.”* Moving Mountains, chapter 5.

This is the background that will allow us next week to unpack, what it means to pray using the authority of Jesus.

In Matthew 28:18 when Jesus delegated his authority, it was not just to the 12, not just to the 72, but to all his followers.

Why did Jesus do this? Why does he delegate to us his authority to go, to pray and to act in his name?

Jesus sends his followers, in every generation, out into the whole world with the news of his victory, and we go… using his authority as the Victor.

The work of Jesus’ rescue, completed at the cross and confirmed at his resurrection, forgives our sins and sets us free (*if the Son sets your free, you will be free indeed –* John 8:36).

But in addition, Jesus gives to us the Holy Spirit who progressively works to restore us to be who God created us to be – the stewards (the rulers) of the earth.

Remember Genesis 1:28?

Jesus, by his victory, defeated Satan; he destroyed his work, his dominion of lies and enslavement, in order that, in the time of the new heaven and earth, forgiven and transformed humans might again rule on the earth on Jesus’ behalf, and for his sake, using his authority.

And all of this is not just a future reality.

In this way, as the Holy Spirit transforms our lives, day by day, we are learning to become the kind of people who will ultimately reign with Jesus.

If Jesus is the Victor then why does he let his defeated enemies still create havoc on this earth? Because every person born on this earth is given by God the opportunity to choose whether they will turn their lives to Jesus or continue to live without him. God will not arm twist a person to love him.

It’s in that place of choice and because of choice that the defeated powers of darkness continue to stir up trouble, to defame God, to create chaos and havoc.

Each new generation affords opportunity for Jesus’ defeated enemies to try and influence men and women to reject Jesus and his salvation accomplished by his death on the cross and the empty tomb.

But with each generation it is seen that Jesus is the Victor, as people all over the globe turn their lives to God and receive his Savior Jesus.

There is no future for evil.

The victory of the cross and the empty tomb can never be undone.

When Jesus physically returned to heaven, Psalm 110:1 confirms that God the Father told Jesus, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” The right hand was well known to be the place of highest authority. And a “footstool for your feet” was understood to signify absolute defeat.

Philippians 2:9-11 adds detail to what Psalm 110:1 speaks of.

The authority which God the Father gave to Jesus the Son was that there was no one greater than him; no one who held greater power. Jesus is Lord. He is supreme in all ways.

So how does this tie in with praying in Jesus’ name?

When we pray in Jesus’ name we draw upon his authority.

Luke 10:19-20