

Stay Connected to Jesus

Sermon · Not stated

Having learnt how to get connected to Jesus, based on the theme for this year's Vacation Bible School, it is vital for us to meditate on how to stay connected to Him all the time. Many present here would recall the frustration we experienced, years ago, trying to make a long-distance telephone call.

Matters were deplorable when it came to making an internet connection over a dial-up system. Those days are thankfully behind us. We are very well connected socially over several tools the technology has placed in our hands: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Messenger, and many more.

The question before us this morning is, "Are we equally or more connected with Jesus than we are socially? How often do we connect with Him? Can we possibly 'stay connected' to Him all the time?"

While there are many ways to stay connected to Jesus, in my view, offering perpetual prayers is one of the most effective and practical of methods. Perpetual prayer, in its classic sense, is an unbroken chain of prayer, sustained around the clock by a group of believers taking it in turns. I prefer to re-define it in a more personal, everyday sense: as spontaneous, short-burst prayers a believer could make from any place, at any time.

Jesus will hear our prayers all the time, however brief it might be. He has infinite channels open for all of us to connect with Him simultaneously, and He can multitask with every single one of us at the same time. Perpetual prayer by implication will place us in the act of prayer at all times. Just as we should not divide our lives into secular and spiritual segments, we should not restrict the place and time for our prayers.

Having said that, there is a restraint: Jesus said, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men" (Matthew 6:5). The reference, I am convinced, is not about perpetual prayers, which are offered in silence and sometimes are just a heart-to-heart communication.

He is just cautioning us that we should not pretend to be praying to impress others, but our prayer should be honest and reaching. If you will recall, Jesus said a prayer at every juncture during His ministry. He prayed while He was in the synagogue, while on the hilltop, while sitting in a boat, while performing healings, while raising someone from the dead, and even when nailed to the Cross!

Taking Jesus as our role model, we should also broaden the scope of our prayer rooms to the world at large. Praying is essentially the time we spend being conscious of being in the presence of God, and of desiring to know and love Him more all the time. Prayer is not a shopping list of demands we place before Jesus.

Prayer is also not something we set aside for a particular time or place, but prayer is something we can do as we work, run, eat, converse, wait for appointments, and yes, even while asleep. We shall then be able to turn to Jesus so easily, not only when we most need Him, in those difficult and critical moments, but even in those moments when we see no specific reason to say a prayer.

Just think of it: do we not at times call up a friend or a relative when we have nothing else to do, just to say hello? Next time when you have nothing else to do, say hello to Jesus. In other words, stay connected to Him at all times. I am aware that there are many ways to define prayer, but I like to use a definition of prayer which I find is best aligned with the line of thinking we are pursuing.

"Prayer is the breathing of the spirit. As the lungs expand to draw in the life-giving elements of air by breathing, so do the depths of our soul open and expand during prayer, and our spirit mounts up to Jesus to be united with Him. And as the oxygen received by the blood is conveyed to the entire body to vitalise it, so the gift received from Jesus permeates everything that is in us and vitalises our entire inner being."

We never stop breathing so long as we are alive. By the same token, I see no reason why we should not be in communion with Jesus at all times. The conduit for remaining connected to Jesus, therefore, is prayer in perpetual mode. The question that needs to be addressed is: how do we pray all the time when we are outside the confines of our churches or our homes?

Christians ought to pray without the outward expressions or performing gymnastics as they do in some communities. To repeat from the definition we just discussed, "praying is essentially the time we spend being conscious of being in the presence of God." In other words, we should learn to experience the presence of Jesus in and around us at all times.

And we do not have to look for Jesus too far. The relationship of a believer with Jesus is both intrinsic and mysterious. He is with us and also within us (see Matthew 28:20; Colossians 1:27).

Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." When we come to Him anxious, and ask Him to help through prayer, we experience the peace which passeth all understanding (compare Philippians 4:7).

When we know Him in that manner, we can offer our prayers to Him throughout the day and night as we go about our business.

Sometimes these are prayers for help, sometimes a thank you, sometimes a prayer for someone else, sometimes an offering of praise, and sometimes an act of penitence. These are usually very simple and short prayers, but such prayers help us to know that we cannot do anything on our own, and that our Lord is the provider of everything and the protector of everyone.

Such silent and short prayers allow us to hear the still, small voice of Jesus (compare 1 Kings 19:12), to be conscious of Him, and in a sense simply allow us to soak in Jesus. When things go wrong, all we need to do is to say, 'Jesus, I need You.'

When we see others in trouble or in suffering, we say, 'Poor fellow, I pity him; he brought it upon himself,' or words to that effect. We could say instead, 'Jesus, he needs You, though he may not know You,' or 'Jesus, make me Your instrument for comforting him.'

When we see others achieve success, we feel envious of them; we at times say, "He does not deserve it." Instead, we could say, 'Jesus, let me be glad for him.' When we are successful, most often we reserve our thanksgiving for Sunday. All we need to do is to say, 'Lord Jesus, this is Your blessing. Show me a way to thank You.'

Possibilities are endless. These are not the standard set of prayers we know. These are prayers which come from within us spontaneously. There are times when we find it impossible to articulate a prayer. At such a time, just say the magic name 'Jesus.' He knows our circumstances and would need no explanations from us. He will surely bless us just the same.

Prayer is basically talking with God. It is simply expressing your heart and spending time with Him. It is not a one-way activity: we speak, and Jesus listens to our hearts; Jesus speaks, and we listen. Prayer can be exciting, powerful, and fulfilling.

It requires the believer to make every effort to live by the teachings of Jesus. It also requires that we are conscious of Him at all times. Not easy at all! Praying perpetually should be an extension of the established methods of corporate worship in churches and other places.

While these have their own purpose and usefulness, perpetual prayer has so much more to it! It is also a condition of the heart—a willingness to exalt Jesus and yield to His will. All of us long to connect with someone who can identify with our circumstances and share in our day-to-day life. Prayer is just that—a personal experience and an intimate connection with our Lord Jesus Christ. May Jesus bless all of us! Amen.