

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR PROBLEMS

Mark 10:46-52

By Andy Manning

- The title of this sermon is “What to do With Your Problems.”
- In life you will have problems.
 - Life is just one problem after another. .
 - It doesn’t matter how devoted you are, your life will be filled with problems and challenges.
 - It could be financial problems. Relationship problems. Emotional problems. Health problems. Career problems. School problems.
- And problems do not mean that God is punishing you. Problems are just a fact of life. Jesus had problems. Moses had problems. King David had problems. The apostle Paul had problems. And you will have problems.
- Throughout your life God will give you different assignments. Right now your assignment may be homeschooling your kids, or raising your kids to follow Jesus. Right now your assignment may be providing for your family in a tough economy. Your assignment may be leading a Home Group. Your assignment might be making good grades, or succeeding at Bible Drill. Your assignment might be accomplishing a goal or project at work. God has an assignment for all of us, and whatever your assignment is, it is not going to be easy. It is full of problems that you need to solve and challenges that you need to overcome.
- And this morning I want to teach you (remind you of) the first and most important thing to do with your problems. You might call this “Problem-Solving 101.”
- And this is something that many Christians either don’t do at all, or don’t do very well. But if you will do this one thing, then you can overcome and conquer and solve any problem that you face.

- We're going to learn what to do with our problems from a man named Bartimaeus. Let's read **Mark 10:46-52.**

46 They came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!" 48 Many people told him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!"

49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called the blind man and said to him, "Have courage! Get up; He's calling for you." 50 He threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

51 Then Jesus answered him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

"Rabbouni," the blind man told Him, "I want to see!"

52 "Go your way," Jesus told him. "Your faith has healed you." Immediately he could see and began to follow Him on the road.

- This story is about Jesus meeting a man named Bartimaeus.
 - We don't know much about Bartimaeus. We know he was blind. He was poor. He was a beggar. That means he was alone, because if he was surrounded by family and friends he wouldn't need to beg for money.
 - We don't know much, but there is something very important that we know about Bartimaeus that can help us with our problems:
 - **Bartimaeus called out to Jesus for help with his problem.**

- What was Bartimaeus' problem? He was blind. That's a pretty big problem. If you think you've got it bad, compare yourself to Bartimaeus. At least you're not blind and unemployed and living in the first century A.D. Bartimaeus was blind.
- And what did Bartimaeus do with his problem? He called out to Jesus for help. He prayed. He asked Jesus for help.
- What should we do with our problems? Here's Problem-Solving 101. We do what Bartimaeus did. **Turn your problem into a prayer request.** Call out to Jesus for help. If you have a problem or a challenge, pray for help.
 - Are you having financial problems? Pray. Are you having relational problems or emotional problems? Pray. Are you having problems with work or with school? Pray.
- Now why is it so important to pray about your problems? Because **when we pray, God moves.**
 - What happened when Bartimaeus called out to Jesus? Jesus helped him. Jesus healed his blindness.
 - Now I can't guarantee that Jesus will heal your blindness, but I can guarantee that when you pray, God will move. When you pray, God will help you to overcome your problems and challenges.
 - Jesus said this about prayer in Matthew 7:7. "Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you." When we pray, God moves.
- On the flip side, when we don't pray, God does not move.
 - When I played basketball they used to tell us, "You miss every shot you don't take."

- In the spiritual realm you miss every blessing that you don't pray for.
- If Jesus says "keep asking, and it will be given to you," then that means that if we don't ask, it won't be given to us.
- When you read the gospels, just about every time Jesus helped someone it was only in response to their request.
- And we have every reason to believe that if Bartimaeus would not have called out to Jesus, he would have missed out on a blessing.
- What do we do with our problems? **Turn your problem into a prayer request.** Pray about your problems.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, "Pay constantly."
- **1 Peter 5:7** says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you (NLT)."
- **Philippians 4:6** says, "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."
- Turn your problem into a prayer request.
- Now let me tell you a little secret about prayer. Prayer is super simple and easy. Prayer is just asking for help.
 - Did you have to teach your child how to ask for help? No. It's natural. It's instinctive. And prayer is just that easy. Just ask God for help.
 - But the thing that makes prayer hard is that you are talking to someone who is invisible and who doesn't talk back. So, let's take a few minutes to learn how to pray about your problems.

4 REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

- First of all, let's talk about a few requirements for effective prayer.

1. Effective prayer requires praying in Jesus' name.

- Look back at the story of Bartimaeus in Mark 10:47. "When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, 'Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!'"
- Who did Bartimaeus call out to for help? Jesus. Not Muhammad. Not just the generic term "god." Not Mary. Not one of the saints. Jesus.
- Effective prayer requires praying in Jesus' name.
- Jesus teaches that when we pray we should pray to God the Father in Jesus' name.
- Do you remember the Lord's Prayer? Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father in heaven...."
- And in **John 14:13** Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
- What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?
- What did Jesus say in John 14:6? "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
- Our sins separate us from God. The only way we can come to God in prayer is if our sins are forgiven, and the only way our sins can be forgiven is if we believe in Jesus as our Savior.

- So when we pray “in Jesus’ name,” we are confessing or admitting our faith in Jesus Christ.
- We are acknowledging that through the death of Christ for our sins, we have been forgiven, and now we can come to God in prayer.
- When you go see a movie you need a ticket to get in. When it comes to talking to God, Jesus is your ticket. If you don’t come to God in the name of Jesus, your prayers won’t get through. But if you have faith in Jesus as your Savior, then God will hear your prayers.

2. Effective prayer requires humility.

- Go back to the story of Bartimaeus and notice his prayer in **Mark 10:47**. “When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, ‘Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!’”
- Underline the words “have mercy.”
- Back then people thought that blindness was a punishment for sin, so Bartimaeus was asking Jesus to help him even though he didn’t deserve it. In other words, Bartimaeus was asking for help, but he recognized that he didn’t deserve it.
- Bartimaeus was wrong about one thing and right about one thing.
 - First, problems are not always God’s punishment for sin. Like I said earlier, problems are a part of life. Even Jesus had problems, and He was perfect. So there’s no reason to believe that Bartimaeus was blind because of his sin.
 - But Bartimaeus was right about something. He was a sinner, and he was undeserving of Jesus’ help.

- This is called humility. **Humility is when you see yourself the way that God sees you.**
- When you pray, you have to recognize two things.
 - First, you are undeserving.
 - Because of our sin, what we deserve is hell.
 - So anything God does for you will be an undeserved gift. It will be an act of grace and mercy.
 - The last thing we want is for God to treat us as we deserve.
 - A Christian should never tell God, “God, that’s not fair.”
 - You don’t want fair. You want mercy.
 - And second, God doesn’t have to answer your prayer the way you want Him to.
 - You are not in charge; God is.
 - There is a God, and you are not Him.
 - Your prayer is not God’s command. Your prayer is a request.
 - He is in charge, and that’s a good thing, because only He knows what is best.
 - God will always move when you pray, just not always in the way you want or expect.
- So when you pray, be humble.
 - Recognize that you are undeserving, and that God is in charge.
 - Ask, don’t demand.
 - And don’t expect God to do exactly what you want.
 - If not, then when God doesn’t answer your prayers you will get angry with God and stop praying. And you might stop believing in Him altogether.

3. Effective prayer requires specificity.

- When they brought Bartimaeus to Jesus, Jesus asked him a question in verse 51. "What do you want me to do for you?"
- Now that's odd. Doesn't Jesus know everything? Can't He read minds? Yes and yes. Jesus could have just healed Bartimaeus right then. But instead, Jesus asked Bartimaeus for specificity. And only when Bartimaeus said, "Rabbouni, I want to see!" did Jesus heal him.
- To pray effectively, you need to be specific with your requests.
- Don't just pray repeated prayers like the Lord's Prayer. It's good to pray the Lord's Prayer, but if you want God to help you with specific problems, then you need to specifically pray for those problems. If you are praying for some of your friends to get saved, you need to mention them by name.
- Go back to **Philippians 4:6**. "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."
 - Underline the words "let your requests be made known to God." Doesn't God already know your requests? What this means is to specifically ask for what you want.
- God doesn't work through general prayers. He only works through specific prayers. Just a generic "bless me today," or "help me have a good day" is not going to cut it. God already knows what you need, but He wants you to make those requests known to Him.

4. Effective prayer requires faith.

- Let's look at the story of Bartimaeus one more time. In verse 52 Jesus said, "Go your way. Your faith has healed you."

- Some people are confused about faith. Faith is not believing that God will give you exactly what you ask for.
- God doesn't do that, and we don't want God to act that way because we don't always know what is best for us.
- **Faith is believing that God is listening and will answer your prayer according to His good and perfect will.**
- You have to have faith for prayer.
 - In fact, prayer is an act of faith. The reason so many Christians don't pray, or pray very little, is because they don't believe it's worth their time.
 - Only if you believe that God is listening, and that God is going to move, will you find the strength to pray.
- **Hebrews 11:6** says, "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him."
- You have to believe the words of **James 5:16**. "The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect."
- You have to believe the words of **James 4:8**. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."
- You have to have faith in the words of **Jeremiah 29:13**, "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."
- You have to believe the words of **2 Chronicles 7:14**. "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and

turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land (NLT).”

- You have to have faith in **2 Chronicles 16:9**, “For the eyes of Yahweh roam throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His.”
- What do you do with your problems? Turn your problems into prayer requests. And watch God move!
- Now before we close, I want to get practical. I’ve been a Christian for over twenty-five years now, and I’ve developed some skills along the way. Let me share with you four skills for effective prayer.

4 SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

1. Schedule your prayers.

- Prayer is an activity. And activities take time.
- What do you have to do if you want to make sure that you get something done? You have to write it into your schedule.
- If you want to make sure to exercise consistently, you have to schedule it. You have to decide what days and what times you are going to exercise.
- It’s the same with prayer. If you don’t schedule it, it won’t get the time that it needs.
- I recommend that you set aside about thirty minutes every day, or most days of the week, to get alone with God and pray.
 - This is what I call a Daily Quiet Time.

- This is also when you will read your Bible.
- Prayer is how we talk to God; the Bible is how God talks to us. If you want to pray effectively, you need to set aside time to do it just about every day.
- Every day except for Saturday I spend time in prayer and Bible reading from 3:15-3:45 in the morning. And I don't miss unless I accidentally forget to the set the alarm.
 - What about this morning? Yes. This morning I was in prayer from 3:15-3:45 am. If prayer is important, you need to schedule it.

2. Organize your prayers.

- Once you start praying regularly, you're going to discover that there's a lot of things that you want to pray for. You want to pray for yourself; your family; your church; your friends; your country; missionaries; and on and on.
- How do you find time to pray for everything?
- The key is to organize your prayers. I learned this skill in college.
- It's called a Prayer Guide.
 - On a sheet of paper, or on an index card, write down the days of the week that you are going to have a Daily Quiet Time.
 - Then, next to each day, write down the topics that you want to pray for on that day. This way you're not trying to pray for everything every single time you sit down to pray.

- This is what my Prayer Guide like:

Sunday: Worship Service

Monday: Connection Cards

Tuesday: Family

Wednesday: Church Acadiana

Thursday: Unbelievers

Friday: America/Politics

- But here's something to remember. This is just a guide, not a law. In other words, I don't just pray for what's on my Prayer Guide. If there's something urgent or heavy on my heart, I pray for that as well.

3. Balance your prayers.

- The most basic prayer is a request. It's asking God for help. But there's more to prayer than that.
- Prayer is a conversation with your Heavenly Father. And if you want your relationship with God to grow, then your conversation should be more than just asking for things.
- Can you imagine if the only time your child or spouse talked to you is when they wanted to ask you for something? That's not a very healthy relationship.
- The key is to balance your prayers.
- When I was a kid I learned an acronym that helps you balance your prayers.
 - **A.C.T.S.** A stands for adoration, which is another word for praise. C stands for confession. T stands for thanksgiving. And S stands for supplication.

- So every day when I pray in my quiet time, I start out with adoration. I spend time praising God for His attributes. “God you are wonderful. You are almighty. I praise You because You are all-knowing. You are full of grace and truth.” Then I move on to confession. I admit my sins to God, and ask for forgiveness, and recommit to be obedient. Then I move on to thanksgiving, in which I thank God for all the things He has done for me. And then last I spend time in supplication, which is a big word that means to ask for something. That’s when I ask God to help me with my problems.

4. Write your prayers.

- When I pray my mind tends to wander. I find myself thinking about all sorts of things. And that wastes time.
- And also when I pray I tend to repeat myself, because I can’t remember what I already said.
- So one day I learned from another pastor a very helpful skill to help me stay focused. **Writing out my prayers.**
- Some people use a pen and journal, but I like to use my computer because I prefer typing rather than writing. But when I pray in my quiet time, I write out my prayers, word for word. That’s right. Word for word.
- I’ve been doing it for years. It helps me to stay focused, and it helps me to be specific, and clear, and not repeat myself.

CONCLUSION

- We don’t know that much about Bartimaeus, but we know he did one thing right. He prayed. He called out to Jesus for help.

- And like Bartimaeus, we all have our own problems.
- But God has given us a wonderful gift to help us solve our problems. Prayer.
- From now on, when you have a problem, the first and most important thing to do in solving that problem is to turn your problem into a prayer request.