

The Prayer of Supplication

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 September 2024

Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Last week I talked about Exodus 34 where the Israelites mess up.! What?

When you make a mistake, that's what God wants to tell you. And then, of course, I'm thinking about Jesus and I'm thinking about how he acted. He was gracious and compassionate. I've been reflecting on just this unhurried Jesus as he walks around doing a million things, being asked to do a million things, but yet he has this calm spirit.

But then there was one time that I can remember where he really lost it. When was that time?

Where did Jesus really lose his will? The temple. This is Matthew 21.

This is one week before he goes and does the thing that saves mankind once and for all. And he goes in the temple and then he gets so mad. What does he see?

[1:20] Bill, what does he see? What happens in the temple that causes him to be like this? The unbelievers weren't allowed to worship.

What did he see in the temple as well? So that's one thing. What else did he see in the temple that really? They are doing business. You see, it's actually hard to blame them because the thing about the temple at that time is people would travel from really far to worship.

And one of the ways to worship is to sacrifice and to bring an animal, a lamb. So, of course, if you've traveled really far, okay, I actually, this is one of my things. When I like to walk around and travel anywhere, this frustrates Christina, I like to travel with my hands in my pockets without a bag. As few items as possible, I will do. That's me. So you can imagine if you've traveled from hundreds and hundreds of miles and there's no high-speed rail and there's no MTR and you hear, oh, actually, you don't need to bring your goat because right outside the temple, you can buy a goat. And actually, you don't need to do currency exchange beforehand. There's Alipay and WeChat at the temple door. And so then you've got these entrepreneurs who are like, hey, we can make a business out of this.

[2:35] And so that's how the business starts. And then, of course, it becomes this whole thing. And then people now go to the temple to do all these things. And it becomes a different kind of place that is what it should be. And so Jesus walks in.

This is one week before he ends up getting arrested and on the cross. And he goes in and he sees us. And what does he say? Well, he just completely tears the place apart. And then what does he say?

Who knows what he says? Huh? Well, he eventually will build it back up in three days. But absolutely, that's something that he says. What does he say, Johnny?

He says, guys, you've got it all wrong. Well, this house was supposed to be a house of prayer. And you've turned it into a den of thieves. You're businessmen ripping people off.

And I realize the one thing that really gets to Jesus isn't us breaking rules necessarily. It's when our relationship with God is threatened. Because the whole point, everything, the end game is about us having a relationship with him.

[3:39] In his final prayer in John 17, he says, pray that they would have eternal life, which is what? Is to know you. And now you're in this temple where people are supposed to know God. But instead, our minds are completely distracted.

Why are we doing this? Because I'm just, I want this. My prayer is that this would be a house of prayer. Paul prayed earlier in our pre-service meeting that we would be a people of prayer.

I don't know why you walked in here today. But my hope it isn't to sing songs and to listen to someone speak. It's that you would meet the living God. And that you would speak to him. And that you would hear from him.

That's why we're doing this. If you're here for the first time, and this is all a little bit strange. Apologies. This is a little bit strange. But this is why we're doing what we're doing. And today, I hope, we'll have this chance where you can walk out of here going, man, I heard from God. And I spoke to God. This will be the last week. And then we're going to take a pause and we're going to go into a more standard sermon series. But I think we're going to keep revisiting this again. Just constantly reminding ourselves of why we're here.

[4:43] Because I need reminding. Those mission statements are for me. Every time I walk in, I'm like, what are we doing? Just running through the motions? No, this is us trying to connect with God.

May we be a house of prayer. So we started a few weeks ago. We did the Lectio Divina. I hope some of the, has blessed some of you. We did the Body Prayer. And I had a friend tell me that they've been doing that every day.

And it's been really good just to kind of wake yourself up at least. And then we did the ABC Prayer where we talked authentically. And so we started saying, hey, just pray what you've got.

If you're angry, if you're frustrated, if you're confused, whatever it is, just pray what you've got. You don't have to be worried. Psalm 22, you have this psalm which is like, God, why have you forsaken me? Why have you turned your back on me? You can pray that kind of prayer.

You know you can pray that kind of prayer because Jesus quoted that prayer. And so after that, it's just a simple, whatever you've got. And then it's a prayer of surrender. Whatever building projects you have. You're like, God, I've been trying.

[5:43] I've been straining, striving, stressing. Ultimately, if you don't build the house, it'll be me building in vain. Last week, we came and said, God, sorry.

Sorry, we've messed up. The art of confession that the modern church is guilty of losing. Of us saying, sorry, that we've drifted away, that we've made it about ourselves.

Now, finally, we get to the one where we get to talk about asking. Now, if you are honest with yourself, if I'm honest with myself, most of our prayers are us asking for things.

As soon as I jump into it, God, thank you. I'm praying for this. Can you do this? Can you do that? Can you do this? Can you do that? And actually, it's okay to get there.

It's okay to be there. And our prayer is that our asks, our requests won't be childish ones, but they will be childlike ones. So God does want us to ask. Of course, when you reflect on your own prayer life, and if all you do is ask and you have no surrender, you have no sorry, you have no bigger picture, then, of course, that's where the problem is.

[6:46] But we are allowed to ask. Paul Miller described, if you look at the Gospels and how Jesus teaches prayer, if you were to summarize it all in one word, it is to ask.

Matthew 7, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened up to you. Whatever you ask to the Father in my name, you will get. Now, of course, when you ask in his name, you're invoking your status as a co-heir with Christ, you're not asking for selfish things, things that you want.

If you're asking in his name, on his behalf, you're asking for things that you know that Jesus would want. That's where the psalmist in Psalm 37 says, delight in the Lord and he will grant you the desires of your heart, which sounds great if you take the second statement, the second half, that he will grant you the desires of your heart.

That would be so good. But the first half is delight in the Lord. So prayer really is just this reorienting of our hearts. It's formation prayer where you're saying, actually, you're bending your will to his.

That's what you're doing. You're not giving him requests and commands. What you're actually doing is, God, it's what Jesus prayed in the garden. This is what I want. I would quite fancy not being hung on a tree.

[8:05] So if you can remove this suffering, please do. But not my will, but yours be done. But we can ask. Charles Spurgeon said, actually, if you were to summarize the whole rule of the kingdom, it is to ask.

And so we reach this final prayer that we're going to go through today, which is the prayer of supplication to ask. But before we do that, I'm actually going to invite my dear wife, Christina, up because I'm going to ask her to share a little bit about what it is, what her relationship is like with asking.

So can we give her a gentle round of applause as MJ is sleeping on that? Don't wake him up. Just in the spirit of confession, I actually asked my wife to do this this morning.

So anyway, she has a fascinating testimony and a story of her relationship with God. Because when I talk about asking, I wonder how you relate to that.

I think some of us have grown up with lots of blessings and we're a little bit spoiled and we're a little bit entitled. So everything about God is, God, I need this. I need that.

[9:16] But some of us, maybe our relationships with our parents is influential in this. because we don't even dare ask him at all. That actually God is just so far.

We are so sinful. We don't deserve to ask him anything. I don't know where you fall in this, but Christina has a wonderful testimony to share with you that really encourages me. Hi.

Gosh. I hope this doesn't wake him up. Yeah. So, no, I guess just to give you a bit of context, I'm the eldest of three girls.

And at a very young age, I was needed to help around in the house. My parents were very, very busy.

And at one point, my dad worked for three years straight without one day off, not even in the weekends, working at multiple locations.

[10:19] And so my relationship with my parents was very much like, I am almost a co-parent. To look after my sisters, my younger sisters, was the thing that I was expected to do.

And so, when it comes to asking, I would, I think initially when I was young, I would ask my mom or dad, it's like, oh, I want to go out to play.

This was in the summer holidays. And then they would say, why do you want to go out to play? What's the point of that? As if it was something that was a terrible thing to do.

Because what was important was for me to do the chores or make sure I do the homework and academia and things like that. And so, I then realized that there was a really good thing to get some things that I wanted, which was to ask my younger siblings to ask my parents.

I was like, oh, my mommy, just ask mom if we can go out to play for a little bit or can we go and have a, can we have a snack or go to the ice cream van to get an ice cream.

[11:44] Now, I think growing up, what happened was I grew a lot of fear in asking for anything. And eventually, I stopped asking at all.

And, you know, as I grew to know God, and who he was for me, I had a reverence awe towards him.

And that wasn't a problem. I recognized his majesty, his power. But it wasn't until later on, I realized that in my prayers, I would not ask him for anything.

Um, which is really interesting because when I'm walking with people, I was like, oh, just ask, just ask. Um, until, um, yeah, I didn't really realize the extent of my lack of asking until I went on a journey of going through, um, an adoption process because I wanted, I felt the Lord place on my heart, um, when I was 15, um, that I should adopt.

And I was like, oh, I really want to adopt. To my parents, um, disagreement and horror. Like, if you can have your own, why would you adopt? Anyway. Um, so, I started the process of adoption just after Ruben was born, my first son.

[13:24] And, uh, after that, uh, sadly, that didn't, um, happen. Um, which I was frustrated about. I was like, oh, why, why, you know, why did that not work out?

Um, and then I had Alicia, um, my second one, which was great. Came over here and then we thought, okay, um, I'll try again. Let's, uh, try the adoption route.

Um, and sadly, that didn't happen the second time around. And so, actually, about two years ago, um, I felt the Lord asking me to spend time with him.

So, at the beginning of the, of each year, I would always, always ask God, it's like, oh, is there anything that you want me to do? Is there anything you want me to do? Um, now, doing things is not my problem.

In fact, Paul, um, told me to calm down, to take a chill pill earlier today. As I came in and saw the chairs went, um, lay down, I was like, okay, let's go, go, go, go, go.

[14:35] I need to do this before I feed. Um, and he was like, Chris, Chris, take, take a chill pill.

Okay, okay, just tell us what to do and we'll do it. Okay, oh, yeah, okay. Um, anyway, so doing is not my problem.

Sitting still is my problem. Um, and also asking. Um, now, asking God, what do you want me to do? Became, turned into God impressing on my heart a heavy burden of him saying, I just want you to spend time with me.

And I was like, but God, I do. I spend time with you all the time. So I would talk to him, pray with him in the most random places. Um, and, he would give me visions and signs and I love that.

But at the beginning of, um, that year, he was like, no, just want you to spend time with me. And I told James that, I'm like, oh, I don't know what that means.

I mean, that's, that's hard. I felt convicted to share it because I knew what he was asking. What he was asking was, don't do anything. Don't do anything.

[15:52] Just be with me. And so, I felt so convicted that I took 40 days out of my usual schedule to spend time with God in prayer.

and I messaged all the leaders and said, oh, I feel like the Lord is asking me to do this and I think it's something to do with adoption. And this was in the middle of our second adoption process.

And, um, what happened was I began just spending time with the Lord as soon as the kids went to school. I would just pray and it was, I would read and before I know it, the day would be gone.

um, and it was about seven days in. Um, God just overwhelmed me with this conviction that I did not know how to be a child of God.

And I just, I just remember I just wept because I was like, what do you mean? I do know, I know that you are my father.

[17:08] I know that you are my God. I know that I am your child, your beloved child. And then he kept saying, he's like, no, you don't.

No, you don't. And I was like, what do you mean? And what happened was, as I spent more and more time just with God, the message was, you do not know that you are my child even though you proclaim it, even though you share it, even though you encourage others that they are a child of God because you do not ask.

And I think on a reflection I thought, well, I always ask. I was like, I ask for your will to be done in my life every single day. And what the spirit was reminding me was like, no, that's not asking me. that's just submitting under my authority, which is good. But your problem is that you don't come to me as a child who can just simply ask.

And so I then yeah, I then just stopped and I complained I said, God, but I have, you know, dedicated these 40 days and all you're telling me is that I don't know that I am your child.

[18:58] And that's it. So I was quite frustrated. But then what he kept telling me was true.

And I looked back and I was like, oh yeah, I can't. I don't, I find it so difficult to ask. In fact, if you ask those who know me a little better, I find it very ask to ask for help in any way.

It takes a lot for me to get to a point where I should just ask. And what happened after that was when I went to James after the 40 days, actually before I went to James, God put this desire on my heart to have more children.

And I went to God and said, Lord, you know my desire is to have more children, hence why I went through the adoption process. Now I'm not going to have more children with James because James has said, no, he does not want to need more children.

And you know that story. He's like, I'm done. I feel complete. I don't need any more tiredness in my life.

[20:16] And so anyway, you know my desire, God. So I just bowed on my knees and actually asked. And it wasn't just asking, oh God, can I have this?

It was bowing before him with confidence that not only do I know who he is, that I know who I am because of him and because he calls me beloved.

And I can confidently come to him as his child and ask. And so you know the passage seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open and ask and it shall be given to you was resonating in me.

And of course the other part was to ask in confidence to know who he is and then in accordance to knowing who he is, then also in accordance to his will, you will receive.

and then afterwards when James said, oh so what did you do in those 40 days? I was like, yeah, God was teaching me about how I should be a child of God.

[21:41] And that was it. I didn't tell him what I asked for. I didn't tell him the challenge of what I asked for.

So yeah. And so God's a troll and so is my wife. Now just to reiterate, you couldn't find anyone more against having children than me.

Of course, I love them, they're in there. But I was like, I'm so done. I'm so done with this. John knows, I'm so done with this. And so I was so happy. My tank was so full.

And we hadn't fought over this issue, but this was the sensitive point of contention that husbands and wives find themselves in. So then unbeknownst to me, a month later, I'm in Singapore for a conference.

And I, okay, this is a bit, okay, the place this happens is a little bit weird, but you should have to bear with me. So we were in the night safari. Me and my colleagues and we were just kind of sitting on those, who's been to the night safari in Singapore?

[22:49] Where you're kind of on that little tram, that cart thing, and you're just walking and we go past and we see the flamingos. And in that moment, the most random thought, it was, James, if you had a third, you'd be okay.

Just the most random thought. I don't know why it was the flamingos. I've committed to never seeing them ever again. And it was, James, if you had a third, you'd be okay.

I said, no, I won't be okay. You know I won't be okay, God. And then it was just, of course, we're looking at other animals and it just starts swirling in my head. What would it look like to have a third?

That would be so crazy. I mean, I'm getting pretty old. This is not, let's leave it. And anyway, our two kids are already very happy and also getting older as well, so the gap would be pretty big.

And then I turned, and actually, one thing I've always said is, actually, my puzzle is complete. I am so happy in every way. I'm not needing anything. And so I turned to my colleague who I'd just met, who'd come from the US, and I said, hey, so how many kids do you have?

[23:49] He said, we have three. But the third one was a surprise and it was a gift that we didn't know that we were going to receive. And it was a medically impossible gift.

He'd done something to make sure that that wouldn't happen, and it happened. Right? He went back to that doctor and the doctor had already tucked a lot close down. But he said this one thing. He said, oh, but it was a missing piece of the puzzle I never knew I needed. I was like, whew, that's a good line. And then I said, how old were your kids when the surprise happened?

He was like, 11 and 7. I was like, oh, shoot, my kids are 11 and 7. And none of, she didn't tell me any of this. And I was having my own little moment freaking out.

But anyway, as the good, honest husband, after my conference, I went back home, I said, hey, let's talk about something. I just had the most weird experience of encounter in the night safari with the flamingos. And I think God's telling me that I need to surrender my fear and control of having another kid.

[25:07] And can you just imagine from her perspective, the wrestling that she went on on these 40 days, she just broke down into his. And I was like, yeah, I'm crying too. Oh, he's awake.

And then, so then it was a wrestling match. It was like, okay, look, we'll try, but we can't try for long. Just a little try, just a little knock, and then we'll run at if the door opens. And I was like, hey, look, we're just going to try for a very short period. She's like, oh, but that's too short a period. Then I'm like, well, if your God wants this to happen, then he will make it happen.

And anyway, of course, it happened fairly quickly. And then I was just like, man, God loves Christina so much. And he really doesn't like me very much.

And just to watch that journey where I know that she doesn't like asking for help. She doesn't like asking for anything. But to watch her go through this journey and learn what asking means was inspiring to me.

[26:16] And of course, we're blessed with this cute little baldy right here. But I'll tell you this, and I want to be sensitive because, actually, I know that there are people also in the room who have asked for children.

Actually, you've asked for different things over the years, and you've not got them yet. And I tell this story not just to say, oh, man, this is, God is so good, and he blessed with this.

It's, what I do know is that, actually, God is good. He does know what you want. But, yes, there are some times where you don't get what it is.

And, actually, I'm here to tell you, I'm not here to tell you why, like, why. I don't know why. I don't know. And, as a pastor, I'm learning over and over again.

Why, God, won't you answer the prayers that we've had for all these years? And, maybe, a final thing I wanted Christina to share in all this is, actually, this is one prayer, but you have tons of prayers that you've not had answered.

[27 : 29] There are long-standing prayers right now about your family that are still not answered. What's your process when it comes to unanswered prayer? I think, first of all, is admitting that I'm angry and frustrated.

But, going to him with that, just as raw as it can be, and being honest with God, and being reminded that he is faithful, being reminded that he is good, and being reminded that it's not about the things in this world.

God, this whole time that we have on earth is just God chasing us, and us alone, that he wants us to really, really know that we are his child, his child, his precious, beloved child, and there's nothing that we can do, wrong or right, that would make him love us any more or less.

And just reminding of that truth then puts everything into perspective, that even if he gave me what I wanted, that that isn't what he wants from us, that we just go and ask, but we go and ask in acknowledgement of who we are, that we are beloved, and that's all that matters, that's what God cares about most, not to just fulfill our desires, but for us to desire him as our father.

Thank you. Can we give her a round of applause? If you join me in just praying these words with me, Psalm 121.

[29 : 33] I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper.

The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life.

the Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore. These are the words of the psalmist in Psalm 121.

This is our final song of ascent in this series. This is a very well-known one. In fact, actually, if you talk about the well-known psalms that people use to memorize, it's probably Psalm 23, Psalm 46, and then Psalm 121.

[30 : 37] You've heard this before. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Some people call this Psalm the Psalm of the sojourner, the Psalm of the person who just journeys in life.

Life is hard, and there's an anxiety that comes of this as they're walking and they're seeing the hills. Now, just a reminder, walking in the hills those days was not like walking in Dragon's Back for hiking or Lion Rock.

here in Hong Kong, when you're walking the hills back in those days, there was danger. There were thieves. That's where even the parable of the Good Samaritan comes, because someone is walking through and ends up getting jumped.

So I lift my eyes up to the hills. Where does my help come from? God, I do not go to God, this journey, this journey is hard, it's long, I can't even see around the corners, I don't even know if there's something that's going to be out there for me.

And the psalmist is reminding himself, I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come from? And then he answers himself, my help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

[31 : 47] I'll tell you what that means, that means there is no hill I need to be afraid of. This guy made heaven and earth, I don't have to be afraid of storms because he can stop the storm just like that.

It's that person. Do you have anxiety as you walk this life and this journey that you're on? You're like, where is my help going to come from? Then this is the prayer that you remind yourself with, I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth and he will not let my foot be moved.

Ken and I will know this through our injury that we had in the early days when we had the crutches. Actually, there was danger, there was slipping, especially in the rainy season, right? But there's someone who actually won't let me slip, who won't let me fall and he won't slumber nor sleep.

And one of the things the doctors told us was when you sleep in the early days, you have to lift your foot. Right up. You have to lift it up because all the blood cannot clot up in the leg area.

[32:53] So I put a couple pillows under my feet as I sleep. But of course, the moment I fall asleep, I'm a martial arts expert during my sleeping time. So by the time I'm done, the cushion's completely somewhere else.

Well, actually no, my wife's kicked me out of bed by then. So I'm in the other room anyway. But the one who keeps my foot, the one who looks after me, does not slumber nor sleep. It's 24-7.

He's always there. And the Lord is your keeper. He is your shade on your right hand. So the sun won't strike you, nor the moon by night.

Do you believe that? That there is a God who is with you every step of the way that is sovereign over everything that you're going through, even the pain, even the uncertainty, even if you don't know what is just around the corner on that hill, he is there with you.

Now, there's an equivalent prayer in the New Testament that is very quite similar. It's probably one of the most well-known passages in the New Testament, and that's Philippians 4, verse 4-7. And it is, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[34:10] Do not be anxious about anything, but in prayer and supplication, supplication means to ask for things, earnestly, sincerely, persistently.

John Calvin says, keep asking, two times, three times, a hundred times. That is the nature of prayer, to keep going, just like the persistent widow that Jesus talks about, just keep asking.

Now, yes, some of those prayers you don't think get answered. And I don't want to say this in a cliché, cheap kind of way, but I can tell you by my own testimony that actually some of the Lord's greatest refusals of my prayer actually ended up being the things that I really needed.

God doesn't give you what you want, he gives you what you need and what you need the most is to be with him. And I don't say this cheaply. I say this as someone who has lost loved ones.

I say this as someone who has seen their children in ICU. And the Lord doesn't seem to be quick to answer. So I know, and I don't say this without a sensitivity of that, but what I do, so I don't know why sometimes he doesn't answer, but I do know who he is.

[35:18] And he is the one that keeps us, who does not slumber nor sleep. And so we go to him and we pray and we ask, mostly saying that we trust you, God, that you are sovereign over us.

That whether you are my keeper, even in my going out and in my coming in, that you are just always with us. So then the question becomes how do we pray or what do we pray for?

There's two kinds of prayer of supplication that I want to briefly talk about and one is petition.

Petition is basically you going to God and asking for things for you. Okay, so that could be, God, I've just got all this anxiety, I've got all this pain, I've got all this hurt, can you free me of these things?

I want to be a better person, but I know I can't get there without you. It's, God, I really need a parking space right now because I'm running late and I think, God, would you give me a parking space?

God, I really, that thing I could really do with that project coming through. Now, of course, we've got to search our hearts and go, is that for me or is that for his glory? But we're allowed to ask these questions to him and that is petition.

[36:32] And then there is intercession, which is, petition is you praying for yourself, intercessory prayer is you praying for others. You're praying for things that are beyond yourself. And we could do with both of those prayers.

We want to pray those kind of prayers and I want to give us some time now to pray for those kinds of things because even in the Lord's prayer, it's, God, would you give me this? Would you forgive me of this?

Would you deliver me from evil? So even baked into the Lord's prayer are basically questions asking God for something. And so what do we pray for? whether it's petition or whether it's intercession.

Today, given that we're all gathered here, I would love for us to spend a bit of time in intercession to pray. I said this last time and I'll confess this again.

I watched the presidential debate with arms crossed, with a smirk on my face and somehow if you looked at me you'd be like, oh, you enjoy watching the world burn and on fire.

[37:36] And then the Lord convicted me. Have you ever prayed for those two candidates? Have you ever prayed for your leaders? Have you ever prayed for your boss?

Paul tells Timothy, hey, you should pray for the leaders of this world. Have we spent time doing that? Have you prayed for your enemies?

Jesus says, pray for those who persecute you. We can pray for ourselves, we can pray for our loved ones, we can pray for our friends, especially if they're in dire need of something. But do we pray for the things that are out there that are not so fun to pray for?

So if you would allow me, if you would allow us, let's spend some time to pray for those things. Now I won't get you all to turn and pray with each other. Today we're going to just pray prayers of supplication of intercession to the things that actually are out there that we as believers need to pray for.

And so the first one is actually to pray for our enemies. Now whilst I speak and I turn to the verse just to quote it to you correctly, you can think about enemies right now.

[38:42] Or you can think about the people who really frustrate you right now. I have some in my head even as I am scrolling through the scriptures. People that really annoy you. People who are actually out to get you.

Jesus said, you have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Actually, I'm not doing this myself. There's another pastor who actually likes to pray in this order. It starts with enemies and then it goes into leaders and then it goes into sinners and finally it's your loved ones and your friends.

So let's pray. If you would join me now, let's spend a few moments to pray for your enemies. Pray for those who have hurt you. Pray for those who are threatening you.

Pray for those who frustrate you. Let us spend some time now and pray for those who persecute us. Lord, we pray for those who have hurt us, who are hurting us, those who we perceive as enemies, those who frustrate us.

[40:19] Lord, we muster up every piece of courage that we have inside us and we pray that you would bless them, that you would keep them safe, that they would know the warmth of your embrace, that any hurt and brokenness that is within them, that causes hurt and brokenness in others and other people, we pray that you would heal and you would restore them.

And we find the courage to pray that prayer from the cross.

As Jesus, when you asked God to forgive them because they know not what they do, remembering that we once were enemies, that we didn't know what we would do.

And Lord, can you soften our hearts towards them? Can you be our protector, but can you also be theirs?

Can you be their comforter, just as you are our comforter? Help us to see them as you see them. Help us to forgive them.

[41:57] Help us to be gracious and compassionate and slow to anger towards them. moment. and then Paul tells Timothy first of all then I urge that supplications prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people for kings and all who are in high positions that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way let's spend a few moments now and pray for the leaders in your circle in this city let's pray for John Lee let's pray for President Xi let's pray for Donald Trump let's pray for Kamala Harris let's pray for the leaders of this world so Lord we lift up the leaders of this world to you we know that mankind is made in your image that we know that we have chosen our own way that we all fall short of your glory

Lord there is no system that is perfect because there are no people that are perfect we know that every system is broken because people are broken Lord we appeal to you God almighty still sovereign and on your throne the kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall that you remain unchanged above them all would you have your way even what the enemy means for evil would you turn for good Lord we pray for this world to repent and turn and choose you again we know that starts with us repenting and turning to you again and turning to you again and turning to you again

Lord we pray for this world to repent and turn to you again and turn to you again and turn to you again Lord we pray without any sense of pride or judgment as you said who is to condemn Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who is at the right hand of God who indeed is interceding for us who shall separate us from the love of Christ we pray for us from the love of God we pray for us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord as we come to an end here

I want to pass the time over to Johnny to lead us in communion let us stay in this space of intercession reflection and come to God together as one family moment moment moment moment

moment