

Speaker 1 ([00:06](#)):

Well, welcome to Northview online Northview is one church in 13 different locations, but today and for the next few weeks we're one church meeting in thousands of locations. I know there's some of you that are joining us for the very first time and if you don't have a church home, we'd be honored to have you come and be a part of all that God's doing at Northview. Listen, we might not be able to go to church right now, but we will never stop being the church. So again, thanks for joining us and now let me just open with prayer and I'll jump into today's teaching. Father, I just thank you and I praise you for your faithfulness. I thank you Lord God that you are still on the throne today. God, we don't understand all that's going on in our, in our world today with this virus, but we know who you are.

Speaker 1 ([00:49](#)):

And so Lord, I just pray for all those that are battling this virus. I pray for their healing and I pray dear God that you would just bring an antidote to cure this virus. God, we thank you and we praise you. I pray for churches all over this area that you would just be with those that are teaching and preaching about your amazing love and now God, I ask that as we get into your word that you would use it to challenge each and every one of us. Thanks God in the name of Jesus. Amen. You know guys, there's an expression that people oftentimes use when they're going through a difficult situation. They'll say like, I feel like I'm in over my head. Have you ever felt like you're in over your head? Especially lately you might be an investment adviser trying to advise your clients and one of the worst ever downturns of the stock market.

Speaker 1 ([01:35](#)):

Or maybe you're a business owner that has no customers now, or maybe you're someone working in healthcare and you feel like you're at risk at the virus, or maybe you're a parent trying to hold down a job while your young kids are now home from school or a pastor who no longer has services. I mean, I could go on and on, but I think you'd get the idea and yet I also know that some of you are dealing with difficulties that have absolutely nothing to do with covid 19 maybe you're fighting a health scare or a breakdown of your marriage or some other impossible situation. Tempers are flaring, trust is broken and emotions are running high and you are at a loss as to what you need to do. I know you can all relate to what I'm talking about. It's one thing to feel like you're waiting in a little shallow water.

Speaker 1 ([02:22](#)):

Goodness. It's quite another to feel like you're in so deep you can barely catch your breath. When that happens, it's easy to lose hope. So we're in a series of messages called hope in crisis and we're talking about how important it is to have hope in our life, especially now that this pandemic virus is all around the world. The truth is we all hope for something. We're hoping for a specific outcome. For instance, I hope I get a raise or I hope she goes out with me. Sometimes the things that we hope for are more serious. I hope this depression or I hope it's not cancer and yet eventually everything we hope for will either wear out, give out, fall apart, melt down, or go away. Guys, that's why it's so important to have a hope in something that is eternal, something that you can count on, a confident expectation of all the God has promised us.

Speaker 1 ([03:19](#)):

Listen, our hope is found in Christ. Listen to this passage in Hebrews chapter 11 it says, now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see certain of what we do not see. Hope and Christ is more than holding your breath or trying to be optimistic. Martin Luther King jr once

said, there is a big difference between hope and optimism. Optimism is the belief that circumstances are going to get better on what we see. Therefore it's on pretty shaky ground and people can get disillusioned because outwardly we are wasting away. But the hope we have is a conviction or belief that there is another reality, another kingdom, and that kingdom exists and has existed through all eternity and it will prevail. So while you might feel it like you're in over your head, I want you to know that God is not all side of you and he's still on the throne and he's promised to somehow some way, work this out for your good if you'll only trust him.

Speaker 1 ([04:25](#)):

Guys, I would also tell you, it's in moments like these that miracles take place. You know, a miracle is when you feel like you've hit the wall or like you're at the end of your rope or like you're in over your head and then God steps into your situation. Listen, it doesn't take any faith to wait around and need deep water, but when you're in over your head, you need God to step in. And that's why it's so important to pray because prayer is not only the most powerful thing we do, but it's key to maintaining hope. And the Mets of our struggles. In Romans chapter 12 it says, rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying. Jesus' disciples were sound asleep. I mean, they were exhausted from handling all the crowds that were now following after Jesus. But while they are asleep, Jesus had gotten up early to pray.

Speaker 1 ([05:19](#)):

Now, this habit of prayer was something that they had witnessed many times during the three years they had traveled with him. Not only did he start the day with prayer, but they would often see him fast and pray. They watched as he would withdraw from the crowds to go and find a quiet place to pray. Listen, if Jesus found it important to pray, how much more important is it for you? And for me? Now, the disciples were starting to understand this about prayer, and in Luke chapter 11 one it says, one day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of the disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to just as John taught his disciples, not understand. These guys knew how to pray. I mean, I'm sure they had prayed together before. They'd prayed by themselves before, but what they observed in Jesus was something completely different.

Speaker 1 ([06:11](#)):

This was something unique and they wanted to experience it. Listen, prayer is not about the words that are spoken. Prayer is about focusing our attention back on a God that loves us and wants to direct our steps. Well, Jesus then gives them an outline or a model prayer that oftentimes we simply call the Lord's prayer. He then tells them a story it's found in Luke 11 and it goes on and says, then teaching them more about prayer. He used this story. Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, a friend of mine has just arrived for a visit and I have nothing for him to eat. Now this story, you have to understand this story is about you or me. So as we read this story, put yourself in that place. So let's say you have an unexpected friend show up at your house and it's late. It's about midnight. He's hungry, but you don't have any food in the house. So you go over to another friend's house and you start knocking on the door.

Speaker 2 ([07:15](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 1 ([07:15](#)):

now remember, it's midnight. It's late. Have you ever had someone show up at your house, knocking at the door in the middle of the night? It can kind of freak you out. It's a little scary. It's a little startling to be woken up out of asleep. Well, in verse seven it says, and suppose the one inside answers don't bother me. The door is already locked in my children, I am in bed. I can't get up and give you anything. So this guy, he hears the knocking, he sticks his head out the bedroom window and he says, what do you want? You tell him, I've got a friend that showed up. He's hungry, but I don't have any food in the house. Can you loan me some bread? He says, no, no way. It's late. We're already in bed. Would you please just go away? But you don't know what else to do. So you, you start knocking again.

Speaker 1 ([08:06](#)):

Listen, I think anyone that has ever been frustrated by unanswered prayer can relate to this story. So let's talk about how we can grow as prey. ERs, prayer people, for instance, when we first learned to pray or oftentimes number one, a disappointed prayer. In other words, you prayed for something but God didn't answer it the way you wanted him to. Maybe you pray, but your cancer is not disappearing. Your desire for alcohol or drugs has not gone away. The pregnancy test is still negative, whatever it might be, you're disappointed by God's silence. I don't know about you guys, but I'd been there so many times in the past. Sometimes when I pray, I sense the Lord is clearly speaking. While other times it feels like the ceiling is made of brass and my prayers are bouncing right back in my face. Listen guys, I've been a Christian for 45 years and I don't always understand what God is doing and yet I know that God sees what I can't see and that's why it's so important for me to trust him.

Speaker 1 ([09:10](#)):

In Proverbs chapter three it says, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will and all that you do, and he will show you which path to take. You know, someone wants said, God answers your prayer in four different ways. Yes, no wait, and you gotta be kidding me. Seriously, listen, years from now, you may look back and say, now I understand why God answered my prayer the way he did. Now I understand why he made me wait. Now I understand why he said no, guys, listen to me. If you've ever gone back to a high school reunion and run into some of the people you dated, you're so glad God didn't answer your prayers. You know what I mean? And of course, when they saw you, they were glad God didn't answer their prayers either.

Speaker 1 ([10:02](#)):

Just saying, well, at the end of the story, Jesus goes on and he says, which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg will give him a scorpion. A loving father is not going to give his child something that will be harmful. Why? Because he loves them and he wants the best for them and he wants to protect them. James tells us in chapter four he says that even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong. You want only what will give you pleasure. Sometimes we're disappointed by prayer because we prayed with wrong motives. In other words, you make your own plans and you want God to bless them. If you're really honest, you don't want God's best. You're looking for a genie in a bottle, someone that will give you whatever you wish for.

Speaker 1 ([10:55](#)):

Again, prayer is not. Prayer is not trying to get God to line up with us. It's the attempt to line us up with God. It's so important. We understand that at times that might mean that we're praying correctly, but our timing is just off. For instance, maybe you're praying for God to give you a new job and yet God may not be through with you there at your current place of employment and other words, God's still might

want to use you to speak into someone's life. God might still want to use you to speak to them spiritually for whatever reason, God wants you right there for now, so he's not ignoring you. He's not telling you no. He's just trying to tell you he's not done with you yet. Now, I'm sure there's some of you that have given up on prayer. You're like, Steve, what's the point?

Speaker 1 ([11:37](#)):

God's already made up his mind again, the point of prayer is to get our focus back on him. Guys, please. You can't hear me say that enough. The point of prayer is to get our focus back on him. Listen, it's the mystery of prayer alongside the sovereignty of God that gives us our hope or our confidence in him. God has chosen prayer as the vehicle he wants to use to change us as the vehicle he wants to use to change our world. Now, the longer you still faithful to prayer, you then become number two, a developing pray or a developing prayer. Uh, typically a developing prayer is a disappointed prayer who didn't give up when God didn't answer their prayer in the way that they thought he should. You know, in our story, even though we might have been disappointed that our neighbor didn't jump out of bed and give us food, we didn't give up.

Speaker 1 ([12:32](#)):

We just continued to knock in verse eight. He goes on and he says, I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity, he will surely give up, get up and give you as much as you need. Jesus refers to this guy's persistence as shameless audacity. I love that he had the shameless audacity to keep on knocking and to keep on asking until he got what he wanted. Now again, the story. Remember the stories about you, the stories about me. So I think there's several things that Jesus is trying to teach us about prayer. For instance, when you have an unexpected problem, who do you turn to for help? Well, I mean usually you're going to turn to a close friend and you're going to turn to a family member, someone that you have a close relationship with.

Speaker 1 ([13:25](#)):

Now granted there are some people that you would not want to wake up in the middle of the night, but I'm talking about the kind of friend that would be there for you no matter what you, you know, you could wake them up and your friendship would survive this middle of the night intrusion. I have that kind of a relationship with the elders of our church. I mean I, I feel like I could call them in the middle of the night and they wouldn't even question it. They would be concerned and they would immediately want to know what they could do to help me. Now I've never tried it. Maybe I should. Maybe tonight I'll call them in the middle of the night and see. I'll let you know like next week if I still have a job. What Jesus is trying to show us that a developing prayer has a personal relationship with God. In other words, I think the reason some of you are frustrated with prayer is because you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ on.

Speaker 1 ([14:14](#)):

I'm not saying that you don't believe in God and that or that you pray to him, but I'm saying that you may not have surrendered your life to him. You may not know him in a personal way. In Hebrews chapter 10 it says, and so dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's most Holy place because of the blood of Jesus. So what is the most Holy place? Well, it's the very presence of God. So you see, if you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then you can come into his presence. But until you make Jesus the Lord and savior of your life, your prayer life will never be what you hope it will be. But if you would like to know him, well, I'll give you the opportunity in just a few minutes. You know

another thing about a developing prayers prayer person is that they maintain a healthy sense of insufficiency.

Speaker 1 ([15:04](#)):

In other words, they recognize their need for God. I love what C S Lewis once wrote. He said, I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time. Waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me guys. That's exactly what I've been trying to tell you this whole time. It doesn't change God. It changes me. Again, this story in Luke is about you going to a friend and saying, I've got a need and I just can't meet my own. I just can't do it on my own. I need your help. Prayer is an acknowledgement that we are in over our head. Listen, effective praying involves a humble admission. God, I can't solve this on my own. I need you. Author and pastor Jim Cymbala said, I've discovered an astonishing truth. God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him.

Speaker 1 ([16:04](#)):

Then I also want you to see the developing prayers. Also pray with passionate persistence. They simply refuse to give up on prayer. Listen to this in verse nine he says, so I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find, knock in the door, be open to you. For everyone who asks, receives the one who seeks, finds and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Jesus says, the friend will give you what you ask for, not because you are a friend, but because you're persistent. You keep on knocking. So here you are in the middle of the night, pounding nonstop on the door and you say, I know you're in there. I need you to help me. I'm not going away. I'm just going to keep on knocking until you get up and give me some bread. Finally, your neighbor says, okay, okay, already you win.

Speaker 1 ([16:58](#)):

Here's the bread you ask for and you say, thank you. That's all I needed. So hear me. Is Jesus trying to compare that attitude with God the father? No. Absolutely not. Not at all. He's actually trying to show the difference between that neighbor and God. Verse 13 he says, if you then though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your father in heaven give the Holy spirit to those who ask him? If an imperfect friend will eventually respond to your persistence, then how much more will a loving and gracious God who wants what's best for you? So what should we do when our prayers are not immediately answered? Remain persistent. Be tenacious. Listen, every month at our church, we have a time that we call miracle prayer. It's a time where I invite our people to come up to the front where we pray for their needs.

Speaker 1 ([17:54](#)):

The people that need a miracle, and I oftentimes tell you, I don't care if you've come down here a dozen times for prayer, continue to come until you get an answer from God. I just read to you. Jesus says, ask and you shall receive. Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be open to you. Those are continuous action verbs. Keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking until you get the answer you need. Okay. Here's the next progression of prayer. Those who were once disappointed, pray ORs become developing pray ERs who will eventually become number three devoted prayers. Now, devoted prayers are people who have reached the point. They know prayer works. You don't have to convince them, you don't have to talk them into it. They know sometimes that God steps in to change their circumstances and other times God's trying to change you or God's trying to change me.

Speaker 1 ([18:48](#)):

And we can find an example of both of that. In scripture. For instance, there's an instance where we're a good King named Hezekiah is told by a prophet Isaiah that God said that he's going to die. It has a Chi. Immediately starts to pray and he's pleading with God to change his mind. And you know what God did? He said, I'm going to give you 15 more years. So in that particular instance, God answered has a Chi, a sprayer, and he changed his circumstances. So yes, prayer can make a difference, but then other times he might not change your circumstance, but he will use it to change you. For instance, Paul had a thorn in the flesh. We don't actually know what that thorn in the flesh was. Some believe it was his eyesight, whatever it was, it tells us that he asked on three occasions, three separate periods of time for God to remove it.

Speaker 1 ([19:39](#)):

But instead God said, my grace will be sufficient for you. So in this case, God is saying for reasons you don't understand right now, I'm not going to change your circumstances, but I'm going to give you the grace and the strength you need to get through it. So while the Corona virus is disrupting your life right now, God is saying, I'm going to give you the grace and the strength to get through it. You see guys, that's where we have to put our trust is in God. We have to know that he sees the bigger picture, that we can't see that he sees the upper story. When we're living in the lower story, he sees a perspective that we can't see and he's promising that he's going to work all things together for our good. So while you feel like you're in over your head, God is not in over his friends.

Speaker 1 ([20:27](#)):

Listen to me. You might tell me that you believe in God. You may not. You might even tell me that you oftentimes pray to God, but I'm asking you, have you surrendered your heart to God? Have you invited him into your life? You know, enrollments three it says, for all of us, every one of us have sinned against God. We've all messed up. Romans six the wages are the penalty. The price of sin is death. You and I, we deserve to die for the sin that's on our life. But Romans five says, but God, but God demonstrated his love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ came and died for us. It got up from his seat and have any came to this earth. He lived as a man. He never sinned, but then he willingly went to the cross for you and for me.

Speaker 1 ([21:09](#)):

He didn't deserve to die, but he died for your sins and for mine and it says, but as many as receive him to them, it gives the right to become sons and daughters of God, even to those that would believe in his name. So my friends, if you've never invited Christ into your life, I'd like to pray for you right now. I'd like to give you that opportunity. I'm going to ask you just to repeat this prayer. I'm going to pray out loud. I'm going to ask you to just to repeat it if you mean business with God. In fact, you could just simply bow your head right where you're at. Repeat this prayer. Dear Jesus, I know I failed you. I know I've sinned against you. I ask you God to forgive me of all of my sins, to come into my life as my savior and as my Lord.

Speaker 1 ([21:52](#)):

Thank you God for loving me. Thank you God for forgiving me and now Lord I commit my life to you forever. In Jesus name my friends. If you prayed that prayer, I promise you that not only has he forgiven your sins, but the Bible tells us he's taken up residence in your life. You're now that temple of the Holy spirit. And so if you prayed that prayer and you meant business, I'd love to hear from you. And I would

encourage you to tell somebody there's somebody in the room with you right now. Just turn and say, I just prayed that prayer with Steve. If nobody's with you, email somebody, but we would like to hear from you. And so you can, you can text next to eight, five, three, seven, nine and let us know that you prayed that prayer. We love you and we care about you. God bless.