

## **Walk in the Spirit—Pray in the Spirit**

Sermon #5: Prayer As Audacious Friendship

Study Text: Genesis 18:16–33

Date: August 1, 2010

Preacher: Mark Stryker

### **Sermon Series Note Introduction:**

Half way through our Family Worship for the summer, we now turn a corner in our sermon series. Just as we have been encouraged to let the Spirit work through us, now we call one another to deeper prayer as we discover what it means for us to pray in the Spirit. We will be examining a series of portraits from the Old Testament, configured in canonical order. Prayer is theology. It reveals what we think about God and who God is. These passages shed light on how we are bid to pray, and we also discover something of the character of God.

Many of us aren't adept at seeing the day as a series of encounters with God. Yet Scripture is clear that each moment is an invitation to prayer. These passages lead us to pray in the gritty "now" of our lives. They show us prayer in the middle of life, not only as a break from life.

### **Bible Study Introduction:**

Eugene Peterson suggests that prayer is really answering God, responding to what God is already doing in the world and around us. While God is still the initiator, we are not merely pawns or mindless puppets. Instead, God treats us as he has made us—as people with concerns, insights, and relationship.

In this first passage, we explore together prayer as an expression of friendship, but not between equals. Abraham models both humility and audaciousness for us in this prayer. We are invited to follow suit in our own prayer with God.

### **Opening Questions:**

- Name a past or present friendship that was especially honest (in a healthy way). How did the two of you get to that spot in your relationship?
- When has your prayer habit or life of prayer been at its best? What was that like?

### **Read Genesis 18:16–33**

- Going over this passage carefully, list the assumptions that Abraham makes concerning God (i.e. God is just, God has a plan, etc). Which of those assumptions do we most need to reclaim today? Why?
- Going over this passage again, what assumptions does God make concerning Abraham? Are those same assumptions true of us now? Which seem most vital for us to know about ourselves today?
- How is this a passage about audacious friendship? Who is being audacious?
- What interesting detail or question do you still have about this passage? How does the answer help us know God or ourselves better?

### **Group or Personal Reflection**

- How might your habit of prayer begin to look more like this interaction between Abraham and God? What, if anything, is missing from your conversation with God?
- What prayer "experiment" can you agree to do together? (Consider time, style, frequency, format and other factors.) How will you know if your experiment is a success?