

Rooted: Who is God?

09.19.2021

I told you that each Sunday we were going to have a prayer model

That you can pray by

Last week

We looked at the Lord's prayer from Luke 11

If you haven't tried that model out

You should

Today, we want to pick a shorter one

A quick hitting prayer

Based on a fantastic prayer from Jeremiah

He says:

Jeremiah 32:17 - Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You.

Let's divide that into two parts

Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great power and outstretched arm.

And nothing is too hard for You.

You have made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great power and outstretched arm.

Why do you think he says that?

Do you think he thinks God forgot?

Like – oh yeah, that was a long time ago, but I think I remember

Wonder if I can still that sort of thing... because that was pretty cool?

Why do you think Jeremiah says that?

He didn't say it for God's benefit

He said it for his... own... benefit

He's reminding himself of the power of God

He's reminding himself that God can come thru

He's fanning into flame the faith he needs for this moment

That's a model for us

When you need God to do something big

When you find yourself in a bit of a pickle

Start your prayer by reminding yourself that this is not too hard for God

You may say

Now wait a minute

Prayer is talking to God

But if this is for me

What's that about?!?

Sometimes our head and our heart get out of alignment

We know something to be true in our head

But we don't feel it in our heart

You can be worried or jealous or scared

But when you stop & think it through

It's actually fine

But your head – what you know

And your heart – what you feel

Don't line up

Same thing happens in our faith

What we know

That God made this entire universe

That nothing is too hard for Him

Doesn't line up with how we feel

I've got a bad medical diagnosis

Or my marriage is really hard

Or I'm behind on my payments and I don't know how to get out

So when we fan the coals of our faith

Into flames

God sees that

And that **roused faith** is an offering

That's pleasing to Him

Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great power and outstretched arm.

Nothing is too hard for You.

Make it specific {SLOW}

This problem I'm facing is not too difficult for you

My relationship is not too difficult for you

My depression is not too difficult for you

My kids are not too difficult for you

My loneliness is not too difficult for you

Nothing... is too difficult for you

Now you're ready to ask Him for what you need

That's a great model

Try it this week

This week is the second week of our Rooted series

And we're answering the question

"Who is God?"

And the bigger question

In my opinion

Is God active in our world or not?

That's an age-old question

And it's the exact question that the people were asking

In Exodus 17

Exodus 17:7 - And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Don't get lost in the weird names

Massah means testing

Meribah means quarreling

So he names the places where that happened

Massah and Meribah

But the point is the question

"Is the Lord among us or not?"

And when we wrestle with that question

Is God among us or not

When we wrestle with that question

It leads to spiritual questioning – Massah

And social quarreling – Meribah

Because we weren't design to live without God

Is it possible?

Let me stop here a second

Is it possible

That we're seeing a huge spike in spiritual questioning - Massah

Christians walking away from faith

De-constructing their faith

Overcome by doubts and scepticism

We're seeing a huge spike in spiritual questioning - Massah

And we're seeing a huge spike in social quarreling – Meribah

Division and strife and riots

Spiritual questioning & social quarreling

Because we weren't designed to live without God

Like our culture currently is

That's nebulous

Let me bottom line this a minute

We weren't designed to live without food

Our culture has even coined a phrase over the last years

To describe what happens when a person goes without food for too long

Anybody know...

Hangry, right

You get hangry when you live without something (food) that you were never designed to live without

And the people of God

Here in Exodus 17

Were spiritually hangry

When we live without God

Without hearing from Him (bible)

Without talking to Him in prayer

When we live as if He's not among us

We get spiritually hangry

Spiritual questioning – Massah

And social quarreling – Meribah

Turn to Exodus 17

Read Exodus 17:8

So I want you to catch something

The Amalekites attacking

Happened in the context of the spiritual questioning

And the social quarreling

When God feels absent

The next thing that happens

Is spiritual questioning & social quarreling

And then after that comes hardship

Now – by the way – hardship comes for all kinds of reasons in life

Jesus promised – in this world you'll have trouble

So I'm not saying that hardship means

You've grown distant from God

But I am saying

Growing distant from God

Often leads to hardship

You see this pattern again and again in the Bible

People stop seeking God

So He feels distant

God didn't move, by the way

God didn't move

If God feels distant

He didn't move

Who moved?

Right – we did

So God feels distant

Spiritual questioning & social quarreling starts

And then pain

That's always the pattern

Why?

Because we weren't designed to live without God

By the way

If that's the pattern

1. Lack of spiritual seeking
2. Spiritual questioning & social quarreling

3. Pain & hardship

Where are we at right now?

And if this is the pattern

Where do you find the answer?

Over here

These are just symptoms

For what started over here

Read Exodus 17:8-9

So you're immediately getting the picture of a divide

Do you see that?

What's happening on the ground

Joshua is leading that

And what's happening up above

Moses is handling that

Read Exodus 17:10-11

So if Moses was on top of the mountain crying out to God

The people were winning the battle

But when Moses was on top of the mountain taking a break

The people were losing

God doesn't want us to get confused

If Moses is up on top of the hill with his hands lowered

It didn't do squat

What does that mean?

It wasn't about Moses

Moses wasn't the key

Moses crying out to God was the key

That's big – don't miss that!

Read Exodus 17:12-13

Now here's where people get sidetracked sometimes

This is a cool picture

And we pastors get excited about cool pictures

So it almost writes itself

You need an Aaron and a Hur to hold up your hands

When life wears you out

OK – that's true

Don't miss that

Get in a group

But – today's not about groups

Today's about God

So let's look at it again

In fact, let me put it up on the screen so we can all see it

Exodus 17:12-13 - When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Wait a minute

If Moses' interaction with God was the key

Which it was

Then why does it say, "Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword."

Shouldn't it read that "Moses overcame the Amalekite army with his prayer?"

Why does it say that?

Because that's the part we see

That's the part that demands attention

Because if Joshua fails

We have funerals

If Joshua fails

Women to become widows

And little boys and girls become orphans

If Joshua fails

We have death and destruction and loss

So "Joshua overcame the Amalekite army" is the result

The symptom

The outcome

But Moses' prayer was the cause

And it's not any different for us

Ephesians 6 tells us:

Ephesians 6:10-12 - Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the Heavenly realms.

Our marriage is the result

Our mental health is the result

Our apathy and despair and addictions are the results

But they're not the real battle

"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power" is the real battle

And to make sure you don't think I'm being hyperbolic to compare our lives to a medieval battle

Remember that not only does the Bible call our enemy a lion

Now by the way

By the way

For those who were here last week

I had so many people

Some sheepishly

Some sarcastically

Ask me, "You know that wasn't a lion, right?"

I know that this is not a lion

I'm not a complete moron

But it is a big cat

And it is ferociously chasing a poor pitiful creature

And that's a powerful picture for what our enemy is doing to us

Whether we realize it or not

Whether we believe it or not

And to make sure you don't think I'm being hyperbolic to compare our lives to a medieval battle

Remember that not only does the Bible call our enemy a lion

Jesus calls him a thief and says

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy – John 10:10a

That's what the Amalakites wanted to do to Joshua

But he overcame them with the sword

But we know different

We know that they overcame the Amalekites

But they didn't really do that... with the sword

Right?

We know different

But poor Joshua didn't know

Read Exodus 17:14a

“make sure Joshua hears it”

Because he must’ve been awfully confused

You know, every general enters the battle with a plan

And quickly, that plan gets tossed and new plans are drawn

So Joshua would try the right side

And it would work

And then he’d press the right side again

And this time it was a complete failure

Little did he know that the second time Moses was having a coffee break

So then Joshua would try the left side

And it would work

Fabulous

And then he’d press the left side again

And this time it was a complete failure

But this time, Moses was eating tacos

“Make sure Joshua hears it”

Make sure he hears what

Make sure he hears that the battle wasn’t won down below

Make sure he hears that the battle was really bigger than his sword

And his plans

And his leadership

The battle was won and lost up above

Friends, you & I are in a battle

And our enemy is vicious and strategic and hungry

And we'll feel the outcomes down below

In our family

In our relationships

In our own mind & heart & life

But that's the just the symptom

The effect

But the battle will be won & lost up above

Let me give you a big theological word

"Omni-present"

The prefix omni means "in all things; in all ways; in all places."

So omnipresent means God is in all things; in all ways; in all places.

All at the same time

Only God is that way

We're not

And neither is our enemy

If he's going to try to steal and destroy you

He's got to pull resources away from one of the rest of us

He's not in all things and in all places at all times

Only God is

Some of the staff and I were at a pastor's conference here in Nashville this week...

If WellSpring is your home and God is *your* God

You are part of a community that's getting ready to see some stuff

I need you to pray

And honestly, I'm well aware

That me preaching this message today

Is waving my hands

I need you to pray for my family

If WellSpring is your home and God is your God

Jeremiah 32:17 - Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the Heavens and the Earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You.

If WellSpring is your home and God is your God

I'm counting on you to pray big prayers

If God is not yet your God

You're not sure you believe in any of this yet

Can I invite you to consider where we started?

When people live without God

They get spiritually hangry
Spiritual questioning & social quarreling
And then hardship comes

If you're in a season of spiritual questioning

Or social quarreling

Or if you're in a season of hardship

Will you give some serious thought to the question:

Am I trying to live life without God?

Is all of this just an outflow

Of spiritual hunger?