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| **Slides** | **Sermon, July 12, 2020** |
| 1 | Title Slide - **Close Encounter of the Best Kind: How We Speak With God** Luke 11:1-13  Theme: Prayer is an openness so that you and God can spend time together |
| 2 | ET was not from this world. He and the little boy became good friends; they had a close encounter. ET had a special touch – finger lit up. He and the boy shared a special bond. They understood one another – even when ET tried to phone home – even when RT left this earth – the 2 of them had a special presence with one another. |
| 3 | “Prayer is a close encounter of a special kind.”  Many folks question – how can we talk to God?  How do we know he hears us?  How can we hear him?  How do we know if what we think God is saying isn’t really our own ideas?  Well I’ve about decided these are the wrong questions. That’s right. They seem to suppose that prayer is all about convincing God to do what we believe needs to be done. |
| 4 | This isn’t surprising because there are lots of scriptures that imply this:  Matthew 7:7-8 – “Ask and it shall be given you; search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”  Matthew 21:22 – “And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in m name shall be given to you.”  James 5:15 – “And the prayer of faith will save the sick man.”  Most of what we know about speaking to God through prayer is - we ask, and God is supposed to give.  Our motives about prayer are living right and doing good so that God will go along with “whatever we ask in Jesus Name” will be granted!  But I haven’t had much luck with this approach. I’ve prayer for healings, for people to come to Christ, for God to grant us more members, etc., etc., - the answers are not there.  Then, I beat myself up – I’m not faithful enough, I’m not spiritual enough, I’m not one with God. |
| 5 | Now all that is true – I and everyone else have miles to go to become the spiritual person God has created us to be. But, viewing prayer in a request-answer demeaner belittle the idea of prayer.  Prayer is so much more. I know this because of the scripture that instructs us to “pray without ceasing”. Impossible to always be talking and listening and talk and asking and listening to God!! We’d never get anything else done. We’d lose our jobs, we’d neglect our family, we’d starve to death!  Prayer has to become ongoing living in the presence of God. And the result is a stronger more grounded life. |
| 6 | Take Jesus –   * Prayed morning, noon and night * Alone * With other * In public * In the temple * Even on the cross   Jesus found “the way” of prayer – he found living his life as an act of prayer.  The disciples saw this and wanted to know how.  Read Luke 11:1-13 – It gives overview of how to train ourselves to pray – live in God’s presence. |
| 7 | Look at parts:   1. Address to God – honor and praise – set the proper relationship; God is first and Creator; we are second and created. 2. Ask for God’s Kingdom – for God to have His will and way in this world. – we want to be a part of this, cooperate not hinder God. 3. Request God to meet daily needs not too much, not too little – “as the 3 little bears story goes” we ask for what is just right! 4. Forgiveness – is tied to forgiving others. – Door to fulness of life and joy. 5. Protect us from danger. |
| 8 | How can we successfully talk to God?   1. Honor and recognize God – how many folks would listen to you if you were disrespectful and put them down? 2. Let God know you are pulling for him and want him to have dominion - who’d listen to you if you go around undercutting the work they are doing? 3. Ask for just what you need – no greed, no false modesty, be honest. No one likes a sandbagger who pretend to have enough but doesn’t. No one likes for folks to pad their request for the rainy day. 4. Forgiveness is key to joy and life – who can know real joy while holding a grudge? Who can experience forgiveness when they are withholding another’s forgiveness? 5. Finally, how can we be bold and have the courage to risk ourselves if we are tied by fear? How can we be personal, honest with God if we fear for our well being and don’t have trust in God?   So, Jesus is saying that talking to God has to do with relationships and how we treat others! |
| 9 | Now Jesus goes on to tell us some directions for talking with God.   1. Don’t give up when talking to God Be persistent! Keep talking, keep listening, keep living like Christ! God will respond. Dad – persistent through his handicap for his family. 2. That response will be appropriate – ex: adults give to their children what is good. We can trust God to respond in our best interest! |
| 10 | 1. Vs 9-10 – Ask – request – given; Seek – search – find; Knock – entering – door open. Image of full relationship; needs given, search deeper relationship, being invited into that relationship. |
| 11 | This text says prayer is more about aligning ourselves with God instead of God doing what we want!  So, what happen when we speak to God in real prayer?  Prayer doesn’t change God so much as it changes us.  Ex: Couple at odds. Women so angry at her husband’s infidelity that she wanted her lawyer to ‘go for the throat’. She wanted revenge. So, advised to set him up. For 2 months really treat him well. Be the perfect wife and then we’ll pull the rug out from under him.  So, she did it. But low and behold, by the end of the 2 months, the relationship was turning around. The wife’s actions brought repentance and renewal in the husband. |
| 12 | The tremendous value in prayer is that it bends our will to God’s. it gradually changes us to become more like Christ.  Doren Kierkegaard – “Prayer does not change God, but it changes whoever prays.”  This talking to God regularly opens us to the change we need and ultimately desire. That’s why Jesus wants us to pray without ceasing. |
| 13 | And that is just letting all we do be an expression of using our gifts, time, talents, to build God’s Kingdom. That’s prayer!  The next thing is that when we develop this life of prayer is that we discover untold strength, clarity of mind, the compassion of heart to face the daily trials and sudden hardship of life. |
| 14 | That’s how Christ could face the cross  That’s how the disciples could face persecution. |
| 15 | But there’s even more! Developing this daily relationship with God, yields new and deep joys that are unmatched by this world!  Ex; - family in Armenia – 2 cows, fruit trees. No car but a donkey. Wife is sewing in the sewing micro business – hard life but rich in joy and hospitality because they walk with God. But before I end. Talking and living with God as prayer does come with a warning label.  “Praying can be hazardous to all your life plans!”  Yes – praying opens us to the chance (I say then probability) that God will do something with us that we do not intend. |
| 16 | Example:  We intended to have a “close encounter of a special kind with God”  That comes via prayer  Praying –talking with God– is about a relationship where we spend time, we spend our lives – living in His presence.  And that presence will result in hope, strength, Confidence, Joy and purpose filled living! |
| 17 | Go ahead – plunge into a Close encounter with God – Pray! You won’t regret it! |