

# The Prayer Class

**Purpose:** *To encourage greater participation and joy in prayer*

*The Prayer Class meets in God's Throne Room 24/7*

*In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence Ephesians 3:12.*

Teacher: Abe Funk

Date: June 6, 2024

**Lesson:** The Worst Pandemic Ever

## Welcome to The Prayer Class:

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of forgiveness of our sin. Help us to talk about it. Amen!

**Bible Reading:** Matthew 15:10-20

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'" Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?" He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." Peter said, "Explain the parable to us." "Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

**Key Verse:** *...the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart... 18.*

## Background and Lesson:

What do you think is the worst pandemic to ever infect the world? There have been many pandemics through history and some very bad ones. The black plague in the 1300s killed 30 to 50% of the population of Europe; 75 to 200 million people died of that plague.

There is another plague that has infected the entire world's population, but no one wants to talk about it. That one is the moral and spiritual plague, the Bible calls sin, that has infected the entire human race, and the cause of all evil. It is a disease of the heart. Jesus put it plainly in verse 19, *For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.* This heart virus is evidenced by our actions and our conversation. *Sin came into the world through one person, and death came through sin. So death spread to everyone, because everyone sinned Romans 5:12 GW.*

I attended an interfaith gathering in our community a few years ago, an attempt to create understanding and tolerance; a good thing in a community. At the end of the lectures, we could write a question on a card to be answered by the presenters. I asked, "Where does evil come from?" First the leader tried to pass the question off, she finally asked who would like to answer; when no one responded she reluctantly gave it to the Christian presenter who gave a vague apologetic reply. No one wanted to talk about it.

When and where did this viral heart pandemic originate? People like to know where pandemics originate. The Bible tells us the whole sad story, not just the origin, it also describes the symptoms and the cure that is 100% effective.

While we don't have a lot of information, the origin of sin seems to go back before God created our world, to his creation of angels as free beings able to choose. One of the higher-up angels, Satan was jealous of God and wanted to take his place. God then expelled him and angels who followed him out of God's presence. When Satan could not win over God, he went about tempting people who were made in the image of God, and who also had the power of choice. Our first parents, Adam and Eve made a very bad choice to believe Satan instead of God and they infected all people thereafter with the virus of sin. (See Genesis 3, Zecharia 3:2, Job 1, Jude 1:6). Since all people have the power of choice, we like our first parents continue to make bad decisions and continue to spread the virus of sin to next generations.

The wonderful news is that there is a simple cure for this pandemic and its consequences—but it came at a very great cost. God loved the world of people so much that he gave his only Son Jesus to die on a horrible cross as payment for sin and then offered forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe John 3:16. We are invited to simply pray to a loving God, confess our sin and receive the gift of forgiveness and eternal life by faith John 3:17. *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* Romans 5:1.

Why doesn't everyone rush to receive the wonderful cure? Many do, but most people don't. Like the people Jesus was talking to about this in Matthew 15; their hearts were hard and unbelieving. They chose to reject the Savior who offered himself and ended up crucifying him. They chose not to believe, just as many people today choose not to believe in Jesus Luke 19:10. We must talk about it!

**Quote:** *For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks* Matthew 12:34

### **Think About This:**

Let's talk about it! As believers we want people to come to Christ. Pray for those around you who do not know the Lord and seek to be a witness to them. Ask the Lord to open a door for you today.

### **A Prayer for You:**

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

### **My Notes and what To Pray for:**

Add your prayer requests here: yourself, family, church family, missionaries, & leaders in government

Note: All Scriptures are from the NIV Bible unless otherwise indicated

***Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful*** Colossians 4:2

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