

**Optional Study and Practice for The 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class
Session 1: Recording 460A, “Maundy Thursday and Preparation for Prayer”**

Summary of the Recording

From time to time, we will provide a two-page summary of the recording that we are studying. The purpose of a summary is simply to serve as a brief reminder of the main points covered in the class. You will probably listen to a recording several times during the two weeks devoted to it, and if you do use a summary, we encourage you to add your own notes about what stood out for you or resonated with you. Of course, if summaries are helpful to you, the best summary is the one you create yourself.

To view the summary for 460A, [click/tap here](#).

What is “Answered Prayer”?

Much of this class revolves around the idea of “answered prayer,” and what we must do to have answered prayer. Yet Joel does not fully explain what he means by “answered prayer.” What do you understand that Joel means by “answered prayer”? If you aren’t sure, the [Electronic Library Search Tool](#) can be a great help. *(Note: If you use the search term “answered prayer,” or any other search term that is more than one word, remember to put the search term in quotes.)*

Practicing the Message of the Chapter

In the class, Joel calls our attention to what he calls the “terms of prayer,” which simply means the things that are required to prepare ourselves for true prayer. He focuses on:

- Humility
- Benevolence
- Forgiveness
- Praying for the enemy

Joel describes each one and suggests how we can practice it. He also says that if there is an absence of answered prayer, “it only means there is need for further introspection until we have come before the presence of the Lord with a clean heart.”

This “further introspection” can be a valuable practice during our study of this class. As we consider each of the terms that Joel outlines, it is easy to stay on the surface of it, but we have an opportunity to go deeper.

Humility

Joel has said that humility is “not any sense that you are less than another in this room, or less than another in the world. . . . Humility acknowledges a divine grace, a divine power, a supreme

being, if you will. True humility is based on our understanding that there is something within us that is greater than anything that is in the world. . . . True humility is an acknowledgement that God is the wisdom, the intelligence of this universe, and that God is the love of this universe.”

He said, “Humility really is an acknowledgment that I do not know how to pray. I do not know what to pray for; I do not know how to go out or how to come in, that I must receive my wisdom from God. . . . True humility comes when we stop trying to enlighten God, when we stop trying to teach God what things our country needs, our family, our community, or we ourselves. True humility exists only when we can acknowledge God to be the all-knowing, and when we can repeat after the Master, **“I of my own self can do nothing; the Father within me doeth the works,”** and then *let* the Father do the works. Be still. Be still and invite God to speak to you. It doesn’t make any difference if you invite God a few hundred times and receive no answer. Keep on inviting God until a condition of true humility is established within you.”

So take the time to really consider this idea of humility.

- What does humility mean to you?
- How are you practicing humility?

As Joel points out, humility is acknowledging, as Jesus did, that “I of my own self can do nothing; the Father within me doeth the works.” But we have to *live* that, and without the introspection that Joel is encouraging, we may overlook some of the more subtle ways in which we are failing to practice humility. For example,

- Wanting to take credit for our successes or our benevolences, instead of acknowledging that “the Father within does the work.”
- Bristling if others are commended or praised for something that we did.
- Refraining from complimenting others, thinking that it might diminish us.
- In conversation, half-listening to others or interrupting them because we do not value their opinions or experiences; failing to remember that we are all equally children of God, and that no one stands above another.
- Relying on our personal human understanding instead of “acknowledging him in ALL our ways.”
- Refusing to admit our mistakes; always wanting to be right.

And there are many more. Just think about it for a minute. What others come to you? Do you see any new ways to improve your practice of humility?

It can be valuable to watch yourself throughout the day, noticing when you are, or are not, practicing humility, noticing where you succeed and where you have difficulty, and then listening for the Christ counsel from within as to how you can practice more consistently. Someone wisely said, “Humility is a strange thing. The minute you think you’ve got it, you’ve lost it.”

Benevolence

As Joel points out, benevolence is not what we do for our families. Benevolence is what we give to those to whom we owe no obligation other than love—no family obligation, no friendship obligation, only that obligation of loving thy neighbor as thy self. He explains that benevolence can be expressed in many forms, and he quotes Jesus outlining the

benevolences we must do—feed the hungry, take care of the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort the comfortless, visit those in prison. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

- What does benevolence mean to you?
- How are you practicing benevolence?
- As with humility, there are subtle ways in which we neglect to practice benevolence. Ponder that. What comes to you?
- Do you see any new ways to practice benevolence?

Forgiveness

Joel teaches that forgiveness does not mean that we condone behavior or action. Our forgiveness is like that of Jesus: “Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.” We recognize that the person is operating out of ignorance, out of spiritual darkness, out of hypnotism.

Joel notes that our forgiveness must extend beyond individuals to whole races and nations that may be acting in negative ways. Also, he has said that we must practice forgiveness not only with those we know personally, but with *any* individual who seems to be doing evil. If you have listened to Joel for a long time, you will be familiar with this story that he tells:

“There have been many, many experiences that each one has to learn in life on that very subject of forgiveness. There was a time when one of my associates was one of the founders of an underground movement against Mr. Hitler, and a lot of correspondence on that subject was coming in my direction. And, of course, in those days, everybody was talking of Hitler, and everybody was talking of antisemitism, and what Hitler was doing to Jews. And occasionally, someone made the comment that they couldn’t quite understand my lack of feeling against Mr. Hitler; that is, that I didn’t seem to be bitter, or harsh, or hard. And you know what my answer was? It will seem natural to you. I said, ‘Supposing that man, tomorrow, should find himself ill, or beyond the help of doctors, and should say, “I’m going to have spiritual help,” and suppose he decided to telephone to me for that help. Wouldn’t I be in a terrible position if I’d been calling him a devil yesterday, and had to declare in a treatment that he’s God’s perfect child today?’ So I said, ‘Let’s begin today and call him God’s perfect child, and let’s see what happens.’” (Quoted from recording 178A.)

So think deeply about forgiveness.

- What does forgiveness mean to you?
- How are you practicing forgiveness?
- As you did with humility and benevolence, think about the subtle ways in which we do not practice forgiveness. What are some of them?
- Based on your insights, are there other ways in which you can practice forgiveness?

Praying for the Enemy

Joel has taught that praying for the enemy does not mean that we pray for their success in evil endeavors. Rather, as he says in this class, we pray “that the enemies’ eyes be opened to receive light, that their ears be opened to receive truth. We pray that their sins be forgiven them, not that the ancient law of ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ be invoked, but rather the opposite—that their sins be forgiven them.”

Contemplate the practice of praying for the enemy.

- Who is the enemy?
- What does ‘praying for the enemy’ mean to you?
- How are you practicing praying for the enemy?
- What are some of the subtle ways in which we may be failing to pray for the enemy?
- Based on your contemplation, are there any ways in which to improve your practice?