

“But You Said...”:
Jacob & the Greatest Prayer in Genesis
Sermon Notes

- **When your sinning leads to the threshold of suffering, don't turn away from God in shame, turn toward him in prayer**

**4 scriptural steps for petitioning the Lord in prayer...*

1. Remember who you're talking to (v.9)

2. Realize your profound unworthiness (v.10)

3. Request what you think you need (v.11)

4. Revel in the promises of God (v.12; Genesis 3:15→ 2 Corinthians 1:20; Romans 8:32; John 15:7; 2 Peter 1:3-4)

Next Sunday: 1 Samuel 2:1-11 - “My Heart Exults in the Lord”:
Hannah's Radically God-Centered Prayer

Community Group Study Questions

For the Week of May 16th-22nd

Getting Started

1. Regarding prayers of petition, Jesus clearly teaches us to: “Ask...seek...knock” (Matthew 7:7-8). So...do you? If so, for what? Being careful to differentiate supplication from intercession (which is praying for others - last week’s topic), what sorts of things do you find yourself petitioning or supplicating for most? How come?

Digging Deeper

2. Jesus’s encouragement for us to “Ask...seek...knock” is followed by one of the most heartening and encouraging passages in the Bible about the character of our God. Read carefully through Matthew 7:9-11. In what way(s) does this motivate you to approach his throne with boldness in petitionary prayer (Hebrews 4:14-16)?

Open Your Bible to Psalm 6...

3. Seven chapters in the Hebrew psalter are known specifically as *penitential* psalms. Such psalms typically feature four movements: invocation, confession, petition and motivation. Take a look at Psalm 6. How many of these do you see? Are there parts of this prayer that stand out to you in particular? Anything you might like to incorporate into your own life of prayer? If so, what and why?
4. Now turn to Psalm 32. Scanning through this chapter, see if you can spot all four components of a penitential psalm. Verses 1 and 2 are unique in that Paul quotes them in Romans 4:7-8. Considering the broader context of Romans 4:4-12, what else makes these truths such especially good news for folks (hint: Gentiles) like us?
5. Psalm 38 is one of the most intense of the penitential psalms. Read through it as a group. Can you imagine a situation or a season of life in which these words would aid your conversation with God? If you’re having trouble coming up with an example, consider the residents at Redemption House in Minnetrista (www.redemptionhouse.net), the 90-day residential care biblical counseling community for men learning to worship their way out of addiction. Might this be a particularly helpful template for their prayers? How so?
6. As you may well know, King David composed Psalm 51 as a means of repentance after taking advantage of Bathsheba and arranging for the murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11:1-12:23). Have you ever used the words of this psalm to confess your sin to the Lord? If so, which specific truths and verses have you made your own as you’ve learned to pray them?
7. Psalm 102 bears a superscription that reads: “*A Prayer of one afflicted, when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the LORD.*” Can you think of such a time in

your life? Read through this psalm. With what sort of fresh language might this chapter furnish you when you turn to God in prayer in the midst of suffering and adversity?

8. The 130th Psalm is an absolute favorite. You may recall that it was one of the chapters of the psalter that was featured in our sermon series last summer on praying the psalms. Though there are several exquisite lines in this psalm, give verses 3 and 4 special attention. What's going on here? What does he mean? How is this a rather stunning summary of what Paul writes in Romans 5:20-6:4?
9. The last of the penitential prayers in the psalter is Psalm 143. Walking through this psalm together, how many of the movements (from question #3 above) can you spot in this chapter? Though we don't know anything for certain about his particular situation, it was clearly written by David in view of his enemies. Do you have any enemies? If so, who? If not, consider Matthew 10:36, Luke 6:26-28, and 2 Timothy 3:12. Got any enemies yet? How might you adopt or adapt Psalm 143 for your own as you pray through the challenge of your enemies?