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Good morning. Children may be dismissed to Children's Church. And up next, I am happy to introduce my brother. Jim just reminded me that we're twins, which is something I need to be reminded of every now and then. He and his family just surprised us with a visit from Colorado. And fortunately, Jeanette and Laith were sick this morning, so they weren't able to make the trip in, but fortunately Dave's here and he's going to share a little with us. Hi, good morning. So good to be here today and see so many familiar faces and see some new faces as well. Jeanette and Laith both send their greetings. They wish they could have been here this morning. In fact, last night Jeanette was so excited. She says, "I can share for 15 minutes. I can share for 20 minutes. I have 20 minutes worth of stories. I'm so excited to share." And then this morning she said, "No, you're going to have to tell all those stories. Tell all my stories, David." There's no way that I can tell all your stories, especially not the way that you can. You can say hello. It's been such an encouraging time. Watching the news lately out of the Middle East has not always been that encouraging, especially out of Egypt, which is a year ago. That's where we ran the pastors conference and of course now seeing some of the trouble that they're having. It's not encouraging. I heard the last number, I think it was 600 dead or something in the protest that they're having over there. But we are encouraged. There's a lot of things that God is doing over there right now that in the Middle East that they're not being reported in the news. They're not considered, of course, by the big news channels to be newsworthy. But they are and they're worth sharing with. I wanted to share with you a little bit today about that. In Jordan, for example, this is where we were for seven years or so. The underground church over there is growing just exponentially. There is one specific movement right now where a man up in the neighborhood just above our English center had been watching a pastor out of Egypt with a Christian television program. This is in one of the poorer areas of town. He'd watched this Egyptian pastor came to know the Lord and contacted a Christian organization and said, "Hey, could someone send someone to visit my house? Give me some discipleship. Tell me more about Jesus." He said, "I think God's putting this on my heart to share with others around me and I'd like to see what he's doing." Well, some months went by. They came out. They sent someone to meet this guy in his home and pay him a home visit. He said, "Thanks for coming out." He said, "In the meantime, I've been busy telling people in my neighborhood here, in my very Islamic neighborhood, about Jesus. I've got about a thousand people who have come to faith in Christ. What do I do with them now?" Here we have this guy pastoring these believers in Jordan, these Muslim background believers with really no idea what to do with them. At last count I heard that there may be 15,000, 20,000 strong this particular movement of underground believers. The church is doing well. He's gotten some discipleship. They're a church right now that's very committed to sharing their faith. In fact, one rule that the church has, one thing that the pastor tells new believers is if you become a believer, one of the roles that you have is to tell other people about Christ. If you're a member of the church and not actively engaging with Muslims about Christ, then this is not the church for you and there are many others that you can join. That's one of the guidelines that they have in this church. They're seeing tremendous growth right now. Again, one thing that you may not see in the news that's happening. I am working with an organization called AIMS. We're still with YWIM, but AIMS has come underneath YWIM and what we're doing is running conferences for pastors. As I mentioned, we were out in Egypt a year ago. My folks were just out there in Jordan and then this fall in January coming up, there's going to be another conference in Jordan. Training pastors and leaders in the church, how do you reach your own nation and why should you reach your own nation? In fact, sometimes we have to start there. Providing training, providing resources and then leading short-term outreaches within those countries. It's to get indigenous believers and indigenous pastors focused on reaching their own nations of the gospel. Jeanette will be going to Jordan again this fall and then probably again next spring. She has a heart to do outreach among women there. The last time she was there they noticed that there's a...many women there in the Islamic world just kind of stay home during the day. There's not as many working moms. The men go away for work and they get to know each other in the homes over coffee. So to reach women there in the Islamic world, it's really women that need to do that and do that. So she would like to bring groups of moms, even moms with kids over there and run...here in the states you have mops groups and she would like to take that type of group over to the Middle East and work with women then and do outreach in that way. So it's a very unique calling. It's something I could never do or would never want to do. But she sees... especially sees Laith as being a big part of her ministry over there and wanting to connect with other moms of kids his age. He's four and a half now. So thank you so much for your prayers. Thank you so much for your support. We think about you all the time. We pray for you. And you're just a big blessing to our lives and to our ministry. Thank you so much for having us today. Alright, thank you. I realized I didn't give them a really good introduction. There's some visitors and people here who maybe don't know, but my family right about the time Dave and I were finishing high school, my family all went into missionary work and Dave and his wife Jeanette ended up in Jordan for many years, seven years. And then now recently they've moved their ministry back to Colorado Springs, but they're still missionaries and they still coordinate taking these teams over to the Middle East and working with training these pastors and so forth. So if any of you feel led to support them I know they would love that. Dave was just telling me that they're trying to finish paying for Laith's preschool. They're trying to pay for that. So if you feel led to support them or given any way, I know they'd really love it. They live off the support of good people like you. And I know this church, corporately and individually, has done a really good job of that in the past. Well, let's take some time now to center in on God and hear what he's speaking to our hearts today. So let's open with prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for all the wonderful things you're doing all around the world and also right here in our hearts and our lives. God, we ask now that as we center down and focus in on you that you help us to push aside the distractions in our mind and focus clearly and simply on you and what you are speaking to our hearts. Help us to hear you and sense your presence with us here today. In the name of your son Jesus, Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you love this world and that you are working in it. And we thank you that you invite us to be a part of that work. We thank you, God, that you open up for us the opportunity to give and to serve and to help and to bless. Thank you that we can be your ministers, your partners, your servants, your workers out in the field bringing your glory to the ends of the earth. Thank you for the opportunity to share in that. God, I pray now that as I try and share these ideas with my friends that You put the right words in my mouth and that You will filter whatever comes into their ears and into their hearts that You hear only the message from You. In the name of Jesus, Amen. Well, I'll be honest, I was relying on my sister-in-law to talk for 20 minutes. So we'll see. I felt this week as I was praying, I've been having a lot of conversations with people who don't believe in God. And it's a real shame when people come to that place in their life, because the Bible says that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. It's something that's in every one of us when we're a little child, that we just look up and we see with wonder the stars and the earth. Even when we look at a microscope and we see the complexity of DNA, we're filled with wonder. And yet, through the constant barrage of false teachings in our society, that that wonder just gets hammered and hammered down until it's just left as cynicism and doubt. But when I talk to these people, a lot of times, the excuse that they give when they say they don't believe in God is they say, "My prayer didn't get answered." And as I begin to talk to them and try and explore what they mean by that, I realize that they're giving bad prayers. And there are prayers that get answered, but there are kinds of prayers that don't get answered. And I just scribbled some notes about this, and I just wanted to talk about those a little, about the kinds of prayers that don't get answered. The first one, I think the most relevant, is the prayer that says, "God, I'll believe in You if You do this." A prayer that says, "God, I doubt You, I don't believe in You. Prove Yourself to me." That is the first kind of prayer that doesn't get answered. You see, God wants us to come to Him in belief and in faith. Time and time again, when we see Jesus walking around the New Testament, described walking around in the New Testament, we see that when He does a great miracle, He says it's because of their faith, or when He can't do a miracle, it says it's because of their lack of faith. So how on earth can we expect to come to God with no faith that He even exists, let alone that He can answer our prayer and expect anything to happen? That's just foolishness. Another prayer that doesn't get answered, and I'm scared even saying this one, is the one that says, "Time to pay up, God." "God, I didn't drink. I went to church every Sunday. I read my Bible. I didn't hit my wife, whatever. I've earned it. Now pay me my prayers, God. I've been good. Now fulfill Your end of the bargain." Those kinds of prayers don't get answered either. God does not owe us anything. He is not a debtor to us. We are and always will be debtors to Him. But because of His great love towards us, we can come to Him and offer our prayers to Him. And as a loving Father, He will provide as we have need. But it's not out of obligation towards us. And if we come to God and we get angry and indignant that He's not answering our prayers, I mean, look at all we've done for Him. No, you can never do enough to God to earn something from Him. Just accept that it's grace, that everything that He gives you is unmerited. Another prayer that doesn't get answered is, "God, if you can spare the time, could you please..." Hebrews 14-16 talks about how we can approach the throne with boldness. Yes, we've been bad. We've been sinners. But the blood of Christ has washed all that away. So we don't need to be cowards before God. If you have confessed and repented of your sin, you can stand there knowing what you've done, but also knowing that it has been 100% washed away, and that you can boldly come before the Father who loves you and who has done everything in His power to clear the way for you to come to Him. You don't need to be scared. You don't need to be a miser or a pauper and say, "God, if you've got a little spare time, no, He loves doing nothing more than spending time with you and showing blessings to you." And then finally, the last prayer that doesn't get answered is, "God, if you will do this, then I will do this." And that kind of goes along with the second one. God doesn't trade favors. Like I said, everything He does is through grace. And the moment that you think that you're doing something to earn or deserve grace, it's not grace anymore. James 5, 16 says, "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." So what kind of prayers should we be offering? Well, first of all, be righteous. Obviously, your righteousness is not going to earn an answer to prayer, but if you really want to be confident that you are on the same page as God in your prayers, then seek to live a righteous life. And also make sure your prayers are fervent. There's the story in Luke 18 about the persistent widow who keeps going to this judge, and she goes over and over and over, and the judge finally goes, "Fine, I'll give you what you want." And Jesus uses this as an example of how we should pray, that God's not even like an angry, upset judge. He's a loving father. But sometimes we just need to be fervent in our prayers. Romans 12, yes, says, "Be faithful in prayer." Joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Keep praying. One of the reasons God allows situations into our lives that require prayer is to draw us to Him, is to establish that dialogue, to bring us to Him. Don't just fire off a prayer and then walk away. God wants that interaction. He wants that back and forth. He's trying to establish a relationship between Him, the Father, and you, His child. So be fervent in your prayer. In James 1, 5-8, it says that when you pray, believe and do not doubt. When you offer a prayer, believe that God can and will and wants to answer your prayer. Some people, they offer up prayers and they think, to them prayer is just another religious sacrament. It's like, "Oh, I'm a Christian. I'm supposed to pray." And so they just toss all these prayers up in the air and they don't expect any of them to ever get answered. They're not going to get answered because you have no faith. And again, like Jesus said, prayers of faith get answered. So when you pray, pray with a believing heart. I was reading Psalm 71 this week and it talks of... A lot of the Psalms are like this one, but this is the one that was an example. The guy's talking about how my enemies are surrounding me, everything is bleak. And you get down to verse 14, he's like, "Yet I will praise you." The last thing you need to remember when you're offering up your prayers is, don't let your circumstances influence your faith and your belief in God's love and his desire to care for you. Don't look at a prayer that didn't get answered the way you wanted to cause you to doubt the unimaginable goodness of God. God will answer all your prayers in the best way possible, but you're not always going to understand that. You're not going to always see those answers and they're not going to always make sense. But you must hold on to the faith and the belief and the truth that God is a good God. And he is a Father who loves you and he's doing everything he can to take care of you and to bring you into his kingdom. So as you go throughout this week, constantly remind yourself of the truth. He is your Father, he loves you, he hears your prayers, he can and wants to answer your prayers. And hold on to that. And when you pray, tell yourself this is a prayer that God is going to hear and he is going to answer. And no matter how it gets answered, it will be answered in the most loving way possible because he is the most loving God. Let's pray. Our most loving Heavenly Father, we thank you that every prayer we pray is heard by you. We thank you, God, that when we approach you with faith and boldness and confidence and in righteousness, that you hear these prayers and that you answer them because you love us. And you want to pour out your goodness and grace on us, not because we've earned it or deserve it, but because you are good and you want to show your goodness to the whole world in how you bless us. So help us to approach you like little children coming to their Father for everything they need. Remind us of this as we go throughout our week. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.