

## Go to Your Happy Place! (Acts 1:12-14)

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When you hear the phrase, "Go to your happy place!" What comes to mind? Where do you 'go'?

For God's people, we have been given **a real happy place here on earth**—the Throne of Grace

- **Hebrews 4:16**, NIV
- **Hebrews 4:14-16**, NIV
- The Happy Place is the Throne of Grace where we encounter God's presence and **receive mercy and grace in the time of need**
  - Jesus as our Great High Priest who **sympathizes with our weaknesses** and knows this life

Last week we learned of **Jesus' ascension** into heaven

- Enthroned and interceding for us
- Present to us
- **Matthew 28:18-20**, NIV
  - **"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"**
  - And then He left... (the angels said Jesus would **come back**)
  - But, as He promised, He is still with us (**surely I am with you always**)
    - How is He with us?
    - My three-year-old daughter FiFi says, **"Jesus lives in my heart"** (true!)
    - But how do we **experience** Him being with us? How do we **lean into** that truth?
    - **Out text teaches us that this is experienced in prayer** (**Acts 1:14a**, NASB)
      - They had been given the command and the promise (**great commission/with**)
      - They had been told to wait in Jerusalem until they received power (Another promise)
      - **The way they LEANED INTO AND SOUGHT TO EXPERIENCE and lay hold of God with them and waiting for God's promise was in prayer!**

**The Book of Acts is the record of how Christianity began to spread throughout the world (God's mission)**

**Prayer is central in the story of God's mission unfolding through His people**

- The first thing we see Jesus' followers doing is praying (Acts 1:14)
- The first time they did not know what to do they prayed (Acts 1:24)
- The first summary description we are given of the church says they were devoted to prayer (Acts 2:42)
- The first miracle we see performed by the Apostles was while they were going to pray (Acts 3:1)
- The first time the mission encounters serious opposition the church responds in prayer (Acts 4:24-31)
- The first time the Apostles had to make a tough decision about priorities in carrying out God's mission they prioritized prayer (Acts 6:4)
- The first time a vision is given to the church about the Gospel going to the Gentiles was while Peter was in prayer (Acts 10:9)
- The first time an Apostle was martyred, and another about to be, the church prayed (Acts 12:5)
- The first time a church discerned the Holy Spirit calling two people by name to a specific mission was while they were praying; and they responded by laying their hands on the two, praying for them, and sending them out (Acts 13:1-4)

And on and on it goes... Prayer is mentioned 31 times in Acts and in 20 of its 28 chapters

**The common thread in all these instances of prayer is need (dependence on God)**

- Whether it was a problem, an opportunity, opposition, miraculous power, or a clear calling (**who doesn't?**)
- Prayer is dependence upon God (**expresses and addresses—does something about—our need**)
- Throughout Scripture we see people praying when they are in need
- In Christ, we have direct, unfettered and welcomed access to the Happy Place of God's help
  - **Hebrews 4:16**, NIV

Do you have any **needs** in your life? Do you need **mercy** and **grace** to help you?

### Go to your happy place—the Throne of Grace—and ask God!

- **Jeremiah 29:11-13**, NIV (declares His goodness & good toward us; shows us how to respond; promise)
- **Jeremiah 33:2-3**, NIV (place of deep discovery)
- **Matthew 7:7**, NIV (promise of response and efficacy)
- **James 4:2**, NIV (a better way to approach our desires)

### We turn to so many other ways and means in our needs—but we are invited to turn to God!

- He loves you so much! He gives good gifts to His children!
- **And He loves to rescue His children when we are in tough spaces and places!**
  - **Psalm 50:14-15**, NLT
  - **Isaiah 57:15**, NIV (nearness)

### In what ways are you in trouble? Where are you heartbroken? **Psalm 55:22a**, NASB

- Kids, marriage, betrayal, addiction, sickness, bitterness, disappointment with life

“Trouble is one of God's great servants because it reminds us how much we continually need the Lord. Otherwise, we tend to forget about entreating Him. For some reason we want to carry on by ourselves.” -Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, p. 60

Why is that? Why do we want to “carry on ourselves”?

- God wants to save us from this (our lack of prayer is evidence that we need saving from self-reliance)
- Why do we not lay hold of dependence on God?
  - Is it because we do not think He loves us and **cares**? (**Romans 8:32**, NIV)
  - Is it because we do not think He **hears**? (**Psalm 116:1-5**, NLT)
- Give the Lord a chance to show His kindness, goodness and mercy to you!
  - Personal Prayer Journaling through the Psalms (helps me to persevere—issues come up again)

### Persevering in prayer

- **Acts 1:14a**, NASB (continually devoting themselves to prayer)
- They were praying in response to Jesus' **command to wait** and **promise for power**
- That would come 10 days later... they persevered in prayer
  - Rather than do what we so often do—give up and just “carry on by ourselves”
  - But God has something better for you! We have a better invitation! **Go to your happy place!**
  - Who knows the mystery of God's timing?!?! He seems to always be late! (**a wizard is never late**)
  - **Psalm 27:13-14**, NASB (prayer requires some faith—trust—hope) (God is worthy of all that!)

### Notice also though, that in this text, they're prayers were bigger than just their problems/needs

- Take all your problems to God, yes!
  - But we also need to catch **a vision for intercession**—praying for others (**1 Timothy 2:1-4**, NLT)
    - Moses, David, Paul (**considering others**)
- But also take your life to God in prayer in humble submission to His purposes! (**you shall be My witnesses**)
  - In seeking that together, the followers of Jesus found **unity** (**Acts 1:14a**, NASB) (**all with one mind**)
  - They were praying together with a common goal (true fellowship) (needs to be a part of bel. life)

### They would discover all the promises of God about His mission to be true!

- But it started with a simple act of obedience (**Acts 1:12**, NASB)
- Returning to Jerusalem was a step of obedience (what is Jesus asking you to do?)
  - It may be simple, even easy, but are you doing it?
  - And they were not getting ahead of the Lord—they would wait in Jerusalem just as instructed

In what ways are you waiting on the Lord? Pray!

Who do you know that needs prayer? Pray!

Where do you need help? Prayer Team!

**Psalm 28:6-7**, NASB