

Wing Tip

Partnering Up in Prayer

July 2, 2023

Today we're learning about Jesus' wings and how they affect our part in prayer.



How much of your faith do you own? And how much is on loan, dependent upon the faith of a *parent, spouse, friend, or teacher*? Cuz **there are no piggybacks to the throne**. Intimacy always reveals the true nature of a *relationship*; so **nothing reveals the nature of our faith like prayer**.



What *part* we actually *play* in *moving* God's hand, within God's will, is rather *mind-challenging* by *design*. But **He calls us to pray, and offers a junior partnership role**. So we best know how *He* expects us to *partner up* in *prayer*. Cuz as *He* warns: **some doors only open when we shut 'em**. You'll see. But *first*, let's just *get* it in our *head*, that no matter what's said, or how *hard* we *pray*, in *whatever* way, **we can't coerce our Creator to give us less than our eternal best**. Even if it's *what* we want.



So let's take a *sincere look* at Jesus' *dos* and *don'ts*; *starting* with *sincerity*.



"Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites." – Matthew 6:5 CSB



Ever hear someone take on a *resonant, reverent tone* thou *didst* not *taketh* in thy *normal* life? *This* is King James. The OG KJ of the KJV. And the *only* one who could ever *sincerely* speak *King-James*. Jesus made *all* of us *kings*. (Rev 1:6) So I guess I *speak* *King-Bruce*. Tell the person *close* to you what you speak. Point is, **your prayers should sound like king-you**. In fact, if they sound like *anything* or *anyone* else, our Father is *displeased*, and Jesus *disapproves*. Know how I *know*? He just said! So the first big *don't* is simply: **whenever you partner up in prayer don't pretend**. Here's a *bunch* of *dos* and *don'ts* – and an *odd detail* regarding those *religious hypocrites*.



Do *everything* they *tell* you. But *do* not *do* what they *do*, for *they* do not *practice* what they *preach*. ... **Everything they do is done for people to see** ... [they make] the *tassels* on their *garments* *long* ... and [they love] to be called '*Rabbi*' **[Great Teacher]** ... But *you* are not to be called '*Rabbi*,' for you have **[only] One [Great] Teacher** – Matthew 23:3-8 NIV

So this *junior partnership* is *first* and *foremost* between *you* and the *Lord* *alone*. Cuz **you gotta own your own faith**. It can't be between *you* and a *parent, preacher, teacher, spouse, friend, or priest* ... and *God*. **So how much of your faith do you own?** And what's *up* with that *odd* detail about the "tassels on their garments"? First off, *God* *commanded* those *tassels*.

"You shall make yourself **tassels [tzitzit; lit. feathered fringes]** on the four **corners [kanaph; lit. wings]** of the *garment* with which you cover yourself." – Deuteronomy 22:12 ESV



“Tell them to make [feathered fringe] tassels on the [kanaph/wing] corners of their [covering] garments ... [and] put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner.” – Numbers 15:38 ESV



And blue dye was very pricey. So the larger those tassels, the wealthier, and therefore – in their minds – favored and blessed the wearer. So Jesus says:



You must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray ... to be seen [sportin’ long feathered fringes] by people. ... But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, [See?] and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. – Matthew 6:5-6 CSB



So what’s the big secret? Well if I knew yours, it wouldn’t be much of a secret. But Jesus makes it clear that our darkest secrets belong in the shadow of our Father’s wings. Which is why David prayed to God to:



Hide me under the shadow of Your [kanaph] wings – Psalm 17:8 NKJ



And just as Jesus would get away to pray, (Mk 1:35-38) we gotta get us a way to pray away from the fray. There were no private rooms when the boys were on the road. Even going to the toilet was a shared experience. So they wore their private room – that feathered-winged covering garment – called a tallit, i.e. Little Tent; because it was mostly used for praying – and still is – representing God’s tabernacle, the Big Tent. Just listen to David’s prayer:



Listen to my prayer ... Let me dwell in Your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter [covering] of Your wings! – Psalm 61:1, 4 ESV



Does it seem strange to call the draping sides of the tabernacle “wings”? Shouldn’t. We still call the curtain-walls on the sides of a stage, the wings. And Jesus came to take the place of the temple in our heart. So He says:



“O Jerusalem ... how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” – Luke 13:34 NIV

We don’t know what Jesus’ feather-tasseled covering garment looked like, but when He spread His arms, we know it made what Scripture refers to as wings. And these covering wings are still a big part of traditional Jewish weddings, wherein the groom covers his bride with his wings, to symbolize security, comfort, friendship, and oneness. This is why, in the book of Ruth, when Ruth, a widow, asks Boaz, a foreshadow of the Bridegroom Redeemer, to redeem her by making her his bride, she says:

“Spread your wings [kanaph] over your servant, for you are a redeemer.” – Ruth 3:9 ESV

[Boaz, having recognized Ruth’s faith, saying] “A full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings [kanaph] you have come for refuge.” – Ruth 2:12 NKJ

And the prophet Malachi is referring to our Redeemer when He says:

To you who *fear* My name the *Sun of Righteousness* shall arise with healing in His [kanaph] wings – Malachi 4:2 NKJ



Why do you think *he* thinks the “name” of the “S-o-n” is “S-u-n”?

[Well] *These are the last words of David: ... “The Spirit ... the Rock of Israel said to me: ‘When One rules over men in righteousness ... He is like the light of morning at sunrise’”* – 2 Samuel 23:1-4 NIV

Now, remember the *sickly, sneaky* woman who *snuck up* and *secretly* and *touched* the tip of Jesus’ *wings* – I mean the *tasseled hem* of Jesus’ *tallit*? Well this might just be the best example of a junior partner, partnering with our Father in prayer in the Gospels. So let’s weave **Matthew in purple**, and **Mark in blue**, and **Luke in green**, to get *all* the *details*.

A great crowd followed Him and the people *pressed* around Him. [Wanting to get their hands on His hands cuz “He laid His hands on every one ... and healed them.” (Lk 4:40) So they *pressed in* to force His hand] And there was a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years, and ... she could not be healed, but rather grew worse. And behold, she had heard the reports about Jesus [being the Redeemer] and came up *behind* Him and [instead of trying to force His hand, simply] *touched the fringe* [that OT *tzitzit-kanaph*, or *feathered wings*] of His garment, for [believing Him to be the One foretold by Malachi] she said to herself, “If I only touch His garment, I will be made well.” And [it worked!] immediately her discharge of blood ceased, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. – Mt 9:20-21; Mk 5:24-29; Lk 8:42-44 ESV

So why’s she *sneaking*? Cuz she’s not allowed anywhere *near* here. **She could be stoned.** Prior to her healing, **everything she touches is contaminated.** She’s been *unclean* and *alienated* for twelve years. **This is one of her deep, dark, secrets.** Till the moment she touched His *wing*.

And Jesus *immediately* turned about in the crowd and said, “Who was it that touched Me? Who touched My garments?” When all *denied* it [touching His garments] ... Jesus said, “Someone *touched* Me, for I perceive that power has gone out from Me.” And His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd *pressing* around You, and yet You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” And He *looked around* to see *who had done* it. – Mk 5:30-32; Lk 8:45-47 ESV

I *love* this story! Because how often do you see Jesus caught off guard? About as often as the Father performs a miracle through Him without telling Him beforehand! But He felt the power go *out*. And He wants to know who tapped *in*! So **did Jesus have less power?** No. **He had more.** Know *why*? Because **He never had power. He is power.** That’s why it went out “from Him”, not “*of Him*”. And what type of power is He? “God is *love*.” (1 Jn 4:8) And **His is the power of love.** And that’s **the one power that increases the more it goes out from you.** So, *want more power? Give more love.*

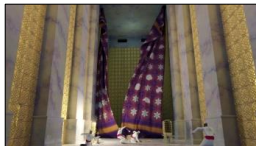
And seeing *her* He said, “Take heart.” And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came in *fear* and *trembling* and fell down before Him and declared *in the presence of all the [pushy] people* why she had touched Him, [on His wings] and how she had been immediately *healed*. And He said to her, [in the presence of all the pushy people] “Daughter, [unlike them] your faith has made you well” – Mt 9:22; Mk 5:33-34; Lk 8:47-48 ESV

So what's the crowd doing at this point? Trying to figure out what's going on! *They all believed* as much as *she* did that *they'd* be healed. That's why they're pushing and shoving and pressing in. And, they're equally *persistent*. So, **how is her faith different from theirs?** It's all about *why* she did what *she* did. Unlike the crowd, **this woman has faith ... in God's Word.** And *that's* why Jesus *stops* the *presses*. *They* were acting on **desire based on their desire.** Whereas, *she* was acting on **hope based on God's promises.** Because **faith isn't about its own strength;** it's about its object. Especially when it comes to partnering up in *prayer*. **Faith in faith is faith in self.** Whereas, **faith in God's Word is faith in our Father.** So we're not *acting in faith* if we're not *trusting* our Father's *promises*; and **it's not possible to trust what we don't know.** Everyone was trusting in *something*: *superstition, magic, spirituality, mysticism, positive energy, crystals, beads, or whatever.* But only one sneaky little woman put *her* trust in the *healing wings* of her *Bridegroom Redeemer*, according to *Scripture* – *rather* than just being *pushy*. So we need to take a *tip* from His *wings*, and *know* His *Word*, so we can *reach out in faith* as we *hope* in His *promises*. This woman unintentionally *changed* the way the *sick* approached the *Savior*.

[Because, after that] Wherever He entered *villages, or cities, or countryside*, they were laying the sick in the market places, and [instead of crushing Him] *implored* Him that they might just *touch* the [feathered] *fringe* [of the wings] of His *cloak*; and [Guess what! This time] *as many as touched it were being cured.* – Mark 6:56 NAS



Picture *that!* The *lame, blind, and diseased*, lying in long *parallel rows*, creating a *runway* for the *outstretched wings* of the *King of kings*, our *Boaz-like Bridegroom-Redeemer*, covering and instantly healing all who reach out, in *true faith*. And **leaving 'em in His wake, leaping and laughing and praising God, in a heart stopping fulfillment of Malachi**, who goes on to say:



The *Sun of Righteousness* will rise with healing in His wings. And you will go *free, leaping with joy* like *calves* let out to *pasture*. – Malachi 4:2-3 NLT



And when Jesus *died*, that *terminated temple curtain-wall-wing* was *torn in two* to *open* it to *all*. Which could *only* be seen by peering between *two* big *pillars* at the *entryway*. Keep in mind, they *read* from *right to left*, because:

[Solomon] [originally] set up the *pillar* on the *right* and called its name *Jachin*, [i.e. He will *establish*] and he set up the *pillar* on the *left* and called its name *Boaz*. – 1 Kings 7:21 NKJ

If the sick hadn't *laid out*, and *reached out*, they would've *continued* to *miss out* on the *power* that *goes out*. Same goes for *us*. So **reach out in faith, based on His Word, without being pushy.** Cuz no matter how hard we *pray*, or whatever we *say* in whatever way, **we can't coerce our Creator to give us less than His best.** Which is *often* the *opposite* of what we want, which is *often* the case with *kids*. So *focus* on your part: **own up, partner up, and make your faith your own.** Because:

He who dwells in the *secret place* of the *Most High* shall abide *under* the *shadow* of the *Almighty*. ... [Cuz] He shall *cover* you with His *feathers*, and *under His wings* you shall take *refuge* ... because you have made the *Lord* ... your *dwelling place* – Psalm 91:1-9 NKJ

And whatever His will, He's got you covered ... with a wing and a prayer.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.