

## Turning Back to God in Prayer Jon Leonetti

Hey everybody, Jon Leonetti here back with our "Pray More Novenas Retreat," it's Lent, what do you say we pray?

### Opening Prayer

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. "Enter through the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction. And those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate constricted the road that leads to life and those who find it are few." Blessed Mother we ask that you be with us during the short time. Mother by your prayers, help us to love Jesus, your son. Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

### Faith = Trust

What is faith? Have you ever asked yourself that question? What is faith? When I think of faith, I think of one other word and that is trust. Faith being trust. You know, I have a hard time with that with God and if I'm just being honest and I'll be very honest, I have always had a hard time trusting in God. My spiritual director would tell you, well he wouldn't, because he can't. But, if I said, hey tell them, he'd tell them. I have a hard time trusting God, I always have. I'm pretty good at driving, that's what I like to do, and God used to be in the trunk. Now He's at least in the passenger seat but I have a hard time giving over the wheel of my life. And maybe you do too, trust because when it all comes down to faith, it all comes down to trust. To put our lives, to give our lives over to God, in such a way that we are able to say, "Not my will Lord, but your will be done."

You know, there's that most dangerous prayer on the face of the earth and the reason I say it's dangerous is because at every Holy Mass right before the priest says the words of the, "Our Father", he says, "We dare to say." And there's that beautiful prayer. That dangerous prayer, the "Our Father". It's dangerous because if we were to actually do or ask God into our life the way that the "Our Father" the words that we're saying, the power of that would change the world. But there's that sneaky line in there, remember that line? And we sometimes just all too easily rattle through it, without even thinking about what we're saying. We're saying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth, as it is in heaven." Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

## We Have a Severe Happiness Problem

You know I don't think this would come as much of a surprise, but I think there is a severe happiness problem in our world today. The problem where many aren't just happy, they don't feel fulfilled, book after book in our day and age, will show you that, "10 steps to a better you," "50 steps to a happier marriage" "182 steps to the life you've always dreamed". And we dream of late-night walks on the beach, and hefty 401Ks and scratching those six winning numbers. If only we could have those things, we would be happy. All the things that the world has to offer, but yet we find ourselves, many of us unfulfilled. Searching and looking for more. That next car, the next phone, the next house, a bigger boat but it never quite does it.

It never quite gives us what it is that we're looking for, so we continue to search but Saint Teresa of Avila, she said one thing that has always stuck out to me, three words really. She said, "My dear sisters, God is enough." God is enough, but when we dream of happiness Saint John Paul II said, "What we're dreaming of actually is God." To possess God within our very being, within our hearts. Because we weren't made for the things of this world, the things of this world were made for us. The highest point of God's creation is man and woman. There's no greater gift God has given to this planet, to the universe than the human person and the reason we know this is the greatest of gifts is because we are the only ones made in God's image and likeness. There's nothing else as good as it is in this world, that is made in God's own image and likeness, nothing except for the human person. That tells us something then that all the other goods in this world and there's many goods God has gifted us with. They are there for one reason and one reason only, to serve us.

The problem in this happiness problem that I talk about is, is what happens in our world today is we begin to serve those things of the world. The Bible doesn't say, money is the root of all evil. The Bible says, "the love of money is the root of all evil." When I begin to serve money and it's just an easy example. My life is based on those things, the goods of this world, they become gods. And so, all the things in the world are there to serve us, we're the highest point of God's creation. We're not God, which means there's one greater. One greater than the human person and that is Him. And so, the good life, the happy life, is to reorder ourselves not to just the things of this world but to God Himself, that's prayer. A complete reordering of my life. Where now I am headed in the direction of God and what He wants. Again, we're doing it imperfectly here, all right, I'm a mess, you are too. Let's just, you know, all understand that. But the good life for every one of us, the life that is there to make us happy or happier is to want what God wants in our life and I think that's one of the most powerful prayers we can pray.

## A Divine Santa Claus

You know, oftentimes we can see prayer as just kind of a divine vending machine. I'm going to put the words in, I'm going to put the money in, I'm going to push the right numbers, I'm going to get what I want, and I better get what I want. Or we see God in prayer as some sort of divine Santa Claus. I'm going to do good, so that what? God can give me what I really want. That's not

prayer. There's an element of relationship there and I get it, we need to go to God when we have our needs but the deeper prayer that God calls every one of us to, and the saints understood this, is have an intimate relationship with Him. An intimate relationship with God, one where we are so close that my will is united to His will. Where my life is a pattern of His divine life in the world.

### What's the Big Picture Here?

Remember what Saint Paul says, powerful words. He says, "I no longer live, I've died with Christ. I no longer live. It is Christ, who now lives in me." Powerful words. Saint Paul says, "I have so given my life over to God and it is now God who lives in me." And I'm kind of going on a 30,000 foot view of prayer here, kind of mixing it up a little bit because I think it's important, one of my other previous talks on prayer, penance and almsgiving I kind of get into the weeds of prayer a little bit more. But I think we've got to have that vision, I think we got to take a look down like in that 30,000 foot view and say, "What's the big picture here? What's the purpose of all of this altogether?"

And that just boils down to one word, Heaven. That's why we pray, that's what God asks for us. But not just Heaven when we're afterwards 60, 70, 80, 90, a hundred years old in death but also to be able to live that embodiment here on earth. You remember Jesus says, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Remember how He says that in sacred scripture, well the Kingdom of God can't be at hand if the King isn't present and that tells us in every Catholic Church around the world right now, the kingdom of God is at hand. The council unites us in His Holy Eucharist, which is a prayer. Which is why we say thank you back to Him, Eucharist, thank you. The council unites Himself to us, and in true prayer like that, God unites Himself to us to establish His Kingdom on earth. To build the city of God as Saint Augustine would say. I can't think of a more exciting life than that and what God calls every single one of us to. That kind of relational love with our father, God and what God desires for each and every one of us to be able to live. So as hard as it is for me and it might be hard for you.

### Have the Courage to Trust in Him

I want you just to simply every day ask God for the courage, the courage to trust in Him. And if you don't want to ask God for the courage to trust in Him, ask Him for the courage, for the courage to even ask to trust in Him and go back as many times as you need to, I know I have before. But that trust takes courage in our life and over and over again I guarantee you God will begin to enter our lives in more powerful and more uniting ways. As I say all the time faith without prayer is a hobby, we're in this for prayer, we're in this for the relational love that God desires to give us. God bless you, I'm Jon Leonetti. More of the retreat soon.