

My Life Is My Prayer

The Language of Prayer of Jesus of Nazareth

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**“All the way to heaven is heaven, because he said, ‘I am the way.’”
St. Catherine of Sienna**

The four gospels reveal a pattern of prayerful living embedded in the words and works of Jesus. Within his life there is a clear pattern or rule. Jesus teaches about prayer by living a life of prayer. His language of prayer has at least four aspects:

- his times of personal solitude and prayers to “the Father”**
- his participation in public worship in synagogue and Temple**
- dimensions of his life of prayer which are seen clearly in his words and works**
- his specific teaching about prayer**

Jesus' life of prayer represents three dimensions of prayer which were part of his Jewish tradition: direct mystical experience of God, experience of God through the rituals of the faith community and encounters with God through good deeds and words. Later rabbinic tradition emphasized only the last two as normative means of human access to God. Repentance, through ritual, was also necessary for atonement.

The tradition of Christian prayer is influenced by the Jewish dimensions of Jesus' life of prayer, yet is clearly Christian in its evolution and practice. The foundation shared by both traditions is the recognition of the need for an integration of contemplation and action.

Modern New Testament scholarship has discovered that the gospels are really portraits of Jesus' life which evolved out of the lives of some of the earliest Christian communities. The gospels contain words and actions which clearly belong to Jesus, himself, and other words and incidents which represent truth about Jesus as seen through of eyes of the faith of these early Christians and their

experience of the risen Christ. It is beyond the purpose of this study differentiate between these two types of gospel material as Jesus' life of prayer is examined. Both types represent truth about Jesus, describe his intimate relationship with God and articulate his wisdom about prayer. Therefore, the content and conclusions of this study are based upon the truth represented in both types of gospel material. This enables us to learn both from Jesus, himself, and the presence of the promised Spirit in the experience of the earliest Christians.

What can we learn about prayer from Jesus? What was the relationship between prayer and his daily life? The gospels respond to these questions with clear patterns in Jesus' life.

JESUS PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PRAYER

Jesus Took Time For Personal Prayer:

Day to day:

- **early in the morning in a lonely place**
(MK 1:35-38 LK 4:42-43)
- **went away by himself**
(MT 5:1 & 14:13 MK 3:13, 4:10 & 6:31-32 LK 6:12-13)
- **went up on a mountain**
(MT 14:23-24, 15:29 & 17:1-2 LK 9:29-30)

“In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.”
MK 1:35

Times of crisis or special intention:

- **in Gethsemane (...not my will, but yours be done)**
(MT 26:38-39 MK 14:34-36 LK 22:41-42 JN 12:27)
- **on the cross (...why have you forsaken me)**
(MT 27:46 MK 15:34)
- **the “high priestly prayer” (...may they be one as we are one)**
(JN 7:1-26)

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” **JN 12:27-28**

Jesus Took Time For Discernment:

- **struggle in the wilderness (desert experience where he is driven by the spirit to embrace truth)
(MT 4:1-11 MK 1:12-13 LK 4:1-13)**
- **the transfiguration (a more complete vision of the truth)
(MT 17 MK 9 LK 9)**
- **Gethsemane (facing the future embedded in the present)
(MT 26:36-46 MK 14:32-42 LK 39-46)**

“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.” MK 1:12-13

Jesus’ Pattern of Prayer Drew Those Close To Him Into Prayer:

- **“...he was praying and the disciples said, ‘teach us to pray’”
(MT 6:7-15 LK 11:1-4)**

**Jesus’ Summary of Life As Prayer (“The Lord’s Prayer”)
(MT 6:1-15 LK 11:1-10)**

- Praise above all...
 - Seek God...
 - Desire God’s realm here and now...
 - Desire what God desires...
 - Ask for only what is proper, day by day...
 - Be a forgiving person and seek forgiveness...
 - Be aware of what will harm your relationship with God and other people...
 - Rely only on God who is the only source of life...

“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” LK 11:9-10

Jesus Prayed Regularly In The Synagogue – “As Was His Custom”:

(MT 1:23-28, 4:23, 9:35, 12:9-10 & 13:54)
 (MK 1:21-22, 1:39, 3:1-6 & 6:1-2)
 (LK 4:16, 4:31-37, 4:44, 6:5-11 & 13:10-11)

“They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” MK 1:21-22

Jesus Worshiped Regularly At The Temple In Jerusalem:

(MT 21:23-27 MK 11:27-33 LK 20:1-8, 21:37-38 JN 2:18-22, 8:1-12)

- At the Feast of Tabernacles (JN 7:10-39)
- At the Feast of Dedication (JN 10:22-39)
- At the Feast of Passover (MK 10:22-34 LK 22:15)

“At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the Temple, in the portico of Solomon.” JN 10:22-23

Jesus Was A Learned Teacher Who Taught Regularly At The Temple:

(MT 22:12 MK 10:1, 11:18, and 12:14 LK 4:22, 19:47-48, 20:21 JN 7:14-39)

“About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the Temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished at it, saying, ‘How does this man have learning, when he has never been taught?’ Then Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not my own but his who sent me...’” JN 7:14-16

Jesus’ Life of Prayer Was Lived In The Context of the Torah:

- “I have not come to abolish the Law...”
 (MT 5:17-20, 22:34-40 MK 12:28-34 LK 10:25-28)

- Jesus affirmed the “Great commandment”
(MT 22:34-40 MK 12:28-34 LK 10:25-28)

Jesus Experienced Union With God (“the father”/”abba”) In Prayer:

- At his baptism: “...you are my son, whom I love...”
(MT 3:13-17 MK 1:9-11 LK 3:21-22 JN 9:28-36)
- At his transfiguration: “...this is my son, whom I love, listen to him...” (MT 17:1-8 MK 9:2-8 LK 9:28-36)
- Jesus manifests the One who sent him, in sight, word and action (JN 3:34-35, 7:28-29, 10:13-14, 12:44-50, 13:3, 14:1-26, 15:1-17, 16:23-28 & 17:1-26)

“Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the Temple, ‘You know me and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.’” JN 7:28-29

Jesus’ Teaching About Prayer Reveals His Own Experiences In Prayer

Prayer Is A Journey Into Life With God:

“The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, ‘Look, here is the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi’, (which translated means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see’” JN 1:35-39

- Prayer (the journey) begins by hearing, being aware of the Word: The two disciples heard, “Look, here is the Lamb of God” and followed after Jesus. Hearing awakens desire.
- God is aware of our desire: Jesus said to the two who followed after him, “What are you looking for?” Prayer continues by our seeking God, by our desire for fullness of life.

- We respond to God's initiative with a desire to find God, to be present with God, to dwell with God: the two disciples answer Jesus, "Where are you staying?"
- The journey of prayer (our dialogue with God) now becomes a relationship: Jesus responds to the disciples, "Come and see!" Our awakening to God's presence evokes a desire to be with God and God lures us to follow that desire into a life of prayer, the journey into the heart of God.
- Prayer is a journey; it is not a technique. It is based on a relationship of faith (putting one's life in God's hands) (MK 9:28-29 LK 17:5-6)

A Life of Prayer Demands Single-Heartedness and Persistence

Jesus spoke often about the need to desire only God as the path to abundant life (fullness of life):

- "If your eye is single, your whole being will be full of light."
(MT 6:22-23 LK 11:34-36)
"You cannot serve two masters." (MT 6:24 LK 6:13)

Prayer (life with God) requires relying only on God.

- "Seek God's realm and all else will follow."
(MT 6:25-34 LK 12:22-32)

Prayer is a way of life, a persistent pattern, a constant action and way of being.

- "Knock and it will be opened to you."
(MT 7:7-11 LK 11:9-13 JN 14:13-14, 15:7, & 16:24)
- Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow (LK 18:1-8)
- Parable of the Talents (MT 25:14-30 MK 13:34 LK 19:11-27)

Jesus constantly encouraged his followers to pray:

- "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be

glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.” (JN 14:12-14) Also: MT 7:7-11, LK 11:9-13
JN 15:7 & 16:24

A Life of Prayer Requires Being Aware, Watchful and Open

A life with God requires letting go of one’s self and being open to God’s life in us:

“Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” MT 10:39
(MT 16:25 MK 8:25 & 35 LK 9:23-24 JN 12:25)

A life with God requires being aware of God’s presence and a faithful watchfulness:

“Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.” LK 12:35-36
(MT 24:42-51, 25:13-15 MK 13:33-37 LK 12:35-48, 21:34-36)

- Parable of the Ten Virgins (MT 25:1-13 MK 13:33-37 LK 12:35-38)
- Parable of the Flood (MT 24:37-44 LK 17:26-36)

Prayer Is Not A Part Of Life. Prayer Is A Way Of Life

Prayer, as a relationship with God, enables us to see life through God’s eyes and desire what God desires. Thus, prayer is a WAY to live and requires knowing the way:

“And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’” JN 14:4-6

Discernment Is An Integral Aspect Of Following “The Way”

Discernment is essential in a life of prayer. Jesus spoke often about “seeing” and being aware:

- The Holy Spirit is our teacher and guide.
(MT 10:17-22 MK 13:9-13 LK 21:12-19 JN 14:26 & 16:6ff)

- Jesus spoke of “seeing with the heart”. The inability of seeing into the heart of life creates barriers between us and God and prevents us from experiencing fullness of life: (MT 13:13-15 MK 8:17-18 LK 8:10 JN 12:37-40)
- Not being aware of God’s presence will cause us to follow false “gods”: (MT 24:23-28 MK 13:21-23 LK 23-24)

“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’, or ‘There he is!’ – do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” MT 24:23-24

- Not seeing God’s image in ourselves will warp our values, behavior and our awareness of our “true self”:

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is Jesus primary teaching about awareness of our true self and the danger of being lured into what is not real or bogus: in the parable the younger son took “what was his” (his real self) and wasted it. Then he “came to himself” (his real self) and desired “To return to his father”.

- Not seeing life as it is will both distort our experience of life and limit its fullness.

The Healing of the Blind Man in MK 8:22-26 is Jesus’ statement about discerning life authentically: “I see men, but they look like trees walking”, says the “blind” man. Jesus heals him and “...he looked *intently* and was restored and *saw everything clearly*”.

Discernment takes place in the context of ordinary, daily life and is related to living in God’s presence in an authentically human way:

- “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be.” MT 6:19-21
- Be aware of “the signs of the times”. (LK 12:10-12 & 54-56)

“The Pharisees and Saducees came, and to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, ‘When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.” MT 16:1-3

- **Guidance in crisis: MK 13:9-13**
- **It is LOVE which will enable us to desire what God desires for ourselves and others: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments...” JN 14:15-30**
- **Discernment results in action: “Get up. Let us go!” MK 14:42**
- **Discernment, in the context of prayer as a way of life takes place one day at a time. (MT 6:25-34 LK 12:22-32)**

“And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?” LK 12:25-26

Prayer Is Living In A Way That Manifests God’s Presence and Power

(The Reign/Realm of God)

Prayer must be congruent with the way we live:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” MT 7:21

- (MT 7:21-27 LK 6:46-49 & 13:25-27)

The manner in which we live really matters:

- **living in God’s realm begins with a denial of the self we have fabricated (our false self):**

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” MT 16:25-26

- (MT 16:24 & 20:28 MK 8:34 & 10:45 JN 12:26)
- **living in God’s realm means responsible living and caring well for what we have been given: Parable of the Talents (MY 25:14-30 MK 13:34 LK 19:11-27)**

Living in God’s realm is based on and formed by experience of God’s love in prayer, and extending that love to others through living out (manifesting) God’s words and commandments:

- using our power to serve others (in washing the feet of his disciples Jesus reveals a new paradigm of power which is horizontal, rather than hierarchical) JN 13:1-17
- as we are “in the Father”, through prayer, we shall spea
God’s words and do God’s works:

“Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”
JN 14:11-12

- our ability to live according to God’s commandments is directly related to our relationship to God in prayer and to our personal experience of God’s love: “The vine and the branches...the branch receives its life from the vine...remain in me...Without me you can do nothing.”
JN 14:1-6
- our experience of God’s love and our love of God, in prayer, will result in our DESIRE to keep God’s commandments.
JN 14:8-14
- in prayer, our relationship with God becomes one of FRIEND, who shares KNOWLEDGE and POWER in love. It is in prayer that we are shown and desire God’s will. We are entrusted with God’s desires for God’s realm.
(JN 14:11-31 & 15:1-17)

“I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. JN 15:15-17

Prayer Is Experience Of And Union With God For The Life Of The World

Jesus knew his true (authentic) self because he saw himself reflected in his experience of the One who sent him. His identity and life were formed/found in his prayer-filled experience of God:

- Jesus knew he was “from God” because he “knew God” (JN 7:16 & 28-29: at the Feast of Tabernacles)
- Jesus was “sent from God” whom he “knows” (JN 8:42)
- Jesus teaches only “what the Father taught me” because “the one who sent me is with me” and “has not left me alone” (JN 8:28-30)
- Jesus, as the “Good Shepherd” knows his sheep, “just as the Father knows me and I know him”; therefore, from that relationship Jesus can “lay down my life for the sheep”. (JN 10:1-18)
- Jesus saw his very being as a manifestation of the life of God: “I am the vine and my Father is the vine grower.” (JN 15:1 ff.)
- Jesus experienced his relationship with God as an eternal one. This was the source of his teaching, healing and glory. This eternal presence of God in Jesus drew others to that same experience of God. (JN 17:1-9)

“They said to him, ‘Who are you?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.’ They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him’. As he was saying these things, many believed in him.” JN 8:25-30

Jesus Manifested the Life of God in His Life in a Generative and Transforming Way:

- Jesus reflects the light of God he experienced in prayer:

“Then Jesus cried aloud, ‘Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.’” JN 12:44-46

- Jesus declared that those who followed him would share his relationship with God: “...so that where I am there you may

be, also.” (JN14:1-3) “The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”(JN 17: 22-23)

- Jesus knew that his life of prayer was a path that would lead others to his union with the truth and life of God: “I am the Way, the truth and the life.” (JN 14:3-6)
- Jesus life of prayer led to such a complete union with God that he was certain of the reality of that union as it was manifested in his human life: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”. (JN14:7-11)
- Jesus knew that the truth of his teaching and the power of his active life came from his prayer-filled union with God. He knew, also, that the same generative power and truth present in his life was also the true destiny/nature for every person who desired what was present in Jesus:

“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” JN 14:11-14

- The primary relationship which leads to compassionate and responsible living is LOVE, experienced in prayer: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” JN 14:15

Jesus Prayed That Every Person Who Experienced God’s Generative Presence Through Him Would Also Manifest That Same Unitive Life:

Jesus offered a model of prayer-filled living to others: (JN 14:15-31):

- The life of God in Jesus is “the Way”: “...follow me.”
- Obey (listen to) “my words”.
- Love, serve, and pray; “...keep my commandments”.
- “...do the works that I do.”: teach, heal, live justly, and love.
- “...love me”.

- “...do not be troubled or afraid”.
- “Get up. Let us go.”

Jesus demonstrated a relationship with God which makes it possible to live his model of prayer-filled living: (JN 15:1-17)

- “Remain in me, as I remain in you.” (i.e. pray!)
- The result of union with Jesus is that we “...will bear much fruit.”
- “I chose you to bear fruit that will remain.” (A life of prayer is for the “long haul”.)
- “Whatever you ask in my name (presence) the Father will give.”
- “Go into your closet (your inner self) and be present to God” (practice contemplative prayer). (MT 6:5-6)

The Life of Jesus Demonstrates the Results of Prayer

- “...my Father will love her, and we will come and make our dwelling with her...” JN 14:23
- “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” JN 14:11
- “...so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him.” (through union with the life of God, which is eternal) JN 17:1-2
- “...consecrate them in the truth...and send them into the world as you sent me...” JN 17:17-18
- “...that they may be one, as you, Father, and I are one...that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know you sent me and that you loved them.” JN 17:20-23
- through prayer we “know God” and “see” as Jesus saw:

“Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.’” LK 10:23-24

- as Jesus was a source of God’s life for people and the world, so is any person who “follows” him: (MT 5:13-16) “...you are the salt of the earth” and “...you are light for the world”.

- each person's life of prayer will have an effect on the world for good:
 - Parable of the Mustard Seed (MT 13:31-32 MK 4:30-32 LK 13:18-19)
 - Parable of the Leaven (MT 13:33 LK 13:20-21)
- the life of God, working in and through us, is a mysterious gift which we accept and manifest through our openness; even though the life of God in us is a gift and beyond our control, we are invited to collaborate with God in the "harvest" of our own lives and the life of the world. Prayer is a journey to become what we already are:

"He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'" MK 4:26-29

Questions for Reflection

1. What patterns do you see in Jesus' life of prayer?
2. Which aspects of Jesus' life of prayer are most important to him?
3. Where and in what ways does Jesus experience God?
4. In what ways is Jesus' prayer present in the active dimensions of his life such as teaching, healing, human relationships, conflict, leadership, religious life, politics and daily work?
5. What seems to be the purpose of Jesus' life of prayer: to work at becoming a holy person? to become aware of the holiness of life? to embrace the sacred dimension and responsibilities of work and relationships? To become acceptable to God?
6. Based on the life of Jesus, what is prayer?
7. How would you describe Jesus' "rule of life"?
8. How does Jesus' life of prayer resonate with your own experience of life?
9. How does Jesus' experience of "the Father" relate to God's self-disclosure in your life?
10. In Jesus life, what is the relationship between prayer and the theology, teaching, worship and institutional life of the religious community (church)?
11. How can Jesus' life of prayer be shared and lived in your congregation?
12. What would Jesus say about integrating prayer and daily life?

Summary and Conclusions

At the heart of Jesus' life of prayer is "knowing the Father" (the reality of God's presence) and remaining in him. Everything else comes forth from this relationship.

Jesus' life of prayer gives us a language through which the Word of God can be spoken in our lives and manifested, through us, in the world. Our life of prayer is essential for the life of the world.

Jesus offers us a pattern which, at its heart, leads us to be fully human – to become what we already are. But how can we know the way? He is the Way, the truth and the life:

- **He invites us to see reality in its full spiritual dimension... (prayer is listening, waiting, seeing, awareness, wonder and gratitude)**
- **He exhorts us to give up anything which is less than our true selves...(prayer is letting go of control, openness)**
- **He reminds us that the path is narrow and demands whole-heartedness, persistence and genuine desire...(prayer is a "turning toward" and an offering of will and self)**
- **He lures us to experience and remain in the unconditional love of God which is the only source of life and power...(prayer is simply "remaining in God" who is already and always present)**
- **He offers us the opportunity to experience truth so that the path is real and not a bogus one...(prayer is "listening with the heart", being guided and sometimes driven to see ourselves and the world with God's eyes and wisdom, to act in ways which are truly authentic for each of us, to be honest about our self-centeredness and sins)**
- **He challenges us to become fully engaged with life...(prayer is the womb of compassion, the wellspring of action, is lived through word and deed)**
- **He calls us to be generative and manifest the vitality and power of God in our lives...(prayer manifests itself through responsible living, justice, caring and self-giving)**
- **He shatters our desire to make our life with God static and self-centered by offering a path of endless transformation which includes a discipline of personal prayer, prayer with other in the context of a community of faith and opportunities to manifest prayer in words and actions.**

A Three-fold Pattern of Life:

The four gospels reveal a pattern in Jesus' life which was the source of his life with God:

- a. quiet listening
- b. faithful discernment
- c. compassionate response

Jesus always found time to listen to God, the world around him and his inner self. This listening heart was the source of the guidance and will which, along with direct experience of God's love, led and sometimes drove him into compassionate involvement in the lives of others. All this took place in the context and in fulfillment of his own religious community. Jesus' life of prayer opened him to the vitality of God's energy and vision. He became what he sought. He loved what he saw. He transformed what he touched. He lived what he spoke.

The Wisdom and Challenge of Jesus' Life of Prayer:

In Jesus' prayer a mystical and personal relationship with God was integrated with social interaction and responsibility. He seems to be saying "The realm of God is within you and is lived all around you." Mirrored in Jesus' life is the wisdom and challenge that prayer is at the same time a personal journey and an opportunity to transform society. Prayer and living must be congruent because they are the same reality.

What are the implications of Jesus' life of prayer for us? Is it more important to declare who Jesus is or to live as he lived? Jesus was less interested in what people called him than in manifesting God's presence in his life and inviting people to share that same experience. Entering into the life of Jesus of Nazareth does not come through theological reflection or debate about right belief or right behavior. It comes by experiencing the divine life which was present in him. That is his challenge to us. It is possible if we take his life seriously and are open to his transformed presence now.

"Remain in me as I remain in you." This is living by faith: placing our lives into the life of the risen Christ. By accepting him as our Way and by committing ourselves to that path we experience what is true and most fully alive. Our life becomes our prayer.