

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER 6

Reflections on Tim Keller's 'Prayer' and God's word

KICKING OFF



As a young boy, having a father who was employed as a bass baritone singer at the Sydney Opera House provided some awesome privileges. Having to sit through four hour long Wagner operas may have seemed a privilege to some, but to me it was having access to the Green Room, the huge Opera House cafeteria and lounge with corridors going

off in every direction lined with dressing rooms and long racks of costumes and swords. This was a world that only the artists and their immediate family and friends could enjoy while the general public were barred entry by the street level east-German inspired concrete Stage Door security bunker.



And this famous photo of the young son of President Kennedy playing beneath the resolute desk of the oval office describes even more beautifully the privileges that come with having a father in high position. What is completely inaccessible to most becomes so completely unrestricted due to the closeness of relationship that all we see in these photos is joyful play.



GOING DEEPER

And it's to our relationship with God that Keller now delves. Because to understand the privilege that comes from now having relationship with God, **our Father** in the highest possible position, that Jesus has gained access for us is key to us experiencing the joy of a full and authentic prayer life.

To do this Keller explores the Trinity, one God in three persons. In the Old Testament, even though Moses insists that, The Lord our God, the Lord is one, [Deut 6:4], there are also many hints of plurality/diversity within God [Gen 1:26]. But in the New Testament the three persons of God come clearly into view especially at Jesus' baptism but most clearly in Jesus' own descriptions of what we call the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in perfect, other-person centred eternal loving relationship. And as Jonathon Edwards argued, if God already enjoyed the fullness of eternal love,

joy and relationship within himself then he has created us not to **get it**, (because he already had it) but to **share it** with him. Let's now explore how we share in this relationship with God through the various persons of the Trinity.

The Father - Read Ephesians 1:3-6

In verse 3 - how has the Father blessed us?

In verse 4 – why has the Father chosen us?

And in verse 5 – what motivated the Father to adopt us as his sons?

The Spirit - Read Romans 8:14-17

In verse 14, what does it mean to be among those who are led by the Spirit of God? (see vs 12&13)

Now that we have the Spirit, how **don't** we live and how **do** we live?

Read Romans 8:22-27

Paul in Ephesians tells us that we have already been adopted as sons but in verse 23 describes us as waiting for our adoption to sonship. How do we make sense of this?

As we wait patiently for the fullness of resurrection life with God, “the future glory of God,” how does the Spirit help us as we pray?

The Son – Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and Hebrews 9:14-15

Compared to other high priests and mediators, what is different about Jesus that we can now have such confidence to approach God's throne?

Why is it so liberating to know that our acceptance and access to God is in absolutely no way dependent on our performance but purely the performance of Christ?

Read Romans 8:31-34

As we pray, what is the crucified, raised and exalted Christ now doing?

TAKING IT HOME

Keller mentions that one the great discoveries is that we have been mired all our lives in forms of self-salvation, that we think we have it within us to save ourselves.

Q: What difference should what we have discussed today make to this way of thinking and to our ongoing prayer life with God?