

PRAYING WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

Does God want us to retreat from the world and spend all of our time seeking Him in prayer and solitude, or has He called us to go into the world as ambassadors of His coming kingdom? The answer is, "Yes!" For many believers, and most churches, the choice between practicing a prayerful, contemplative faith is always held in contrast and opposition to practicing an active faith. But Jesus not only called us to both, He spent His earthly ministry modeling the importance of each. At Southside, we believe the character of our prayers determines the character of our ministry. Join us for part three of **Tightrope** as we continue to explore our core values and how they shape who we are and who we hope to become.

PASSAGE: James 2:14-24 and Romans 4:1-5

CORE VALUE:

We believe the character of our _____ determines the character of our _____.

Prayer (faith)
— Ministry (works)

Ministry (works)
— Prayer (faith)

Prayer (faith)
+ Ministry (works)

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ministry

BALANCE CHECK:

Prayer (faith) ----- Ministry (works)

Questions:

- Do you use prayer as a cover for inaction?
- Are you so busy "doing" things "for God" that you've totally lost contact with Him?

DAILY READINGS:

- Day 1: James 2
- Day 2: Romans 4
- Day 3: Ephesians 2
- Day 4: Matthew 25
- Day 5: Matthew 6
- Day 6: Matthew 7
- Day 7: Acts 1-2

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Books:

- Radical*, by David Platt
- Don't Waste Your Life*, by John Piper

Sermon Series

- (ssbc.org/sermon-archive/series/):
- The Prayer Journey (2018)
- Pray (2012)



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

We are in a series called **Tightrope**. In our worship gatherings we are focused on our church's core values and how those values provide clarity in times of uncertainty. Last week we looked at the difference between essential and non-essential beliefs. This week we are going to look at Southside's eight essential beliefs and how they shape the way we live and do church.

HANGOUT [WARMING UP TO THE TOPIC]:

1. If you had to give an elevator pitch to someone to say why you are (or are not) a follower of Jesus, what would you say? What important elements of your faith did you NOT discuss on that elevator ride? Why did you not discuss those things?

HEAR [LISTENING TO GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE]:

2. Read Southside's official "elevator pitch" and answer the following questions:

WE BELIEVE . . . There is One God who eternally exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God with us come to show us God's love, save us from sin, set up God's Kingdom, and shut down religion, so we can share in God's life. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is the only mediator between God and man. His death and resurrection are events rooted in history and they offer forgiveness of sin and eternal life to all who place their faith in Him. The Holy Spirit has also eternally existed. He now takes up residence in all true believers gifting and empowering them to work together as His Church.

The Scriptures, as collected in the Bible, give eyewitness accounts to all of this and are authoritative and true. From Genesis to Revelation, we learn of the great redemptive movement of God to save us from the consequences of sin and to bring us back to a restored relationship with Him. Those who have been rescued by God join a new and lasting family called the Church and continue the cause of Christ in the world. We believe Jesus is coming again and will bring with Him a new heaven and a new earth.

- What do you like about this statement?
- Is there anything unclear or with which you disagree?

3. Read each of our eight essential beliefs and the associated scripture references and answer the following questions:

- Why is this an essential belief?
- What difference would it make if this belief were abandoned?

GOD IS

Only one true and living God exists. He is the Creator of the universe, eternally existing in three Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - each equally deserving our worship and obedience. He is infinite and perfect in all His attributes. (*Deuteronomy 6:4-5*)

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

The Bible is God's written revelation to people, divinely given through human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is entirely true. The Bible is sufficient and completely authoritative for matters of life and faith. The goal of God's Word is the restoration of humanity into His image. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*)

PEOPLE ARE GOD'S TREASURE

God created us in His image for His glory. We are the crowning work of His creation. Yet all of us have willfully disobeyed God - an act known as sin - thus inheriting both physical and spiritual death and the need for salvation. We are all born with a sin nature and into an environment inclined toward sin. Only by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, can we experience salvation. (*Genesis 1:26*)

JESUS IS GOD AND SAVIOR

Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He is Christ, the Son of God. Born of a virgin, He lived a sinless life and performed many miracles. He died on the cross so we could be forgiven of sin and experience eternal salvation. Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return in power and glory. (*Hebrews 1:3*)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD AND EMPOWERER

The Holy Spirit is supernatural and sovereign, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ. He lives within all Christians beginning at the moment of our salvation, and empowers us to live like Jesus and to carry out His mission as we surrender to Him. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, uses God's Word to mature us into Christ-likeness, and secures us until Christ returns. He is God in us. (*Acts 1:8*)

SALVATION IS BY FAITH ALONE

We are all born with a sin nature, separated from God, and in need of a Savior. That salvation comes only through a relationship with Jesus Christ. When we repent of our sin we receive Christ's forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. Salvation is instantaneous and accomplished only by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Salvation happens only because of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not on the basis of any human efforts. All the redeemed are secure in Christ forever. (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)

THE CHURCH IS GOD'S PLAN

The Holy Spirit immediately places those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ into one united spiritual body -- the Church -- of which Christ is the head. The primary expression of the Church on earth is in autonomous local congregations of baptized believers. The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by taking the gospel to the entire world and by building its members in Christ-likeness through the instruction of God's Word, fellowship, service, worship, and prayer. (*Acts 2:42-44*)

THE FUTURE IS IN GOD'S HANDS

God is actively involved in our lives and our future. Through His prophets, God announced His plans for the future redemption of His people through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. With the call of the disciples, God prepared the way for the future of His Church. In scripture, God promised that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth to resurrect and judge all people. As the all-knowing and all-powerful Creator and Judge, God can and should be trusted today, and with our future. (*Hebrews 9:27-28*)

4. What do these essentials all have in common? What makes them essential?
5. Are there any beliefs not mentioned that you feel are essential? What are they and why do you believe they should be considered essential?
6. Can something be important and still not essential? Can you give some examples?

HUDDLE [MAKING IT PERSONAL AND PRAYING TOGETHER - IN HUDDLES]:

7. In this week's sermon, we discussed our core belief that the nature of our praying determines the nature of our ministry. How is your prayer life? If you talked to your spouse or a close friend the way (and as frequently) as you talk to God, how would that affect your relationship? Talk about it, invite accountability, and take time to pray.