PRAYER  
**Talk 4: What happens when we pray?**

**Introduction**

If God is sovereign, does prayer change anything?

* God uses means

Responsibility

*"Young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me." An older minister in response to William Carey*

1 Corinthians 3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible….27 I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (NIV)

Acts 14:1   At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. (NIV)

Colossians 1:28  We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (NIV)

**Prayer changes things**

Exodus 32:13-14 But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God. “O LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? …Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.… Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. (NIV)

James 4:2-3 You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (NIV)

James 5:17-18 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. (NIV)

**God is sovereign and prayer changes things**

Daniel 9:1-3 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom — in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (NIV)

Genesis 20:6-7 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die.” (NIV)

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. (NIV)



*“He instructs us from the Bible about what pleases him; he puts into our hearts a longing for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven; and then we pray, as he has moved us to pray. And then he does what he wants to do, and has chosen to do; but—most wonderfully—he has chosen to do it****only when we pray for it****. In this extraordinary way, God draws us in to his government of the world, so that our God-shaped desires and yearnings actually shape what happens! There is no higher privilege.”* Christopher Ash, ‘Where was God when that happened?’