

Honest Prayer
Pastor Ethan Boester
St James, Chicago

We often think that prayer needs to sound professional – respectful words, calm tone, even a little rehearsed. And while there is a place for that, God also calls us to be honest in our prayers and give our struggles to Him. Honest prayer isn't always pretty. It's the cry in the middle of the night when you don't know what else to say. It's the words that tumble out raw, broken, and confused. It's the moment when you stop pretending and stop trying to hold God at a distance.

Habakkuk prayed like that – “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?” (Habakkuk 1:2). So does Job, and so do many of the Psalmists. Even Jesus in Gethsemane, as He pleads, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” (Matthew 26:39). Honest prayer doesn't mean you lack faith; it's what faith looks like when we are suffering. It's clinging to God when nothing makes sense. It's trusting Him enough to bring Him your fears, anger, and doubt.

In those moments, God draws near to you. Jesus isn't only our example of prayer, He is its answer when He goes to the cross for us. In His death and resurrection you and your imperfect, honest prayers are redeemed. So pray. Pray honestly. Pray desperately. Pray even when the words feel ugly. Because the One who said, “Thy will be done,” has carried your sins, and your cries – every unspoken word and broken plea – to the cross. He is the long-awaited answer who brings forgiveness, salvation, and life, and He will not delay. Amen.