**What is prayer?** – It is simply speaking to God. VA
(Comprises of different elements: praise, thanks, petitions).

**Did you know it’s a duty? Omission is a sin.** We all know deep down – there is a Creator, and that we should acknowledge Him.
**(Alone VA 2 and illustration)**
**Title today:** **Have you ever really prayed?** VA 1
 **Reading:** Luke 16:19-24

***There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:***

***20And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,***

***21And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.***

***22And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;***

***23And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.***

***24And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.***

It is often said about this rich man – that this was his first ‘prayer’.
 **Imagine that!** His first prayer was **after** death. His first prayer was: **too late!**

**We can only pray now. The Lord calls us to come in prayer today.

What about you? Have you ever prayed?** **What might you pray about/for?** Thanks for food, prayer for exams, in trouble.
**VA 4 Illustration about plane turbulence.** Crying out in fear! (No atheists in a disaster!)  **Getting lost at rock climbing story,**

**In danger – So one turns to prayer.**

**Is this you? Do you think God hears such a prayer?**
 **Teacher illustration** – instructions ignored, then they ask for help. I often tell them I gave you the chance! **Don’t come to me now**.
 **The Lord is gracious – patient** – He has given you time, opportunities, the gospel – have you prayed? Or will you only in an emergency?

**Does God hear the emergency prayer?**Well He may still, by grace – **but such a prayer only saves your life** – not your eternal soul.
 **His** greatest concern is our eternity – So it should be **your** greatest concern?

**Where should you pray? VA** **Anywhere is the obvious answer (and correct)
But the Bible is actually specific:** **Matt 6:6**
In the ideal situation – you go somewhere quiet – close the door – and pray to the Father.
 **Have you ever really done that?

This shows a desire to pray**
Not just for food – not in a panic out of fear – **but a decision to go and speak to the Lord.**

**What should you say?** VA 5
**Some examples:**
David prayed for forgiveness. Psalm 51v1-4.

***Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.***

***2Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.***

***3For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.***

***4Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.***

The Thief on the cross: ***“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”***
Father of possessed boy: ***“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”***Publican (parable): ***“God be merciful to me a sinner.”***Paul and Silas to the Jailor: ***(Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved…)***

**Finish with the question: Have you ever really prayed?**
**Have you gone to a quiet place –** and said a simple but sincere prayer?
 **Have you confessed your sin** – admitted your unbelief – and trusted in the Saviour?

 **You can ask for Faith. Ou can ask for a repentant heart.**

**God has provided a way for us to approach Him.**

It is via His Throne of Grace.

It is the Mercy Seat where God’s forgiveness is found.

It is open 24 hours a day every day of the year.

We can only approach it claiming the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ believing He died for you on the Cross of Calvary.

He Lord is waiting for your prayer. Now is the Day of Salvation.

Jesus said, “I AM The Way, The Truth and The Life no man cometh unto The Father but by Me.”