

Chapel Flock



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[Beautiful-Mercy Me](#)

[Bring The Rain-Mercy Me](#)

[I Can Only Imagine-Mercy Me](#)

Prayer

Lord, I realize today that I've been praying the wrong prayer! I've been asking You to remove all the problem people from my life; meanwhile, You've been wanting to reinforce me with sufficient strength to live with these people victoriously. Forgive me for wanting to run from my challenges. Help me face them bravely and confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit from this day forward. I know You want to give me this teaching/learning/healing, so I open my heart to receive it right now in Jesus' name. Amen...

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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[" Praying In The Closet" David Wilkerson](#)

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 DAVID FLED from Naioth in Ramah and came and said to Jonathan, What have I done? Of what am I guilty? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life? 2 Jonathan said, God forbid! You shall not die. My father does nothing great or small but what he tells me. And why should [he] hide this thing from me? It is not so. 3 But David replied, Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved. But truly as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death. 4 Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever you desire, I will do for you. 5 David said to Jonathan, Tomorrow is the New Moon [festival], and I should not fail to sit at the table with the king; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. 7 If he says, All right, then it will be well with your servant; but if he is angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him. 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought [me] into a covenant of the Lord with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father? 9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from you! If I knew that evil was determined for you by my father, would I not tell you? 10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly? 11 Jonathan said, Come, let us go into the field. So they went into the field. 12 Jonathan said to David, The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness. When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well inclined toward David, and I do not send and let you know it, 13 The Lord do so, and much more, to Jonathan. But if it please my father to do you harm, then I will disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. 14 While I am still alive you shall not only show me the loving-kindness of the Lord, so that I die not, 15 But also you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever—no, not even when the Lord has cut off every enemy of David from the face of the earth. 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, And the Lord will require that this covenant be kept at the hands of David's enemies. 17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again by his love for him, for Jonathan loved him as he loved his own life. 18 Then Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow is the New Moon festival; and you will be missed, for your seat will be empty. 19 On the third day you will go quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain by the stone Ezel. 20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And I will send a lad, saying, Go, find the arrows. If I expressly say to the lad, Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them—then you are to come, for it is safe for you and there is no danger, as the Lord lives. 22 But if I say to the youth, Look, the arrows are beyond you—then go, for the Lord has sent you away. 23 And as touching the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever. 24 So David hid himself in the field, and when the New Moon [festival] came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 The king sat, as at other times, on his seat by the wall, and Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Yet Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, Something has befallen him and he is not clean—surely he is not clean. 27 But on the morrow, the second day after the new moon, David's place was empty; and Saul said to Jonathan his son, Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today? 28 And Jonathan answered, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. 29 He said, Let me go, I pray, for our family holds a sacrifice in the city and my brother commanded me to be there. Now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers. That is why he has not come to the king's table. 30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan and he said to him, You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do not I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother who bore you? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, you shall not be established nor shall your kingdom. So now send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die. 32 Jonathan answered Saul his father, Why should he be killed? What has he done? 33 But Saul cast his spear at him to smite him, by which Jonathan knew that his father had determined to kill David. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food that second day of the month, for he grieved for David because his father had disgraced him. 35 In the morning Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him. 36 And he said to his lad, Run, find the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 When the lad came to the place where Jonathan had shot the arrow, Jonathan called to [him], Is not the arrow beyond you? 38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not! The lad gathered up the arrow and came to his master. 39 But the lad knew nothing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and told him, Go, carry them to the city. 41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose from beside the heap of stones and fell on his face to the ground and bowed himself three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another until David got control of himself. 42 And Jonathan told David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and yours forever. And Jonathan arose and departed into the city.

Chapter 20

Now David fled from Naioth in Ramah, he came to Jonathan, he said, What have I done? what is my iniquity? what is my sin that your father is seeking my life? And Jonathan said to him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but he'll shew it to me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? is it not so (1Sa 20:1-2).

David said, "Your father's trying to kill me." Jonathan says, "Ah, he's not really trying to kill you, he wouldn't do anything unless he told me first, and he hasn't said anything about it."

And David sware moreover, and said, Your father certainly knows that you and I are good friends; and so he said, Don't let Jonathan know this, lest he is grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death (1Sa 20:3).

David just said, "Man, I'm living on the border of eternity. There's just a step between me and death. Your dad's after me and he's trying to kill me."

Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever you want, I'll do. And David said to Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I'm supposed to be sitting there at your father's feast: and I'm not gonna show up. [I want you to pick up on your dad's attitude when I don't show up.] If he says, Where's David? Just tell him, Well his family is having an annual get together in Bethlehem. [And David pleaded with me that he might go and spend this annual family affair with his family. So he didn't come. Just notice what your dad's attitude is when I don't show up, because he's really planning to kill me when I come and sit there at the table. So Jonathan was a little skeptical, but he said, Okay, we'll let you know.] But he said, What we'll do is you wait out here behind this rock, and I'll come out with my servant when I really find out what my dad's feelings are. I'll come out with my servant, and I will shoot my arrows and send him out after them; and if I call to him, and I say, The arrows are this side of you, then they've fallen short, then you'll know that it's okay, my dad is in a good mood, and he doesn't really have any intentions of killing you. But if I say to the young fellow, The arrows have gone beyond you, then you'll know it's time to flee because my dad is angry and is thinking about killing you. So Saul, the new moon, [the feast of the king,] and Abner his captain was there, Jonathan's place was there, but David's place was empty. And Saul didn't say anything the first day: he thought, Well he probably isn't ceremonially clean, [maybe he's killed somebody, has blood on his hands, go through the cleansing rites before he comes, he'll be here tomorrow.] So the next day when David's chair was empty too: he said to Jonathan, Where's David? Jonathan said, Well his family's having an annual get together it's a family gathering, and David pleaded with me that he might go, and spend this celebration with the family in Bethlehem. And Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, Thou son of the perverse woman, don't I know that you've chosen the son of Jesse to your own confusion, and to the confusion of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse is living, you're not gonna become king after me, he's gonna have the kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die (1Sa 20:4-31).

So Saul of course gave forth now his true feelings. Jonathan saw what was in his dad's heart.

And Jonathan said, Why should he be slain? what evil has he done? And Saul cast his javelin at Jonathan: [You know the guy was just enraged, and so just because his son dared to ask a question, "Why should you kill him, what has he done wrong?" Saul let fly with the javelin towards his son Jonathan.] and so he knew that he had determined to kill David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, [He was really upset with his dad.] he did not eat meat on the second day of the month: and he was grieved for David, because his father had done him this shame. So it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out in the field at the time appointed with David, and a little fellow was with him. [The little boy that chases arrows.] And he said to the lad, Run, out to the field and find the arrows which I shoot. And so as the lad ran, he shot the arrows beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond you? So Jonathan said, Hurry and gather together all of the arrows. And so the fellow gathered together all of the arrows, and he brought them back to Jonathan. So Jonathan gave him all of his artillery, and said, Take it back to town. And after the little boy left, then David came out from behind the rock where he was hiding, and he bowed himself: they kissed each other, they wept with one another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, The Jehovah be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And they arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city (1Sa 20:33-42).

Now Jonathan and David had made a bond. Jonathan had realized that somehow God was gonna give the kingdom to David, and he said, "I just want you to treat my family well when you come into the kingdom, and all of my descendants. Let there be a bond between us." And David made an oath to Jonathan that he would treat the house of Saul with respect and kindness, and love. (Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

In ancient Israel, when two people entered into a covenant relationship, everything they possessed as individuals was made freely available to the other. The covenant relationship also meant that they would help one another, fight for one another, and do anything necessary to meet each other's needs.

David and Jonathan had a covenant relationship that included all of their descendants (see 1 Samuel 20:14-16; 18:3). We know from later chapters that Jonathan was killed and David became king. David kept the covenant he made with Jonathan by actively searching for Jonathan's heirs so that he could bless them. King David found Jonathan's son, brought him to the royal palace, and restored him (see 2 Samuel 9:1-13). Just as David honored his covenant with Jonathan, God will honor the covenant He makes with us. God is looking for someone He can bless for Jesus' sake. It can be you, if you are willing. The Everyday Life Bible.

V. JESUS CHRIST, THE DIVINE TEACHER OF PRAYER

"A friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him! He knocks again. 'Friend! lend me three loaves?' He waits a while and then knocks again. 'Friend! I must have three loaves!' 'Trouble me not: the door is now shut; I cannot rise and give thee!' He stands still. He turns to go home. He comes back. He knocks again. 'Friend!' he cries. He puts his ear to the door. There is a sound inside, and then the light of a candle shines through the hole of the door. The bars of the door are drawn back, and he gets not three loaves only, but as many as he needs. 'And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.'—Alexander Whyte, D.D.

Jesus Christ was the Divine Teacher of prayer. Its power and nature had been illustrated by many a saint and prophet in olden times, but modern sainthood and modern teachers of prayer had lost their inspiration and life. Religiously dead, [] teachers and superficial ecclesiastics had forgotten what it was to pray. They did much of saying prayers, on state occasions, in public, with much ostentation and parade, but pray they did not. To them it was almost a lost practice. In the multiplicity of saying prayers they had lost the art of praying. The history of the disciples during the earthly life of our Lord was not marked with much devotion. They were much enamoured by their personal association with Christ. They were charmed by His words, excited by His miracles, and were entertained

concerned by the hopes which a selfish interest aroused in His person and mission. Taken up with the superficial and worldly views of His character, they neglected and overlooked the deeper and weightier things which belonged to Him and His mission. The neglect of the most obliging and ordinary duties by them was a noticeable feature in their conduct. So evident and singular was their conduct in and this regard, that it became a matter of grave inquiry on one occasion and severe chiding on another.

"And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." In the example and the teaching of Jesus Christ, prayer assumes its normal relation to God's person, God's movements and God's Son. Jesus Christ was essentially the teacher of prayer by precept and example. We have glimpses of His praying which, like indices, tell how full of prayer the pages, chapters and volumes of His life were. The epitome which covers not one segment only, but the whole circle of His life, and character, is pre-eminently that of prayer! "In the days of his flesh," the Divine record reads, "when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears." The suppliant of all suppliants He was, the intercessor of all intercessors. In lowliest form He approached God, and with strongest pleas He prayed and supplicated.

Jesus Christ teaches the importance of prayer by His urgency to His disciples to pray. But He shows us more than that. He shows how far prayer enters into the purposes of God. We must ever keep in mind that the relation of Jesus Christ to God is the relation of asking and giving, the Son ever asking, the Father ever giving. We must never forget that God has put the conquering, inheriting and expanding forces of Christ's cause in prayer. "ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession."

This was the clause embodying the royal proclamation and the universal condition when the Son was enthroned as the world's Mediator, and when He was sent on His mission of receiving grace and power. We very naturally learn from this how Jesus would stress praying as the one sole condition of His receiving His possession and inheritance.

Necessarily in this study on prayer, lines of thought will cross each other, and the same Scripture passage or incident will be mentioned more than once, simply because a passage may teach one or more truths. This is the case when we speak of the vast comprehensiveness of prayer. How all-inclusive Jesus Christ makes prayer! It has no limitations in extent or things! The promises to prayer are Godlike in their magnificence, wideness and universality. In their nature these promises have to do with God—with Him in their inspiration, creation and results. Who but God could say, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive?" Who can command and direct "All things whatsoever" but God? Neither man nor chance nor the law of results are so far lifted above change, limitations or condition, nor have in them mighty forces which can direct and result all things, as to promise the bestowment and direction of all things.

Whole sections, parables and incidents were used by Christ to enforce the necessity and importance of prayer. His miracles are but parables of prayer. In nearly all of them prayer figures distinctly, and some features of it are illustrated. The Syrophenician woman is a pre-eminent illustration of the ability and the success of importunity in prayer. The case of blind Bartimæus has points of suggestion along the same line. Jairus and the Centurion illustrate and impress phases of prayer. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican enforce humility in prayer, declare the wondrous results of praying, and show the vanity and worthlessness of wrong praying. The failure to enforce church discipline and the readiness of violating the brotherhood, are all used to make an exhibit of far-reaching results of agreed praying, a record of which we have in Matthew 18:19.

It is of prayer in concert that Christ is speaking. Two agreed ones, two whose hearts have been keyed into perfect symphony by the Holy Spirit. Anything that they shall ask, it shall be done. Christ had been speaking of discipline in the Church, how things were to be kept in unity, and how the fellowship of the brethren was to be maintained, by the restoration of the offender or by his exclusion. Members who had been true to the brotherhood of Christ, and who were laboring to preserve that brotherhood unbroken, would be the agreed ones to make appeals to God in united prayer.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ lays down constitutional principles. Types and shadows are retired, and the law of spiritual life is declared. In this foundation law of the Christian system prayer assumes a conspicuous, if not a paramount, position. It is not only wide, all-commanding and comprehensive in its own sphere of action and relief, but it is ancillary to all duties. Even the one demanding kindly and discriminating judgment toward others, and also the royal injunction, the Golden Rule of action, these owe their being to prayer.

Christ puts prayer among the statutory promises. He does not leave it to natural law. The law of need, demand and supply, of helplessness, of natural instincts, or the law of sweet, high, attractive privilege—these howsoever strong as motives of action, are not the basis of praying. Christ puts it as spiritual law. Men must pray. Not to pray is not simply a privation, an omission, but a positive violation of law, of spiritual life, a crime, bringing disorder and ruin. Prayer is law world-wide and eternity-reaching.

In the Sermon on the Mount many important utterances are dismissed with a line or a verse, while the subject of prayer occupies a large space. To it Christ returns again and again. He bases the possibilities and necessities of prayer on the relation of father and child, the child crying for bread, and the father giving that for which the child asks. Prayer and its answer are in the relation of a father to his child. The teaching of Jesus Christ on the nature and necessity of prayer as recorded in His life, is remarkable. He sends men to their closets. Prayer must be a holy exercise, untainted by vanity, or pride. It must be in secret. The disciple must live in secret. God lives there, is sought there and is found there. The command of Christ as to prayer is that pride and publicity should be shunned. Prayer is to be in private. "But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father in secret. And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

The Beatitudes are not only to enrich and adorn, but they are the material out of which spiritual character is built. The very first one of these fixes prayer in the very foundation of spiritual character, not simply to adorn, but to compose. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The word "poor" means a pauper, one who lives by begging. The real Christian lives on the bounties of another, whose bounties he gets by asking. Prayer then becomes the basis of Christian character, the Christian's business, his life and his living. This is Christ's law of prayer, putting it into the very being of the Christian. It is his first step, and his first breath, which is to color and to form all his after life. Blessed are the poor ones, for they only can pray.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,

The Christian's native air;

His watchword at the gates of death;

He enters Heaven with prayer.

From praying Christ eliminates all self-sufficiency, all pride; and all spiritual values. The poor in spirit are the praying ones. Beggars are God's princes. They are God's heirs. Christ removes the rubbish of Jewish traditions and glosses from the regulations of the prayer altar.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

"But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee:

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first, be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

He who essays to pray to God with an angry spirit, with loose and irreverent lips, with an irreconciled heart, and with unsettled neighbourly scores, spends his labour for that which is worse than naught, violates the law of prayer, and adds to his sin.

How rigidly exacting is Christ's law of prayer! It goes to the heart, and demands that love be enthroned there, love to the brotherhood. The sacrifice of prayer must be seasoned and perfumed with love, by love in the inward parts. The law of prayer, its creator and inspirer, is love.

Praying must be done. God wants it done. He commands it. Man needs it and man must do it. Something must surely come of praying, for God engages that something shall come out of it, if men are in earnest and are persevering in prayer.

After Jesus teaches "Ask and it shall be given you," etc., He encourages real praying, and more praying. He repeats and avers with redoubled assurance, "for every one that asketh receiveth." No exception. "Every one." "He that seeketh, findeth." Here it is again, sealed and stamped with infinite veracity. Then closed and signed, as well as sealed, with Divine attestation, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." Note how we are encouraged to pray by our relation to God!

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

The relation of prayer to God's work and God's rule in this world is most fully illustrated by Jesus Christ in both His teaching and His practice. He is first in every way and in everything. Among the rulers of the Church He is primary in a pre-eminent way. He has the throne. The golden crown is His in eminent preciousness. The white garments enrobe Him in pre-eminent whiteness and beauty. In the ministry of prayer He is a Divine example as well as the Divine Teacher. His example is affluent, and His prayer teaching abounds. How imperative the teaching of our Lord when He affirms that "men ought always to pray and not to faint!" and then presents a striking parable of an unjust judge and a poor widow to illustrate and enforce His teaching. It is a necessity to pray. It is exacting and binding for men always to be in prayer. Courage, endurance and perseverance are demanded that men may never faint in prayer. "And shall not God avenge his own elect that cry day and night unto him?" This is His strong and indignant questioning and affirmation. Men must pray according to Christ's teaching. They must not get tired nor grow weary in praying. God's character is the assured surety that much will come of the persistent praying of true men. Doubtless the praying of our Lord had much to do with the revelation made to Peter and the confession he made to Christ, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living god." Prayer mightily affects and molds the circle of our associates. Christ made disciples and kept them disciples by praying. His twelve disciples were much impressed by His praying. Never man prayed like this man. How different His praying from the cold, proud, self-righteous praying which they heard and saw on the streets, in the synagogue, and in the Temple.

VI. JESUS CHRIST, THE DIVINE TEACHER OF PRAYER (Continued)

"Luke tells us that as Jesus was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' This disciple had heard Jesus preach, but did not feel like saying, 'Lord, teach us to preach.' He could learn to preach by studying the methods of the Master. But there was something about the praying of Jesus that made the disciple feel that he did not know how to pray; that he had never prayed, and that he could not learn by listening even to the Master as He prayed. There is a profound something about prayer which never lies upon the surface. To learn it, one must go to the depths of the soul, and climb to the heights of God."—A. C. Dixon, D.D.

Let it not be forgotten that prayer was one of the great truths which He came into the world to teach and illustrate. It was worth a trip from Heaven to earth to teach men this great lesson of prayer. A great lesson it was, a very difficult lesson for men to learn. Men are naturally averse to learning this lesson of prayer. The lesson is a very lowly one. None but God can teach it. It is a despised beggary, a sublime and heavenly vocation. The disciples were very stupid scholars, but were quickened to prayer by hearing Him pray and talk about prayer.

The dispensation of Christ's personality, while it was not and could not be the dispensation in its fullest and highest sense of need and dependence, yet Christ did try to impress on His disciples not alone a deep necessity of the necessity of prayer in general, but the importance of prayer to them in their personal and spiritual needs. And there came moments to them when they felt the need of a deeper and more thorough schooling in prayer and of their grave neglect in this regard. One of these hours of deep conviction on their part and of eager inquiry was when He was praying at a certain place and time, and they saw Him, and they said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

As they listened to Him praying, they felt very keenly their ignorance and deficiency in praying. Who has not felt the same deficiency and ignorance? Who has not longed for a teacher in the Divine art of praying?

The conviction which these twelve men had of their defect in prayer arose from hearing their Lord and Master pray, but likewise from a sense of serious defect even when compared with John the Baptist's training of his disciples in prayer. As they listened to their Lord pray (for unquestionably He must have been seen and heard by them as He prayed, who prayed with marvelous simplicity, and power, so human and so Divine) such praying had a stimulating charm for them. In the presence and hearing of His praying, very keenly they felt their ignorance and deficiency in prayer. Who has not felt the same ignorance and deficiency?

We do not regret the schooling our Lord gave these twelve men, for in schooling them He schools us. The lesson is one already learned in the law of Christ. But so dull were they, that many a patient iteration and reiteration was required to instruct them in this Divine art of prayer. And likewise so dull are we and inapt that many a wearying patient repetition must be given us before we will learn any important lesson in the all-important school of prayer.

This Divine Teacher of prayer lays Himself out to make it clear and strong that God answers prayer, assuredly, certainly, inevitably; that it is the duty of the child to ask, and to press, and that the Father is obliged to answer, and to give for the asking. In Christ's teaching, prayer is no sterile, vain performance, not a mere rite, a form, but a request for an answer, a plea to gain, the seeking of a great good from God. It is a lesson of getting that for which we ask, of finding that for which we seek, and of entering the door at which we knock.

A notable occasion we have as Jesus comes down from the Mount of Transfiguration. He finds His disciples defeated, humiliated and confused in the presence of their enemies. A father has brought his child possessed with a demon to have the demon cast out. They essayed to do it but failed. They had been commissioned by Jesus and sent to do that very work, but had signally failed. "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, saying, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Their faith had not been cultured by prayer. They failed in prayer before they failed in ability to do their work. They failed in faith because they had failed in prayer. That one thing which was necessary to do God's work was prayer. The work which God sends us to do cannot be done without prayer.

In Christ's teaching on prayer we have another pertinent statement. It was in connection with the cursing of the barren fig tree:

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

"And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

In this passage we have faith and prayer, their possibilities and powers conjoined. A fig tree had been blasted to the roots by the word of the Lord Jesus. The power and quickness of the result surprised the disciples. Jesus says to them that it need be no surprise to them or such a difficult work to be done. "If ye have faith" its possibilities to affect will not be confined to the little fig tree, but the gigantic, rock-ribbed, rock-founded mountains can be uprooted and moved into the sea. Prayer is leverage of this great power of faith.

It is well to refer again to the occasion when the heart of our Lord was so deeply moved with compassion as he beheld the multitudes because they fainted and were scattered as having no shepherd. Then it was He urged upon His disciples the injunction, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest," dearly teaching them that it belonged to God to call into the ministry men whom He will, and that in answer to prayer the Holy Spirit does this very work.

Prayer is as necessary now as it was then to secure the needed labourers to reap earthly harvests for the heavenly garner. Has the Church of God ever learned this lesson of so vital and exacting import? God alone can choose the labourers and thrust them out, and this choosing He does not delegate to man, or church, convocation or synod, association or conference. And God is moved to this great work of calling men into the ministry by prayer. Earthly fields are rotting. They are untilled because prayer is silent. The labourers are few. Fields are unworked because prayer has not worked with God.

We have the prayer promise and the prayer ability put in a distinct form in the higher teachings of prayer by our Lord: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Here we have a fixed attitude of life as the condition of prayer. Not simply a fixed attitude of life toward some great principles or purposes, but the fixed attitude and unity of life with Jesus Christ. To live in Him, to dwell there, to be one with Him, to draw all life from Him, to let all life from Him flow through us—this is the attitude of prayer and the ability to pray. No abiding in Him can be separated from His Word abiding in us. It must live in us to give birth to and food for prayer. The attitude of the Person of Christ is the condition of prayer.

The Old Testament saints had been taught that "God had magnified his word above all his name." New Testament saints must learn fully how to exalt by perfect obedience that Word issuing from the lips of Him who is the Word. Praying ones under Christ must learn what praying ones under Moses had already learned, that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The life of Christ flowing through us and the words of Christ living in us, these give potency to prayer. They breathe the spirit of prayer, and make the body, blood and bones of prayer. Then it is Christ praying in me and through me, and all things which "I will" are the will of God. My will becomes the law and the answer, for it is written "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Fruit bearing our Lord puts to the front in our praying: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye shall go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit shall remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

Barrenness cannot pray. Fruit bearing capacity and reality only can pray. It is not past fruitfulness, but present: "That your fruit should remain." Fruit, the product of life, is the condition of praying. A life vigorous enough to bear fruit, much fruit, is the condition and the source of prayer. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "In that day ye shall ask me nothing." It is not solving riddles, not revealing mysteries, not curious questionings. This is not our attitude, not our business under the Dispensation of the Spirit, but to pray, and to pray largely. Much true praying increases man's joy and God's glory.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give," says Christ, and the Father will give. Both Father and Son are pledged to give the very things for which we ask. But the condition is "in His name." This does not mean that His name is talismanic, to give value by magic. It does not mean that His name in beautiful settings of pearl will give value to prayer. It is not that His name perfumed with sentiment and larded in and closing up our prayers and doings will do the deed. How fearful the statement: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." How blasting the doom of these great workers and doers who claim to work in His name!

It means far more than sentiment, verbiage, and nomenclature. It means to stand in His stead, to bear His nature, to stand for all for which He stood, for righteousness, truth, holiness and zeal. It means to be one with God as He was, one in spirit, in will and in purpose. It means that our praying is singly and solely for God's glory through His Son. It means that we abide in Him, that Christ prays through us, lives in us and shines out of us; that we pray by the Holy Spirit according to the will of God.

Even amid the darkness of Gethsemane, with the stupor which had settled upon the disciples, we have the sharp warning from Christ to His sluggish disciples, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." How needful to hear such a warning, to awaken all our powers, not simply for the great crises of our lives, but as the inseparable and constant attendants of a career marked with perils and dangers on every hand.

As Christ nears the close of His earthly mission, nearer to the greater and more powerful dispensation of the Spirit, His teaching about prayer takes on a more absorbing and higher form. It has now become a graduating school. His connection with prayer becomes more intimate and more absolute. He becomes in prayer what He is in all else pertaining to our salvation, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. His name becomes all potent. Mighty works are to be done by the faith which can pray in His name. Like His nature, His name covers all needs, embraces all worlds, and gets all good.

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

"If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it."

The Father, the Son and the praying one are all bound up together. All things are in Christ, and all things are in prayer in His name. "If ye shall ask anything in my name." The key which unlocks the vast storehouse of God is prayer. The power to do greater works than Christ did lies in the faith which can grasp His name truly and in true praying.

In the last of His life, note how He urges prayer as a preventive of the many evils to which they were exposed. In view of the temporal and fearful terrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, He charges them to this effect: "Pray ye that your flight be not in winter."

How many evils in this life which can be escaped by prayer! How many fearful temporal calamities can be mitigated, if not wholly relieved, by prayer! Notice how, amid the excesses and stupefying influences to which we are exposed in this world, Christ charges us to pray:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

In view of the uncertainty of Christ's coming to judgment, and the uncertainty of our going out of this world, He says: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is."

We have the words of Jesus as given in His last interview with His twelve disciples, found in the Gospel of John, chapters fourteen to seventeen, inclusive. These are true, solemn parting words. The disciples were to move out into the regions of toil, and peril, bereft of the personal presence of their Lord and Master. They were to be impressed that prayer would serve them in everything, and its use, and unlimited possibilities would in some measure supply their loss, and by it they would be able to command all the possibilities of Jesus Christ and God the Father.

It was the occasion of momentous interest to Jesus Christ. His work was to receive its climax and crown in His death and His resurrection. His glory and the success of His work and of its execution, under the mastery and direction of the Holy Spirit, was to be committed to His apostles. To them it was an hour of strange wonderment and of peculiar, mysterious sorrow, only too well assured of the fact that Jesus was to leave them. All else was dark and impalpable.

He was to give them His parting words and pray His parting prayer. Solemn, vital truths were to be the weight and counsel of that hour. He speaks to them of Heaven. Young men, strong though they were, yet they could not meet the duties of their preaching life and their apostolic life, without the fact, the thought, the hope and the relish of Heaven. These things were to be present constantly in all sweetness, in all their vigour, in all freshness, in all brightness. He spoke to them about their spiritual and conscious connection with Himself, an abiding indwelling, so close and continuous that His own life would flow into them, as the life of the vine flows into the branches. Their lives and their fruitfulness were dependent upon this. Then praying was urged upon them as one of the vital, essential forces. This was the one thing upon which all the Divine force depended, and this was the avenue and agency through which the Divine life and power were to be secured and continued in their ministry.

He spake to them about prayer. He had taught them many lessons upon this all-important subject as they had been together. This solemn hour he seizes to perfect his teaching. They must be made to realize that they have an illimitable and exhaustless storehouse of good in God and that they can draw on Him at all times and for all things without stint, as Paul said in after years to the Philippians, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

("The Reality Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 5-6 ; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer. Public Domain)

"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." -Romans 12:20-21

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 424-426)

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