



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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[Around The World-](#)  
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## Prayer

Lord, today I am surrendering myself as a living sacrifice to be used in whatever way You choose. I know You are beckoning me to come higher and closer than ever before, so right now I approach You with great reverence and surrender myself more fully to You. With all my heart I vow to give You my soul, my emotions, my spirit, my body, and everything else that I am and that I possess. I want to live for You and to serve You for the rest of my life. Starting today, I yield to You completely. When You speak, I will do exactly what You tell me to do, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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[Cathe Laurie](#)

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 THEN DAVID went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech was afraid at meeting David, and said to him, Why are you alone and no man with you? 2 David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king has charged me with a matter and has told me, Let no man know anything of the mission on which I send you and with what I have charged you. I have appointed the young men to a certain place. 3 Now what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you may have. 4 And the priest answered David, There is no common bread on hand, but there is hallowed bread—if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. 5 And David told the priest, Truly women have been kept from us in these three days since I came out, and the food bags and utensils of the young men are clean, and although the bread will be used in a secular way, it will be set apart in the clean bags. 6 So the priest gave him holy bread, for there was no bread there but the showbread which was taken from before the Lord to put hot bread in its place the day when it was taken away. 7 Now a certain man of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the Lord; his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen. 8 David said to Ahimelech, Do you have at hand a sword or spear? The king's business required haste, and I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me. 9 The priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you slew in the Valley of Elah, see, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you will take that, do so, for there is no other here. And David said, There is none like that; give it to me. 10 David arose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. 11 The servants of Achish said to him, Is not this David, the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in their dances: Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? 12 David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish king of Gath. 13 And he changed his behavior before them, and pretended to be insane in their [Philistine] hands, and scribbled on the gate doors, and drooled on his beard. 14 Then said Achish to his servants, You see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? 15 Have I need of madmen, that you bring this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?

## Chapter 21

So David now fled to Nob to Ahimelech who was the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said to him, Why are you alone, why aren't there men with you? [You know David was a captain over a thousand men, "Where's your—where are your troops?"] David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king has commanded me on a business, and said, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabouts I'm sending you, and what I've commanded thee: and I've appointed my servants to such and such a place (1Sa 21:1-2).

So David's saying, "I'm a CIA agent, I'm on a special mission for the king, and nobody knows about this special mission. It's just a secret mission that I'm on for King Saul. So my men are over here, and I need some bread for them.

The priest said, I don't have any common bread, all I have is this bread that I baked for the shew bread for the table of the Lord; [It was that bread that had been sanctified to set out before God on the table of shew bread. And David said, Well give it to me five loaves, and for me and my men. He said, Well are the men clean?] He said, Have they not touched women? He said, We've not been around women for at least three days since we've been on this trip. So the fellow gave them the holy bread [which was not lawful for any man to eat but the priest.] They took it and gave it to David and his men (1Sa 21:4-6).

Now in the New Testament Jesus makes reference to this particular incident. When the Pharisees are trying to nail Him in some of the fine, technical aspects of the law, Jesus said, "Did not David take the shew bread, which was not lawful for a man to eat?" They were getting on Him because they felt He had violated the Sabbath, one of the fine points of the law of the Sabbath. The disciples had gone through the field on the Sabbath day and they took some wheat, corn of wheat. They called it the wheat, the tassel of wheat tares, they called it the corn actually. They took it and they were rubbing it in their hands.

Now you can take the dry wheat from the stalk and you can rub it in your hands, and as you rub it in your hands it has the effect of sort of threshing it. What you're doing is rubbing off the hard, outside hull. Then you can hold it in your hands and blow on it and you can actually blow off the hulls, then you can eat the wheat raw. It's actually very good.

One of the trips over in Israel we were there in the latter part of May when the wheat fields were about ready for harvest. Up in the area near Mount Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan were ultimately killed, which is up at one end of the Valley of Megiddo. It's about eight miles, ten miles south of the Sea of Galilee, Mount Gilboa there. There in that valley are some beautiful wheat fields. So we were there and I went out and I took some of this wheat. I rubbed it in my hands, and blew off the hulls and ate this wheat.

Of course when we were kids we discovered out of the chicken feed, if we took the wheat out of the chicken feed, we were kids, it's soft enough that you can crunch it in your teeth and chew it. If you chew it long enough it turns into a gum. We used to always chew wheat gum when we were kids. We didn't have enough money to buy regular chewing gum. So we'd pick all the wheat out of the chicken feed and then we'd chew it and after awhile it turns into gum. Then we'd have our gum with wheat. So it's very nutritional, very healthy.

So the disciples were with Jesus, they were hungry; it was the Sabbath Day. They were going through the wheat fields, and they began to pick the corn of wheat and rub it in their hands, and blow it off and began to eat it. So they said, "Oh, look at your disciples. They're doing that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day. You're not supposed to do any work." So that constituted work rubbing the wheat in your hands.

So Jesus said, "Don't you remember what David did when he was hungry, how he went in and ate the shew bread which was not lawful for a man to eat?" So Jesus makes an illusion to this thing of David showing that human need rises above the law. Human

hunger, these guys are hungry, forget this little work bit of rubbing the wheat in your hands, their hunger. The hunger supercedes the fine point of the law, even as with David, the guys are hungry. Yes, it's not lawful that they should eat this shewbread. Yes, it's supposed to be only there for the priest to eat but the guys are hungry. The human hunger supercedes the fine points of the law. The point that Jesus was making, and of course using this particular instance with David as the illustration of the point, which of course everybody accepted that David had done. In other words, there was no wrong doing here.

"So the priest gave him the hallowed bread," verse six, "for there was no bread except the shewbread, that was taken from before the Lord, and put hot bread in the day it was taken away."

So they ate the bread that had been sitting there all week before the Lord when it was replaced by this new hot bread.

Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, and his name was Doeg, and he was an Edomite, ["Doeg", and you could very well pronounce it "dog," because he turned out to be a real dog.] and he was the head over the herdsmen that belonged to Saul. And David said to Ahimelech, Do you have here any spear or any sword? for I didn't bring any sword or weapons with me, for the king's business required haste. The priest said, Well, I have the sword of Goliath that you took from him when you killed him, and it's wrapped here in a cloth behind the ephod: if you will take it: there's no other but that one here. So David said, Ah, there's no sword like that one; give it to me. So David arose, for fear of Saul, and he went to Achish the king of Gath. [So actually he fled down to the camp of the Philistines, to the enemy, the city of Gath and to king Achish.] And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did not they sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and he was afraid of Achish the king of Gath. [I mean they said, "Hey, this is that David you know that wiped out the giant. This is David they were singing about killing his thousands," and so David thought, "Uh oh, the king's gonna do me in." So they brought David in before the king.] And David changed his behaviour, and he acted like he was a madman, he began to scabble on the doors of the gate, and he let his spit run down his beard. [Just acted like he was insane.] And so Achish said to his servants, Hey, the guy is crazy: why have you brought him to me? I don't need any mad men, that you've brought this fellow to play a madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house (1Sa 21:7-15)?

So he sent David away and he escaped, of course, out of the guy's hand. Of course he wasn't afraid of some guy that was so weird. I personally like it. I think David's just, you know, he's a neat kind of a shrewd kind of a guy. I just like him. Yet here's an interesting thing, my hero, but I sort of admire his wit and his little act here and getting out of trouble, yet there's an interesting verse of scripture that says, "The fear of man brings a snare" (Proverbs 29:25).

Now it does definitely declare that David was afraid of Achish. The fear of man can oftentimes cause a person to act like a fool. It brings a snare. So my brave David, he's not afraid of the giant, he's afraid of the king. So acting like a madman, he's reduced to a man with spit running down his beard and scrabbling on the doors and gates, but he did escape out of the hand of Achish.  
( Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

## VII. JESUS CHRIST AN EXAMPLE OF PRAYER

"Christ, when He saw that He must die, and that now His time was come, He wore His body out: He cared not, as it were, what became of Him: He wholly spent Himself in preaching all day, and in praying all night, preaching in the temple those terrible parables and praying in the garden such prayers, as the seventeenth of John, and "Thy will be done!" even to a bloody sweat."—Thomas Goodwin.

The Bible record of the life of Jesus Christ gives but a glance of His busy doing, a small selection of His many words, and only a brief record of His great works. But even in this record we see Him as being much in prayer. Even though busy and exhausted by the severe strain and toils of His life, "in the morning a great while before day, he rose up and went out and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." Alone in the desert and in the darkness with God! Prayer filled the life of our Lord while on earth. His life was a constant stream of incense sweet and perfumed by prayer. When we see how the life of Jesus was but one of prayer, then we must conclude that to be like Jesus is to pray like Jesus and is to live like Jesus. A serious life it is to pray as Jesus prayed.

We cannot follow any chronological order in the praying of Jesus Christ. What were His steps of advance and skill in the Divine art of praying we know not. He is in the act of prayer when we find Him at the fords of the Jordan, when the waters of baptism, at the hands of John the Baptist, are upon Him. So passing over the three years of His ministry, when closing the drama of His life in that terrible baptism of fear, pain, suffering, and shame, we find Him in the spirit, and also in the very act of praying. The baptism of the Cross, as well as the baptism of the Jordan, are sanctified by prayer. With the breath of prayer in His last sigh, He commits His spirit to God. In His first recorded utterances, as well as His first acts, we find Him teaching His disciples how to pray as His first lesson, and as their first duty. Under the shadow of the Cross, in the urgency and importance of His last interview with His chosen disciples, He is at the same all-important business, teaching the world's teachers how to pray, trying to make prayerful those lips and hearts out of which were to flow the Divine deposits of truth.

The great eras of His life were created and crowned with prayer. What were His habits of prayer during His stay at home and His toil as a carpenter in Nazareth, we have no means of knowing. God has veiled it, and guess and speculation are not only vain and misleading, but proud and prurient. It would be presumptuous searching into that which God has hidden, which would make us seek to be wise above that which was written, trying to lift up the veil with which God has covered His own revelation.

We find Christ in the presence of the famed, the prophet and the preacher. He has left His Nazareth home and His carpenter shop by

God's call. He is now at a transitional point. He has moved out to His great work. John's baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are prefatory and are to qualify Him for that work. This epochal and transitional period is marked by prayer.

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, being also baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

It is a supreme hour in His history, different and in striking contrast with, but not in opposition to, the past. The descent and abiding of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness, the opening heavens, and the attesting voice which involved God's recognition of His only Son—all these are the result, if not the direct creation and response to His praying on that occasion.

"As He was praying," so we are to be praying. If we would pray as Christ prayed, we must be as Christ was, and must live as Christ lived. The Christ character, the Christ life, and the Christ spirit, must be ours if we would do the Christ praying, and would have our prayers answered as He had His prayers answered. The business of Christ even now in Heaven at His Father's right hand is to pray. Certainly if we are His, if we love Him, if we live for Him, and if we live close to Him, we will catch the contagion of His praying life, both on earth and in Heaven. We will learn His trade and carry on His business on earth.

Jesus Christ loved all men, He tasted death for all men, He intercedes for all men. Let us ask then, are we the imitators, the representatives, and the executors of Jesus Christ? Then must we in our prayers run parallel with His atonement in its extent. The atoning blood of Jesus Christ gives sanctity and efficiency to our prayers. As worldwide, as broad, and as human as the man Christ Jesus was, so must be our prayers. The intercessions of Christ's people must give currency and expedition to the work of Christ, carry the atoning blood to its benignant ends, and help to strike off the chains of sin from every ransomed soul. We must be as praying, as tearful, and as compassionate as was Christ.

Prayer affects all things. God blesses the person who prays. He who prays goes out on a long voyage for God and is enriched himself while enriching others, and is blessed himself while the world is blessed by his praying. To "live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" is the wealthiest wealth.

The praying of Christ was real. No man prayed as He prayed. Prayer pressed upon Him as a solemn, all-imperative, all-commanding duty, as well as a royal privilege in which all sweetness was condensed, alluring and absorbing. Prayer was the secret of His power, the law of His life, the inspiration of His toil and the source of His wealth, His joy, His communion and His strength.

To Christ Jesus prayer occupied no secondary place, but was exacting and paramount, a necessity, a life, the satisfying of a restless yearning and a preparation for heavy responsibilities.

Closeting with His Father in counsel and fellowship, with vigour and in deep joy, all this was His praying. Present trials, future glory, the history of His Church, and the struggles and perils of His disciples in all times and to the very end of time—all these things were born and shaped by His praying.

Nothing is more conspicuous in the life of our Lord than prayer. His campaigns were arranged and His victories were gained in the struggles and communion of His all night praying. By prayer He rent the heavens. Moses and Elijah and the transfiguration glory wait on His praying. His miracles and teaching had their power from the same source. Gethsemane's praying crimsoned Calvary with serenity and glory. His sacerdotal prayer makes the history and hastens the triumph of His Church on earth. What an inspiration and command to pray is the prayer life of Jesus Christ while in this world! What a comment it is on the value, the nature and the necessity of prayer!

The dispensation of the Person of Jesus Christ was a dispensation of prayer. A synopsis of His teaching and practice of prayer was that "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

As the Jews prayed in the name of their patriarchs and invoked the privileges granted to them by covenant with God; as we have a new Name and a new covenant, more privileged and more powerful and more all-comprehensive, more authoritative and more Divine; and as far as the Son of God is lifted above the patriarchs in divinity, glory and power, by so much should our praying exceed theirs in range of largeness, glory and power of results.

Jesus Christ prayed to God as Father. Simply and directly did He approach God in the charmed and revered circle of the Father. The awful, repelling fear was entirely absent, lost in the supreme confidence of a child.

Jesus Christ crowns His life, His works and His teaching with prayer. How His Father attests His relationship and puts on Him the glory of answered prayer at His Baptism and Transfiguration when all other glories are growing dim in the night which settles on Him! What almighty potencies are in prayer when we are charged and surcharged with but one inspiration and aim! "Father, glorify thy name." This sweetens all, brightens all, conquers all and gets all. "Father, glorify thy name." That guiding star will illumine the darkest night and calm the wildest storm and will make us brave and true. An imperial principle it is. It will make an imperial Christian.

The range and potencies of prayer, so clearly shown by Jesus in life and teaching, but reveal the great purposes of God. They not only reveal the Son in the reality and fullness of His humanity, but also reveal the Father.

Christ prayed as a child. The spirit of a child was found in Him. At the grave of Lazarus "Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father." Again we hear Him begin His prayer after this fashion: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father." So also on other occasions we find Him in praying addressing God as His Father, assuming the attitude of the child asking something of the Father. What confidence, simplicity and artlessness! What readiness, freeness and fullness of approach are all involved in the spirit of a child! What confiding trust, what assurance, what tender interest! What profound solitudes, and tender sympathy on the Father's part! What respect deepening into reverence! What loving obedience and grateful emotions glow in the child's heart! What Divine fellowship and royal intimacy! What sacred and sweet emotions! All these meet in the hour of prayer when the child of God meets His Father in Heaven, and when the Father meets His child! We must live as children if we would ask as children. We must act as children if we would pray as children. The spirit of prayer is born of the child spirit.

The profound reverence in this relation of paternity must forever exclude all lightness, frivolity and pertness, as well as all undue familiarity. Solemnity and gravity become the hour of prayer. It has been well said: "The worshipper who invokes God under the name of Father and realises the gracious and beneficent love of God, must at the same time remember and recognise God's glorious majesty, which is neither annulled nor impaired, but rather supremely intensified through His fatherly love. An appeal to God as Father, if not associated with reverence and homage before the Divine Majesty, would betray a want of understanding of the character of God." And, we might add, would show a lack of the attributes of a child.

Patriarchs and prophets knew something of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God to God's family. They "saw it afar off, were persuaded of it, and embraced it," but understood it not, in all its fullness, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

"Behold he prayeth!" was God's statement of wonderment and surprise to the timid Ananias in regard to Saul of Tarsus. "Behold he prayeth!" applied to Christ has in it far more of wonderment and mystery and surprise. He, the Maker of all worlds, the Lord of angels and of men, co-equal and co-eternal with the Everlasting God; the "brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person"; "fresh from his Father's glory and from his Father's throne."—"Behold he prayeth!" To find Him in lowly, dependent attitude of prayer, the suppliant of all suppliants, His richest legacy and His royal privilege to pray—this is the mystery of all mysteries, the wonder of all wonders.

Paul gives in brief and comprehensive statement the habit of our Lord in prayer in Hebrews 5:7—"Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." We have in this description of our Lord's praying the outgoing of great spiritual forces. He prayed with "prayers and supplications." It was no formal, tentative effort. He was intense, personal and real. He was a pleader for God's good. He was in great need and He must cry with "strong cryings," made stronger still by His tears. In an agony the Son of God wrestled. His praying was no playing a mere part. His soul was engaged, and all His powers were taxed to a strain. Let us pause and look at Him and learn how to pray in earnest. Let us learn how to win in an agony of prayer that which seems to be withholden from us. A beautiful word is that, "feared," which occurs only twice in the New Testament, the fear of God.

Jesus Christ was always a busy man with His work, but never too busy to pray. The divinest of business filled His heart and filled His hands, consumed His time, exhausted His nerves. But with Him even God's work must not crowd out God's praying. Saving people from sin or suffering must not, even with Christ, be substituted for praying, nor abate in the least the time or the intensity of these holiest of seasons. He filled the day with working for God; He employed the night with praying to God. The day-working made the night-praying a necessity. The night-praying sanctified and made successful the day-working. Too busy to pray gives religion Christian burial, it is true, but kills it nevertheless.

In many cases only the bare fact, yet important and suggestive fact, is stated that He prayed. In other cases the very words which came out of His heart and fell from His lips are recorded. The man of prayer by pre-eminence was Jesus Christ. The epochs of His life were created by prayer, and all the minor details outlines and inlines of His life were inspired, coloured and impregnated by prayer.

The prayer words of Jesus were sacred words. By them God speaks to God, and by them God is revealed and prayer is illustrated and enforced. Here is prayer in its purest form and in its mightiest potencies. It would seem that earth and heaven would uncover head and open ears most wide to catch the words of His praying who was truest God and truest man, and divinest of suppliants, who prayed as never man prayed. His prayers are our inspiration and pattern to pray.

#### VIII. PRAYER INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD

"There was a great cape at the south of Africa and so many storms and so much loss of life until it was called the Cape of Death. One day in 1789 a bold navigator shoved the prow of his vessel into the storms that thundered around it and found a calm sea. He then named it the Cape of Good Hope. So there is a cape that jutted out from earth into the sea of eternity called death. All were afraid of it. All navigators, sooner or later, must contend with these murky waters. But once upon a time, nearly two thousand years ago, a brave navigator from heaven came and drove the prow of His frail humanity bark down into the gloomy waters of this cape and lay under its awful power for three days. Emerging therefrom, He found it to be the door to endless calm and joy, and now we call it Good Hope."—John W. Baker

One of Christ's most impassioned and sublime pæans of prayer and praise is found recorded by both Matthew and Luke, with small verbal contrasts and with some diversity of detail and environments. He is reviewing the poor results of His ministry and remarking upon the feeble responses of man to God's vast outlay of love and mercy. He is arraigning the ingratitude of men to God, and is showing the fearfully destructive results of their indifference with their increased opportunities, favours and responsibilities.

In the midst of these arraignments, denunciations and woes, the seventy disciples return to report the results of their mission. They were full of exhilaration at their success, and evinced it with no little self-gratulation. The spirit of Jesus was diverted, relieved and refreshed by their animation, catching somewhat the contagion of their joy, and sharing in their triumph. He rejoiced, gave thanks, and prayed a prayer wonderful for its brevity, its inspiration and its revelation:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

"All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him,"

The Christ life was in the image of His Father. He was the "express image of His person." And so the spirit of prayer with Christ was to do God's will. His constant asseveration was that He "came to do His Father's will," and not His own will. When the fearful crisis came in His life in Gethsemane, and all its darkness, direness and dread, with the crushing weight of man's sins and sorrows which were pressing down upon Him, His spirit and frame crushed, and almost expiring, then He cried out for relief, yet it was not His will which was to be followed. It was only an appeal out of weakness and death for God's relief in God's way. God's will was to be the law and the rule of His relief, if relief came.

So he who follows Christ in prayer must have God's will as his law, his rule and his inspiration. In all praying, it is the man who prays. The life and the character flow into the closet. There is a mutual action and reaction. The closet has much to do with making the character, while the character has much to do with making the closet. It is "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man which availeth much." It is with them who "call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" we are to consort. Christ was the greatest of prayers because He was the holiest of men. His character is the praying character. His spirit is the life and power of prayer. He is not the best prayer who has the greatest fluency, the most brilliant imagination, the richest gifts, and the most fiery ardour, but he who has imbibed most of the spirit of Christ.

It is he whose character is the nearest to a facsimile of Christ. His prayer referred to just named, in the form of thanksgiving, sets forth the characters upon whom God's power is bestowed and to whom God's person and will are revealed. "Hid these things from the wise and prudent," those, for instance, who are wise in their own eyes, skilled in letters, cultured, learned, philosophers, scribes, doctors, rabbis—"prudent"—one who can put things together, having insight, comprehension, expression. God's revelation of Himself and His will cannot be sought out and understood by reason, intelligence nor great learning. Great men and great minds are neither the channels nor depositories of God's revelation by virtue of their culture, braininess nor wisdom. God's system in redemption and providence is not to be thought out, open only to the learned and wise. The learned and the wise, following their learning and their wisdom, have always sadly and darkly missed God's thoughts and God's ways.

The condition of receiving God's revelation and of holding God's truth is one of the heart, not one of the head. The ability to receive and search out is like that of the child, the babe, the synonym of docility, innocence and simplicity. These are the conditions on which God reveals Himself to men. The world by wisdom cannot know God. The world by wisdom can never receive nor understand God, because God reveals Himself to men's hearts, not to their heads. Only hearts can ever know God, can feel God, can see God, and can read God in His Book of Books. God is not grasped by thought but by feeling. The world gets God by revelation, not by philosophy. It is not apprehension, the mental ability to grasp God, but plasticity, ability to be impressed, that men need. It is not by hard, strong, stern, great reasoning that the world gets God or gets hold of God, but by big, soft, pure hearts. Not so much do men need light to see God as they need hearts to feel God.

Human wisdom, great natural talents, and the culture of the schools, howsoever good they may be, can neither be the repositories nor conservors of God's revealed truth. The tree of knowledge has been the bane of faith, ever essaying to reduce revelation to a philosophy and to measure God by man. In its pride, it puts God out and puts men into God's truth. To become babes again, on our mother's bosom, quieted, weaned, without clamour or protest, is the only position in which to know God. A calmness on the surface, and in the depths of the soul, in which God can mirror His will, His Word and Himself—this is the attitude toward Him through which He can reveal Himself, and this attitude is the right attitude of prayer.

Our Lord taught us the lesson of prayer by putting into practice in His life what He taught by His lips. Here is a simple but important statement, full of meaning; "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come He was there alone."

The multitudes had been fed and were dismissed by our Lord.

The Divine work of healing and teaching must be stayed awhile in order that time, place and opportunity for prayer might be secured,—Prayer, the divinest of all labour, the most important of all ministries. Away from the eager, anxious, seeking multitudes, He has gone while the day is yet bright, to be alone with God. The multitudes tax and exhaust Him, The disciples are tossed on the sea, but calmness reigns on the mountain top where our Lord is kneeling in secret prayer—where prayer rules. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain alone."

He must be alone in that moment with God. Temptation was in that hour. The multitude had feasted on the five loaves and the two fishes. Filled with food and excited beyond measure, they would fain make Him king. He flees from the temptation to secret prayer, for here is the source of His strength to resist evil. What a refuge was secret prayer even to Him! What a refuge to us from the world's

dazzling and delusive crowns! What safety there is to be alone with God when the world tempts us, allures us, attracts us! The prayers of our Lord were prophetic and illustrative of the great truth that the greatest measure of the Holy Spirit, the attesting voice and opening Heavens are only secured by prayer. This is suggested by His baptism by John the Baptist, when He prayed as He was baptised, and immediately the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. More than prophetic and illustrative is this hour to Him. This critical hour is real and personal, consecrating and qualifying Him for God's highest purposes. Prayer to Him, just as it is to us, was a necessity, an absolute, invariable condition of securing God's fullest, consecrating and qualifying power. The Holy Spirit came upon Him in fullness of measure and power in the very act of prayer.

And so the Holy Spirit comes upon us in fullness of measure and power only in answer to ardent and intense praying. The heavens were opened to Christ, and access and communion established and enlarged by prayer. Freedom and fullness of access and closeness of communion are secured to us as the heritage of prayer. The voice attesting His Sonship came to Christ in prayer. The witness of our sonship, clear and indubitable, is secured only by praying. The constant witness of our sonship can only be retained by those who pray without ceasing. When the stream of prayer is shallow and arrested, the evidence of our sonship becomes faint and inaudible.

#### IX. PRAYER INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD (Continued)

"Sin is so unspeakably awful in its evil that it struck down, as to death and hell, the very Son of God Himself. He had been amazed enough at sin before. He had seen sin making angels of heaven into devils of hell. Death and all its terrors did not much move or disconcert our Lord. No. It was not death: It was sin. It was hell-fire in His soul. It was the coals, and the oil, and the rosin, and the juniper, and the turpentine of the fire that is not quenched."—Alexander Whyte, D.D.

We note that from the revelation and inspiration of a transporting prayer-hour of Christ, as its natural sequence, there sounds out that gracious encouraging proclamation for heavy-hearted, restless, weary souls of earth, which has so impressed, arrested and drawn humanity as it has fallen on the ears of heavy-laden souls, which has so sweetened and relieved men of their toils and burdens: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...."Take my yoke upon you, and lean of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls....."For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."At the grave of Lazarus and as preparatory to and as a condition of calling him back to life, we have our Lord calling upon His Father in Heaven. "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." The lifting to Heaven of Christ's eyes—how much was there in it! How much of confidence and plea was in that look to Heaven! His very look, the lifting up of His eyes, carried His whole being Heavenward, and caused a pause in that world, and drew attention and help. All Heaven was engaged, pledged and moved when the Son of God looked up at this grave. O for a people with the Christly eye, Heaven lifted and Heaven arresting! As it was with Christ, so ought we to be so perfected in faith, so skilled in praying, that we could lift our eyes to Heaven and say with Him, with deepest humility, and with commanding confidence, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

Once more we have a very touching and beautiful and instructive incident in Christ's praying, this time having to do with infants in their mothers' arms, parabolic as well as historical: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. "But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them."This was one of the few times when stupid ignorance and unspiritual views aroused His indignation and displeasure. Vital principles were involved. The foundations were being destroyed, and worldly views actuated the disciples. Their temper and their words in rebuking those who brought their infants to Christ were exceedingly wrong. The very principles which He came to illustrate and propagate were being violated. Christ received the little ones. The big ones must become little ones. The old ones must become young ones ere Christ will receive them. Prayer helps the little ones. The cradle must be invested with prayer. We are to pray for our little ones. The children are now to be brought to Jesus Christ by prayer, as He is in Heaven and not on earth. They are to be brought to Him early for His blessing, even when they are infants. His blessing descends upon these little ones in answer to the prayers of those who bring them. With untiring importunity are they to be brought to Christ in earnest, persevering prayer by their fathers and mothers. Before they know, themselves, anything about coming of their own accord, parents are to present them to God in prayer, seeking His blessing upon their offspring and at the same time asking for wisdom, for grace and Divine help to rear them that they may come to Christ when they arrive at the years of accountability of their own accord. Holy hands and holy praying have much to do with guarding and training young lives and to form young characters for righteousness and Heaven. What benignity, simplicity, kindness, unworldliness and condescension and meekness, linked with prayerfulness, are in this act of this Divine Teacher! It was as Jesus was praying that Peter made that wonderful confession of his faith that Jesus was the Son of God: "And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."It was after our Lord had made large promises to His disciples that He had appointed unto each of them a kingdom, and that they should sit at His table in His kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, that He gave those words of warning to Simon Peter, telling him that He had prayed for Peter. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, so that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."Happy Peter, to have such an one as the Son of God to pray for him!

Unhappy Peter, to be so in the toils of Satan as to demand so much of Christ's solicitude! How intense are the demands upon our prayers for some specific cases! Prayer must be personal in order to be to the fullest extent beneficial. Peter drew on Christ's praying more than any other disciple because of his exposure to greater perils, Pray for the most impulsive, the most imperilled ones by name. Our love and their danger give frequency, inspiration, intensity and personality to praying. We have seen how Christ had to flee from the multitude after the magnificent miracle of feeding the five thousand as they sought to make Him king. Then prayer was His escape and His refuge from this strong worldly temptation. He returns from that night of prayer with strength and calmness, and with a power to perform that other remarkable miracle of great wonder of walking on the sea. Even the loaves and fishes were sanctified by prayer before He served them to the multitude. "He looked up to Heaven and gave thanks." Prayer should sanctify our daily bread and multiply our seed sown. He looked up to heaven and heaved a sigh when He touched the tongue of the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech. Much akin was this sigh to that groaning in spirit which He evinced at the grave of Lazarus. "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave." Here was the sigh and groan of the Son of God over a human wreck, groaning that sin and hell had such a mastery over man; troubled that such a desolation and ruin were man's sad inheritance. This is a lesson to be ever learned by us. Here is a fact ever to be kept in mind and heart and which must ever, in some measure, weigh upon the inner spirits of God's children. We who have received the first fruit of the Spirit groan within ourselves at sin's waste, and death, and are filled with longings for the coming of a better day. Present in all great praying, making and marking it, is the man. It is impossible to separate the praying from the man. The constituent elements of the man are the constituents of his praying. The man flows through his praying. Only the fiery Elijah could do Elijah's fiery praying. We can get holy praying only from a holy man. Holy being can never exist without holy doing. Being is first, doing comes afterward. What we are gives being, force and inspiration to what we do. Character, that which is graven deep, ineradicably, imperishably within us, colours all we do.

The praying of Christ, then, is not to be separated from the character of Christ. If He prayed more unweariedly, more self-denyingly, more holily, more simply and directly than other men, it was because these elements entered more largely into His character than into that of others. The transfiguration marks another epoch in His life, and that was pre-eminently a prayer epoch. Luke gives an account with the animus and aim of the event: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: "Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."The selection was made of three of His disciples for an inner circle of associates, in prayer. Few there be who have the spiritual tastes or aptitude for this inner circle. Even these three favoured ones could scarcely stand the strain of that long night of praying. We know that He went up on that mountain to pray, not to be transfigured. But it was as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered and His raiment became white and glistening. There is nothing like prayer to change character and whiten conduct. There is nothing like prayer to bring heavenly visitants and to gild with heavenly glory earth's mountain to us, dull and drear. Peter calls it the holy mount, made so by prayer. Three times did the voice of God bear witness to the presence and person of His Son, Jesus Christ—at His baptism by John the Baptist, and then at His transfiguration the approving, consoling and witnessing voice of His Father was heard. He was found in prayer both of these times. The third time the attesting voice came, it was not on the heights of His transfigured glory, nor was it as He was girding Himself to begin His conflict and to enter upon His ministry, but it was when He was hastening to the awful end. He was entering the dark mystery of His last agony, and looking forward to it. The shadows were deepening, a dire calamity was approaching and an unknown and untried dread was before Him. Ruminating on His approaching death, prophesying about it, and forecasting the glory which would follow, in the midst of His high and mysterious discourse, the shadows come like a dread eclipse and He bursts out in an agony of prayer: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. "The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to him. "Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." But let it be noted that Christ is meeting and illuminating this fateful and distressing hour with prayer. How even thus early the flesh reluctantly shrank from the contemplated end! How fully does His prayer on the cross for His enemies synchronise with all He taught about love to our enemies, and with mercy and forgiveness to those who have trespassed against us! "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Apologising for His murderers and praying for them, while they were jeering and mocking Him at His death pains and their hands were reeking with His blood! What amazing generosity, pity and love! Again, take another one of the prayers on the cross. How touching the prayer and how bitter the cup! How dark and desolate the hour as He exclaims, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the last stroke that rends in twain His heart, more exquisite in its bitterness and its anguish and more heart-piercing than the kiss of Judas. All else was looked for, all else was put in His book of sorrows. But to have His Father's face withdrawn, God-forsaken, the hour when these distressing words escaped the lips of the dying Son of God! And yet how truthful He is! How childlike we find Him! And so when the end really comes, we hear Him again speaking to His Father: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he gave up the ghost."

("The Reality Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 7-9 ; 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)

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

Chapel Flock ♦ PO Box 161102 ♦ Wichita, KS ♦ 67216 ♦ (316) 243-1438

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