



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Prayer

Lord, I am so thankful for Your love that never fails me and never deserts me. I am filled with gratitude that nothing in this world has the power to disconnect me from Your awesome, powerful, life-changing love. In moments when I feel overwhelmed by circumstances or problems, I ask that You give me a special awareness of Your unfailing love in my life, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

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1 SO DAVID departed and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. 2 And everyone in distress or in debt or discontented gathered to him, and he became a commander over them. And there were with him about 400 men. 3 And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, Let my father [of Moabite descent] and my mother, I pray you, come out [of Judah] and be with you till I know what God will do for me. 4 And he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the stronghold [in Moab]. 5 Then the prophet Gad said to David, Do not remain in the stronghold; leave, and get into the land of Judah. So David left and went into the forest of Hareth. 6 Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him. Saul was sitting in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height, his spear in his hand and all his servants standing about him. 7 Saul said to his servants who stood about him, Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards and make you all commanders of thousands and hundreds, 8 That all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a league with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses that my son has stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait, as he does this day? 9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood with Saul's servants, said, I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech son of Ahitub. 10 And [Ahimelech] inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine. 11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nob, and they all came to the king. 12 Saul said, Hear now, you son of Ahitub. He replied, Here I am, my lord. 13 Saul said to him, Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so he could rise against me to lie in wait, as he does this day? 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, And who is so faithful among all your servants as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into your council and honored in your house? 15 Have I only today begun inquiring of God for him? No! Let not the king impute any wrong to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, little or much. 16 [Saul] said, You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house. 17 And the king said to the guard that stood about him, Turn and slay the Lord's priests, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hands against the Lord's priests. 18 The king said to Doeg, You turn and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked the priests and slew that day eighty-five persons who wore the priest's linen ephod. 19 And Nob, the city of the priests, he smote with the sword; both men and women, children and sucklings, oxen and donkeys and sheep, he put to the sword. 20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub named Abiathar escaped and fled after David. 21 And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. 22 David said to Abiathar, I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all your father's house. 23 Stay with me, fear not; for he who seeks my life seeks your life. But with me you shall be safeguarded.

Chapter 22

And he went from there, and he escaped to the cave at Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard of it, they went down to him there. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there came about four hundred men (1Sa 22:1-2).

So from out of all the land, David began to gather together a band of men, a motley crew to be sure. Every one who was stressed, every one who was in debt, every one who was discontented. They gathered together with David down there at Adullam.

And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab (1Sa 22:3):

So he actually crossed over in the area of the Dead Sea, went over to the other side to Moab and there he established his family. Now he knew that Saul's anger against him would ultimately turn against his family.

So he said to the Moabites, Let my father and my mother dwell here, until I find out what God's gonna do with me. And so he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with the king of Moab all the while that David was in the hold (1Sa 22:3-4).

Verse four. Now the word "hold" is "Masada", and there are those who believe that actually David was there in the hold, or in the fort of Masada which of course was later really developed by king Herod as a winter palace and a fortress. So it is possible David was down in that area of the Dead Sea. It is possible that this is indeed a reference to Masada, but he was there in the hold or in the fort wherever it might have been.

Now I want you to put a little note here to read Psalm 57 and Psalm 142. Both of these psalms were written at this particular time of David's experiences. So I want you to go home tonight and read these two psalms, but I want you to be thinking now of the background of these two psalms as David writes Psalm 47, and Psalm 57 rather, and Psalm 142. He's down there, Saul is pursuing him. He's just taken his parents to safety over in Moab. He's hiding there in the wilderness area down near the Dead Sea.

And the prophet Gad said to David, Abide not [in the fortress, or] in the hold, [Masada] depart and get thee to the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth. [Now a prophet by the name of Gad, whoever he was, told David not to stay there but to get into Judah.] So when Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all of his servants were standing around him;) Then Saul said to his servants that stood around him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; this son of Jesse, will he give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make all of you captains of the thousands, and captains of hundreds; That all of you have conspired against me (1Sa 22:5-8), In other words he is saying, "Hey, you Benjamites, I'm a Benjamite. Look what I've done for you. If you elect me president, I'll do this and this and this," sort of a political speech against David. "You know if David's elected, if David's elected king, he's not gonna treat

you Benjamites well. He's from the house of Judah, you know Jesse, and so forth. He's not gonna be as nice to you as I've been to you. He's not gonna make you the captains over the thousands and the hundreds. He's not gonna give you fields and all. Here look what I've done for you, and you guys are turned against me. You're in favor of David instead of me. None of you will really tell me where he is. You've conspired against me."

You haven't shown me that my son Jonathan has made a league with David, there's none of you that's sorry for me? Then answers this Doeg [fellow] and he said, I saw this son of Jesse come to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, [That is Ahimelech the priest inquired of the Lord for David.] and gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, and all of his father's house, and the priests that were there at Nob: and they all of them came to the king. Now Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have you conspired against me? thou and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread, and a sword, and you have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? And Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all of your servants as David, which the king's son in law, and goes at your bidding, and is honourable in thy house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all of the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more (1Sa 22:8-15).

"What are you talking about? I don't know what you're talking about, Saul. I didn't really conspire. I'm not against you, and you don't have any servant that's more faithful in all of your house than David."

And the king said, You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and your father's house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and didn't shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord. But the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall on the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew them that day eighty-five persons that wore the priest's gown. [Terrible, terrible crime.] And Nob, the city of the priests, he smote with the sword, both men women, children, little children that nursed, oxen, asses, sheep, with the edge of the sword. [That which he wouldn't do against the enemies of God, he is now doing against the servants of God.] And one of the sons of Ahimelech whose name was Abiathar, escaped, and he fled after David. And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. And David said to Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all of the persons of your father's house. Stay with me, don't be afraid: for he that seeks my life is seeking your life: but with me you'll be safe (1Sa 22:16-23).

So the one escaped to David from the house of Ahimelech, and David felt really responsible for the death of all of those families. He knew that he made a mistake in letting this Doeg go. He should've killed him
(Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

X. OUR LORD'S MODEL PRAYER

"What satisfaction must it be to learn from God Himself with what words and in what manner, He would have us pray to Him so as not to pray in vain! We do not sufficiently consider the value of this prayer; the respect and attention which it requires; the preference to be given to it; its fulness and perfection; the frequent use we should make of it; and the spirit which we should bring with it. 'Lord, teach us how to pray.'"—Adam Clark

Jesus gives us the pattern prayer in what is commonly known as "The Lord's Prayer." In this model, perfect prayer He gives us a law form to be followed, and yet one to be filled in and enlarged as we may decide when we pray. The outlines and form are complete, yet it is but an outline, with many a blank, which our needs and convictions are to fill in.

Christ puts words on our lips, words which are to be uttered by holy lives. Words belong to the life of prayer. Wordless prayers are like human spirits; pure and high they may be, but too ethereal and impalpable for earthly conflicts and earthly needs and uses. We must have spirits clothed in flesh and blood, and our prayers must be likewise clothed in words to give them point and power, a local habitation, and a name.

This lesson of "The Lord's Prayer," drawn forth by the request of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray," has something in form and verbiage like the prayer sections of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the same great lesson of praying to "Our Father which art in Heaven," and is one of insistent importunity. No prayer lesson would be complete without it. It belongs to the first and last lessons in prayer. God's Fatherhood gives shape, value and confidence to all our praying.

He teaches us that to hallow God's name is the first and the greatest of prayers. A desire for the glorious coming and the glorious establishment of God's glorious kingdom follows in value and in sequence the hallowing of God's name. He who really hallows God's name will hail the coming of the Kingdom of God, and will labour and pray to bring that kingdom to pass and to establish it. Christ's pupils in the school of prayer are to be taught diligently to hallow God's name, to work for God's kingdom, and to do God's will perfectly, completely and gladly, as it is done in Heaven.

Prayer engages the highest interest and secures the highest glory of God. God's name, God's kingdom and God's will are all in it. Without prayer His name is profaned, His kingdom fails, and His will is decried and opposed. God's will can be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. God's will done on earth makes earth like Heaven. Importunate praying is the mighty energy which establishes God's will on earth as it is established in Heaven.

He is still teaching us that prayer sanctifies and makes hopeful and sweet our daily toil for daily bread. Forgiveness of sins is to be sought by prayer, and the great prayer plea we are to make for forgiveness is that we have forgiven all those who have sinned against us. It involves love for our enemies so far as to pray for them, to bless them and not curse them, and to pardon their offences against us whatever those offences may be.

We are to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," that is, that while we thus pray, the tempter and the temptation are to be watched against, resisted and prayed against.

All these things He had laid down in this law of prayer, but many a simple lesson of comment, expansion, and expression He adds to His statute law.

In this prayer He teaches His disciples, so familiar to thousands in this day who learned it at their mother's knees in childhood, the words are so childlike that children find their instruction, edification and comfort in them as they kneel and pray. The most glowing mystic and the most careful thinker finds each his own language in these simple words of prayer. Beautiful and revered as these words are, they are our words for solace, help and learning.

He led the way in prayer that we might follow His footsteps. Matchless leader in matchless praying! Lord, teach us to pray as Thou didst Thyself pray!

How marked the contrast between the Sacerdotal Prayer and this "Lord's Prayer," this copy for praying He gave to His disciples as the first elements of prayer. How simple and childlike! No one has ever approached in composition a prayer so simple in its petitions and yet so comprehensive in all of its requests.

How these simple elements of prayer as given by our Lord commend themselves to us! This prayer is for us as well as for those to whom it was first given. It is for the child in the A-B-C of prayer, and it is for the graduate of the highest institutions of learning. It is a personal prayer, reaching to all our needs and covering all our sins. It is the highest form of prayer for others. As the scholar can never in all his after studies or learning dispense with his A B C, and as the alphabet gives form, colour and expression to all after learning, impregnating all and grounding all, so the learner in Christ can never dispense with the Lord's Prayer. But he may make it form the basis of his higher praying, this intercession for others in the Sacerdotal Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is ours by our mother's knee and fits us in all the stages of a joyous Christian Life. The Sacerdotal Prayer is ours also in the stages and office of our royal priesthood as intercessors before God. Here we have oneness with God, deep spiritual unity, and unswerving | XI. OUR LORD'S SACERDOTAL PRAYER

"Jesus closes His life with inimitable calmness, confidence and sublimity. 'I have glorified Thee; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.' The annals of earth have nothing comparable to it in real security and sublimity. May we come to our end thus, in supreme loyalty to Christ."—Edward Bounds

We come now to consider our Lord's Sacerdotal Prayer, as found recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel.

Obedience to the Father and abiding in the Father, these belong to the Son, and these belong to us, as partners with Christ in His Divine work of intercession. How tenderly and with what pathos and how absorbingly He prays for His disciples! "I pray for them; I pray not for the world." What a pattern of prayerfulness for God's people! For God's people are God's cause, God's Church and God's Kingdom. Pray for God's people, for their unity, their sanctification, and their glorification. How the subject of their unity pressed upon Him! These walls of separation, these alienations, these riven circles of God's family, and these warring tribes of ecclesiastics—how He is torn and bleeds and suffers afresh at the sight of these divisions! Unity—that is the great burden of that remarkable Sacerdotal Prayer. "That they may be one, even as we are one." The spiritual oneness of God's people—that is the heritage of God's glory to them, transmitted by Christ to His Church.

First of all, in this prayer, Jesus prays for Himself, not now the suppliant as in Gethsemane, not weakness, but strength now. There is not now the pressure of darkness and of hell, but passing for the time over the fearful interim, He asks that He may be glorified, and that His exalted glory may secure glory to His Father. His sublime loyalty and fidelity to God are declared, that fidelity to God which is of the very essence of interceding prayer. Our devoted lives pray. Our unswerving loyalty to God are eloquent pleas to Him and give access and confidence in our advocacy. This prayer is gemmed, but its walls are adamant. What profound and granite truths! What fathomless mysteries! What deep and rich experiences do such statements as these involve:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.oyalty to God, living and prayingto glorify God.

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

Let us stop and ask, have we eternal life? Do we know God experimentally, consciously, and do we know Him really and personally? Do we know Jesus Christ as a person. and as a personal Saviour? Do we know Him by a heart acquaintance. and know Him well? This. this

only, is eternal life. And is Jesus glorified in us? Let us continue this personal inquiry. Do our lives prove His divinity? And does Jesus shine brighter because of us? Are we opaque or transparent bodies, and do we darken or reflect His pure light? Once more let us ask: Do we seek God's glory? Do we seek glory where Christ sought it? "Glorify thou me with thy own self." Do we esteem the presence and the possession of God our most excellent glory and our supreme good?

How closely does He bind Himself and His Father to His people! His heart centers upon them in this high hour of holy communion with His Father.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them; I pray not for the world; but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."

He prays also for keeping for these disciples. Not only were they to be chosen, elected and possessed, but were to be kept by the Father's watchful eyes and by the Father's omnipotent hand. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

He prays that they might be kept by the Holy Father, in all holiness by the power of His Name. He asks that His people may be kept from sin, from all sin, from sin in the concrete and sin in the abstract, from sin in all its shapes of evil, from all sin in this world. He prays that they might not only be fit and ready for Heaven, but ready and fit for earth, for its sweetest privileges, its sternest duties, its deepest sorrows, and its richest joys; ready for all of its trials, consolations and triumphs. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

He prays that they may be kept from the world's greatest evil, which is sin. He desires that they may be kept from the guilt, the power, the pollution and the punishment of sin. The Revised Version makes it read, "That thou shouldst keep them from the evil one." Kept from the devil, so that he might not touch them, nor find them, nor have a place in them; that they might be all owned, possessed, filled and guarded by God. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

He places us in the arms of His Father, on the boom of His Father, and in the heart of His Father. He calls God into service, puts Him to the front, and places us under His Father's closer keeping, under His Father's shadow, and under the covert of His Father's wing. The Father's rod and staff are for our security, for our comfort, for our refuge, for our strength and guidance.

These disciples were not to be taken out of the world, but kept from its evil, its monster evil, which is itself. "This present evil world." How the world seduces, dazzles, and deludes the children of men! His disciples are chosen out of the world, out of the world's bustle and earthliness, out of its all-devouring greed of gain, out of its money-desire, money-love, and money-toil. Earth draws and holds as if it was made out of gold and not out of dirt; as though it was covered with diamonds and not with graves.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Not only from sin and Satan were they to be kept, but also from the soil, stain and the taint of worldliness, as Christ was free from it. Their relation to Christ was not only to free them from the world's defiling taint, its unhallowed love, and its criminal friendships, but the world's hatred would inevitably follow their Christ-likeness. No result so necessarily and universally follows its cause as this. "The world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

How solemn and almost awful the repetition of the declaration, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." How pronounced, radical and eternal was our Lord Christ's divorce from the world! How pronounced, radical and eternal is that of our Lord's true followers from the world! The world hates the disciple as it hated his Lord, and will crucify the disciple just as it crucified his Lord. How pertinent the question, have we the Christ unworldliness? Does the world hate us as it hated our Lord? Are His words fulfilled in us?

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

He puts Himself before us clear cut as the full portraiture of an unworldly Christian. Here is our changeless pattern. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." We must be cut after this pattern.

The subject of their unity pressed upon Him. Note how He called His Father's attention to it, and see how He pleaded for this unity of His followers: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

Again He returns to it as He sees the great crowds flocking to His standard as the ages pass on:

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

"I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Notice how intently His heart was set on this unity. What shameful history, and what bloody annals has this lack of unity written for God's Church! These walls of separations, these alienations, these riven circles of God's family, these warring tribes of men, and these internecine fratricidal wars! He looks ahead and sees how Christ is torn, how He bleeds and suffers afresh in all these sad things of the future. The unity of God's people was to be the heritage of God's glory promised to them. Division and strife are the devil's bequest to the Church, a heritage of failure, weakness, shame and woe.

The oneness of God's people was to be the one credential to the world of the divinity of Christ's mission on earth. Let us ask in all candor, are we praying for this unity as Christ prayed for it? Are we seeking the peace, the welfare, the glory, the might and the divinity of God's cause as it is found in the unity of God's people?

Going back again, note, please, how He puts Himself as the exponent and the pattern of this unworldliness which He prays may possess His disciples. He sends them into the world just as His Father sent Him into the world. He expects them to be and do, just as He was and as He did for His Father. He sought the sanctification of His disciples that they might be wholly devoted to God and purified from all sin. He desired in them a holy life and a holy work for God. He devoted Himself to death in order that they might be devoted in life to God. For a true sanctification He prayed, a real, whole, and thorough sanctification, embracing soul, body and mind, for time and eternity. With Him the word itself had much to do with their true sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth."

Entire devotedness was to be the type of their sanctification. His prayer for their sanctification marks the pathway to full sanctification. Prayer is that pathway. All the ascending steps to that lofty position of entire sanctification are steps of prayer, increasing prayerfulness in spirit and increasing prayerfulness in fact. "Pray without ceasing" is the imperative prelude to "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." And prayer is but the continued interlude and doxology of this rich grace in the heart: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

We can only meet our full responsibilities and fulfill our high mission when we go forth sanctified as Christ our Lord was sanctified. He sends us into the world just as His Father sent Him into the world. He expects us to be as He was, to do as He did, and to glorify the Father just as He glorified the Father.

What longings He had to have us with Him in Heaven: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." What response do our truant hearts make to this earnest, loving, Christly longing? Are we as eager for Heaven as He is to have us there? How calm, how majestic and how authoritative is His "I will"!

He closes His life with inimitable calmness, confidence and sublimity. "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

The annals of earth have nothing comparable to it in real serenity and sublimity. May we come to our end thus in supreme loyalty to Christ.

XII. THE GETHSEMANE PRAYER

"The cup! the cup! the cup! Our Lord did not use many words: but He used His few words again and again, till this cup! and Thy will!—Thy will be done, and this cup—was all His prayer. "The cup! The cup! The cup!" cried Christ: first on His feet: and then on His knees: and then on His face. . . . 'Lord, teach us to pray!'"—Alexander Whyte, D.D.

We come to Gethsamane. What a contrast! The sacerdotal prayer had been one of intense feelings of universal grasp, and of world-wide and illimitable sympathy and solicitude for His church. Perfect calmness and perfect poise reigned. Majestic He was and simple and free from passion or disquiet. The Royal Intercessor and Advocate for others, His petitions are like princely edicts, judicial and authoritative. How changed now! In Gethsemane He seems to have entered another region, and becomes another man. His sacerdotal prayer, so exquisite in its tranquil flow, so unruffled in its strong, deep current, is like the sun, moving in meridian, unsullied glory, brightening, vitalising, ennobling and blessing everything. The Gethsemane prayer is that same sun declining in the west, plunged into an ocean of storm and cloud, storm-covered, storm-eclipsed with gloom, darkness and terror on every side.

The prayer in Gethsemane is exceptional in every way. The super-incumbent load of the world's sin is upon Him. The lowest point of His depression has been reached. The bitterest cup of all, His bitter cup, is being pressed to His lips. The weakness of all His weaknesses, the sorrow of all His sorrows, the agony of all His agonies are now upon Him. The flesh is giving out with its fainting and trembling pulsations, like the trickling of His heart's blood. His enemies have thus far triumphed. Hell is in a jubilee and bad men are joining in the hellish carnival.

Gethsemane was Satan's hour, Satan's power, and Satan's darkness. It was the hour of massing all of Satan's forces for a final, last conflict Jesus had said, "The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me." The conflict for earth's mastery is before Him. The spirit led and drove Him into the stern conflict and severe temptation of the wilderness. But His Comforter, His Leader and His inspiration through His matchless history, seems to have left Him now. "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy," and we hear Him under this great pressure exclaiming, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The depression, conflict and agony had gone to the very core of His spirit, and had sunk Him to the very verge of death. "Sore amazed" He was.

Surprise and awe depress His soul. "Very heavy" was the hour of hell's midnight which fell upon His spirit. Very heavy was this hour when all the sins of all the world, of every man, of all men, fell upon His immaculate soul, with all their stain and all their guilt.

He cannot abide the presence of His chosen friends. They cannot enter into the depths and demands of this fearful hour. His trusted and set watchers were asleep. His Father's face is hid. His Father's approving voice is silent. The Holy Spirit, who had been with Him in all the trying hours of His life, seems to have withdrawn from the scene. Alone He must drink the cup, alone He must tread the winepress of God's fierce wrath and of Satan's power and darkness, and of man's envy, cruelty and vindictiveness. The scene is well described by Luke:

"And he came out and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives: and his disciples also followed him.

"And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed.

"Saying, Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.

"And said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

The prayer agony of Gethsemane crowns Calvary with glory and while the prayers offered by Christ on the cross are the union of weakness and strength, of deepest agony and desolation, accompanied with sweetest calm, divinest submission and implicit confidence.

Nowhere in prophet or priest, king or ruler, of synagogue or church, does the ministry of prayer assume such marvels of variety, power and fragrance as in the life of Jesus Christ. It is the aroma of God's sweetest spices, aflame with God's glory, and consumed by God's will.

We find in this Gethsemane prayer that which we find nowhere else in the praying of Christ. "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." This is different from the whole tenor and trend of His praying and doing. How different from His sacerdotal prayer! "Father, I will," is the law and life of that prayer. In His last directions for prayer, He makes our will the measure and condition of prayer. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," He said to the Syrophenician woman, "Great is thy faith! Be it unto thee as thou wilt."

But in Gethsemane His praying was against the declared will of God. The pressure was so heavy upon Him, the cup was so bitter, the burden was so strange and intolerable, that the flesh cried out for relief. Prostrate, sinking, sorrowful unto death, He sought to be relieved from that which seemed too heavy to bear. He prayed, however, not in revolt against God's will, but in submission to that will, and yet to change God's plan and to alter God's purposes He prayed. Pressed by the weakness of the flesh, and by the powers of hell in all their dire, hellish malignity and might, Jesus was on this one only occasion constrained to pray against the will of God. He did it, though, with great wariness and pious caution. He did it with declared and inviolable submission to God's will. But this was exceptional.

Simple submission to God's will is not the highest attitude of the soul to God. Submission may be seeming, induced by conditions, nothing but all enforced surrender, not cheerful but grudging, only a temporary expedient, a fitful resolve. When the occasion or calamity which called it forth is removed, the will returns to its old ways and to its old self.

Jesus Christ prayed always with this one exception in conformity with the will of God. He was one with God's plan, and one with God's will. To pray in conformity with God's will was the life and law of Christ. The same was law of His praying. Conformity, to live one with God, is a far higher and diviner life than to live simply in submission to God. To pray in conformity—together with God—is a far higher and diviner way to pray than mere submission. At its best state, submission is non-rebellion, an acquiescence, which is good, but not the highest. The most powerful form of praying is positive, aggressive, mightily outgoing and creative. It molds things, changes things and brings things to pass.

Conformity means to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." It means to delight to do God's will, to run with eagerness and ardour to carry out His plans. Conformity to God's will involves submission, patient, loving, sweet submission. But submission in its elf falls short of and does not include conformity. We may be submissive but not conformed. We may accept results against which we have

warred, and even be resigned to them. Conformity means to be one with God, both in result and in processes. Submission may be one with God in the end. Conformity is one with God in the beginning, and the end. Jesus had conformity, absolute and perfect, to God's will, and by that He prayed. This was the single point where there was a drawing back from God's processes, extorted by insupportable pain, fear and weariness. His submission was abject, loyal and confiding, as His conformity had been constant and perfect. Conformity is the only true submission, the most loyal, the sweetest and the fullest

Gethsemane has its lessons of humble supplications as Jesus knelt alone in the garden. Of burdened prostration, as He fell on His face, of intense agony, of distressing dread, of hesitancy and shrinking back, of crying out for relief—yet amid it all of cordial submission to God, accompanied with a singleness of purpose for His glory. Satan will have for each of us his hour and power of darkness and for each of us the bitter cup and the fearful spirit of gloom. We can pray against God's will, as Moses did, to enter the Promised Land; as Paul did about the thorn in the flesh; as David did for his doomed child; as Hezekiah did to live. We must pray against God's will three times when the stroke is the heaviest, the sorrow is the keenest, and the grief is the deepest. We may lie prostrate all night, as David did, through the hours of darkness. We may pray for hours, as Jesus did, and in the darkness of many nights, not measuring the hours by the clock, nor the nights by the calendar. It must all be, however, the prayer of submission.

When sorrow and the night and desolation of Gethsemane fall in heaviest gloom on us, we ought to submit patiently and tearfully, if need be, but sweetly and resignedly, without tremour, or doubt, to the cup pressed by a Father's hand to our lips. "Not my will, but thine, be done," our broken hearts shall say. In God's own way, mysterious to us, that cup has in its bitterest dregs, as it had for the Son of God, the gem and gold of perfection. We are to be put into the crucible to be refined. Christ was made perfect in Gethsemane, not by the prayer, but by the suffering. "For it became him to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." The cup could not pass because the suffering must go on and yield its fruit of perfection. Through many an hour of darkness and of hell's power, through many a sore conflict with the prince of this world, by drinking many a bitter cup, we are to be made perfect. To cry out against the terrific and searching flame of the crucible of a Father's painful processes is natural and is no sin, if there be perfect acquiescence in the answer to our prayer, perfect submission to God's will, and perfect devotion to His glory.

If our hearts are true to God, we may plead with Him about His way, and seek relief from His painful processes. But the fierce fire of the crucible and the agonising victim with His agonising and submissive prayer, is not the normal and highest form of majestic and all-commanding prayer. We can cry out in the crucible, and can cry out against the flame which purifies and perfects us. God allows this, hears this, and answers this, not by taking us out of the crucible, nor by mitigating the fierceness of the flame, but by sending more than an angel to strengthen us. And yet crying out thus, with full submission, does not answer the real high, world-wide, royal and eternity-reaching behests of prayer.

The prayer of submission must not be so used as to vitiate or substitute the higher and mightier prayer of faith. Nor must it be so stressed as to break down importunate and prevailing prayer, which would be to disarm prayer of its efficiency and discrown its glorious results and would be to encourage listless, sentimental and feeble praying.

We are ever ready to excuse our lack of earnest and toilsome praying, by a fancied and delusive view of submission. We often end praying just where we ought to begin. We quit praying when God waits and is waiting for us to really pray. We are deterred by obstacles from praying, or we succumb to difficulties, and call it submission to God's will. A world of beggarly faith, of spiritual laziness, and of half-heartedness in prayer, are covered under the high and pious name of submission. To have no plan but to seek God's plan and carry it out, is of the essence and inspiration of Christly praying. This is far more than putting in a clause of submission. Jesus did this once in seeking to change the purpose of God, but all His other praying was the output of being perfectly at one with the plans and purposes of God. It is after this order we pray when we abide in Him and when His word abides in us. Then we ask what we will and it is done. It is then our prayers fashion and create things. Our wills then become God's will and His will becomes ours. The two become one, and there is not a note of discord. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. And then it proves true: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

What restraint, forbearance, self-denial, and loyalty to duty to God, and what deference to the Old Testament Scriptures are in that statement of our Lord: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

("The Reality Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 10-12 ; 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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