

*Donald E. Schmudlach -**July 25, 2010*

## Prayer

Reading James 5:13-18, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; <sup>15</sup> and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit."

Today we will look at what the Bible has to say on prayer in a series of lessons on the basics. At 75, I'm returning to the lessons, on the basics, this is what most of the writers in the periodicals I read suggest are needed today. So in my old age I have the need to preach on them again so everyone has heard them once, twice or more..

### **Let us look into the basics of prayer**

#### **To whom do we pray?**

Colossians 1:3, "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

We pray to our Father, God the creator and giver of all that is good to those who believe, Matthew 7:11, "If you then, being evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

### **Through whom do we pray?**

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Ephesians 5:20, " always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"

### **What do we pray?**

We find in the sample prayer given by Jesus Christ, Matthew 6:9, "Pray, then, in this way: `Our Father who art in heaven, here we acknowledge God as the Father of all.

We praise God, "Hallowed be thy name." a commitment to honor our creator.

We pray that His "will be done," As Christian we know that in the end it will be His will that will be done.

We thank God for our daily bread, "Give us this day our daily bread." Here we acknowledge that as Christians He will provide those needs.

We ask for forgiveness, with the understanding, that we need to forgive others for their transgressions.

We ask for protection form evil, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." As Christians we know that God does not tempt us, He does allow us to be tested, which helps us grow and learn. In 1Corinthians 10:13 " No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but

with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."

At the end we find more praise, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

"always giving thanks for all things" as we read in Ephesians 5:20. Some time we may find it hard to give thanks for what is taking place in our lives, give thanks and learn.

As you can see by the above, Prayer need not be full of big words, elaborate thoughts. The prayer that Jesus taught the disciples was short and to the point. Prayer must be sincere, from the heart, for this is your communication with your God, who knows all and sees all. There are many more individual items of prayer mentioned in the Bible one needs to think on, as home work, look them up during the coming week.

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### **How often do we pray?**

In Acts 1:9, Jesus Christ was lifted up to set on the side of the Father. We read in verse 12 that those who had been with Him at that time returned to Jerusalem, In verse 14 we read, "These all with

one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer,"  
"Continually"

Romans 12:12, "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, Those are to strong words, Christians should pay attention to, "Continually" and "devoted to prayer."

### **Why do we pray?**

Matthew 21:22, "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

Hebrews 4:16, " Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

Prayer is a free moral act where men turn to God to pay homage; to the creator, the giver. For all things come from God, the one who will be judge. Prayer is where men turn to God and make requests which come from mans weakness and need for guidance. When one of the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord teach us to pray " (Luke 11:1), he uttered the deepest and most universal desire of the humane heart; the desire of finite man having definable limits to make real personal contact with the Power (God) that transcends time, space and matter.

Man, every where, form the beginning of time has prayed, often blindly, uncertainly and erratically. But they prayed. Look at the many things the Jews turned to when they fell away from God's teaching; and the many things those who took over their land worshipped. Almost anything and everything has been prayed to in the history of man.

Until man finally found the one true God, he was lost; truly lost, looking for the true master, the true creator. Prayer truly and fully answers the universal need of mankind for the continual presence and help of God, as it is in keeping with the word of God ( the bible), where we find the divine authority of prayer.

Every prayer in the bible was to the personal God of heaven, the God of unlimited authority and power, the all powerful God. The God that was; the God that is, present in all places at all times and the God that will be, forever.

We find at the end of that prayer Jesus was teaching these words. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." Our Father, the one true God, will be forever.

How can man possible pray to a God whom he does not believe exist ? For if a man does not believe in the reality of God, it would never enter his mind to pray. You must believe, you must have faith.

James 5:31, "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him."

Prayer; it could be said, is the reach of man after the absolute reality of God, the personal God and his conscious connection with that reality

Absolute reality of God, in ones life, ones growth in becoming a Christian; when in his heart and mind he must and does become aware that there is one creator, one master, one giver of all; one personal God who created the earth that we walk upon, the heavens above, and all upon the earth.

When one reaches this reality in his or her Christian growth there comes the realization, through faith, of the power of prayer.

Hear the word of the Lord, James 5:15,16," and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Christ used the intimate and personal term "Father" when addressing God. Teaching His disciples and Christians to do the same.

Matthew 11:25, " At that time Jesus answered and said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, "

Then we read in Luke 23:34 the words of Jesus Christ while upon the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

God; our Father is the creator, the benefactor of all, the beginning of all, the founder of all, the authority over all; the first of the trinity, God the father, Jesus Christ the son, and the Holy Spirit.

We pray through Jesus Christ or in the name of Jesus Christ, He is the go between for Christians and their God.

John15:16, "that what ever you ask of the father in My name, He may give to you."

Prayer is a Christian's desire for God, born out of his sense of human weakness and divine strength, and thus his need for God. Christians and all people stand continually in need of God's providential care. Jesus emphasized man's inability to live fruitfully and victoriously without God's providential care.

In other words we, Christians, are only human, we are weak. We need God's guidance we need to tap into that strength that only God can give, that guidance that only God can give, that wisdom that only God can give. The way is through Jesus Christ, by prayer.

John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing,"

When one recognizes the desperate , urgent, and constant need of God's providential protection and care, the desire for God overrides every other desire, then prayer becomes the number one activity in life.

God hears prayer. James 4:8, we find God's ability and willingness to hear worthy prayer. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you, cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."

God answers prayer. We must assume there is a God who answers Christians acceptable prayers; for it would be futile to pray if there was no response. We as Christians must believe there is a God and our God answers prayer and He will give us what he believes we need.

Hebrews 11:6, " And with out faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him."

Our God in heaven hears and answers prayer because of His concern and love for man. Prayer, assumes that God is interested in the welfare of the one praying, that He has a desire that their worthy needs be filled. All of us from early Sunday School have heard John 3:16, " For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believed in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. "

God has the power and the willingness to help us. Yes, God wants to answer our prayers; because He loves us. That is why man can pray to Him with confidence that their prayers will not be in vain. One must be worthy and that which he asks must be needed. Let us look at some more of the conditions of prayer. A devoted Christians life is a condition of acceptable prayer.

1 John 3:21,22, " beloved if our hearts does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."

Keeping His commandments is a condition of acceptable prayer.

1 John 2:3," And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. "

No one receives God's answers to his prayers on the basis of his merits; but by the grace of God and the intercession of Jesus Christ along with merits, that being , following God's commandments.

And remember Jesus Christ as He prayed, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven "

We must pray in the name of Christ and recognize the sanctity and supreme authority of His will concerning us. To pray in the name of Jesus Christ is to recognize that He died for us, paying the price of our redemption and supplying divine power for fruitful successful living in His service. When we pray in the name of Christ, we truly recognize his name is above everything.

Philippines 2:9, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name."

We must be certain that our prayers are in keeping with God's will as we find it in the New Testament. Therefore we must read and study His word, to be sure that prayers are in union with His will, so that they are acceptable to Him.

It is not enough, however that we desire His will be done, with His help we must do our part to see that it is carried out. We have to work, the work, We have to carry out the task, the trust given every Christian, that goes with His will, His great commission.

For reasons we may not understand, God answers to our prayers may differ from what we requested. Remember Paul's request in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9,

The object of prayer is not to bend God's will to ours, but to raise ours to God's. It is not to change , but to accomplish the divine purpose. Again the great commission, to spread the word of God through out the world.

As stated before God has given everything one needs to know for salvation and all one needs to know to live a righteous life to reach heaven and it was written down. The path to salvation is as follows:

### What Must I Do To Be Saved

Hear the Gospel, Romans 10:17. Believe in Jesus, John 3:16, Repent (change), Acts 2:38. Confess the name of Christ, Romans 10:9-10. Be Baptized, Matthew 28:19 & 1 Peter 2:21. Live a Righteous life, 1 Peter 2:14.

All of these commands are part of what our old timers call basic teachings. If you do not hear the word. What knowledge do you have to believe in the Father and the Son, from where are you getting your faith? You can not confess your belief in the Son if you do not know of His birth, life, death and resurrection? If you do not know The commands from the Father given by the Son, how can you follow Jesus Christ and live a righteous life?

There is a need. I learn more every time I hear these lessons and pray other do. So if I have the time and opportunity you will hear them some more.

One last thought. It is good for one to pray often. Keeping in mind that God knows what is in your heart. He knows what you believe. When you pray, let the words come from your heart, let them be what you truly believe. Remembering the word of God, Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

Are you one who has had doubts and feelings ; leaving and returning, like the surf of the sea and tossed by the winds; here and there. Have you over come those doubts and have the desire for someone to pray with you. Do you have the desire and need to be baptized. Please come forward as we sing. Please lets us pray, let us help you.