



March 20, 2005

Prayer

While Christ was praying in the garden, he had left Peter, James and John to be alone as he spoke with God. Upon returning to them he found them sleeping. Luke tells us that this was because of the sorrow that they were experiencing at the things that had been revealed to them by Christ that evening (Luke 22.45). Christ said to them, “**Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.**” Luke 22.46). In the future the disciples would be presented with trials that would seek to destroy their resolve. Christ prepared them for these things by telling them what lay ahead as he prepared them for his death. A vital link to God was that of prayer. Prayer would sustain them and remind them that God was with them.

Prayer has been a vital part of the lives of those who are faithful to God throughout the scriptures. David writes, “**As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.**” (Psm 55.16-17). In the midst of hatred and betrayal, there was deliverance. Prayer stood as a reminder that there is one more powerful than the earthly forces of evil, and while it seems that these might prevail for a short time, God will deliver and render justice in the end. Prayer can provide encouragement by building the inner strength that tells us that we are not alone. It points to the nature of the heart of one who relies on the Lord as well since this practice admits that there is help needed and this cannot come from oneself.

There are examples of those who were faced with life circumstances that were not going to change right away if ever in this lifetime. One such situation was that in which Daniel found himself. Among one of the earliest groups of captives taken to Babylon, Daniel found himself in a strange land and among a hostile people. In spite of this he depended on God and used prayer to remind himself of the Lord’s faithfulness. When conspirators, who could find no other way to attack Daniel, tried to use his faithfulness to God against him, they had the king issue an edict that there were to be no solicitations to anyone except the king for thirty days. “**Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.**” (Dan 6.10). Daniel was not embarrassed to pray. He realized that God would deliver him, even if it meant his own death.

These are only two examples of prayer in the lives of the faithful. There are many others. In the present world prayer is little understood and misused. We pray to God because we love him and understand that he is there to help us. There are some who think that God is like a waiter who will bring us whatever we want and so approach prayer as a way of conveying the current wish list to God. Prayer is a serious matter and should not be taken lightly nor used for mere trivialities that we need to deal with in the physical world. Solomon comments on the need to remain in a proper frame of mind anytime that we approach God. “**Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.**” (Eccl 5.2). We also need to remember that we are servants here to do the will of God, not the other way around

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