



THE GOOD NEWS MESSENGER

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The Gethsemane Prayer

Excerpt from *Availing Prayer* by: Fay C. Martin

“Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:36-39). Read also Mark 14:33-35.

Here we have the grand climax to soul-burden. No one ever knew the value of a soul as Jesus knew it. No one ever felt the weight of lost souls as he felt it. No one ever has or ever can feel a burden for souls like that. Nearly thirty-four years he had lived as others lived on this earth. About four years He had labored tirelessly and incessantly for the salvation of souls. He knew their salvation depended on his death, not a natural death, but a death brought about by the spilling in a cruel manner of His own precious blood. Now as the weight of it all falls upon Him, while His mind dwells upon the thought, it seems almost more than He can bear.

“He began to be sore amazed.” Seeing the multitude of lost souls on every hand He becomes alarmed. He is astonished at the indifference of His own disciples who can repeatedly fall asleep while surrounded by souls on the brink of hell. He is awed at His own human desire to shrink from the sacrifice of His own life. For months He had talked about that which was to occur. Repeatedly He had warned His disciples, that when the time arrived they might be prepared, but now as the time approaches and He is brought face to face with and is on the verge of sacrifice, He finds it different from merely talking about it. Oh, that others might learn this same lesson. That they might really make more sacrifice, even the sacrifice of life itself if only souls can be saved,

instead of merely boasting of intended action.

But now as He faces the issue, will He yield? Is it going to be too much? Will His humanity overcome His spirituality and eternal desires? After all, has His teaching been merely superfluity and is all to be lost?

Hear Him as He pours out His heart to His Father, “Not my will, but thine.” It was as if He had prayed, “Father, I’m in a ‘strait betwixt two.’ It involves bodily suffering and sacrifice. On my part I hardly feel content to decide what is best; hence I leave it to your judgment.” Mighty humility, this.

Hear Him as He cries, “Let this cup pass.” But what was this cup? Was it the suffering He was about to endure on the cross because of a pierced side, and nail-riven hands and feet, and a lovely brow torn and shredded and bleeding from the cruel crown of thorns? Was it the awful humiliation before His enemies and those who had place confidence in Him? We hardly think so. “This cup” no doubt involved His terrible soul-agony, His great soul-burden. He desired to drink the cup to the last dregs. To drink it quickly and have it all over with, not for His own good or His own relief, but souls were dependent and He was anxious for them.

“This cup” was the hiding of His Father’s face, caused by the blackness of sin, that blackness which is to cut off all sinner s from God throughout an endless eternity, that blackness which is the very core itself of eternal death for a sinner. Oh, the awfulness of that short period of being cut off from communion and contact with God. It was more than Jesus could bear. Then what of those who because of sin will be cut off, not for just a few short minutes, but for a long, long, never-ending eternity? Jesus was glad to have the moment pass as quickly as possible. This was His taste of death for mankind.

“This cup” is the awful penalty of an insulted and broken law.

Mercilessly and vehemently the black tempest of soul-agony lashes His shuddering nature. It seems impossible to endure the fearful strain, and temporarily He yields to the weakness of the flesh. Would He be justified in yielding permanently? Has He not as much right to yield from suffering and heartache as have His disciples?

Hear Him as He says, “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). His innermost being was troubled. He was troubled to the depths of His heart. Troubled at what? At death? No, “for this cause came I.” What then? All that is involved in that comprehensive term “this hour,” “this cup,” for on its outcome depends the destiny of souls, not a few souls, but all souls.

His flesh shrank from the stunning and crushing agony of

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The Gethsemane Prayer

Excerpt from *Availing Prayer* by: Fay C. Martin (*continued*)

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crucifixion. To shrink from absolute subjection to the Father's will would be worse. For the time being He felt His way between two dread alternatives. But He was not long deciding. The love of souls, eternity-bound souls, conquered in "Father, have your will." This was genuine soul-burden.

He prays once, twice, three times. Each time the surges rise higher and beat more tempestuously and vehemently and overwhelmingly. Then an angel appears, strengthening Him. But what for? For death? No, for greater soul agony. His earnestness drags Him into "agony" and as His agony increases His earnestness increases until His agony (for lost souls) is so intense, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44).

It is said that many times men have, while enduring intense suffering and unbearable agony, sweat blood. Here is the Savior of men agonizing in prayer for a lost world; not suffering for Himself, but suffering for you and suffering for me. Wonderful Savior! Marvelous prayer! Oh, that we might all get to that place of intense, agonizing soul-burden, till hearts were poured out to God in prevailing prayer.

Had he suffered less, the atonement would have been a failure. Had He suffered more the suffering would have been unjust. While His suffering could not be alleviated, yet strength was administered for endurance of even a hotter and fiercer struggle. The struggle convulsing the inner man sends, as it were, the blood oozing from the pores of the outer man. Such pressure brought to bear by the inner man today will compel the outer man. Too many are saying, "My heart is in it, but somehow I just cannot force myself to do it." This is the wrong logic, for if the heart, the inner man, impels, there will be no compulsion of the outer man. The outer man is perfectly and absolutely obedient to the inner man. Once get our hearts, our very inner man, burdened for souls, and our bodies will take up the march.

As He cries in this marvelous prayer, "Thy will be done," the victory is His and the victory is the world's. "I will suffer," is the grand climax of Gethsemane. "It is finished," is the triumphant shout of the cross. "I come not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." This is true prayer. "What thou wilt, I will" is genuine, prevailing prayer.

To reach this place may, and usually does, take agonizing prayer, but when once reached the victory is sure and the answer certain.

If it was necessary for Jesus to agonize in prayer, then how much more necessary is it that we do so? More agonizing, more earnestness, more intenseness, more seriousness, more strenuous effort in prayer, is the need of the hour. Such praying will bring more victories, more souls to Christ, more power among His people, and more healings.

A young girl who was a real leader and loved by all who knew her came home from college and was urged by her pastor to give her heart to God and get saved, that her influence might be used to win others. She requested that he do no urg-

ing until the revival which they were planning to hold later on had begun. When that time came she said she could not give up the dance, cards, theaters, and the society in which she mingled, although she really did desire to get saved. She finally consented to do so, though, provided her father and mother, who had been leaders and officers in the church for years, would also get saved. They refused, although admitting they were not living for God and had not done so for many years, saying it was uncalled for to stand the humiliation after so long a time as professors.

The revival closed and that same night the pastor was called on the telephone and urged to rush to the hospital, where he found this girl who had been taken suddenly ill with appendicitis. She was in the operating room before the pastor arrived and shortly the surgeons announced she was dead. Later in passing the cemetery at night this pastor heard bitter wailing and sobs of a broken heart. Upon investigation he found the father of this girl lying prostrate on the grave and crying that his girl was lost and in hell and hew as to blame.

But his wailing and agony, like that of many others, was too late. He should have spent much time in agonizing prayer, from a pure heart, for the salvation of his dear daughter ere the death angel knocked.

But here is Jesus in the garden agonizing for the lost, His enemies, and those who had spitefully used Him.

A salve by the name of Cuff was informed by his master that he (the master) was so poverty-stricken he must sell him. The infidel buyer was informed that Cuff was an ideal slave in every way with the exception of one bad habit, and that was his habit of praying every night and morning before and after his day's work. The infidel replied that he would cure Cuff of that in a hurry. The next morning, finding Cuff on his knees praying to God, his new master tied him to the whipping-post and began lashing till poor old Cuff was torn and cut to the bone and bleeding. The infidel's wife was touched with pity. So greatly was the flesh on poor Cuff's back torn and shredded and so great was the loss of blood she feared he would die at the post. She begged her husband to quit. This only angered him the more and he threatened unless she at once went away she would suffer the same fate. Then he went to lashing again till he fell from sheer exhaustion. Cuff that day went to his work and although lacerated and suffering intense agony, performed as best he could his honest duties.

That night the infidel was taken ill suddenly and suffering intense agony he called for someone to pray for him. His wife thought of poor Cuff and sent for him. When the slave arrived he prayed such an earnest prayer for his cruel master that the master was instantly healed. Together he and his wife yielded to Jesus and were saved. Jumping to his feet, master and slave embraced, poverty and riches met, white and black united, infidel and saint became one. Then together, up and down the land, they went praying, **praying**, and preaching Christ.

The Wine of Prayer

Excerpt from *Adventures in the Land of Canaan* By: R. L. Berry

I am troubled with listlessness in prayer. When I kneel to pray, my mind wanders here and there out over the world—to my business, or probably to some trifling thing that amounts to nothing. I feel chagrined and disappointed. Jesus is so loyal to me, so worthy of praise and prayer, that to feel thus in prayer is mortifying. I have confessed it, but have not obtained a satisfactory deliverance, nor a solution of the matter. Can you give me any help? It will be much appreciated if you can teach me how to feel unction in prayer, and how to pray the fervent prayer of the righteous. Oh, do help me! My heart longs, yea yearns, for that nearness to God in prayer that will draw out my soul in mighty petitions for others, especially for the suffering and lost.

We heard of the fruits of Canaan long before we arrived. There were grapes of Eschol, pomegranates, milk and honey, and the old corn and wine of the land. Back in the Wilderness we were told of fruits so wonderful that they made the pilgrims strong and valiant for Immanuel, and of course we were eager to pluck them for ourselves. But we found that every one must grow or gather his own fruit, and also that the finest food is obtained from the most unlikely places, on hard, stony soil, and in rather inaccessible spots.

For instance, the honey. Hardly any of this delightful food was obtainable except in the crags of Hard Trials Mountains. And the Wine of Prayer was pressed from grapes that grew best in the Valley of Sore Temptation.

Do you suppose Caleb could tell us how to obtain these fruits? We are specially interested in the Wine of Prayer, suppose we go and see Caleb today. He received us so graciously on our former visit, he probably would be glad to see us again. Let us go!

Yes, he is at home today. See, there he is now. Oh, he is on his knees! Dear old saint of Canaan! And what is that he is doing? Oh, see, he seems to be drawing something from a cask in the shades of his beautiful garden! Yes, indeed, that must be Wine of Prayer he is drawing! What a blessed favor to call upon him on such an occasion. He does not see us. Let us wait here, apart from his sanctuary.

Caleb seems lost in earnest communion with Immanuel. Note the heavenly smile that lights up his weather-beaten old face! He seems animated by the draughts he takes from his wine-cask. When his devotions and communions are over, we shall greet him. See, he rises! What a glory emanates from his face! It causes me to feel eager to slake my thirst at the same holy place! My life seems so earthly, so lacking in heavenliness and saintliness!

“Pilgrim Caleb, do tell us what you were drinking and how we may obtain some of the same wine.”

“Most gladly. First, I must tell you a secret. The grapes from which the best Wine of Prayer is made come from the Valley of Sore Temptation. That is not a pleasant place, by any means. Several bad giants rendezvous there. Old Giants Lust, Pride Persecution, Worldliness, Covetousness, and others make it a sort of headquarters. They never bother the grape vines; it is only the pilgrims that they annoy. The soil is rocky and hard to

subdue and cultivate. I wanted the very best fruits the land had; so I, too, was obliged to take a plot of ground in the Valley of Sore Temptation and make a beginning.

“No sooner had I marked off my little plot than the giants haunted me. They buffeted me about rather rudely. Old Giant Pride tried to make me think I was one of the greatest men who ever came into Canaan. Old Giant Covetousness told me all about a silver mine which Balaam opened and Demas worked in. I could easily get rich, he said, if I would abandon the cultivation of grapes and follow him to the mine. He certainly told a plausible story, and tried hard to influence me to go. Giant Lust pointed out ways and means to capture silly souls, and tried hard to attract my attention toward a valley that leads down into Egypt; I had had enough of Egypt, and resisted him with all my might. But no matter how hard I resisted or rebuked these giants, they stayed in that valley. No one, it seems, can rout them completely from it. Their presence there goes with the cultivation of grapes.

“Well, I grew a small crop the first season. Then I made a wine-press out of pieces of faith, patience, and obedience, and placed a heavy weight on top made of perseverance. I got a little wine, and, oh, it was delicious and refreshing! Since then I have learned more about raising the fruit and making wine. I can get more wine out of the grapes, too, than formerly, by getting a heavier weight and using larger pieces of material in the press.

“Nothing is so refreshing as the Wine of Prayer. The whole soul is caught up, invigorated, revitalized, inspired. It gives mighty strength. Giants tremble and quake and run for their lives when they see a pilgrim fresh from his wine-cask move upon them. Blessed be Immanuel! Glory, praise, and honor, halleluiah to his high name, forever and ever! Oh, he provides such power and unction and sweetness! Never rest, pilgrims, till you get your vineyard started. And may Immanuel bless you!”

Thanks to Caleb for his words!

Listlessness in prayer is the result of a lack of interest; no one is listless about things he is vitally interested in. The thing to do is, not work against listlessness, for listlessness is only a symptom, but work up a real interest in the object of prayer. Find something to pray for, and pray for it with all your might.

Mind-wandering during secret prayer can also be attributed to a lack of interest in the right thing. If your mind wanders, it is no sin, but a sign that you have nothing very pressing to pray for. If you were wanting something which you needed very much—if you were sorely and severely tempted, or were sick and suffering, or if you were persecuted and needed help—you would pray earnestly enough. Or, if you had in mind a friend or relative who was in need of help, then you could pray earnestly.

The cure for listlessness and mind-wandering, therefore, is in feeling and knowing the need, either of ourselves or of others, for which we engage in prayer. There is too much

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Praying in the Spirit

Excerpt from *The Holy Spirit* By: R. L. Berry

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Luke 11:1-4 ~ “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”

The example of Jesus set the apostles to thinking. “Lord, teach us to pray,” one of them said. Moreover, he imparted a charming bit of information about John the Baptist when he said, “as John taught his disciples.” This throws a flood of light upon the work of the forerunner—he taught his disciples how to pray.

There is no one thing upon which teaching would be more appropriate today than prayer. Some have taken this as a request to be taught how to frame the words of a prayer, but, except in public prayer, the words of a prayer are the least important part of it. There are other things about prayer vastly more important than the words of it, for instance, what things shall we pray for? In what spirit shall we ask for them? How may my praying be powerful and effective? How shall I pray to obtain answers? What is my privilege in regard to praying for others, that is, intercessory prayer? How can I pray in the Spirit?

“Lord, teach us to pray,” should be our prayer now. Let us take the attitude of students and pray believingly that the Spirit will open to us how to make our praying more effective. No sooner had the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray than he began. We may expect the very same thing to happen with us. A sincere desire to know how to pray is needed. We should pray that our understanding of prayer and what may be accomplished by it will be answered and our hearts will be opened and enlarged; then our praying will take on new meaning and value.

The Spirit Makes Intercession

Rom. 8:26-27 ~ “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

The Holy Spirit himself makes intercession. He knows the will of God and what is the mind of the Spirit. Praying becomes effective when it follows the will of God, when it is in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. Our desires in prayer might be fixed upon unworthy things, upon things of lesser value, even upon impotent things, unless we are guided in prayer. Our requests might become as wild and futile as the repetitions of the heathen. There needs to be a guide to desire, something to lead us into right thinking. In some way we must be let into the secrets of God; we must come close enough to be shown the footsteps of the Almighty.

Paul pulls aside the veil somewhat in a beautiful passage in Col. 1:9-10, where he says that his prayer for the Colossians is that they “might be filled with a knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Notice how deep down in realities these words go. Instead of praying that they might be blessed with some material blessing he goes to the heart of things and prays that they may know the deep will of God and have wisdom and knowledge of spiritual things.

Until one has this guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer and his help in the creation of desire he is liable to waste much effort in prayer. There is much praying that lacks point because it is so divergent from the will of God. Praying becomes effectual in exact proportion as it harmonizes with God’s purposes.

This point is verified by a word of James’: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (Jas. 4:3).

We do not wish to ask amiss, yet the only preventive of such asking is to have the Holy Spirit to inspire us to desire that which tallies with God’s will. There will be times when the will of God is not perfectly clear. At such times we can hold still, asking the Spirit to help us to hold steady and reveal the right thing to pray for. When God wishes to do something it is his way to stir someone to desire and pray for it and send it in answer to prayer. God knew before he sent Elijah to tell Ahab it would rain that it would rain, but nevertheless it required a seven-fold prayer on Mt. Carmel before the rain-clouds appeared. We are thus let into the secrets of God and work with him in accomplishing what he desires to do in the world.

Praying without Ceasing

Luke 18:1-6 ~ “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

In one of Paul’s brief, pithy sayings he speaks of prayer thus: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). That is, pray without ceasing to pray; don’t quit praying. Not that one is constantly uttering prayers, no, but that one prays every day, on and on, as long as one lives. The idea of repetitious prayer being valuable seems hard to get rid of. But when one knows what true prayer is, the idea of there being value in mere repetition dissolves away. One may pray for the same thing over and over just as the woman in the Parable of the Unjust Judge came often with the same request, and be entirely within the will of God. Mothers have borne upon the wings of fervent prayer the same petition for their children. Wives have sent up the same request year after year for the conversion of their husbands. And that is exactly the meaning of Paul’s injunction and the teaching of Christ’s parable.

The Wine of Prayer

Excerpt from *Adventures in the Land of Canaan* By: R. L. Berry

need for any listlessness in prayer. To be sure, no one can always feel the same degree of fervor and unction in prayer; but there may always be enough to make prayer a really refreshing season to the soul.

Prayer is more than asking; it is praise, thanksgiving, communion. We are exhorted "to be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). Prayer, then, is partly thanksgiving.

Begin with thanksgiving. If the Lord has done anything for you, thank him for it. Count your blessings as you kneel. Remember the pit of sin you were taken out of; consider how often you have been helped and protected. Exercising the soul in this way produces the most favorable state of mind for further prayer,

for making requests.

Give God a chance to talk to you while you are in prayer. Ask for a conversation. Be still and listen for God's voice; expect him to speak.

In making requests, be willing for God to have his way. Ask, and you shall receive; but not always as soon as you ask.

Importunity in prayer is needed as well as perseverance and patience.

It is a blessed thing, this life of trust, the life of prayer. In daily communion with Christ we may travel life's road and enjoy a fellowship too rich, too deep, too holy to describe adequately. Enter in and see and taste for yourself.

Before the King

By: Linnie Chancellor

"Let us come boldly before the judgment seat of Christ, that we may find mercy and grace to help in every time of need." - Hebrews 4:16

"It's Wednesday again," the Time Keeper noted with mounting excitement. It was one of his favorite times, when God's children began filtering into the hushed solemnity of the throne room. The children's faces were familiar to Him, as each one came each day before the throne to speak with the Father and King. He smiled with fond regard at the pillars, the children who had been coming for many Wednesdays in a row. He was glad they were there one more time, but knew it wouldn't be long until they would simply stay in their Father's presence for all eternity. One of his favorite moments was when his King approached him and told him to call time on one of the pillars.

He felt a jolt of pleasure as he saw new faces among the children. His excitement knew no bounds at the knowledge that there were more souls started on the path to the Kingdom. He'd heard the joy bells only days before and had waited in impatient anticipation for when he'd see these souls participating in worship of the King.

The songs of praise echoed in the Time Keeper's heart as the children sang of the Father's goodness and mercy. Soon, a hush fell as their hearts turned to the petitions they desired of the King. These ones already had obtained the precious jewels of salvation, and craved that pearl for their loved ones and neighbors. As one voice beseeched for souls, hearts cried out in earnest agreement. All attention was riveted on the Savior and Father of all Creation. The Time Keeper couldn't help but join in agreement. How he hated to have to call time on souls doomed to hell. His heart pleaded alongside the children for the souls on Earth. As the children's prayers quieted, the Time Keeper heard a voice still whispering, begging in anguish for the needs that had been expressed. He raised on tiptoe to see who was still speaking. There, on His knees before the throne, was the Holy Spirit, groaning with the intensity of the intercession he was making for the petitions the children had presented. His whispers continued as the children

began giving thanks to the Father for His answers to their prayers.

As the children reluctantly left the throne room to continue their weekly duties, the Time Keeper saw the convening of a new meeting. His blood stirred in excitement as he anticipated the words of the Father. A call went out from the Father and King, calling individuals before Him. Angels rushed from throughout Heaven, their wings beating swiftly to learn what new service their Master desired. A rustling filled the throne room as the Father gave them their missions and they departed on light, glistening wings. Next, the Father spoke gently to some children He'd called into His presence. He gave them explicit instructions for actions He wanted them to perform. When all of the tasks had been assigned, the Father sent them from His presence with His blessing, fully equipped for the duties at hand. The Time Keeper smiled with utter joy, knowing that each prayer was even then being answered in a marvelous way. He turned back to his clock, knowing that with each passing moment, he was that much closer to that glorious final moment when time would be no more...

How Peter's Coming Broke Up a Midnight Prayer-Meeting

From Egermeier's Bible Storybook—Story #12—Acts 12

It was midnight; the streets were deserted and all was still. But even at this late hour not all the people of the city were fast asleep. A group of men and women were having prayer-meeting at the home of a widowed woman named Mary. For a long time they had been praying together, but still they continued to pray.

These people were believers in Jesus, and again they were being persecuted. Their persecutor now was the wicked king Herod Agrippa, whom the Roman government had appointed to rule the Jews. This Herod was a grandson of the Herod who killed all the little children at Bethlehem when Jesus was a baby, and a nephew of the Herod who caused the death of John the Baptist.

Wishing to please the Jews, King Herod became friendly toward the religious rulers of the people. And soon he heard about the hatred that the chief priests and scribes felt toward those who had accepted Jesus as the Savior of men. So at once he began to trouble the believers. Seizing James, one of the apostles, he commanded his soldiers to kill this good man with a sword. And because the Jews were pleased, he decided to kill Peter, too. So he caught Peter and shut him up in prison, intending to keep him until after the feast days, and then bring him out to have him put to death in the presence of the Jews.

The church was much distressed by the loss of James, and now when Peter was taken they felt that they could not spare him too. So they prayed daily for his release. But days passed, and still Peter lay in the dreary prison. Finally the last day came and went but their prayers were yet unanswered. So the church met together in Mary's home to pray all night.

Peter was lying fast asleep, chained to two soldiers. Outside the prison door other soldiers stood on guard, for they knew that before another night Peter would be imprisoned there no longer. They knew about Herod's plan, but they did not know about the greater plan of God.

While Peter was sleeping, an angel from God came into the dark cell where he lay and touched him. The soldiers beside him did not see the angel, neither did they hear him speak to Peter, telling him to rise up. But Peter obeyed, and the heavy chains fell off his hands. Then the angel bade him to put on his sandals, and tie his girdle about his waist. Hardly knowing what he was doing, Peter prepared himself to leave the prison with the deliverer whom God had sent. Then the angel said, "Wrap your cloak about you," and when Peter had done so, they walked out of the cell, past the guards, and on to the great iron gate which opened into the city street.

When they came to the iron gate it swung open easily to let them pass through, although it had been tightly locked. The angel led Peter through one street and then disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

Now Peter understood what had really taken place. He had moved as if in a dream; but now he was fully awakened. He decided at once to find some of his friends before leaving the city, and tell them what had happened.

To the home of the widowed Mary he went, for she had a son named John Mark who was a friend of Peter's. When he came to the door of the gate and knocked, the gate-keeper, a young girl named Rhoda, called, "Who is it?" At the sound of his an-

swering voice she ran into the room where the people were kneeling in prayer and cried, excitedly, "Peter is come! Peter is come!" So delighted was she that she forgot to open the gate and let him in.

But those who had been praying did not believe Rhoda's words. They said, "You are crazed."

Still she insisted that it was indeed Peter who had answered her call.

Then they said, "It must be his angel."

While this excitement was going on, Peter stood outside the gate and continued to knock. Soon someone ran out to see, and there was Peter, for whom they had all been praying so earnestly. Then he came into the room, and motioned for them to keep quiet while he told them how wonderfully God had answered their prayer.

Peter knew his danger was not yet over, so he bade the happy saints goodbye and told them to send James, a brother of Jesus, and to the other disciples word of his escape from prison. Then he went away to another place.

Herod, the king, was very angry when word came to him the next morning that his prisoner had escaped. He questioned the keepers, but they knew nothing about the visit of the angel. They had stood watching at their post, and the prison doors were tightly locked, but Peter was not to be found anywhere. To express his displeasure, the King ordered the keepers to be put to death.

Not long after this Herod himself died very suddenly. His death was so terrible that people believed God's wrath had caused it. And from that time the disciples in Jerusalem were no longer persecuted so bitterly by their foes.

Bible Study—Praying (Luke 18:1)

By: S. L. Speck

- I. Unto whom should we direct our prayers
Acts 8:24; 2 Cor. 13:7
- II. All prayer should be offered unto God
 1. In the name of Jesus—John 16:23
 2. With thanksgiving—Phil 4:6
 3. In the Spirit—Jude 20; Eph. 6:18
 4. Without vain repetition—Matt. 6:7
- III. Those whom God will hear
 1. Those who worship God and do his will
John 9:31; Isa. 58:9
 2. The righteous people.
1 Pet. 3:12; Isa. 65:24
- IV. God will hear sinners if they confess their sins
1 John 1:9; Luke 18:13, 14
- V. God will not answer our prayers
 1. If we regard iniquity in our hearts—Psa 66:18
 2. If we are committing sin—Isa. 59:1, 2
 3. If we have an unforgiving spirit—Mark 11:25, 26
 4. If we are self-righteous—Luke 18:10-14
 5. If we waver when we pray—Jas. 1:5-7
 6. If we do not ask to the glory of God—1 Cor. 10:31; Jas. 4:15
 7. If we reject the word of God—Prov. 28:9

Praying in the Spirit

Excerpt from *The Holy Spirit* By: R. L. Berry (*continued*)

Let us take everything to God in prayer. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). Supplication is prolonged prayer. God does not always answer immediately, and this fact calls for this teaching on prayer which relates to importunity.

Perseverance in prayer is vital, necessary teaching to those who wish to learn how to pray. We might call it waiting in prayer. Perhaps it was a lesson of perseverance that David attempted to teach when he said, “Wait on the Lord” (Ps. 27:14). “Wait patiently for him” (Ps. 27:7). Yes, we must learn to wait, learn to persevere, to importune, to pray without ceasing.

Earnestness in Prayer Necessary

Matt. 15:21-28 ~ “Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

One of the first things the incoming of the Holy Spirit imparts is earnestness in prayer. He sets up an altar of prayer in the heart where he dwells and often calls that heart to prayer, maybe by placing a burden there to lead a soul to Christ, or to reveal to it that someone is in danger.

A man was sitting at his desk one busy day, when suddenly a thought or impression came very forcibly to his mind. “Brother W—’s party is in danger.” He knew that that gospel party was then in Colorado somewhere. At once he went to prayer, asking God to protect Brother W— and his party. Several days later he learned that at that hour the train upon which the party was riding was wrecked, or nearly so, but that they had escaped unharmed.

In the case of the Syrophenician woman there was a great need. Whatever position we may take concerning the rebuff that she got from the Lord it certainly reveals the sterling character of the woman and the earnestness of her request and the faith which she had in Jesus. She simply would not take no for an answer. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel and saying, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,” so the woman said, “No matter about my position, dog or puppy, up or down, please heal my daughter.”

We have another case where earnestness is displayed—in Mark 9:16-29— where a father desired the deliverance of his until he cried out, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24). This father made a desperate effort to be rid of

unbelief. He acknowledged that he was bothered with it and stretched himself to exercise his faith. His effort was blessedly rewarded.

Faith and Prayer

Matt. 21:21-22 ~ “Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and there is a special gift of faith by the Holy Spirit. Faith is absolutely necessary if prayer is to be answered. We see here how close the connection is between a Spirit-filled life and power in prayer. As we saw before the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God, and he reveals the will of God to those who are filled with him. There is a deeper revelation to a Spirit-filled soul of the purposes of God than to one who is not filled. This no doubt accounts for the weakness of faith that exists in so many cases. The Holy Spirit stirs a lively faith to believe the promises of God. Being party to the making of the promise in the first place he knows full well how eagerly God desires to fulfill it. Let us take for an illustration of this point the promise of Christ to send the Comforter. The holy Godhead, the Trinity, all are back of that promise. It is the will of God, the will of the Spirit, the will of the Son, that every disciple be filled with the Holy Ghost. They all know how great is this promise, how great is the coming of the Spirit. Hence, when a believer consecrates and prayers for the Comforter to come, is it not reasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit himself is right there inspiring the seeker’s faith and increasing it to the point where he says triumphantly, “The Comforter has come”? Yes, the Spirit works exactly that way.

Faith in God is a Spiritual function. It is an act of the soul. In this teaching on prayer we need sorely to learn how to believe. Let us not be too proud to acknowledge the weakness of our faith and to pray for more faith. The disciples were not ashamed to say, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

When we pray, “Lord, teach us to pray,” remember that a vital part of that teaching must be how to believe, for without faith prayer is impotent. To waver is to doubt, or perhaps it should be put the other way around—to doubt is to waver. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord.” (Jas. 1:6-7).

The Tremendous Outreach of Prayer

Ps. 2:8 ~ “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Luke 10:2 ~ “Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.”

The Eternal Father gave the Son the privilege of asking for the whole world for his dominion. Hitherto Israel had been the

Praying in the Spirit

Excerpt from *The Holy Spirit* By: R. L. Berry (continued)

chosen people. Christ asked. Of this we are sure because in the last great commission he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." His gospel, Jesus said, was to be published in all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

But while Jesus asked for the whole world, for the heathen for his inheritance, though he desired that his kingdom of grace and peace embrace every nation and people, he desires his people also to ask and pray with him for the accomplishment of this great work.

A personal experience may be permissible here. Some years ago the writer was threatened with death with sickness. During the progress of the diseases he encountered great discouragement as far as healing was concerned, yet he determined to continue in the work as long as he was able to do so. While on his way to a revival one day the burden of the affliction pressed down on him so hard that he asked God for some sustaining promise of Scripture. He then got all quiet before the Lord, waiting with assurance for a reply. Then there came to him the text:

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Seeing in this no promise of value to one who was afflicted, he put it away, thinking it accidentally came to his mind. Again he prayed more earnestly for a sustaining promise for his case. Again he grew quiet, awaiting the divine answer. To his surprise the text came:

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

After some consideration of the text he again rejected it as not applicable to his case and as having accidentally recurred to his mind. Then he asked most earnestly for a sustaining Scriptural promise upon which to stand during his time of affliction. Again he was quiet and again with stronger force and emphasis came that remarkable text:

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Then he accepted this as God's answer and betook himself to fathom the meaning of the text. There he found it was a prophetic utterance dealing with Christ's worldwide reign. But, he said, what is there in such a text for a man, a common human being? Then was given to him a revelation of the tremendous outreach of prayer. If you, said the Holy Spirit, will pray as you may pray, and pray as you give to the missionary cause, you may have some souls from heathen lands to your credit in the final day of rewards.

You, too, dear reader, can make your prayers reach around the world.

Praying in the Holy Ghost

Rev. 5:8-10 ~ "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by

thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

There is such a thing as praying in the Holy Ghost. Part of our training in prayer is to learn how to do that kind of praying. We fear much praying is not in the Holy Ghost. Let us in our search seek to know just how we may pray in the Spirit. There is a close connection here with Rom. 8:26-27. As an example of such praying read John 17. This whole prayer was imperfect harmony with all the purposes of God. There was an intimate connection between that prayer and the mind of God. Another instance is found in Acts 8:14-17, when the two apostles prayed for the converted Samaritans that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Another instance is Acts 13:1-4, where the Holy Ghost revealed his purposes while the church at Antioch was fasting and praying. They got very near the heart of God in this prayer. A modern instance may be the famous "Haystack meeting." Four young men met to discuss the will of God concerning the heathen. A rain chased them to a haystack, where they held a prayer service. There was born the modern missionary movement.

While we are in this school of the Spirit let us not be satisfied until we have learned how to pray, learned what a force it is, learned how intercessory prayer can bring blessings to souls far separated from us in space, learned how to exercise faith, learned how to pray prayers that God will be pleased to answer, prayers that parallel the mind of God.

Then, as an encouragement to us let us remember that God preserves our prayers. John, the beloved, saw in his vision of heaven, 'golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints' (Rev. 5:8). Real Holy Spirit prayers have a pungent, lasting odor. God preserves such prayers as most precious things to him. The "golden vials" is a figure to show that uncommon effort is made to reassure up the prayers of the saints. Brother, sister, your prayers are not wasted. God bottles them up. Do not cease to pray. Hold to God's unchanging hand by faith, praying for his divine will to be most fully and completely wrought in your life.

"But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 1:20-21).

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Spanish interpretation is available in the services.

Service Times:

Wednesday Prayer Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Young People's Service (Sunday)	4:45 p.m.
Children's Service (Sunday)	5:00 p.m.
Sunday Evening Service	6:00 p.m.

We have literature available for those who would like to study the Word of God in the confines of their home. Let us know if you are interested by contacting us at the above telephone number, address, or website.