

"I BELIEVE IN PRAYER"

Job 21:15

Job asked a question - what is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
And what ~~profit~~ should we have if we pray unto him.

People would answer that question in many ways.

1- First, there would be those who would say, there is no profit at all. What you all call prayer may be just talking to yourself. It may have some value if you pray for the right things, or if you say the right words. And the suggestion is that it is negative - so why pray at all.

2- Other people would say, what are you trying to do when you pray. Are you trying to give God advice and keep him informed of your own, and the world's needs. Are you trying to do like a commentator on the national radio hook-up two or three times a day. To inform the hearers of the latest news, of that date. Is this what you do in prayer - inform God. That really doesn't make sense, does it.

3 Others who would object and say, why, we live in a universe of law, and order. Cause and effect - you can see God's law operating all about you. You can see through the microscope. You can read it in your vegetables and fruit trees. You can trace the pattern in your own lives and the family tree. If you would be sure of the pattern of law - all is law in this world. Even the Heavens declare the glory of God. And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

A light year is the distance which light will travel in one year at the speed of 186,300 miles per second. Think about that. The Milky Way - the light patch up there that you can see with your naked eye. Those stars that are gathered close together in a galaxy. They look like a giant wheel. We know all of this about our solar system. We know the principle planet of earth, of Mercury, and Venus, and Mars and Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Mercury lies nearest the sun. Pluto is the farthest - and all of them travel in well defined orbits around the sun.

Our earth is one of the smallest of the planets. Having a diameter of about 7,900 miles. It is small indeed when you compare it with Jupiter which is 90,000 miles in diameter and could contain about 1,350 earths. Jupiter is also interesting in comparison with the sun which is 865,000 miles in diameter. And is equal in volume to more than a million earths. And the distance from the earth to our sun is 93 million miles away.

The diameter of our sun is more than a 100 times that of the earth. These planets revolving around - and the earth is not the only planet which has a moon. Mars has two satellites or moons. Jupiter has nine. Saturn has ten.

Our earth is traveling in its orbit around the sun at the speed of 18 1/2 miles per second. And its surface speed, rotation at the equator, is roughly 1,000 miles per hour. And these movements go on day after day. Year after year. Century after century. In its travels around the sun, the earth is kept in its assigned place, by two forces. One of which is exactly balanced by the other.

Now, do we understand that this just happened so. That here, that they have been regulated and kept in place, and have a function and follow. And you say, now this is law and this is order. And this is the way the divine universe works.

Someone else would object to faith in prayer, by saying - that you cannot change God or the course of his will. Do you really think that you can do that.

4 Yet, there is someone else who would say, prayer is trying to get God to do your homework for you. It is sort of an attitude - you put off on God what you ought to do yourself. It is like an insurance policy - that one hopes that he will never need. But in case that he does need it - he will have it in force, and in proper order that it will be taken care of. And that is what prayer is, somebody says. Hence, what profit shall we have if we pray unto him.

There are many arguments for and even (against) prayers. These go back and forth.

But (tonight) I want to tell you that (I believe in prayer) I believe that prayer really works. Let me tell you this story.

It is about a man who had a (flat tire) It was a hot day. And he had exhausted his strength trying to get a stuck rim off of the wheel. Finally, he cut loose, some profanity - just then a preacher came along. Shocked him, and he grieved. And he said, friend, you should not use such language. Do you mind if I help you with

the tire. Somewhat ashamed, the motorist accepted the offer. Now said the preacher, I suggest that we offer a little prayer for the success of our efforts. When he proceeded to do so - then he picked up a heavy hammer - and gave the rim a mighty blow. The rim flew off the wheel and went rolling down the street. And they stood there in amazement.

Remember it was about that!

The reason that many of us never use prayer is - that we say prayer never really works.

We are the kind of people that go to church to pray for rain. But we never carry an umbrella with us.

Bill Bright said "we should emphasize prayer in every facet of the Church program and personal life"

Now I not only know and believe that prayer works, I know it works. Because there are so many reasons to believe that I know of - that prayer really works.

I read a most amazing story of a man who brought the New York Times. This man believed in prayer. He worked in one of the government departments in Washington. He was losing his eye sight. It had failed to the point where he could no longer do his work. He had written out his resignation and intended to turn it in that very afternoon. At noon time, the man who sat at the desk next to him, went out to lunch. While he was out - he bought a New York Times. He had never bought a New York Times before in his entire life. And afterwards, he could think of no reason why he should have bought a Times that day. While eating his lunch and reading the paper, his eye was attracted to an article describing a very rare disease of the eye. And giving the name of the Doctor who had discovered it and who had also discovered a cure for it. He brought the paper back to the office, and threw it on this man's desk, with the eye problem. And he said, that sounds like what you have got. He read the article and saw that it was what he had, hunted up the Doctor, and was completely cured and tore up his resignation. Now figure it out, if you can, how many chances there would be of three of these things happening. First, that the man would buy a New York Times when he had never bought one before. Second, that he would buy it on the one day of the year when it had that article in it. And third, that he would be sitting at the

desk next to a man having that rare eye disease. Now the chances against all of those things happening are probably going to run into the millions.

Now that is what happened to that man.

That is a most remarkable answer to prayer.

The problem with some people today is, that we have (newspaperitis) We start the day by sitting down to breakfast and filling our minds with crime and disaster from the four corners of the earth. If we must do this, out of curiosity, to see what is going on. Then we turn to the Classified and other advertising pages, and how many normal people there are - going about their daily affairs. Working to support their families, constituting a mass of useful things. As we try to read through all of these things.

And (no) wonder we become pessimistic as (Roger Babson) once said - whenever he found himself depressed by the world conditions, he quickly becomes an optimist by walking into his library and picking up a book on history and reading it for one hour. Then he realizes that the world has always been in the agony of civilization and on the brink of disaster. He says he realizes that no matter how bad conditions are now, they are infinitely better than they used to be. And that the world as a whole may be making some improvements.

Indeed, we need to come back to this question. What profit shall we have if we pray unto him. Much profit. Prayer, we are told, is one of the greatest forces on this earth. It moves Heaven and earth - we are assured. One can do anything through prayer. Prayer is the one force that the Christian has at his disposal. That is equal to the needs of every tragic hour.

Prayer can operate in the realm of every life and every individual. I believe tonight, that prayer can work in every (domestic) problem. Every social, economic, political problem. Military problems. Moral and mental problems. In fact, there is no limit to prayer. What profit should we have if we pray unto him. We would have to say, there is much profit.

✓ If this is the case, and I do believe in prayer some things we need to do.

First, we need to give a great deal of time to prayer. Shall we say, we ought to give a full hour each day to prayer. Perhaps, that may be too much. Well, shall we give at least 30 minutes a day. You probably wouldn't agree to that. Shall we give at least 15 minutes each day. In definite consecrated prayer.

Others would have problems with that. Really, you know how much time you ought to give. And so, you consider that question and you answer that. Believing that prayer is profitable, we do so little of it. And we spend so little time in it.

Kagawa was the one person who kept many people from losing faith completely.

In the Japanese people - during those awful months and years during the second World War. When we heard and read, and saw all the savage ways and cruelty of the Japanese in the war, when the hatred and the bitterness against them were at its highest, when we reached the point where we was sure there was not one drop of human kindness or one spark of decency, or one bright hope left among the Japanese people. That they were our bitter enemy. But we should say to ourselves, but what about Toyohiko Kagawa. And he is one of the greatest Christians alive, and of course, he is a Japanese. One day someone asked him, how it was that he found time to pray, For he was known as one of the busiest men in the world.

When he answered that question, his face lighted up, as he said - I find time to pray between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning. Then I am undisturbed - and there is little probability that I will be disturbed. I wake at 3, and then I spend that hour with God. I could not possibly get along without it. Nothing would go right if I did. I could not be true to my friends, I could not get my work done, I could not possibly preach the Gospel that Christ has given me for the poor. If it were not for that hour between 3 and 4 in the morning.

This is a good place to ask. What profit shall we have. If we pray unto him. (It takes time.)

The second thing to be aware of is - that prayer changes things.

First, it will change the person who prays. And that is no small achievement. One day a friend was talking to Andrew Carnegie about prayer. The millionaire.

And he said, why should I pray? I have everything that I need. Why should I ask God for anything. And the friend was bold enough and honest enough to say, perhaps, you could ask for the spirit of humility. It would change your attitude toward God. Yes, prayer does change things. It changes us and it changes individuals.

Prayer will help us to adore God. " Bless the Lord, oh my soul. And all that is within me. Bless his holy name. "

Prayer will put great affirmations at the center of your life. " The Lord is my shepherd - I shall not want. "

Prayer will bring us to a definite committment. Of our lives to Him. I love the Lord, oh my God. I will pay my vows. I will keep thy statutes. "

Another thing, prayer will keep us in communion with Him. " The Lord stood with me. I will never leave Thee nor forsake Thee. " How marvelous it is, that prayer will change all of these things.

Prayer will change our attitude towards others William Lay once demonstrated this beyond a shadow of a doubt. To maintain the spirit of ill will toward a person, if he prays for that person, it is impossible. That if one will pray earnestly and sincerely, and continuously - he simply cannot maintain a spirit of hatred, and ill.

How often have we heard an individual say, I simply cannot forgive that person for what he has done to me. Or for what he has done to someone else, I want too. I wish I could. But I simply cannot. Christ's death, life, and resurrection and the Bible, and the threat of judgement makes no difference. I simply cannot forgive him. If ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Now there is a sure fire remedy. Given by the Bible - it says, if we will lay ourselves out in prayer for another person, we will not only find it possible to forgive him, but we will find it impossible not to forgive him. Prayer will do that for us.

In Pilgrim's Progress, prayer was the key that unlocked the dungeon. And sometimes we are sort of prisoners. Here are Christians and hopeful imprisoned. They began to pray. Presently Christian jumps to his feet and cries, what a fool am I, to lie in a fowl smelling dungeon when I have a key, that will open any lock in Doubting Castle. Prayer will give us the key of promise. That will unlock the doors of every Doubting Castle.

Prayer will do this for the person who prays. It will help him out of his depression and out of his dungeon of doubt. And set his feet on solid ground.

Prayer will lift the flood gates, that hold back the power for triumphant living.

Have you ever watched the miracle of water power in one of the old mills where

they grind corn and make flour. Or where they used to gin cotton. Here we have corn waiting to be turned into flour. And cotton into cloth. And logs turned into lumber. And here is a great dam that holds back millions of gallons of water. What was needed. A power to lift the power gate. And let the water come pouring through when the giant machinery of the mill and the gin come alive. And do the work needed to feed, to cloth, to house the hungry and cold people. Prayer sort of lifts the power gate. It brings into our lives those things which we are in desperate need of.

I find that prayer helps us to become what we were meant to be. And what is deep down in our souls, we want to be. But what we know very well we shall never be without divine power.

Seneca once said I have been seeking to climb out of the pit of my besetting sins. And I can't do it. And I never will unless a hand is let down to me to draw me up.

Prayer makes contact with that hand. Augustine said, I have lashed at my will. And cried, leap now. And it all but leaped. And yet it did not leap. Prayer breaks the grip of the past. And hold us to the life for which we have yearned to be.

What profit should we have if we pray unto Him. We ourselves will be changed.

But the person being prayed for will also change. Now obviously, there is something in a person that needs to be prayed for. We have something that is needful in a man. Here is a man who believes, in me - who trusts me. Who is praying for me.

He is laying himself out for me. And I cannot possibly let him down. If he believes in me like that, and prays for me like that, I'd be a fool to let him down.

Ida L. Reed, when everything else failed, felt in her heart that somebody was praying for her. She was left almost an invalid, at age 15. Following diphtheria - she lived in a mountain community a few miles from Phillippi, W. Va. And her father died of T. B. while still fairly a young man. The mother, half sick, managed a little farm and all of these clouds were upon her. She tried to read every magazine and book that she could get her hands upon. She had a dream in her heart, that she would go away from this mountain community, go to college, and there were icy winters. Snow-covered ground. And she tried to teach in a district school and save every penny - hoping to get to go for a college education. And her dreams were almost shattered time and time again. She boarded a train - because two physicians had refused to admit her to college. Because of the frailty of her health. They said that physically she was unable to pursue such studies. All of her dreams and her hopes were shattered. Little did the Doctors know that God had Ida Reed for a purpose. And God would not call her home, until after her (85th Birthday). Now she was disappointed in all of these things. And in spiritual distress, she felt that somebody was standing by her. One of her poems, when she was let down, and disappointed. I quote -

"Come to the Father, oh wanderer come,
Somebody is praying for you
Turn from the sin paths no longer to roam
Somebody is praying for you.

Somebody loves you, wherever you stray
Bears you in faith to God, day after day
Prayerfully follows you all the dark way
Somebody is praying for you.

The publisher paid her \$2.00 for these stanzas. And set them to music without hardly a thought of Ida Reed, back in her W. Va. home. She wrote many other poems. But all along the way, there must have been somebody praying for her. Just as she had been praying for someone else. And the loving God, our Heavenly Father, who hears all of our prayers listens. And in his own way, answered the heart of this dear woman with gladness in the evening time of her life. With the assurance that she would not be forgotten. And had not been forgotten. Because there were those who met her needs until her death July 8, 1951.

Some years ago, a fisherman fishing for a living, off the New England coast was out with the crew and was overtaken by a storm late in the evening. It looked pretty bad. He looked around, and then looked at his watch and said to his men. Well, about this time, the little woman will be sending up a prayer for us, to the God who rules the wind and the waves. Silent for a moment, and then he shouted - 'all hands on deck, we've got to get that prayer answered.'

It is easy enough to see how prayer will change the person prayed for. If the person knows it. But it means a great deal more than that. It will change the person whether he knows it or not.

God knew about each of us. He knows your name. Even back yonder millions of years ago. God start planning. He had the idea of the kind of person that he wanted you to be. So God began working. And he has combined all of his work - and he has chosen the particular spot. You remember. The kind of preparation at the exact point. He sent his son to Calvary to die for you. When he saw to it that men gave their lives that you might have a Bible to read. And to study. God saw to it that you might have a church in which to nurture you.

And finally, God saw to it, the (day you were born.) And all Heaven has been rejoicing. And toward that great event, and God rejoiced in you. And he gave you loving care. From your father and your mother, and from your loved ones. And there were those in your schools and in your church that have helped you. And in the hospitals. And then one day you were faced with an awful (temptation) And all of Heaven shook. Because the effort of God, through all of these years, were about to be lost and blasted with a hopeless ruin. And if your friend had said a prayer, honestly and sincerely, for that person - it would have saved him. But you didn't pray for that person. And all that God had done for him through all of these years seems to be lost.

Now we may subscribe to all of the implications of that idea. But of this, we can be sure - that prayer is near the center of God's plan and God's purpose.

Dr. Arthur J. Gossip that great Scottish preacher said, during the first World War, the bravest and most courageous men that he ever knew in his life, came to him one day and said - tell me, why is it sometimes when I am scared almost to death, I'm shaking like a leaf. Then suddenly a steadiness and a (calm) comes, and I am as steady as if I were at home before the open fire. And the chaplain said, "could it be that (someone is praying for you.)" And the man said, of course, that is it. "It would be my old mother. Of course, that's it."

When Wilbur Chapman came to Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, there followed a marvelous ministry. The first Sunday after he had preached, one of the layman came to him and said, you seem like a very (ordinary) individual. I'm afraid you are going to (fail) here. But (six or eight men) have promised to meet me here next Sunday morning, to pray for you. We are going to spend an hour in prayer.

That your ministry may be successful. That group grew to 500 men praying for Wilbur Chapman. They literally prayed him into success. They so undergirded his ministry, that he could not fail.

And that part of the world knows about his spiritual greatness as a result of praying.

Failing to pray for one another can be a serious thing. Because God puts in our hand the welfare of other individuals. Let us consider this. Do we actually believe that what happens to your neighbors may be the result of your praying for him. That to his welfare depends upon you. Whether you pray for him or not. Does it mean that the ministry that I am able to do depends upon you. And the work that you are able to do.

Why should we doubt it. God certainly lets the welfare of individuals depend upon whether you work or not. There is no question that it is there. If you are a hard working man and intelligent, if you are diligent in your effort, if you are a moral man. And you are shiftless and lazy, and sorry and mean. Your influence will take place in your community.

Here is a surgeon Tomorrow morning he goes to the hospital. He is going to the operating room. And he is going to perform a delicate operation. God's going to let the life of that person depend upon the skill, the wisdom, and the work of that surgeon. He has put in many years in medical school. His willingness to keep abreast with the field of progress in medicine and surgery across the years. Why should you doubt that God lets the welfare of individuals depend upon our praying.

And he is depending upon our work and our planning.

Eugene A. Perry and his wife have hearts filled with gratitude because of a recent experience. They live near Ardmore. And they were enjoying a family Christmas party on December 17th. Mrs. Perry was expecting a baby. She suffered a heart attack. And suddenly was in great pain. She was rushed to the hospital. The next day, Sunday, she suffered heart seizures. She gave normal birth to an 8# - 20" Rebecca. Immediately afterwards, she was transferred to a hospital in Oklahoma City. And on Monday, Rebecca was taken by Ambulance to the Oklahoma Children's Hospital because of an RH factor, and had a complete blood transfusion. Following a series of detailed tests and examinations, Mrs. Perry underwent emergency open-heart surgery. Which lasted 6 1/2 hours - beginning Tuesday evening. Her chances of survival were estimated at 5%. Her brother, her husband, her child 11 and 8 waited. Mrs. Perry got to see Rebecca just before the operation began. She came through well and began making a recovery. Because of the good progress, they were both released from the hospital on January 3rd. Last month they were reported as doing well and at home. Church members and the neighbors have been working in their behalf. Mrs. Perry said, "it was by the grace of the Lord that everything went as well as it did. I owe my life and my daughter's to God. And the people that prayed for us." She believes in prayer. And God does wish to help people when we pray.

We are the body of Christ. And I don't think we have ever realized what that means. If we are the body of Christ, there are some things that Christ can't do without. Our hands - he has to have hands to get things done. There are some things he cannot do without our feet. He has to use our feet. He had to use our tongues and our hearts. Our eyes and our ears. It is all in co-operation. What profit should we have if we pray unto him.

The person for whom we pray will be changed and helped.

Now I believe that prayer will change ~~a person~~. It will change the person for whom we pray. And I believe that prayer will change some of the circumstances. And the conditions that we find ourselves in. For we know that water does not run up a hill. That God's laws may not be broken - but that God may use these laws. And prayer would certainly bless in the matter of circumstances.

In the Presidential campaign of 1824, Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams were leading candidates. But since neither man received a majority vote, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. And the Congressmen voted by states. New York held the controlling vote. And the voters there were evenly paired against the two men. One of the delegates disliked John Quincy Adams. However, Webster and Clay tried to persuade him to change his mind and to vote for Adams. The general refused to do so. But he did agree to pray about it earnestly and to seek the will of God. And the result, the next day, he voted for John Quincy Adams - whom he personally disliked. But when he prayed, he changed his vote. Now if you know your American History, you remember, the conditions were different because of Adams' election.

There are many places, in time and in history, that I could illustrate to you why I believe in prayer. We could go tonight out there on the Plains, and stand where Abraham stood, and listen to him pray for Sodom.

James Stevens said, I saw God, do you doubt it. Do you dare to doubt it. I saw the almighty man - his hand was resting on a mountain. And he looked upon the

world and all about him. I saw him plainer than you see me now. You must not doubt it.

He was not satisfied - his look was all dissatisfying. His beard swung on a wind far out of sight. Behind the world's curve - and there was light. Most fearful from his forehead, and his sighed. That star went always wrong, and from the start, I was dissatisfied.

He lifted up his hand, I saw ^{As} he heaved a dreadful hand over the spinning earth. Then I said, stay. You must not strike it God, I'm in the way. And I will never move from where I stand. He said, dear Child, I fear that you will be dead and stayed his hand. "

Does prayer change anything. Yes, I believe in prayer. I believe it will change the person who prays. And it will change the person who has been prayed for. And it will change the circumstances in your life.

In 1859, some of the years following, Southern Seminary had been born in that year by four gifted, educated men. There were 26 students. But the Civil War came and the school was in doubt. The young professors, met and followed (much prayer, agreed to this - that they would die before they let the Seminary die. There were seven students for the first session after the war. Then in 1877, the Seminary moved from Greenville, S. C. to Louisville, Ky. They were in a desperated situation. James P. Boyse, who was the President, and one of the four early professors - said, we need a (large gift) to keep this school going. He asked the professors to join him

in prayer. He says, let us pray that God will put it upon someone to give \$50,000. The students also joined in a special prayer.

Then one day, President Boyse came into the study of one of the professors. There were tears in his eyes but a voice of joy. In his hand, he was holding a letter. Here is the answer to our prayers. He said, the letter is from Joseph E. Brown, ex-Governor of Ga. And a U. S. Senator.) He wrote that he was interested in making a gift to some institution of higher learning. He was interested in training young preachers.

President Boyse met Brown in Atlanta, and he returned with a check for \$50,000. The school was saved. And the Seminary today ministers to more than 2,000 young people.

Prayer is one of the most personal, intensive, spiritual things that we can do. Obviously many people pray. And many things enter into the making of a prayer effective. Prayer is not what you call easy for any of us. In prayer, we must leave off our personal desires in favor to God's will. In prayer, we must give up our personal prejudices, in favor of a larger cause. In prayer, we must lay aside our personal will in favor of his ultimate will.

Today - Attitude "What can I get out of the Church, instead, what can I give?"
Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ - X is lord of my life -"
Gal 6:7 "Whatsoever man sows this he also reaps" We always reap what we sow of more -

Many people, Christians, have given up on prayer. Many people have stopped

attending prayer meetings. People have no experience in prayer life. Could it be that they feel comfortable in their homes.

Life of this Church has moved - People P.
This has - early in sun - morning -
Pray for God to send revival to our own lives!

Summary like Shepherd - Hyman
1. P for self - personal
2. P for others - individuals
3. P for circumstances - Crisis
on knees -
close Pray - 2 George -
- after service -