

S. N. March 27, 77. A.M. -
(Linda Lee)

"PRAYER HINDRANCES"

I Peter 3:7

INTRODUCTION:

There is an admonition that your prayers be not hindered. The Psalmist said, "from whence shall my help come." The tragedy is that we often begin too late to search for our help. Men often become aware that they have been betrayed in the 11th hour. This is the task of the preacher - to try to bring to people and inspire them to face the question of life while there is a choice.

In the state of Oregon, an old abandon church was put up for sale. There had been no services in it for many years. The denominational heads decided the wisest thing was to dispose of the property. A storm of protest arose. The local paper was full of letters written by upset citizens objecting to the sale of the historical landmark. A man who had once been it's pastor remarked -- if people had shown that much interest in it while it was still alive, it would not have been abandon.

So it is with men and their concern for their souls. They go along without thought. But the record of man's first calling on God in prayer. Men have believed that God works when men pray.

Andrew Murray once wrote in relation to his people, God works only in answer to their prayer.

James wrote, "the effectual fervant prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Not a little, but much. We are encouraged by these words. The revival in Wales, there was preaching. But there was first praying. It was done by people who were so stirred that the crowds came to the church -- not only one church but church

after church. And they remained until 4 o'clock in the morning. The flame spread from one district to another, throughout south Wales. Would you not like to see such fire and feel such warmth burning in your own church.

We believe, and we say to ourselves - that's what we need as individuals. In our homes we need it. In our church we need it. In our Sunday School classes we need it. And in our nation, we need what God can do for us.

Note what great Christians have said.

Dr. Jowett said I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.

Evans Roberts' secret intercessors make it possible for public laborers to do their work and win. They do as much for the Lord's cause - they intercede like Moses on the Mount. As they do who fight like Joshua in the thick of battle. Prayer based on God's word is the only weapon man can use today to touch the invisible force.

Courtland Meyers - God's greatest agency for the winning of men back to himself is the prayer of other men. How few ever enter into the positive practice of prayer. It is the mightiest force in the universe. And the Christian world is blind to this fact.

S. Chadwick - souls may be lost in good works as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of the Devil is the keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless, study less work. Prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil - mocks at our wisdom. But trembles when we pray.

Arthur Pierson said - every step in the progress of missions is directly traceable to prayer.

Tennyson - prayer is like opening a shining gate between the great ocean and our little channels. And the sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide.

Judson - I never prayed sincerely for anything - but it came. At some time, no matter how distant a day, it came in some shape.

Jowett - pleaded with people to pray. The people with one talent can help the man endowed with ten.

Obscure folks can be in the mighty fellowship of the great. By prayer, I can have a share in the work of the preacher. I can visit a lonely missionary. I can visit throne, sit in cabinets with statesmen, go into the editorial office and influence the articles. What a privilege is mine - what a solemn duty. How little and rare I use my power. Be up my soul - make thy journey around the planet. Helping enrich minds and hearts.

Many great men have had a word to say about encouraging us to pray. But why is it that we do not pray more. Dr. Lee one time suggested several things that bothered people or stood in their way, in prayer. And many other leaders like F. B. Myer have fathomed the difficulties that come up. I wonder today if it wouldn't be well for us to consider some of these hindrances, that really stand in the way of prayer.

So I cried, and they would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts. Zach. 7:13.
God had answered prayer for those who were his obedient servants. God heard and answered the prayer of Abraham. Abraham was ready to do God's will. He obeyed God's voice. Gen. 22:18.

Joshua, Jericho fell because Joshua strictly obeyed God's directions.

John - I John 3:22 - and whatsoever we ask we receive of him because we keep his commandments. And do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

If we are disobedient to God, we cannot pray.

God will always hear the obedient but never the rebellious. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Isa. 1:15.

Disobedience - a disobedient spirit can claim nothing from God.

Jer. 26:13 - Obey the voice of the Lord, your God. He pleaded with people. He showed them their troubles.

When King Saul disobeyed God and protested to Samuel that he had done all that God asked - he said, but the people took of the spoil, the sheep, the oxen, and the chief thing that should have been utterly destroyed, unto the Lord thy God. I Sam. 15:21.

To which the prophet Samuel said, hath the Lord is great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices of obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. And to harken the fat of rams. I. Sam. 15:22.

Prayer must always have a heart that is full of obedience.

II. CHERISHED SIN - Ps. 66:18

|| If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me. That means, regard given to what is sinful in God's sight. Whether it is one thing or many things. So long as there are any known sins, or sin in any form in your heart - sin or sins which we have not forsaken, such will act as a hindrance between us and God.

John Mock - has God ever been known to hear a prayer from a heart in which any form of iniquity was desperately fostered or tolerated.

F. B. Myer - the act of consecration was cancelled by one reserve. But to give 99/100 - and withhold 1/100 was to undo the whole.

God will not answer prayer if there is one point of controversy.

III. THE ROADBLOCK OF UNBELIEF - Heb. 11:6.

But without faith it is impossible to please him. To he, that believeth and cometh to God must believe that he is. And that is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

James 1:6-7 - Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24.

Eph. 3:20 - Now to him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to his power - the work is in us. When we call, we

must call with faith. We must have faith to take a hold of God, to wait on God. Unbelief hinders God's power.

IV. DISCORD IN MARRIAGE AND THE HOME IS A HINDRANCE

Our text tells us -- likewise ye husband dwell within according to knowledge, give honor, unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together to the grace of life. That your prayers be not hindered. I Peter 3:7.

*Here is Great Truth "The sighs of the injured wife come between the husband's prayer & God hearing"
It is when we are one with each other that we are also one with God.*

Quarreling and fussing at home is a hindrance to prayer. When a man marries he says - he is to love his wife even as Christ loved the church. And gave himself for it. Eph. 5:25.

When a woman marries, God says that she must see to it that she reverence her husband. Eph. 5:33.

Somerset Maugham's mother Beautiful woman married Not to Handsome Husband - why do you remain faithful to that ugly man you married "Because he never hurts me" unbreakable bond -

And both of these are to be followers of God, as dear children. So many husbands and wives are breaking their promises. God says, this will hinder your prayer.

Eph. 6:1-4 says children obey your parents, in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor thy father and thy mother which is the first commandment with promise.

That it may be well with thee.

So this in the home, among wife and husband, and the children and youth - if things are not right, you are hindering prayer.

V. THE HINDRANCE OF PRIDE

And they that cry but none giveth answer. Because of the pride of evil men
- surely God will not hear vanity and neither will the almighty regard it.
Job. 35:12-13.

Men must humble themselves before God. They cannot come into God's presence and expect God to hear and answer.

Gen. 18:27 - Abraham came before God with humility. I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord which am but dust and ashes.

Is. 57:15 - For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabited eternity. Whose name is holy. I will dwell in the high and holy place. With him also that is with a contrite and humble spirit. To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the spirit of the heart of the contrite ones.

God resisted the proud and giveth grace to the humble. If you will humble yourself therefore unto the hand of the almighty, that he might exalt you in due season. I Peter 5:5-6.

VI. THE HINDRANCE OF UNFORGIVENESS

Matt. 6:14-15. For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you forgive men not their trespasses, then your heavenly father will neither forgive you of your trespasses.

How little and trifling the sins others have done against us. In comparison to the terrible way we treat God.

Man not speaks to another - it feel This is sin. Went to visit - made peace - received -
Man Hated another - Pastor - pray for every day - God Bless him - Rejected idea - Later
Radiant face - Mad at you - try P. for Man Hated - I called him & told P daily - Made New Man out
of Me!

Unforgiveness, holding grudges, emnity against others, may seem to be very
respectable sin. People who would never get drunk, never commit adultery, never
lie, never steal - are guilty of this sin.

How can you ever expect your prayers to be heard. Jesus said to Peter. I say
not unto thee until 70 times but 70 times 7. Matt. 18:22.

What Jesus is saying is - how can you turn a cold shoulder to your fellowman.
Somebody in your knowledge and fellowship. And then offer an acceptably warm heart
to God. If a man says I love God and hates his brother - he is a liar. For he
that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen - how can he love God whom he has
not seen. I John 4:20.

VII. SELFISHNESS - James 4:3

Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss. That you may consume it upon
your own lust. We find that many experiences in the Bible illustrate this - that
selfishness is really a hindrance. Mary and her great unselfishness poured the
precious ointment upon Jesus. And Mary had power in prayer. The widow who cast
in her two mites into the treasure. Certainly when she called upon God - God
answered. But the man who has some of God's money stuck in his pocket, that never
will be a liberal answer for him. My God shall supply all your riches according
to his glory by Jesus Christ. Phil. 4:19.

There ought to be less of self each day and more of God.

VIII. IDOLATRY IS A HINDRANCE - I John 5:21

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Ezekiel speaks to people setting up idols in their hearts. He says, son of man - these men have set up idols in their hearts. And put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. Shall I be inquired of at all by them. Ez. 14:3.

There was a stumbling block - they could not get to the face of God.

Jacob said unto his household, put away the strange Gods from among you. Change your garments and let us rise and go to Bethel. And build an altar to God. Gen. 35:2-3.

When God called Jacob back to Bethel, it was necessary to cleanse his house of strange Gods. Now as we have been told time after time, an idol is anything that takes the place of God and the place that God ought to have.

Love not the world - neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world - the love of the father is not in him. I John 2:15-16.

Money is the idol of some people. Some people put their home first. Some people put their families first. Any idol that becomes a hindrance.

IX. UNPAID DEBTS

Sometimes people in honesty make debts that they cannot pay. Sometimes people make debts and can pay those debts and yet they will not pay. A debt you can pay and you do not do - what God requires - every prayer you offer is with dishonesty.

ZACH was converted. We have the record. He stood before the Lord - behold he said - half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation - I will restore him fourfold. Luke 19:8.

The jailer was saved - the record says he did all he could to right the wrong. He had done Paul and Silas - and he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And he brought them into his home and set meat before them. And rejoiced before God with all the house. Acts 16:33-34.

There is a story that Courtland Meyers told in his book - Dangers Of Crooked Thinking. About a Christian merchant in Boston many years ago. He and two other fish dealers put their money together and bought all of the cod fish brought into Boston harbor. Thus controlled the market. The Christian man on his knees at the family altar tried to pray - but he could not. He stumbled and mumbled. He read how many poor people could not buy cod fish because of the high price. And were forced into the place of want and suffering. The cod fish choked his prayer channel. He told his partners in the cod fish corner that he was through. When I was on my knees in prayer a whole mountain of cod fish rolled between me and Heaven. And I could not see God. I would not let all the cod fish in the Atlantic Ocean stop my praying.

Now there are many many hindrances to prayer. More than we could quote, or more than we could mention, or more than we could urge upon you in one message. In the words of Hosea, return unto the Lord thy God. Turn to the Lord and say unto him, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously. Hosea 14:1-2.

God says he will heal your backsliding, freely. He will love you freely and his anger will be turned away from you.

When the publican standing afar off lifted up not so much his eyes to Heaven.

but smote his breast, said God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his death justified. Luke 18:13-14. The only way that prayer is really going to reach its mark, is for men to remove the hindrances and confess before almighty God.

You remember Jesus one time talking about the hypocrites. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Matt. 15:7-8. There may be prayer upon your lips but if there is iniquity in your heart, then you have some hindrances. And we need to get into a private place with God. And we need to be able to go into the closet with God, and we need to get rid of the hindrances that would delay us.