

PRAYER'S DIFFICULTIES

Luke 11:1-

v. 1 Lord teach us to pray.

The world knows little or nothing of the greatest men and women.

We give publicity to politicians, to music, to artistic genius; we more than overdo the advertisement of pop singers, film stars.

But what about the unheralded offerers up of untiring prayer.

Has the media any limelight to turn upon the good, pious, those who spend time in prayer --- of course not --- nor would the men and women of prayer want any publicity.

Truly the world knows little of its greatest men and women of prayer. Those of devotion.

Jesus was, after all, the greatest offerer up of prayer --- His life was one great unbroken prayer!

One (day) His disciples came upon Him when He was alone and at prayer.

They watched --- they waited --- they listened.

When the Master was done, the impression was so deep, that one of the disciples voicing the thoughts of all the others said "Lord, teach us to pray!"

It was a spontaneous tribute to what they had been through.

The (result) was a prayer --- a prayer that has span the world --- a prayer that is spoken every five minutes of every day.

It is a (model) --- by which to learn. By what Jesus says and does --- and what He does not say; by what He gives first place to and what He gives second place.

Jesus was not just teaching them (a) prayer, but (how) to pray.

Have you examined the Lord's Prayer for its guidance? Or do you use it as (magic?)

These remarkable few words but great themes, when looked at closely and in the order which they were put, yield surprises and yield answers.

Many have (difficulties) and doubts about prayer.

Because you have problems with prayer, you have problems with your whole (spiritual life). Their spiritual health is impaired.

You can never make people want to pray by arguing about it --- or even preaching about it. We need to get across into the holy of holies.

I. How can a sovereign God enter into a relationship with an individual person --- even thousands in this universe.

The writer of (Ecc) asks --- "Who shall remember me on high? I shall not be known among so many people."

At that time the (population) of the world would be a hundreth or thousandth part of the inhabited world today.

Our imagination is overcome at the tremendous complexity of it all.

How can it be that "I" can be known by God.

With all the computer age, created in us things beyond us --- makes one dizzy. We know how all these gadgets work yet we in faith push buttons, flip switches --- we use ---

Father walks hand in hand with his child --- values that child far more than the moon above --- conscious of the moon and ask questions about.

Don't let the biggness of things put you off your prayer.

He is the creator of the stars also and at the same time He loves me --- and loves me as if there were but one of me to love.

Jesus answer to the problem is very assuring: "The very hairs of your head are numbered."

Jesus begins this prayer with the word of the house --- the first word He learned to utter --- Abba --- which means daddy --- the one He had touch for within Him was all of life.

Greater the artist, the greater care given to details.

II. If God is almighty, why do I have to tell Him all about myself?

Why am I to draw His attention? To the widows --- Does not God know what unemployment does to body and soul?

Of course He does --- Does He not know my brother died and I am brokenhearted --- Of course He does and grieved.

Jesus has said, your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. We could add, knows a great deal more about them than we do. He sees them in an all around situation.

The object of prayer is not to inform God --- nor drag His wisdom down to the level of our wisdom.

The object of prayer is to educate us with conversation with God. Value beyond explanation --- Speaking whatever is in our minds.

Imagine a child coming to his earthly father. He has just returned from vacation, been to fun land. He begins to chatter about where he's been, the good times, etc. Father says, "Yes, yes, yes, I know all about that." Using that (cold stopper) Child has to go.

With God, prayer is interesting to Him. What we have to say ---

Telling God in prayer we begin to see things in a different light. In a wider context --- against the background of God's eternal ways and everlasting promises.

It is thus that we sometimes come to see our asking is little better than ignorance --- selfish begging --- it is saying not thy will but mine be done.

It is good for us to talk and let God's grace flow into the situation. Communication.

III. Prayer appears to go unanswered.

? A wife sees her husband die, in spite of her persistent and nightly prayer.

? Faithful and Godly loving parents keep praying that God will correct and change their evil loving daughter. All that appears to happen is that she stays out more nights than ever and talks to her parents about being squares. Their faithful prayers seem so vain in the face of her arrogance. This is a hurtful thing in their own offspring --- where have they gone wrong.

Unanswered prayer also leads us to brokenhearted souls.

Some become angry with God --- bitter.

Sometimes bitter towards the church.

Sometimes bitter towards the ministry.

Say you have missled me --- unanswered prayer turns them off --- what can one say?

Very little you can say to a person in a bitter, angry mood.

You sometimes say your prayers silently.

A Scotch preacher went to see a man once. He knew he was in a horrible situation, not long to live. After a time, he said I will offer up a prayer. He was an old Scotchman and he lived in an old house. The preacher was a young man. The old man turned to him and said "I thatched my roof before the storm." The young minister later saw the truth. The old man lived in a house not covered with slate but with straw or reeds. When he said "I thatched my roof before the storm", he was saying I have made my spiritual preparation --- I have built up the things of my soul before this storm of death came upon me.

Now that we see the gist of this, we will see the need to build up spiritual resources before the strain does come.

You will remember that the Lord's Prayer was made by one whose prayer in the stress of Gethsemane remained unanswered.

Prayer after all has to meet certain conditions.

Jesus said whatsoever ye shall ask in My name --- that is a condition.

If ye abide in Me and I in you and My words abide in you --- that is a condition.

God is not contrary.

We often are not asking inside His will --- He cannot answer and remain true to His character.

We are praying in defiance of His moral order. We are praying for things and all the time we are bugging the very things that block Him from answering.

There can be (no forgiveness) and pardon (f) we ourselves do (not) have the forgiving spirit. It is just a spiritual law.

Prayer is not easily taken as slimming tablets are suppose to do, give you a nice slim figure without (sacrifice) of cream cake, fried potatoes or double-dip ice cream. Without any obedience to dietary laws and exercise.

Sometimes what we pray for cannot be given.

We are asking for wrong preferential treatment. If we get, others of God's children will not get.

We must never forget we pray (our) Father not my.

Sometimes we forget there are two answers to prayer.

Yes and no.



No is an answer.

✓  
Paul got it --- when he would have turned and gone eastward he was blocked. Turned to westward and establish the church in Europe.

✓  
David Livingstone got it --- he was blocked in his travels. Mother Argentine - son Falkland War - returned from war

✓  
Contacted Mother - asked if she would care for a soldier friend who had lost his legs & foot in the war - she refused - she had prayed & suffered for her own

The answer no, by God's grace, may become the source of son - one's (life purification and enrichment).

But his son was the one with no legs. He couldn't bear to tell her & shot himself.

God may shut up one way and open up a better way.

I say in all humility, I have at times had the answer no and I have lived by God's grace.

No may mean not yet --- not yet is an answer.

Would it be a wise father who never said no?

Who never said wait awhile?

You are not ready for it?

No my child I have something better for you. More worthy of your talent, a venture wider than your present narrow path.

An English mystic said "a lot of our unanswered prayer --- "I am sure that either we abide for better times or more grace, or a better gift."

The end of matter is as Jesus tells us men ought to always pray and never to lose heart.

For us, it is only the trying --- the rest is not our doing.

Greenfell the missionary, said I never venture to criticize God's answer; it's only my part to ask, if it were otherwise I would not dare to pray at all.

Our text might better be -- Lord teach us to pray, and to go on praying". The results are in the wisdom of almighty God.

11 Father we come to thee now in silence yet shouting for joy.

We come in silence over the thought of your love for us --- You rule supreme over time and space --- yet You loved us so much that You gave Your only son to suffer and die for us --- to think that You

loved us like that takes our breath away.

When we think of this love, You gave us living birth into a new hope when You brought Jesus back from death. So that we could make a new start in life, free from the guilt and shame of the past. Confident that nothing in life or death can separate us from your love.

Father accept our worship and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bless those whom we love, near and far. Those in sickness and health.