

STUDY ELEVEN – PRAYER!

Introduction

Prayer is joining forces with the Father. It is a fellowship with Him, carrying out His will upon the earth. It seems that God is limited by our prayer life, that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him to do it. Why this is, I do not know. We get a hint of it in Gen. 18 when God refused to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until He had talked it over with His Blood Covenant friend, Abraham.

Prayer Under the Old Covenant

Abraham's prayer, which is recorded in Gen. 18:22-23,25, is the most illuminating and suggestive of any prayer in the Old Covenant. He said to God, *"Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? ... Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"* Here Abraham was taking his place in the Covenant.

Abraham had through the Covenant received rights and privileges that we little understand. The Covenant that Abraham had just solemnized with Jehovah gave him a legal standing with God. We hear him speak so plainly, *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"* This is his intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. All through the Old Covenant we find men who understood and took their place in the Covenant. Joshua could open the Jordan. He could command the sun, moon and stars to stand still in the heavens.

Elijah could bring fire out of heaven to consume the offering as well as the altar. David's mighty men were utterly shielded from death in their wars. They became supermen as long as they remembered the Covenant. Practically all the prayers of the Old Testament were prayers of Covenant men. They had to be answered. God had to give heed to their petitions.

Prayer Under the New Covenant

The New Testament is a New Covenant. The believer has Covenant rights in prayer Isaiah 43:25-26 *"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted."* Here is a challenge of the Covenant-keeping God to Israel. It is a challenge to the church. *"Put me in remembrance."* In other words, remind Him of His promises in regard to prayer. Men who have been mighty in prayer have always reminded God of His promises and laid the case legally before Him.

When you pray, stand before the throne and plead your case as a lawyer. That lawyer is continually bringing law and precedent. Bring His Word, His Covenant promises, plead your rights. *"Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted."*

It is the challenge of God to lay the case before Him. If your children are unsaved, find a scripture that covers your case and lay the matter before Him. Isaiah 45:11 *"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me."* This is prophetic. It does not apply to Israel. It is yours. *"Ask me of the things that are to come."* These were future things, things perhaps connected with your life and your family, your community or your government.

"Concerning the work of My hands, you command Me." This is in perfect harmony with John 15:7 *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."*

SCHOOL OF FAITH!

The word “ask” means “demand”. You do not command in tones of arrogance, but as a partner. You lay the case before Him. You call His attention to His part in the drama of life. A scripture you should use continually is Isaiah 55:9-11.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the Sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” This is the very backbone of the prayer life. No Word that has gone forth from God can return unto Him void. Jer. 1:12 *“I watch over my Word to perform it.”* He will make good His Word, if you dare stand by it.

Jehovah’s Remembrancers

Isaiah 62:6 *“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace, day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent.”* Here He suggests there are men and women who are “remembrancers”, whose business it is to hold these promises and these statements of fact clearly before the Lord’s mind. Isaiah 64:7 *“And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us and have consumed us because of our iniquities.”*

Daniel stirred himself up to pray. He gave himself to prayer. He called God’s attention to the promises He had made through Jeremiah. There would be a restoration of Israel. They should go back again to the promised land. Their captivity in Babylon should end.

Read carefully Daniel 9. Satan tries to oppose prayer and stand in the way of it. Read the story of the combat of angels and demons over Daniel recorded in Dan. 10:20. Jer. 33:3 *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* God is challenging our cooperation with Him in the prayer life. He wants to bless us. Psalm 78:41 *“Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.”*

We have done that. We have limited Him with our prayer life. We have let the great promises of fellowship and cooperation with God go by as untouched, unrealized. Jesus was not only a teacher of prayer, but He was a prayer. I wish there had been a record given us of the things for which He prayed and the method of His prayer. We know that He left the multitudes again and again, to spend sometimes a whole night with His Father in prayer Whether that was purely for fellowship, or whether He was praying for a lost world, we cannot tell.

United Prayer

Matt. 18:18-20 gives us a picture of united prayer. *““Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. “Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.””* This scripture is amazing. *“Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I.”* That would be an executive meeting with the Master. We come together to do business, sitting in His presence, planning, discussing and then praying, for He said, *“If two of you shall agree.”* The group may be very small, just a husband and wife, but if they agree as touching anything they shall ask, it shall become. This is a challenge.

Every believer should find an agreeer, someone who could join with him in prayer. We should lay out a program of prayer, making a list of subjects and of people to lay intelligently before the Father. John 15:7-

SCHOOL OF FAITH!

8 *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”* If we are Born Again, we do abide in Him.

His Word abides in us in the measure that it governs our lives, in the measure that we act upon it. The problem of faith does not enter prayer. It is supposed that those who abide in Him have faith. It took faith to get into the family. We are in the family now, and it is not a problem of faith. It is a problem of the Word abiding in us.

If we are living the Word, then when we come to pray, that Word dwells in us so richly it will become His Word on our lips. It will be as the Father's Words on the Master lips.

How to Pray

John 15:16 *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”* Prayer here is addressed to the Father in Jesus' Name. This is divine order. This statement has enwrapped within it the ability to bring God into our circumstances, into our finances or whatever the need may be in our homes, in our business, or in our nation.

“Whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” We are not praying to Jesus. We are praying to the Father in the Name of Jesus. Jesus really gives us the power of attorney. That means that what Jesus can do, we can do. That means that Jesus' Name gives us the right to go into His presence and see our prayers answered. Jesus backs our prayer. He makes it good.

John 16:23-24 *“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”*

We are to pray to the Father in Jesus' Name. We can fellowship and talk things over with the Master, but when it comes to prayer based on legal grounds, then it is directed to the Father, in Jesus' Name.

Nothing is impossible here. We will not ask anything of the Father that is out of His will if we are walking with Him. The word “faith” does not occur in this connection.

We had faith to come into the family; now everything that Jesus did belongs to us. We are taking advantage of it. We are acting the part of a child of God. 1 John 5:14-15 *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”*

It Is the Father's Will

The believer, walking in fellowship with the Word, will never ask for anything outside of the Father's will.

We need not worry about that. We know that saving the lost is in His will, for to this end Jesus died. John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* We know that healing the sick is in His will, for Christ bore our infirmities and carried our pains. 1 Peter 2:24 *“who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”*

We know praying for finances to meet obligations is His will. Phil. 4:19 *“And my God shall supply every need of yours.”* Practically everything is covered in these points. We can pray for the ministers that they will speak, in the power of the Spirit. We can pray for the lost in heathen lands.

SCHOOL OF FAITH!

All this is in His will. With what boldness we should come to Him. Matt. 19:26 *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* We are coming to Him who has all ability. Speaking to the Jews He said in Matt. 21:22 *“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”*

Mark 11:24 *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* Here is faith thanking Him for a thing that he already possesses which has not yet materialized, but he knows that it is his.

Mark 9:23 *“All things are possible to him that believes.”* All things are possible to the man who cooperates with the Lord, who fellowships with the Lord, who is a co-labourer with the Lord.