

An Attempt To Listen To God

Meditations on  
His Prayers of Intercession  
Section 1

By

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## Introduction

We can easily “read”, almost unconsciously: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34). The result is a failure to more deeply appreciate the wonder of the prophecy and fulfilment of the interceding Christ (Isa. 53:12).

Intercessory prayer was a major feature of the Lord’s prayers, and to the best of my knowledge, it is the only spiritual exercise He did on earth and still does in Heaven (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). When musing on the Lord’s interceding our minds almost automatically think of two in particular, although there were others. They are His prayer in John 17:1-26, and His prayer for Peter “I have prayed for Thee” (Lk. 22:32). Neither of these we will consider here, but rather His first cry from the cross.

## When Intercession is Related To Those Who Are Redeemed

We all pray for others, but there are several factors that qualify one to be an intercessor in the highest level:

- a) They must be in fellowship with God, seeing things from His perspective.
- b) Have learnt by experience the truths of Rom. 7:14-23, and seeking the face of God for themselves when temptation approaches.
- c) They have experienced the internal warfare, and the depth of sin within themselves, and personal helplessness against it.
- d) They have learnt to cry to God: “Lead me to the to the Rock that is higher than I” (Psa. 61:2) and cling until the battle is over.
- e) They must have learnt the necessity to intercede for themselves before they can intercede for others.
- f) They must have and be led by the Spirit.
- g) They must have learnt the bitterness of sin, which our Lord did at the grave of Lazarus, and when suffering for sin on the cross, but never by wrongs He personally had done (Jn. 11:35).
- h) Such individuals can truly be able to feel for others and will not criticize, gossip about, gloat over, or in smug imagined superiority criticize when another falls.
- i) They will agonize for their spiritual restoration, crying to God for the preservation of other saints, and that they themselves will be kept from the same ruin.

When intercession is related to those who are unsaved:

- a) The intercessor will understand the plight of the unsaved and put themselves in their spiritual condition and approaching judgment. Paul did this when he prayed: “I wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren” (Rom. 9:1-3).

Consequently, when there is true intercession it is the result of a burden, which is the result of the individual being in living fellowship with God. As such, they feel and appreciate that which He is sensitive to, but not in the same degree. Job put it well when he cried: “O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!” (Job 16:21).

## Individuals Who Were Intercessors

- a) Abraham interceded for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but that prayer was not answered. It is important to realize that the reason it was not answered was because it was all dependent on the merit of man. (Gen. 18:23-32)
- b) Lot interceded for his own life and family members who were with him, and for the city of Zoar, but unlike Abraham’s, it was based on the mercy of God. (Gen. 19:16-22)
- c) Moses interceded for the children of Israel and God spared them when they sinned. (Ex. 32:7-14; 34:9; Num. 21:7; Psa. 106:23)
- d) Samuel interceded for Israel when the judgment of God was about to fall because they had asked for a king. (1 Sam. 12:19)
- e) David sinned by counting the people, thus putting his trust in human abilities. He confessed his sin but God, through Gad, made David aware that sin could not just be ignored and he was given a choice of

- three judgments. When the judgment was falling David began to intercede for the innocent people. (1 Chron. 21:1-19)
- f) Elijah interceded with God on the people's behalf and to manifest He was the true God when Israel were gross idolators and met with the prophets of Baal. (1 Kgs. 18:36-37)
  - g) Ezra confessed the sins of the people as if they were His own (Ezra 9:4-10:1). Nehemiah did the same (Neh. 1:3-11 and all of ch. 9), as did Daniel (Dan. 9:4-19).
  - h) Esther called for a fast by the people of Israel before she went before the King to plead for the lives of her people. (Est. 4:15-16; 7:3-4; 8:3-6)
  - i) Jeremiah. Zedekiah the king had sent messengers to Jeremiah to: "Pray for us unto the LORD our God" (37:4; 42:2, 20). While this prayer was fulfilled, it was only temporary, for later the Chaldeans would come again and destroy the city (Jer. 37:8).
  - j) Jairus for his daughter. (Mk. 5:22; Lk. 8:41)
  - k) The nobleman for his son. (Jn. 4:47-50)
  - l) Unnamed father whose son was tormented with a dumb spirit. (Mk. 9:17)
  - m) Stephen interceded for those who were stoning him while they were doing it. (Acts 7:60)
  - n) The saints interceded for Peter and the Lord was gracious. (Acts 12:5-12)
  - o) Paul (Eph. 3:14-20; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-17; 1 Thess. 5:20; 2 Thess. 3:1)
  - p) The writer of the Hebrews. (Heb. 13:18)

Of the many dark days of Israel's history, perhaps one of the darkest was when Jeremiah was told to search the city for a righteous individual and not one could be found (Jer. 5:3). It was bad enough when not a righteous person could be found in Sodom among the ungodly (Gen. 18:23-32), but this was even darker. This was not Sodom but Jerusalem, not pagans but God's blessed people, and yet not a righteous person could be found. Then God spoke to Jeremiah and in triplicate told him: "Pray not thou for this people" (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). For such there is no hope. The Spirit has worked upon them but there is no repentance.

On a practical side, we also live in a world ripe for judgment, and perhaps it is startling to realize that it could be said of us: "God was amazed and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 64:7), and through Ezekiel God said: "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge" (Ezek. 22:30). Perhaps we are so taken up with "our little circle"; "the time consuming entertainments of Satan"; and "our deadly form of religiosity"; that we have lost sight of the necessity for intercession. Perhaps a major lesson to be learnt is.

### **Intercessory prayer prevents self centering**

Charles Spurgeon said: "I commend intercessory prayer, because it opens man's soul, gives a healthy play to his sympathies, constrains him to feel that he is not everybody, and that this wide world and this great universe were not after all made that he might be its petty lord, that everything might bend to his will, and all creatures crouch at his feet."

### **The Glorious Blessing Of Having Divine Persons Who Pray For Us As Individuals**

Paul asked the saints to intercede for him (1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1); the writer of the Hebrews did the same (Heb. 13:18); and Paul made intercession for them (Col. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:11) as did the individual who was sick (Jam. 5:14). It is a blessing to know that there are saints praying for us, but infinitely greater is the reality of having two divine persons praying for us. Both doing it for the glory of God, and both knowing the will of God.

- a) The Holy Spirit
  - i) 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." (Rom. 8:26)
- b) Christ
  - i) "Who is He what condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34)
  - ii) "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:24-25)

Being Divine they have:

- a) All wisdom for to impart to us in each situation. (Col. 2:3)
- b) All foreknowledge to know and understand the ramifications of our present course of action and the blessings of His desired course of action. (Psa. 139:2-4)
- c) All love that will never belittle us nor willfully let us go the wrong pathway. (Rom. 8:35; 15:30)
- d) All power to keep us if that is our true desire. We must remember that when the Lord prayed "Keep them from the evil", it was because God has given to us a free will that is only as effective as we want to be kept from the evil. (Jn. 17:15)

These are blessings earthly money, prestige, power, and influence could never buy or secure.

We have observed that intercession comes from a burdened heart. When Jairus prayed for his child it was with a burdened heart filled with love for his child (Mk. 5:22), the same with the nobleman's son (Jn. 4:47-50). Such prayer is never ever cold factual speaking, but at times with tears and a breaking heart. Such is its importance that our Lord spoke about it in the parable about the inopportune widow (Lk. 18:3). A moments consideration will show that a burdened heart is not spasmodic in prayer, but as the preacher said: "Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, Till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven" (Lam. 3:48-50). There are saints "who never hold their peace day nor night" and "give Him no rest" (Isa. 62:6-7; Lam. 2:18-19). This is part of the reason the Lord was a "man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3).

When it comes to us, it is evident that the chronological order which leads to intercessory prayer is as follows:

- a) The enlightenment from the Holy Spirit one is made aware of a need.
- b) The cooperating with the Holy Spirit regarding the need there is developed a burden for:
  - i) Seeing people blessed for the glory of God.
- c) The burden becomes the "force" which results in intercession.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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