

An Attempt To Listen To God

Introductory Thoughts on  
The Prayers of Christ

By

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Irrespective of what aspect of Christ we consider, all are sacred and beyond comprehension. However, when venturing into the themes of the prayer life of the Lord and listening to divine communications, there is a loftiness so sacred that one treads with utmost reverence. The praying of the Lord was distinct from every other individual for it was marked with a more holy reverence, a simplicity, and a calm serenity that fallen man can never know. Even in the midst of personal turmoil, as in the garden of Gethsemane, there was no panic but profound calmness.

The prayers of our Lord sprang from the holy sanctuary of His heart for His heart and mind were undisturbed:

- a) By a conscience convicting of sin
- b) An interruption from external happenings
- c) Nor internal restlessness.

Due to His soul's holy musings on God and communications with Him, there came the unveilings of these in His prayers. In them there is observed the out-raising of rich communications which were always set against the background of man's ingratitude, unbelief, and independence on God. Just as the spray from the waves give evidence of the hidden movement below, so the words of our Lord in prayer give evidence of His deep fellowship with God, fellowship in soul and spirit that no one else could know.

His utterances were the sacred breathings of the man who dwelt in the shadow of the Almighty (Psa. 91:1), and in the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1:18). It was a sphere that never was desecrated by rote formality, empty phraseology or pathetic patronizing. His prayers had depths of personal fellowship that reduce the highest of all other men's fellowships and communions to faint shadows. He knew parallelisms in spirit with God that no created being can enter into, and intensity of sincerity unknown by any other human being. This was a communion with the grip of reality and genuineness. Every utterance was the purest frankincense of devotion arising from the purity of His heart.

In listening to His prayers, we stand, as it were, on the edge of a mighty ocean seeing the surface, but beyond our sight are the depths of His Holy Spirit filled emotions and exercises of heart and mind. In those prayers there was admiration for the beauty of God, a dependence on the ability of God, a consciousness of the heart of God, and an awareness of the purposes of God. The Holy Spirit did not just anoint Christ, He was an integral part of His very being (Lk. 1:35), and He filled the Lord (Lk. 4:1). The Holy Spirit, as the river of God (Psa. 65:9), permeated every member of the body of Christ.

His praying was never a duty to be discharged for conscience sake, nor an occupation at various times of the day as Daniel did (Dan. 6:10). It was a period of the uninterrupted fellowship between divine persons, void of any empty pleasantries. His prayers were never the mere speaking of words nor the patronizing of God, much less vain repetitions. He always spoke to God with sincerest devotion, seeking only His glory in His petitions.

The Lord prayed! This is a truth, that if grasped, would bow hearts in wonder and amazement. The great I AM was speaking to His Father God, and the Son as the perfect servant. Its very simplicity of the expression belies the profoundness of the truth it reveals. Like a mountain towering to heights, which by its very grandeur overwhelms us, so is this stupendous truth. Many are the sights of glory which angelic beings have seen, yet this must have been a sight of immeasurable wonder to all of them. He, whom they knew was the fulness of deity (Col. 2:17), was praying.

Our Lord was the only man who could stand in perfection in the Holy place for He alone had the qualifications. Psalm 24 declares: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein". That is, it is His by right of creatorship (Rev. 5: 13-14), and by redemption (Rom. 8:19-22). It is a sphere in which His throne will rule in millennial glory but who has the right to rule for God? Not someone with the honorary title of "King of glory" but one who is the supreme monarch having the glory of moral perfection. Without going into the truths of the psalm save to observe the qualifications of one who can "ascend", who can "stand", "who shall come in" (Psa. 24:3 & 7, 9).

The qualifications are moral, militarily and personally:

- a) Morally: such a one must have "clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Psa. 24:4)

- b) Militarily: He is the LORD, “Strong and mighty” (Psa. 24:8)
- c) Personally: He is the “LORD of hosts” (Psa. 24:10)

Praise God our Lord was the only man who was able to “stand” before God with perfection of moral qualification.

- a) Clean hands:
  - i) Persons both infernal and terrestrial have sought to rule this world, claiming to have the right to rule but never for the glory of God, and none were the King of God’s appointment. Without question, every human has had hands defiled by blood, i.e. Napoleon, Alexander, Hitler, Mao.
- b) Pure heart:
  - i) The heart of every human is described by God as:
    - 1. “Deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9)
    - 2. “Departeth from the Lord” (Jer. 17:5)
  - ii) It is the thinking aspect of man:
    - 1. “Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye . . . for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:6-7)
    - 2. “Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?” (Matt. 9:4)
- c) Not lifted up his soul to vanity:
  - i) “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?” (Ex. 5:2). This was the attitude of Pharaoh.
  - ii) “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?” (Dan. 4:30). This was the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar.
  - iii) “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple. . . that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein” (Dan. 5:1-2). This was the attitude of Belshazzar.
  - iv) “And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up” (Dan. 11:12). This was the attitude of the king of the South.
- d) Sworn deceitfully:
  - i) “And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully.” (Dan. 11:23)
  - ii) “Departing away from our God . . . conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.” (Isa. 59:13)
  - iii) “Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in his heart he layeth his wait” (Jer. 9:8)
  - iv) “Ye have perverted the words of the living God.” (Jer. 23:36)

None of these individuals could ever have stood in the holy place, or ruled the earth for the glory of God. Every natural born son of Adam was marred by these characteristics, but the Lord never was.

- (a) His hands were marked by purity even when he touched that which was defiling, such as the leper or the dead body. His perfection was so intense that no defilement could pass upon Him. (Matt. 8:3; 9:25)
- (b) His heart was immaculate before God. It was one thing to cast the challenge to men: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (Jn. 8:46), but could He take the words of the Psalmist in truth and stand before God and say: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me” (Psa. 139:23-24). The answer of God stands like a rock undaunted by the slighting of men: “In Him is no sin” (1 Jn. 3:5). His will was always to fulfill the will of God irrespective of the cost to Him.
- c) He never lifted His soul to vanity. Pride was unknown by Him, for:
  - i) He did not judge it below Him to be known as the carpenter of Nazareth. (Mk. 6:3)

- ii) He was not complaining when he said: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His Head” <sup>1</sup>(Matt. 8:20).
  - iii) He did not murmur when He was not given recognition and respect for who He was but was seen as one who had: “No form nor comeliness”. (Isa. 53:2)
  - iv) He was meek and lowly of heart. (Matt. 11:29)
  - v) Humility marked his mind set. (Phil. 2:5-8)
- d) He never swore deceitfully:
- i) The Lord is the Truth, man called Him a deceiver (Matt. 27:63), but not a single word He ever spoke was error. Such was His speech and adjudications that He never had to:
    1. Repeal a sentence
    2. Put a spin on an utterance
    3. Withdraw any pronouncement
    4. Make an apology for a mistake in any assessment

Consequently, His prayers and prayer life were always a sweet fragrance to God, and God had infinite delight in answering each utterance.

There was never a prince so royal,  
So worthy of worldwide fame,  
There was never a friend so loyal,  
Whose love is as great as His Name.

There were never such springs of sweetness,  
Such rivers of unequalled bliss,  
There was never such perfect meekness  
As dwelled in that heart of His.

What moved His heart with such kindness,  
Expressed by His words of grace,  
Impelling His feet in great mercy,  
T’was love, the lost ones to save.

His saved ones will never fathom,  
Such depths of measureless love,  
That led this blest Man to Calvary  
To suffer God’s wrath from above.

There were never such oceans of sorrow,  
There were never such floods of grief,  
As o’erwhelmed My lovely Saviour  
In order to bring my relief.

Let each one ponder Golgotha,  
Take a look at the Cross where He died,  
And wonder, and worship before Him.  
Blest Saviour, the Crucified.

*Albert Hull*

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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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<sup>1</sup> My own translation