

An Attempt To Listen To God On
Meditations on
The Genuinness of His Prayers

By

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Among the many features in which the Lord is distinct from all other human beings is that He was perfectly genuine at all times and places. When God gave Moses His name: "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14), it was an unequivocal declaration that among other truths, He was genuine and unchangeable. Therefore, for our Lord to be the I AM in the flesh, there was of necessity for Him being genuine every moment of every day and night. This was especially so when He was praying, for not only was it His essential character to be sincere and honest, but He also knew the glory of the One to whom He prayed.

It can be so easy to repeat data, void of the emotion of love, but possibly from peer pressure or taking part in a prayer gathering, for it is expected of one. Such was never the experience of the Lord. It was not for men to speak well of Him or how others thought of Him. That would have been an attitude of pride. Neither was it the words of a "holier than thou" attitude, it was the communing and unburdening of His heart to God.

When the Lord told the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk. 18:10-14), He was teaching several lessons, one of which was, there are only two types of prayer:

- a) That which is genuine, which manifested the attitude of one in need, whether it is for:
 - i) Humility (Lk. 18:13) (*This attitude was manifested in Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:12); Ezra (Ezra 9:6)*)
 - ii) Wisdom (Jam. 1:5)
 - iii) Mercy and grace (Heb. 4:16)
 - iv) Spiritual understanding (Eph. 1:18) (*These are just a few of the needs*)
 - v) The thankfulness from ones heart to God for the mercies He has rendered. (1 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:3)
 - vi) The manifestation of dependence and the expression of communion. This is how it was seen in the publican. (Lk. 18:13)

- b) That which is counterfeit and was manifested by:
 - i) The Pharisees on the street corners. (Matt. 6:5)
 - ii) The Pharisee. (Lk. 18:11)

Our Lord was the manifestation of God. To perfectly manifest God there could be no pretense or make believe. He was not a "cloud without water" (Jude 1:12). His praying was never a charade, a patronizing of God, nor a manifestation of pseudo spirituality like the Pharisees, rather:

It was the attitude of His heart to God in thanks, worship and adoration. When the Lord called God "My God" (Psa. 22:2, 10; 25:2; 31:14; Matt. 27:46; Jn. 20:17; Rev. 3:12), it was more than calling Him by a given name, or the acknowledging who He was and is. It was the verbalization of a heart attitude and mind understanding in itself, in which it was an act of worship.

It was His priority to give God preeminence. His first communion each day was with Him. (Isa. 50:4)

Since there was nothing artificial or fake about the Lord, His every prayer was according to the will of God in what He prayed and how He prayed. His prayers expressed His dependence on God (Mk. 6:41) and:

- a) His words were the expression of deepest communion (Matt. 14:23).
- b) His intercession was the expression of the deepest yearnings of His heart (Lk. 22:32).
- c) His petitioning was purest of motives of His heart (Matt. 26:39)
- d) His expressions of gratitude were always sincere (Matt. 11:25; Jn. 11:41))

When praying in the Garden of Gethsemane there was a changing of intensity, but not of sincerity. The changing intensity was because the time was drawing near for the full manifestation of man's rejection of Him, the full hatred of satanic spite, and ultimately, the experience of being forsaken by God. "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly" (Lk 22:44). That sincerity and fervency was seen when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. In the fierceness of the conflict, (*This was the hour of darkness*) there is clearly manifested of what the sufferings for sin meant to Christ. (*This is not to say or intimate that he was beginning to suffer vicariously for sins, but the time was fast approaching when His darkest hour would be upon Him.*) The contemplation of being made sin for us and being forsaken by God changed everything for the Lord. There was a changing into darkness and immeasurable sorrow. We cannot tread intrusively on this prayer scene. This had a solemnity that was far beyond that which Jacob experienced when the angel wrestled with Him. Afraid and alone Jacob said: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven" (Gen. 28:17).

Even in the intensity of His praying there was a depth unknown by any other. Many a breaking heart has wept in prayer with strong crying, but none have ever known the intensity of His in Gethsemane (Heb. 5:7). Because of the Lord's genuineness, His every prayer was the purest frankincense of devotion rising from His heart. There can be sensed the blessed quietness of His delight in the activities of God when He said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25), and His spirit was rejoicing (Lk. 10:21). That which we are privileged to hear Him speak was the outpouring of His secret communing with the Father being verbalized.

Pondering such truths, we stand on the edge of a mighty ocean, as one reading the surface words but each having depths beyond our comprehension and knowledge. In His 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.

His thanking God was not just an empty function but a heart filled with gratitude, and when He worshipped God it was not the reiteration of true facts in dead formality, but a vibrant living appreciation of the worthiness of God. Glorious it is to realize that He never was conscious of any unworthiness in Himself in approaching the Father.

Prayer to the Lord was the times of being apart from all others, just He and God alone, enjoying the delightfulness of each others company in the calm quietness of love.

Of course it is not 100% accurate to speak of our Lord praying at different times on different occasions. Prayer was not simply a part of the life of Christ. It was the habitual attitude of his mind and the atmosphere in which he lived. Of Him alone it can be said: "I give myself unto prayer" (Psa. 109:4). There were those times when He did turn aside to pray and are interesting in this connection:

- a) It appears that it was normal for the Lord to come aside from the people, to go into a desolate place and pray. The words used in Lk. 5:15 are plural words, that is, there was not one withdrawal but many withdrawals, many wilderness experiences, many prayers. The withdrawals were habitual, the wilderness experiences were many, and the prayers were a way of life.
- b) His praying was the reflection of His hearts steadfast devotion, His uncompromising holding of the truth, but ever gracious fulfilling it in love.
 - i) In contrast to we who are fallen humanity and consequently selfish, I am aware of only four occasions when the Lord prayed for Himself:
 - (a) "Father . . . glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (Jn. 17:1)
 - (b) "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (Jn. 12:27)
 - (a) "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26:39) (and its associated prayers in Gethsemane)
 - (b) "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46)

The prayers of the Lord were expansive and there can be little doubt that in those night seasons He would have prayed for:

- a) Those who were rejecting Him as He did on the cross (Lk. 23:34)
- b) Those who were His own, as He possibly did in the upper room (Jn. 17:15)
- c) Himself, as in the aforementioned passages.

**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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