

An Attempt To Listen To God

The Prayers of Christ
A Conscious Unclouded Fellowship
With God

By

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Never for a moment must there be the slightest hesitation, or variation on the truth, that our Lord was God manifest in flesh, never setting aside His deity nor being bereft of any iota of deity. We state clearly that the Lord is not just divine, He is deity, God of very God. Let the scriptures speak:

- a) "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 9:5)
- b) "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9)
- c) "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16)
- d) "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13)
- e) "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:1-3)
- f) "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Heb. 1:8)
- g) "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen." (Jude 25)

When this truth is accepted, then it is evident that since God is true Christ also must be true. With God there is no sham or coyness, everything is done in the light. Consequently, when our Lord prayed His prayers were always genuine (refer to "Introductory Comments on The Prayers of Christ"), always specific and expectant.

The genuineness of His communing with God was because He lived what he said. Speaking to the Pharisees He said: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). The Psalmist said: "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King (Psa. 45:1). In the highest level such could only be said concerning the worship and prayers of the Lord.

His prayers would have had several characteristics which did not focus on a singular matter but covered a wide range of themes.

First there was:

His Consciousness of Unclouded Fellowship With God

When responding to the request of the disciples to be taught how to pray, the teaching began with the musing on the glory of the Father and the reverence due His name.

It began:

"Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name"

It was a double consciousness, both based on the Old Testament.

- a) "God is in Heaven and we are on earth" (Ecc. 5:2), therefore uttermost reverence is His due. In praying the mind must not wander to other things, and that which is said must be carefully weighed before Him.
- b) His Name is to be held in great reverence.

The glory of God was the priority. One of the most annoying things in life it to have someone to speak to them and fail to give them any respect, or to speak while their mind and attention is somewhere else. I would dare to say it would be very hard, if not impossible, to find anyone who could honestly say they have always given God full attention and reverence when speaking to Him. Herein we find a major glory of the Lord, for His prayers would have always been marked by an absolute conscious respect for God and giving Him full attention.

His unclouded fellowship with God, resulting from His consecration, did not come at a crisis moment in time when the fulness of the Godhood of God began to affect His life. Moses had a crisis experience at the burning

bush and no doubt his life would never be the same. Jacob had a crisis moment when he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord, and his life was never the same. But the Lord never needed a crisis moment to walk a deeper path of consecration and holiness, for He was from before His coming wholly consecrated to God, therefore He lived and prayed in unclouded fellowship.

I say again, His baptism did not lead to deeper consecration and neither did the experience of the Holy Mount. Neither was it a devotion by compulsion (save that of love), but from the moment of His incarnation to His ascension He was wholly devoted to God, consequently there was no breach in the fellowship. It was a change of place and character but the fellowship of eternity past was unchanged. Mr. H. Brooks stated: "Consecration implies that the powers of the body, the affections of the heart, and the possessions of the offerer are put in the (offerer's) hands and held out before God as an offering to Him".* This was the life of our Lord.

** Personal consecration, Herbert Brook, (James Nesbit & Co. London. 1897*

When the ancient Israelite approached God his acceptability was based on the acceptance of his sacrifice (Lev. 1: 1-6). He, and we, are aware of our spiritual distortions and sins, therefore, when we approach God it is by virtue of the sacrifice of our Lord. There is the awareness of a cloud between us, and as John writes: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God (1 Jn. 3:20-21).

- a) Christ lived in the reality of His personal qualifications for ascending to the "Hill of the Lord, for He alone had clean hands, a pure heart, had not lifted up His soul to vanity nor sworn deceitfully" (Psa. 24:3-4).
- b) Christ lived in the reality that all He did was pleasing to the Father, indeed before He ever came, God knowing the perfections of Him said: "In whom my soul delighteth". This is far more wonderful than if the Lord had said: "With whom my mind is satisfied", or "With whom my soul finds happiness". God had said He would be delighted in Him, not just with Him but in Him. Therefore, in His innermost being He was ever utterly delightful to the innermost being of God.

Conscious of an uncondemned heart, perfect qualifications, and God's righteous evaluation of His excellencies, He went to the grave of Lazarus and made a profound statement. But, before that statement was made: "He lifted up His eyes" (Jn. 11:41), He looked up to Heaven. How much there can be in a look, a sweetheart's smile, a judge's sternness, a convict's uncertainty in waiting for a verdict. Thus, we ask what was in the look up to heaven? It must be seen in its context.

- a) It is one of the two times when the Lord lifted His eyes upward (Jn. 17:1), which adds "to Heaven". Thus both begin with the same attitude and the same word, "Father".
- b) It was against the background of unbelief, for the sisters said: "If thou hast been here my brother had not died" (Jn. 11:21 & 32), and when the Lord requested the stone to be removed there was the outburst: "He stinketh for he hath been dead four days" (Jn. 11:39). The people also were marked with unbelief (Jn. 11:37).
- c) It was against the background of profession for Martha said: "I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it Thee" (Jn. 11:22) and "Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world (Jn. 11:27)

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always" (Jn. 11:41-42).

This was His delight, living in the unsullied purity of an unclouded sky every moment of His entire life. He never knew the heaviness that comes for the longing that something had never been said or done. Every day began with the Father's smile and every day ended with His undarkened countenance. It is in this standard of fellowship the Lord stood at the grave of Lazarus and said: "Thou hearest me always" (Jn. 11:42). What was it He was referring to? The previous verses reveal that to us.

- a) "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* (Jn. 11:25)

** The wording and tenses of v.25 are magnificent for the Lord is teaching that even though Lazarus is physically dead, he is alive. This is the truth in Isa. 57:2: "They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness" "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me." (Jn. 11:41)*

God had heard the statement He had just made. Was it the absolute truth? Praise God it was and in saying it, it was exactly that which God wanted said at that time, in that place, in that way.

In the consciousness of His pleasing the Father (in this context), in every statement made He says:

"Father I thank Thee that Thou hearest me always".

**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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