

Lesson 8

The Results of Prayer

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Prayer is the most valuable spiritual exercise for the Christian. It moves God to accomplish His purposes according to His own will. It is contact with God. Through prayer man has the marvelous possibility to commune with his Creator, to make known to Him his condition, his needs; he can call to Him for help, for protection, and for strength in difficult times and circumstances.
- B. The results of prayer for the Christian are wonderful. There are both objective and subjective results of prayer.

II. OBJECTIVE RESULTS

- A. God Is Glorified: Whenever the Christian prays, this pleases and glorifies God, for this shows an attitude of total dependence of the creature upon the Creator. Prayer is equally valuable to God and to the Christian. He longs for fellowship with His children. NOTE: Often a Christian may come to prayer and feel that he received nothing from this time, but, taking a divine viewpoint, the prayer was important to God. Christians must be careful about running on experience rather than on faith. It is only faith that pleases God.

“When the glory of the Father

Is the goal of every prayer:

When before the Throne in heaven

Our High Priest presents it there,

When the Spirit prompts the asking,

When the waiting heart believes:

Then we know of each petition

Everyone who asks receives.”

- B. Answered Prayer: Every prayer that is offered up in faith to the Father is answered. Sometimes the answer does not coincide with the specific request, but God always answers every prayer. The answer is yes, no, or wait a while. NOTE: Real faith does believe that God answers every prayer and then the person rests back in God's sovereign plan for his life. NOTE. We should be grateful that God does not answer every prayer with a “yes.” So many prayer are asked in the flesh. If God answered all our prayers positively, we would mess up and even destroy our lives.

III. SUBJECTIVE RESULTS

- A. Introduction: There are many side benefits to prayer that deal with the subjective experience of the Christian. Prayer brings God into the conscious experience of the child of God.
- B. Prayer Wins over Worry (Phil. 4:6-7): Prayer is God's antidote to worry. Taylor, in his Living Letters, paraphrases these verses as follows:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will know God's peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

Worry is failure to let God handle a situation. It is rejection of God's sovereignty. The Christian is commanded to stop worrying, for worry is a sin. The child of God is to take his problem, big or small, to God, leaving the situation with Him and expecting God to work out a solution. When this is done, the "peace of God" keeps (garrisons) the mind and

heart of the one praying. This peace comes from God. It is heavenly tranquility in the midst of outward turmoil. No human being can emotionally whip up this type of peace, for it is a supernatural work of God. Notice that it guards the mind (thoughts) and the heart (emotions), which are the two areas of man vulnerable for psychological problems. It also says that this peace is "through Christ Jesus" or, as Taylor says, "as you trust in Christ Jesus." There must be a continual trust in God to solve the problem. NOTE: Our trouble is that we often pretend to take our burdens to the Lord, but we don't leave them with Him. We bring them back again. The chorus of that famous Christian song says:

"Leave it there, leave it there.

Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

If you trust and never doubt,

He will surely bring you out.

Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there."

I remember hearing the story of a mother who, when walking home, saw five of her children huddled together in great concentration. As she came closer she was astonished to see that they were playing with baby skunks. She screamed at the top of her voice, "Children run!" Each one grabbed a skunk and ran. Isn't that what we often do? We have our little worries, our little problems—our little skunks. We take them to the Lord in prayer. He says, "Run!" Instead of leaving them there, we grab the stinking things and run!

- C. Prayer Brings the Filling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31; 16:25): The filling of the Spirit can be the experience of the Christian as he is trusting in God, occupied

with Christ and submitted to the Holy Spirit. In actuality the filling or control of the Spirit comes as one is actively conscious of his dependence upon God. There are innumerable results of the filling of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) but, in context, there are four results that came about through prayer and the filling of the Spirit:

1. They were bold for Christ: It says that they spoke “the word of God with boldness.” Prayer prepared them to stand boldly for the gospel. They became fearless. It is said that one day when John Knox approached the court of Mary, Queen of Scots, he was warned that it might be better to postpone his visit as she was in one of her angriest moods. He continued on his way, replying, “Why should I be afraid of a queen when I have just spent four hours with God?” NOTE: It says they spoke the word with boldness. In order to do this, they had to know the Word of God. Prayer prepares a man for the Word and the Word prepares a man for prayer. The German theologian Bengel had the reputation of being a great man of prayer, knowing the secret of effectual prayer. One day a fellow believer watched him at close of the day. He saw the old saint sitting before a large Bible, reading slowly, often stopping, meditating with the silent tears running down his cheeks. After reading and meditating a long time, Bengel closed the Book and began to speak to God in prayer. His heart had been prepared through the reading of the Word. Neglect of the daily reading of the Word of God and meditation on it soon results in neglected prayer as well.
 2. They had a spirit of unity: Those who believed were “of one heart and of one soul.” Prayer unites men around the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 3. They had a spirit of sacrifice: They shared their goods and had “all things in common.” Prayer produces an attitude of humility and teaches us the value of others.
 4. They had great power: Prayer brought God’s grace into their lives and the disciples experienced the power of God, so that they gave a strong witness for the Lord.
- D. Prayer Brings Joy (John 16:24): Our Lord told his disciples, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Joy will be the experience of the Christian who enters into personal relationship with the Father through Christ in prayer. This is an inner joy and is not to be related to external happiness, which can be the experience of both unsaved and saved. Joy is the delight of soul in communion with God.
- E. Prayer Brings Sufficient Grace (2 Cor. 12:8-9): Paul had a sickness and asked the Lord three times for deliverance and the answer was no. But God did promise to give him relief by granting him sufficient grace to live with the infirmity. NOTE: Paul, like all Christians should, entered into the abounding grace of God in his personal experience through prayer. Discovering the grace of God is one of the most thrilling experiences in the Christian life.
- F. Prayer Gives Wisdom (James 1:5): Any time the Christian lacks wisdom he should ask God about it. God promises to grant wisdom. NOTE: There are many decisions that we make each day in which special wisdom is needed if the right choice is going to be made.
- G. Prayer Brings Revived Strength (Isa. 40:31): Waiting upon the Lord certainly includes prayer. Prayer is one of God’s ways for strengthening, renewing and reviving one’s soul so that a person may serve the Lord in faithfulness and power.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Prayer not only brings the Christian into communion with his God, it is also

absolutely essential for normal mental health. Prayer keeps (guards) the mind and emotions. Prayer brings inner joy and peace (assurance, confidence) and wards off the possibility of serious psychological problems.

- B. Prayer is also essential in building our Christian character, for an attitude of prayer is related to the filling of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).