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THE PRAYER NETWORK



Praying In The Spirit

By Samuel Chadwick

Early in the year 1882 there came to me an experience that lifted my life to a new plane of understanding and of power. The demands of an impossible task awakened me to a sense of need. I had neither power nor might in either service or prayer. I began to pray for power for service, and God led me to the answer by way of equipment for prayer. I thought I knew how to pray and had prayed much over the work to which He had sent me. When I began to seek power, my ears were opened before my eyes began to see.

I heard testimonies to which I had been deaf. Others had been driven to God baffled by lack of power, but they always associated the gift of power with an experience of holiness about which I was not keen. It was power I wanted. I wanted power that I might succeed, and my chief concern for power was the success it would bring. I wanted success that would fill the chapel, save the people and bring down the strong fortifications of Satan with a crash.

I was young, and I was in a hurry. Twelve of us began to pray in band. God led us to Pentecost. It awakened my mind as well as cleansed my heart. It gave me a new joy and a new power, a new love and a new compassion. It gave me a new Bible and a new message. Above all else, it gave me a new understanding and a new intimacy in the communion and ministry of prayer; it taught me to pray in the Spirit.

The Co-operation of the Spirit

The work of the Holy Spirit is always in co-operation. He never works alone. He depends upon human co-operation for the mediation of His mind, the manifestation of His truth and the effectual working of His will. He indwells the Body of Christ, as Christ dwelt in the Body prepared for Him by the Holy Spirit. Revelation came from the Spirit of Truth as men of God were inspired by Him. The Word is His, but the writing is with the hands of men.

This two-fold action runs through the whole of redemption by Christ Jesus. Our Lord was born of a woman, but conceived by the Holy Spirit of God. He grew in stature and in knowledge in the house of Joseph, instructed and guided by the Holy Spirit. His teaching and ministry were in the power of the same Spirit. He offered Himself without blemish unto God through the Eternal Spirit, and it was the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead.

There is the same co-operation in all the experience of salvation. There is always a human and a divine factor. There is a two-fold witness, a two-fold leading, a two-fold work, and a two-fold intercession. We pray in the Spirit, and the Spirit maketh intercession for us.

The Fellowship of the Spirit in Prayer

The Holy Spirit does nothing of Himself, neither does He do anything for Himself. His mission is to glorify Christ, and all He does is based upon the finished work of Christ. He could not be given until Jesus was glorified, and in experience there can be no Pentecost until there is a Coronation. The Spirit is the Coronation gift of Jesus, whom the Father had made to be both Lord and Christ.

The fellowship of the Spirit in prayer is made possible by an experience in Christ. The sequence is set forth in the eighth chapter of Romans (verses 9 to 27). Those who pray in the Spirit must be in the Spirit, and if the Spirit of God is to make intercession for us He must dwell in us. If we live after the flesh we die, if we are led of the Spirit, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, then the Spirit dwells in us, lives through us, and works by us.

Then comes to pass that which is written, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself, that dwelleth in us, maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God; He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. God knows the mind of the Spirit; we pray in the Spirit, instructed and inspired by Him, and He makes intercession for us in wordless intercession. That is the New Testament explanation of prayer that prevails.

Though I did not know it until years after, that is what happened to me when God gave me a new understanding, a new joy, and a new power in prayer. A new Personality entered a new Temple, and set up a new Altar. As I live, yet not I; so I pray, yet not I. I pray in the Spirit, and the Spirit Himself also maketh intercession. The Spirit in my spirit prays.

The Spirit Helping Our Infirmities

The Spirit instructs and inspires all true prayer. There is no truer word than that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." There is no realm in which we so soon come to

the end of what we know as in that of prayer. Our petitions urge wants that are immediate, obvious, and urgent. We cannot see deep enough or far enough to know what is our real need.

Most people would like good health, home comfort, congenial conditions, happy friendships, a little more money, and better success, but who can tell if these would be for their ultimate good? God sees deeper and farther, and He may will otherwise. How often have people who have pleaded with breaking hearts that a life might be spared lived to thank God that the Lord took when He did? He knew what was coming, and took them from the evil to come.

The Holy Spirit knows the mind of Christ and the will of God, and He teaches us how to pray and what to pray for. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and He will give him more than wisdom; He will give Him the Spirit of wisdom to instruct, strengthen, and guide.

The Holy Spirit creates the conditions of prayer. We may ask amiss, not only in what we ask, but also in the reason for asking. He sanctifies desire and directs it into the will of God, so that we desire what God wills to give. That is how it comes to pass that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, we can be sure that He will give us the desires of our heart. We want what He wills. The Spirit brings to expression the unutterable things of the soul. His groanings are before our praying, and our prayers are born of His travail. In Him is the supply of life and desire, wisdom and faith, intercession and power. He quickens desire, purifies motive, inspires confidence, and assures faith.

The Prayer of the Spirit

This is the inner meaning of prayer. It is more than asking, it is communion, fellowship, co-operation, identification with God the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. Prayer is more than words, for it is mightiest when wordless. It is more than asking, for it reaches its highest glory when it adores and asks nothing. When a child entered his father's study and walked up to him at his desk, the father turned and asked, "What did you want, sonny?" The little boy answered, "Nothing, daddy, I just came to be with you."

This mystery of the Spirit is the key to other mysteries. The secret of the Lord is made manifest to those who pray in the fellowship of the Spirit. There are stages of prayer. In one stage we pray and ask Him to help. There is a more wonderful way in which He prays and we assent, and His praying is ours. He makes intercession within the Temple of our hearts, and our Lord ever lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of the Father. The Spirit within our spirits prays, working in us to will and to do the will and good pleasure of our Father which is in Heaven. He is God the Spirit representing God the Father, and God the Son, and the Three are one God. He is the power that worketh in us.

He it is that unifies hearts in prayer and makes them an irresistible unity in intercession. The assurance of answered prayer comes from Him and He it is that makes prayer the mightiest force in the universe of God. The secret of it all is in Him. The power of it all is by Him. The joy of it all is with Him. The biggest thing God ever did for me was to teach me to pray in the Spirit.

We are never really men of prayer in the best sense, until we are filled with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Lord, teach us to pray in the Spirit!

The Difference Holy Ghost Fire Makes

By Samuel Chadwick from The Way to Pentecost.

Pentecost transforms the preacher. The commonest bush ablaze with the presence of God becomes a miracle of glory. The ministry energized by the Holy Ghost is marked by aggressive evangelism, social revolution, and persecution. Holy Ghost preaching led to the burning of the books of the magic art, and it stirred up the opposition of those who trafficked in the ruin of the people. Indifference to religion is impossible where the preacher is a flame of fire.

To the church, Pentecost brought light, power, joy. There came to each illumination of mind, assurance of heart, intensity of love, fullness of power, exuberance of joy. No one needed to ask if they had received the Holy Ghost. Fire is self-evident. So is power! Even demons know the difference between the power of inspiration and the correctness of instruction. Secondhand gospels work no miracles. Uninspired devices end in defeat and shame. The only power that is adequate for Christian life and Christian work is the power of the Holy Ghost. The work of God is not by might of man or by the power of men, but by His Spirit. It is by Him the truth convicts and converts, sanctifies and saves. The philosophies of men fail, but the Word of God in the demonstration of the Spirit prevails. Our wants are many and our faults innumerable, but they are all comprehended in our lack of the Holy Ghost. We want nothing but the fire.

The resources of the church are in the "supply of the Spirit." The Spirit is more than the Minister of Consolation. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Witness, the Spirit of Conviction, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Help, the Spirit of Liberty, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Promise, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Meekness, the Spirit of Sound Mind, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Glory, and the Spirit of Prophecy. It is for the church to explore the resources of the Spirit. The resources of the world are futile. The resources of the church within herself are inadequate. In the fullness of the Spirit there is abundance of wisdom, resources, and power; but a man-managed, world-annexing, priest-pretending church can never save the world or fulfill the mission of Christ. Suppose we try Pentecost!