

“Prayer”
By Brother Parrish Lee
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Acts 16:25-26 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God...

I have come to understand that in our Christian walk, there are things that are important, but five things really stand out: Study, fellowship, prayer, worship, and evangelism. These are five pillars in our foundation.

From our Scripture thought for today, “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God...” we see the result of this is:

1. God sent an answer in the form of an earthquake
2. The foundation of their prison got shaken
3. Doors became opened, and
4. Their bands (what was binding them) got loose.

So, if we use this example, if you need the foundation of your prison shaken, pray. If you need doors to open, pray. If you need what’s binding you loosened, pray. If you need an answer from God, pray. Sometimes it’s a ‘where’ you need deliverance from, sometimes it’s a ‘what,’ sometimes it’s a ‘how,’ and sometimes it’s a ‘who.’

One of the most necessary and powerful, and yet most taken for granted, parts of our Christianity is prayer. So, it only resonates louder when the Apostles said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1) I would wager that, up to that point, they had only heard about the great things that had happened because of prayer. About how Moses prayed and people were healed (Numbers 21:7-9, Numbers 12:10-15) and fed (Numbers 11:11-32). About how Joshua prayed, and the sun stood still (Joshua 10:12-14); about Solomon’s humbling prayer before the congregation (1 Kings 8:10-54).

And, speaking of Solomon, they had heard about the offerings and prayers going up and the Spirit of God coming down and filling the Temple, so they must have asked, “Where is it?” got a Temple, and we’ve got prayers, so where is that blessed Spirit of God? I could just hear Peter and John saying, “We’re just fishermen,” and others saying what they were—like we do, a nurse, a mechanic, a laborer—and how they would say that none of them had seen that blessed Spirit of God come and fill the Temple. Sure, we’ve had God bless our lives and take care of us; but that deep, rich walk with God that we’ve heard about: and then they see JESUS. They see Him teaching, and healing, and praying. Oh, what it must’ve sounded like when He prayed! So, it’s not hard to see why they would ask, “Master, teach us to pray.” Teach us to come before God as you do—to have an audience with Him, to commune with God. And the Lord turned and said, “Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name...”

I know that there is, Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come and more after that, but let’s talk about this for a moment. “Our Father,” You know how society wants to start off praying? ‘God gimme,’ ‘God, I want,’ ‘God, I need,’ they act like they don’t know who they’re talking to. You see, some people go wrong right there where they are so consumed with asking God for what they want that they don’t even think about coming before God and making anything holy. Almighty God, You are so much higher and holier than anything I know. Blessed and rich and

wonderful is Your Name. I trust You, God, I trust Your will, I trust Your way. Blessed is Your Name.

Luke 11:1-2 ...Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth...

One of the problems that we're having in the world today is that we don't invite God to reign with us as He does in Heaven. Oh, how great it would be if we had more times where God was present in what we go through here, like He is in Heaven.

Luke 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

You know, I have friends and family with diabetes, overweight issues, etc. and so often in talking to them, they tell me that it's a matter of diet. "I like this, but it isn't good for me, it's not nutritious." They say that there are certain things that they need for the day. Our spiritual man is no different; our soul needs nutrition from the Lord from His word, from His presence.

I was in Baltimore recently visiting with family and, after a few days, I was overcome with emotion. At first I couldn't figure out why I was so hungry, and sad, and longing—it wasn't that I hadn't thanked God for all that He was doing for me, it wasn't that I hadn't told people how great He was, it wasn't even that I was scurrying around in sin. My soul was crying out to God because, while I had praised Him for what He's done, I had not worshipped Him for who He is. You see, saints, while God is better to us than we are to ourselves, he is still the Lord of the Heavenly Host, and sometimes in our prayers we have to remember that it ain't all about us—sometimes in our prayers we have to make sure that it's about Jesus.

Luke 11:4 ... And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

I want to address a spirit in the world today that it is better to offer God a weak, dirty, and inferior sacrifice than no sacrifice at all. God says, would even you governor be satisfied with that? (Malachi 1:8) How would you feel if someone you care about brought you something weak and lame. Why would anyone offer a half-way offering and not expect a half-way blessing? To be blunt, God is not satisfied with just any old offering—God is satisfied when He gets what He asked for. Our God is a Holy God, you can't just throw anything at Him and expect Him to be lollipops and giggles about it.

Prayer is such an arsenal, and there are different types of prayer:

1. Prayer of thanksgiving
2. Prayer of petition
3. Prayer of intercession
4. Prayer of confession, and
5. Prayer of praise or **extolment**

Just as there are good prayers, there are not-so-good prayers, like, "Lord, don't let me get caught," "Lord, I know I shouldn't, but I want it real bad," and, "God, get 'em back for me."

Lazy prayers, half-hearted prayers... Years ago, I was having a problem with someone in the church, and I felt that I had been done so wrong; I told the Lord that I wasn't going to pray for them. I said that to God, the Holy Righteous One, the Alpha, the Omega, the Everlasting

Lord! Yeah, Him—I'm telling Him what *I'm* going to do. He answered me on that: He said, "Not my will but His will be done."

James 5:16 ... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Before I wrap this up, I must mention effectual, fervent prayer. Look at the power God has given us—to be an overcomer through mighty, powerful prayer. I talked with a person who told me once that she prayed for the gift of healing for a year and didn't get it. They were upset about it—after all, if they ask, shouldn't they receive? (Luke 11:10) So I asked them why they stopped praying. If you're praying, you get locked in until He answers you. I asked them, "What did He tell you?" because if you're praying you don't let up until you get your answer.

Revelation 8:3 ... he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar...

God, you have been good to me. My Rose of Sharon, God, you have been good to me; my Lily of the Valley, my Rose of Sharon, my bridge over troubled water. God, you have been the type of good to me that nobody else can even compare to and find your love is so tremendous it just makes me shake. I am amazed whenever I come into your presence. I can't even find the words to bless you the way you make me feel; I just know that wherever it is you want to take me, I want to be with You, Lord Jesus. God, help me to do right, live right, be right. Lord, I know that I have other things to do, but I just don't want to rush out of your presence.

