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THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 23
HEBREWS 4:16

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HEBREWS 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We are now living in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict. On the cross Christ defeated all sin and he rejected all human good. When Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins, that was a part of his priesthood. But there is another phase of his priesthood which is also very important and that is his ministry of intercession.

One Reason Why Christ Had To Overcome Death.

Christ is said to be a priest forever, but if he had died and stayed dead, then his priesthood would have been terminated. A dead high priest could not pray for you or me. So Christ was raised up so he might, as the great High Priest, continue his ministry of intercession. This prayer of our great High Priest is found in Hebrews 5 and is also found in Psalm 19 and 22 and 69. In his prayer, while he was on the cross, he asked God The Father to raise him from the dead for the perpetuation of his priesthood. His high priestly ministry was temporarily terminated for three days but in his resurrection, his high priestly ministry was continued and will continue throughout eternity.

Christ arose on the third day, ascended, and was seated at God's right hand side and thus was concluded the first phase of the Angelic Conflict. This is described in Hebrews 2 and Colossians 2. Once Christ was seated on the right hand side of God, he is told to sit there until his enemies were made into his footstool. This will be the end of the Angelic Conflict. Christ and the line of Christ had been the target for Satan for so long, but now all of that was changed and now his followers are Satan's target. Every believer, therefore, is now a priest so he can face up to Satan himself, and within every believer is The Holy Spirit and the indwelling Christ so there will be ample power for this conflict. Living on this earth as priests, we are now to push on toward the ultimate victory. When Christ returns, he will wage a second stage of his victory in the Angelic Conflict and that is when he will personally slaughter millions of the enemy in the Armageddon campaign. Then the Devil will be chained for 1,000 years and after that Christ will put down the Gog and Magog rebellion and will set up his eternal kingdom.

Hebrews Gives Great Significance To Christ As High Priest.

Christ is emphasized as the great High Priest, and also in Hebrews our place as priests is also emphasized. As priests the believers will experience four types of grace.

1. Salvation grace: Grace includes all that was provided for us at the point of salvation. We believe in Christ and are saved, but this is a non-meritorious thing, we get no credit for believing. He gets all the credit. BUT OUR VOLITION IS INVOLVED IN OUR BELIEVING. But even though our volition is involved, we get no credit for the decision.
2. Grace for every day of the Christian life. Unlike salvation grace, no volition is involved here. This is just God's provision for us every day. He gives us the sunshine and the rain and a thousand other things without us having anything to say about it. It just comes from his bounty. You are alive right now because of the grace of God, apart from any decision on your part.

3. Super Grace.

This is the "more grace" that is spoken about in James 4:6. You have to learn doctrine and keep learning it day after day and super grace is the station to which you arrive and your volition is involved.

4. Surpassing grace.

EPHESIANS 2:7 "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." This is the grace of God that provides perfection for you in heaven and this too comes without your volition being involved. God does it all.

God is only glorified when he can pour, and through super grace, we make a cup available to him so he can pour and this is the real function of his priesthood. He has had the supply all along and has just been waiting to pour out his super grace blessings. This is the meaning of Romans 8:28 but that verse is for believers only and really is for super grace believers only. So don't quote Romans 8:28 just for anybody, for it applies to the super grace crowd only. All things do not work together for good unless God is supreme in your life. So just remember this, Bible Doctrine is more important than anything in your life.

Why do so many people fail?

There are many reasons why so many Christians fail. Some of the reasons are disillusionment, boredom, discouragement, self-pity, loneliness, frustration, jealousy, bitterness and many other mental attitudes that defeat the super grace life. But emotional revolt in the soul shuts down the possibility of spiritual growth every time, and this leads to a black out of the soul and eventually brings the sin unto death.

Power In Prayer Assured.

Once a believer enters super grace he becomes very powerful in prayer. Prayer becomes a normal, powerful, daily function of his life. Before a believer reaches super grace, prayer is a useless weapon. The only prayer that a reversionist can really pray is a prayer of repentance and rebound. The super grace Christian is certain to be powerful in prayer. They both go together. He knows how to pray, knows what to pray for, and he prays according to the rules God has set down in his book.

Our Priesthood Will Also Be Continued.

We have stated above that Christ dropped his priesthood for the three days he was in the grave, then when he was resurrected, he picked up his office of High Priest again and he will occupy that office forever. We too are priests and when we die, we will temporarily lay aside that office, but when we are resurrected, we will become priests again and will forever be priests and kings with Christ forever and forever. When we return to this earth with Christ as priests, our first job for Christ will be to rid this earth of demons.

Prayer Promises Depend On Super Grace Living.

One of the reasons why so many prayers are not answered and why so many Christians misunderstand the prayer promises is that they do not have doctrine and they don't understand the rules of the game. One must be in fellowship in order to be heard. One must be in super

grace in order to claim the promises. That's why that verse says, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you." Now that's super grace living.

Illustration--Just suppose a man says that he wants to be a hockey player, but he has never had on a pair of ice skates. Well, you can't play hockey just because you buy some ice skates and get a stick in your hand. He may dress up in the uniform and get the skates and the stick, but he can't play hockey until he learns how to skate and until he studies the rules of the game. That's the way it is with prayer. Just because you are a Christian you can't pray until you learn the rules of super grace living. Don't think just because you are saved and you say, "O Jesus" that all your prayers are going to be answered. Now quite often someone prays about something and the results come out pleasing to them and they think God answered their prayers.

Illustration

Suppose someone who has never seen a baseball decides they want to play baseball. They get a ball and a glove and go out on the field and then they discover that the only way they can play that game is to learn the rules. Then they have to practice and practice and after years of effort and concentration, they learn the game. Prayer is exactly the same way. No one can know how to pray effectively unless he learns the Word of God and puts it into every day living.

HEBREWS 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Please notice it says, "Come boldly" and it doesn't say to come ignorantly or to come stupidly. Lots of our prayers are ludicrous. We are like the hockey player who never had on a pair of ice skates, or like the so-called baseball player who never had a ball in his hand. We have the word "therefore" and this is from "oun" which is an inferential particle and it means to come to a conclusion. Here it means to come to a conclusion about the super grace life. Take in doctrine and keep taking it in and you will become a great person in prayer. They always go together. Now let me beat you off at the pass and remind you that you don't have to wait until you reach super grace to start praying. I didn't say any such thing. I simply am saying that you will never be powerful in prayer until you know doctrine and know how to use this amazing weapon. Don't do like some believers do and pray for the filling of The Holy Spirit. You already have the Holy Spirit in you and have had since the moment you believed in Christ. Then there are some people who plead with God to do certain things for them and they think this will get God's attention. So this "oun" here is what we call a "secondary particle" which means that this is a conclusion, and that many other great things are also coming up in this book. One of the conclusions we can reach here is that when a believer learn doctrine and applies the truth to prayer, he can come with confidence to God at any time and ask what he wants.

"Let us come" is a present, middle, subjunctive of "pros erchomai." "Pros" means face to face and "erchomai" means to approach. So the conclusion we can draw here is this--Take in doctrine and you will have an effective prayer life. You can walk into God's presence boldly and tell him what you need. (In the light of these truths I would suppose that prayer is one of the most abused things in all the Word of God.) The middle voice here means you voluntarily yield yourself to the result of the action that comes from such a decision. The subjunctive mood means that you are invited on the basis of your own volition to enter this great experience of prayer, which after all is just committing everything to God.

So thus far we have "Therefore, let us be approaching." Next we have the word "boldly" and the words are "meta parrhesia" and it means "with confidence." In other words, you know the rules, you know what you are doing, so come with confidence before God. Next we have "Unto the throne of grace." The word for throne is "thronos" and the word grace has the definite article before it, "The grace." And this is where we know it is referring to super grace. This is the real fountain. This is the real place of grace blessings.

Next we begin a purpose clause with the word "hina" plus the subjunctive. "That we may obtain" is an aorist, active, subjunctive of "lam-bano." This is a culminative aorist and it means you are now ready to use a weapon which you understand and can use. Romans 8:26-27.

I throw this in here to remind you that this is a great conflict in which we are engaged and this illustrates the intensity of the struggle of the Angelic Conflict. Then this is a subjunctive mood and this means that it is God's purpose to answer our prayers if we will only get out of the way and let God do his great work through us. The thing we are to obtain is "eleios" and it means mercy, benefit, and this really means grace in action.

Next we have the word "find" and this is an aorist, active, subjunctive of "heurisko" and it means to discover. It means to find something that has been hidden before. The thing you find is grace and this leads to super grace living and this means effective powerful prayer. So look what we have "Therefore, let us be approaching the throne of grace with confidence, that we may receive grace in action and discover grace with reference to reasonable help."

So you don't have to shout. God knew a million years ago what you were going to need and he has it ready for you right when you need it

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

1. THE APPROACH IN PRAYER.

Always address your prayers to God The Father.
Ephesians 3:1 and 14; Matthew 6:9

2. GOD RECEIVES PRAYER FROM THREE SOURCES.

- a. From believers. Our passage here is Hebrews 4:16.
 - b. From Christ. Hebrews 7:25
 - c. From The Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26-27
- The more doctrine you learn the more effective your prayers become.

3. THE AGENDA FOR PRAYER.

- a. Confession. 1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18
- b. Thanksgiving. Ephesians 5:20, 1 Thess. 5:18
- c. Intercession. Ephesians 6:18
- d. Petition for our own needs. Hebrews 4:16

4. PRAYER IS AN EXHALE OF THE FAITH-REST PRINCIPLE.

Matthew 21:22, Matthew 18:19, Mark 11:24, John 15:7
Prayer is the exhale of faith.

5. EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER.

- a. Prayer becomes more and more effective when the believer lives by faith-rest. John 15:7
- b. Prayer is an extension of the faith-rest principle. It causes us to live the faith-rest life every day.

- c. Prayer demands that you know the will of God, and you can't know the will of God apart from the Word of God.
1 John 5:14
 - d. Prayer must be offered in the status of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:18
 - e. Prayer is ineffective while we are in carnality. Psalm 66:18 (Don't try to pray when you are out of fellowship.)
 - f. Prayer demands that a believer grow in grace. Heb. 4:16
 - g. Prayer is ordained as a function of our priesthood as a part of the divine decrees. Jeremiah 33:3
 - h. Prayer is directly related to occupation with Christ.
6. PRAYER IS A GRACE FUNCTION AND CANNOT BE BASED ON HUMAN MERIT.
Christ makes it possible for us to approach God. God doesn't hear my prayers because he is impressed with me.
7. REASONS WHY PRAYERS ARE NOT ANSWERED (Facets of Carnality)
- a. Lack of faith, Matt. 21:22, Mark 11:24
 - b. Selfishness. James 4:2-3
 - c. Carnality. Psalm 66:18
 - d. Lack of compassion. Prov. 21:13
 - e. Lack of harmony in the home. 1 Peter 3:7
 - f. Pride or self-righteousness. Job 35:12-13
 - g. Lack of filling of the Spirit. Eph. 6:18
 - h. Lack of obedience. 1 John 3:22, "keep His commandments," stay filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18
 - i. Noncompliability with Divine will. 1 John 5:14
8. PRAYER PETITIONS AND PRAYER ANSWERS
- a. Petition answered. Flesh to eat. Num. 11:4-6, 13
Desire not answered. Happiness
 - b. Petition not answered. Spare Sodom and Gomorrah
Desire answered. Lot's safety. Gen. 18:32-33
 - c. Petition answered. Raise Lazarus from the dead.
Desire answered. Bystanders to believe. John 11:41-45
 - d. Petition not answered. (Nine reasons above why prayer is not answered.)
Desire not answered.