

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

PRAYING FOR OUR NEEDS

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Philippians 4:11-12

To say that the average "Christian" has a self centered view of prayer would be an understatement. Most "pray-ers" approach the LORD with their requests as though HE is a large celestial vending machine. The average prayer meeting sounds like a nurses report in a hospital ward. The television and radio is filled with the message of the "name it and claim it" crowd who assure one another that they can have anything they ask for if they'll just muster up enough faith to believe it to be so. I heard a "preacher" of that type, just the other day saying that when you pray to be healed, you actually already have the healing you just don't know it yet. According to this "preacher", the apostle Paul evidently was in error when he said "*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*" (2 Cor 12:8) because he says that the LORD did not remove it. No one would ever die if men who prayed were always healed. These "wells without water" (see II Pet.2:17) build their false doctrine primarily on a mistaken interpretation of Isaiah 53:5. They say that HE bought healing of physical diseases for us when HE died on the cross. Now the amazing thing about their interpretation is that they actually deny that HE purchased anything else. They say that HE only made the forgiveness of our sins a possibility, that HE only took away our transgressions if we cooperate with HIM but HE actually healed us of physical diseases and all we have to do is claim it.

When the LORD JESUS CHRIST died on Calvary's cross HE actually obtained eternal redemption for HIS people. (see Heb.9:12) HE satisfied every jot and tittle of the law in their behalf. HE purchased their pardon totally by HIS work without the input or cooperation of even one of them. A man does not stand in jeopardy who has his sin debt settled by JESUS CHRIST. So if it were true that at this same time HE purchased our physical healing, then none of those for whom HE died would ever have any sickness of any type.

When a man is sick the first thing he thinks he needs is some medicine or a doctor. The reality of the matter is that he may actually need a change of lifestyle. Heart trouble afflicts a multitude. The immediate need of someone stricken with this malady is bypass surgery but their real need is probably a change in diet and exercise. So it is with the maladies and troubles which beset us in this life. When troubles arise that's when most people start to pray. Sadly, most of our prayers are centered on getting relief from the trouble that has beset us. But in reality, our "immediate" problem is not our "real" problem. GOD has not promised us health, happiness in this life, nor wealth of an earthly kind. But HE has promised to be with us in the midst of our trials and to lead us in a path which will ultimately result in good for us. (see Rom.8:28)

GOD is not interested in our comfort but in our conformity to CHRIST. "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*" (Heb 12:6) Paul said that he

was given a thorn in his flesh in order that he would not be lifted up with pride. He was thankful that the LORD dealt with him in this fashion rather than just granting his wish to be healed. David said *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. -- I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."* (Ps,119:71,75) Job said, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:"* (Job 13:15) The afflictions and troubles of this life are as much a blessing from the LORD as deliverance from them is.

Prayer is primarily about worship. When the LORD taught HIS disciples to pray, HE began by saying *"Our FATHER who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"*. True prayer cannot be carried on without a heart and attitude of worship and adoration. Prayer is also about confession of our sins. The LORD said that a publican and a Pharisee went down to the temple to pray but only one came away "justified". The publican who smote upon his breast and said *"GOD be merciful to me, a sinner"*. Not only is it about confession of the sins that we have committed but also has an eye to our "propensity" to sin and asks for deliverance from temptation yet to come.

Paul said that he had learned to be content. That is not a state of mind and heart which a man can easily achieve nor one that he is born with. In fact I believe it to be the most difficult place for a man to ever get. Contentedness does not grow out of getting everything that our flesh wants in life. There are many men who have the capability to buy anything they want yet they do not necessarily ever achieve contentedness. To be content one must be brought to a place of understanding that our GOD is the GOD of the light and the darkness. The GOD of affliction and the GOD of health and prosperity. HE is the GOD of abundance and the the GOD of abasement. HE is the ONE who "shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:19) When we pray for HIM to fill our needs we should spend more time asking HIM what our needs are than in describing to HIM what we think we need.

When a man genuinely prays he does not always even know what he should pray for. *"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself 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."* (Rom.8:26-27) *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."* (1 John 5:14)

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