

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume III

Issue 42

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

THE BLESSING OF UNMET DESIRE

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Matthew 6:8

In thinking of a name for this article, I initially chose the title "The Blessing of Unanswered Prayer" when I realized that there is really no such thing as an unanswered prayer. There are requests that we make to the LORD in prayer that HE does not see fit to grant, sometimes HIS answer may be delayed, and sometimes it is not what we think we want to hear. But HE does indeed hear those prayers asked in JESUS name and even grants those things we ask when we pray according to HIS will (i.e.; purpose). Most of the praying that the average so-called Christian does is self centered and many times very short sighted. Quite often the phrase "if it be your will" is added to make those prayers "scriptural" even when the real desire is that HE will grant the request whether its HIS will or not; or that maybe HE will change HIS will to fit ours.

According to much of the preaching that we hear on prayer, one would get the impression that something is wrong with a child of GOD who is not getting whatever they request. These false prophets tell us that health and wealth is at our fingertips. That GOD is just like a genie in a bottle which if we rub just right we'll get our wish every time. Its all up to us. They tell us we must demand what we want rather than request it. GOD does indeed fatten calves for the slaughter but HE will not spoil HIS children by indulging their whims. (see Jer.51:40;Ezek.21:15)

We should be extremely grateful that HE does not always answer our prayers as we think we would like HIM to. One of the marks of the LORD's love to HIS elect children is that HE is working all things together for their good. HE is so determined to bring us along the proper path and so much desires our well being that HE will only do for us those things which are beneficial for us, even if it means denying our requests. So I believe it is a great blessing when the LORD does not fulfill our desires when those desires would either lead us astray or not result in our ultimate good. GOD intends to bring us into conformity with HIS SON and will spare no expense nor hold back any chastening in order to work that perfect work. We see this illustrated in :

The Apostle Paul. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. Many have speculated on what this was exactly since the scriptures do not specifically tell us. They seem to indicate that it was some sort of physical malady, perhaps poor eyesight. But while we cannot be certain what the exact "thorn" was we can be certain that it was worrisome enough to Paul that he approached the LORD in a formal way three different times to request its removal. But the LORD did not honor HIS request even though Paul thought this thorn was a great hindrance (in the flesh as Paul viewed it) to his ministry. Because the LORD had a purpose in bringing this thorn (even a messenger from Satan) upon Paul in order that he might not be lifted up with pride and HE was going to fulfill that purpose for Paul's benefit. *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor 12:9) All glory belongs to the LORD and we must learn that no man's ministry is so indispensable that the LORD will overlook the working in him of his reliance upon and growth in CHRIST.

The Prophet Elijah. Elijah was a great miracle working prophet and is the epitome of the old testament prophets. His prayers were answered numerous times and he is even used as an example of fervent and effectual prayer. (see James 5:16-17) Yet the LORD was pleased to deny his request when he asked the LORD to take his life. (see I Kings 19:4) The very best and most spiritual of men are prone to bouts of weakness, self-pity, and poor judgement. Thank the LORD that HE is not moved by the whims and emotions of men but is working HIS perfect work in us at all times. GOD often uses the denial of our prayers to reveal to us a greater blessing that we could not see otherwise, just like the revelation HE gave to Elijah that HE had reserved unto himself, seven thousand men who were not Baal worshippers.

Mary and Martha. These precious ladies sent word to the LORD JESUS (acting in great faith I might add) to come quickly and heal their brother Lazarus, even appealing to the fact that he was greatly loved by the LORD. (see John 11:3) Yet the LORD upon hearing this request (this was not news to HIM who knows all things) tarried with HIS disciples until HE knew Lazarus had been dead for four days. The LORD often delays his answer to our prayers because HE wants us to learn a greater lesson and see HIS power demonstrated in a way that we could not if he granted our wishes precisely when we asked. So we see the LORD acting exactly according to HIS purpose and arriving at exactly the proper time though it was deemed late by these women.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST. Our LORD had one chief desire as HE walked upon this earth. That was to fulfill HIS FATHER's purpose in all things and to be found pleasing in HIS sight. Yet we find HIM praying in agony in the garden "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*" (Matt 26:39) Some have characterized HIS prayer as a crying out in the weakness of HIS flesh to be kept from the pain and suffering of the crucifixion. I believe this to be a great error in analysis. Rather, HE was agonizing with this great dilemma: the only way that HE could be found pleasing in the FATHER's eyes was to be found accursed in the same. Oh what wonder and amazement must fill our hearts as we see HIM who knew no sin, becoming sin for us. The spotless LAMB of GOD judged as a guilty sinner in the sight of the ONE whom HE desired to please and whose law HE came to fulfill. HE who could have called ten thousand angels willingly laid down himself to judgement for our sake becoming an outcast from the FATHER's presence. Because HE was a perfect SON HE cried out, "*nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matt 26:39) "*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" (Heb 12:2)

mam