

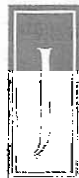


Prayer

POWERFUL PRAYER

STORMIE DMARTIAN

(Matthew 6:5-13)



Just as our physical bodies need care, so do our souls. Our souls need to be fed, cleansed, healed, trained, and rested. Our souls can only find that kind of wholeness when we are in the presence of God. In Him we find the peace, health, growth, fulfillment, and restoration we need. The way to enter into the fullness of God's presence is through prayer.

TALKING TO A POWERFUL GOD

Prayer is talking to God. But it is not just about asking Him for things, even though that is an important part of it. Prayer is spending time with God—listening to His voice speak to our hearts. Prayer is fulfilling that deep desire to be with God and letting our spirits align with His. Through prayer we declare our dependence on Him and draw upon His wisdom and strength. Through prayer, we tell God how much we love Him, and we let His love for us fill our souls to overflowing. Prayer is getting to know God better.

It's hard to get to know someone if we seldom talk to that person, or if the only time we talk to him or her is when we want something. The same is true with God. It's hard to get to know Him without ongoing daily communication with Him. Most of us have electricity in our homes. But if we don't plug into it, we will not have light. The same is true of our relationship with Jesus, who is the Light of the world. If we don't plug into Him, we will miss the greatest portion of His radiance and illumination in our lives.

We become like the people with whom we spend time. When we spend time with God, His character rubs off on us. When we are in His presence, we soak in His healing and wholeness, and it makes us healed and whole. His peace becomes our peace. In His presence, our lives can be transformed.

TRUSTING GOD THROUGH POWERFUL PRAYER

"Pray without ceasing," the Bible says (1 Thess. 5:17). That means praying constantly, making prayer a way of life. To pray without ceasing means that we draw near to God in everything we do—our work, relationships, hobbies, entertainment, travel, and the mundane activities of daily living. It means praying about everything so that we don't leave our lives to chance.

Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7). The problem is that we neglect to ask. We don't take time to seek. And we forget to knock. We get busy trying to live our complex lives on our own terms. There is so much vying for our attention, so many decisions to be made, so many issues to deplete our strength, distort our thinking, and steal our peace. Perhaps our greatest sin is thinking we can handle any part of our lives without talking to God about it.

We need to ask of God, and we need to be specific. We should keep knocking until the door opens to everything He has for us. But He doesn't want us to just ask for anything and everything, hoping He will get us out of the mess we're in or give us whatever we want. The Bible says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). When we merely ask for things without first drawing close to

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God, we can miss how we're supposed to pray:

Prayer should not be reduced to a mere formula, but there are important elements that are good to include if our prayers are to be as effective and powerful as we want them to be. In prayer, we should try to:

- Tell God how much we love Him.
- Praise Him for who He is.
- Thank Him for all He has done.
- Declare our dependence upon Him.
- Confess any sin in our lives.
- Share everything that is in our hearts.
- Tell Him our requests.
- Wait on Him to speak to our souls.
- Thank Him for hearing our prayers.

We will find that the more we pray, the more we will find to pray about. But we mustn't be discouraged if the answers to our prayers don't seem to come right away. Sometimes it takes a while. And often we don't even recognize the answers to our own prayers because they are not answered in the way or time we thought they would be. We can't limit God to our timetable. Our job is to pray; God's job is to answer. We can trust that God always hears our prayers; something is happening whether we can see it or not.

Jesus said, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14). That is His promise to us. So say to Him, "Lord, touch me with Your healing love and power. Meet my every need and open up my understanding to all You have for me where I am right now. Reveal Yourself to me in every situation I face. Show me what I need to see and tell me what I need to know. Enable me to do what I have to do. For I know that without You, I can do nothing."

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of prayer include:

- Nehemiah 1:4—2:5
- Psalm 118:5-8
- Matthew 21:22
- Mark 1:35
- 1 John 5:14

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on prayer at Matthew 6:5-13 on page 1237. See also the personality profile of Jesus on page 1252.

whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND RICHES

²⁴"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

DO NOT WORRY

²⁵"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body

more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

KEY PASSAGE



Prayer

OPENING HEAVEN'S GATES

(6:5-13)

Jesus taught that prayer should arise from people's sincere love for God—not from a love of show or ritual. The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples provides the perfect example of prayer.

- > The first words of the prayer express adoration and love for God as Father.
- > The next phrases express submission to God and trust in His power and promises: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done."
- > Then the prayer asks God for daily provision.
- > The prayer also gives opportunity to express repentance, asking for forgiveness according to how the person praying forgives others.
- > Next follows a request for help in resisting temptation and in fighting sin.
- > The final sentence recognizes that everything belongs to God and is under His control.

Our prayers should include elements of adoration, submission, petition, repentance, and praise to God.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about prayer on pages 1238, 1239. See also the personality profile of Jesus on page 1252.

SOUL NOTE



Mind Clutter (6:25-34) Worry fills people's minds with useless clutter that leaves no room for God. Worry clouds perspective, causing people to focus on themselves rather than on God. Jesus said that God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, so He will take care of His children. Trusting God involves trusting Him to care for us. Jesus tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." As believers we still must work to meet our needs; we don't sit back and expect God to do it all. We work, but we don't worry. We know that God will care for us. **Topic: Worry**

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

¹³When Jesus heard *it*, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

¹⁶But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

¹⁸He said, "Bring them here to Me." ¹⁹Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. ²⁰So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. ²¹Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

²²Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³And when He had sent the multitudes away,

He went up on the mountain to pray. Now when it was late, the disciples were on the sea, and a storm of wind was contrary.

²⁵Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. The disciples saw Him, and they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost." And they cried out, "Help! We are perishing!"

²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer, I am here; do not be afraid."

²⁸And Peter answered Him, saying, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You, and I will walk on the water, just as You do."

²⁹So He said to him, "Come." And Peter came down out of the boat, and walked on the water, and began to sink, for the wind was strong. He began to cry out, saying, "Save me, Lord!"

³¹And immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"

³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are the Son of God."

MANY TOUCH HIM

³⁴When they had crossed the land of Gennesaret, they came into all that country. He healed many there, and they sought Him, and touched Him, and they were healed. And as He went into a city, they met Him, and they touched Him, and they were healed. And as He went into a city, they met Him, and they touched Him, and they were healed.

DEFILEMENT COMES FROM THE HEART

15 Then the Pharisees and scribes said to Him, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?"

³He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God, saying, 'Whoever touches the bread that comes from the oven of a man, that man becomes defiled'?"

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Prayer

JESUS: TEACHING US TO PRAY

(MATTHEW 14:23)

Jesus prayed in public and in private. Jesus prayed with and for His disciples. He prayed openly for others. He commanded prayer, encouraged prayer, taught prayer, and modeled prayer. During several significant times in Jesus' life, He left the disciples and His public ministry and spent time alone in prayer.

Prayer, Jesus revealed, is not just the method for godly request-making or an exercise in guidance. He taught that prayer is also a vehicle

- > for worship,
- > for the expression of praise,
- > for adoration,
- > for confession, and
- > for thanksgiving to God.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1), He gave them what we call the Lord's Prayer as an example.

For Jesus, prayer was not just a wordy exercise—it was connection and communion with the living God. Jesus poured His heart and soul into prayer, and it became a time of great emotional expression of His spirit. The kind of intense intimacy with God that the disciples observed in Jesus while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46) doesn't appear overnight, but is the result of years of prayerful interaction with God.

Luke's Gospel includes an interesting example of how characteristic prayer was in Jesus' life. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus walked with two disciples from outside Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32). They traveled and talked for several hours, but it wasn't until the mealtime, when Jesus prayed for the bread and broke it, that the disciples' eyes were opened to recognize Him. Prayer offered a hint that even they couldn't miss.

Prayer was central in Jesus' life. If Jesus, who was the divine Son of God, needed to get alone with God in order to pray and commune with Him, how much more do we!

To Learn More: Turn to the article about prayer on pages 1238, 1239. See also the key passage note at Matthew 6:5-13 on page 1237.

the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

30 “You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. ²A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. ⁴Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. ⁵You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ⁶And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

⁷“Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. ⁸And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. ⁹You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. ¹⁰And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.”

THE RANSOM MONEY

¹¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹²“When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD,

when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.

¹³This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the LORD. ¹⁴Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. ¹⁵The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.”

THE BRONZE LAVER

¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁸“You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, ¹⁹for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. ²⁰When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. ²¹So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations.”

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

²²Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³“Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shek-



SOUL NOTE

A Gentle Reminder (30:1) The altar of incense was a visible reminder of the importance of daily prayer. Located inside the tabernacle itself (40:26, 27), it was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering, which was inside the courtyard by the main entrance. Priests burned sweet-smelling incense on the altar of incense daily to represent the prayers of God's people. The sweet aroma of the incense wafting to heaven symbolized God's pleasure with His people's prayers. What reminds you to pray and worship daily? **Topic: Prayer**

els of sweet shekels of ca the sanctuary shall make in ointment com the perfume. ²⁶With it you meeting and table and all i utensils, and r burnt offering ver and its be that they may them must b Aaron and his they may min

³¹“And you rael, saying: I to Me through not be poure make any oth sition. It is h ³³Whoever co puts any of it from his peop

THE INCENSE

³⁴And the L spices, stacte pure frankinc these sweet sp shall be equa of each. ³⁵You of these an compound ac the art of the salted, pure, ³⁶And you s some of it and put som the tabernacl with you. It s as for the ir you shall no cording to its holy for the like it, to sm his people.”

ARTISANS FOR

31 Then ²“See, the son of Ur Judah. ³And I

who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. ⁷Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: ⁸When Jacob had gone into Egypt,⁴ and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. ⁹And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. ¹⁰Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashioretths;^a but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' ¹¹And the LORD sent Jerubbaal,^a Bedan,^b Jephthah, and Samuel,^c and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. ¹²And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king.

¹³"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you. ¹⁴If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. ¹⁵However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.

¹⁶"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: ¹⁷Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves."

¹⁸So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

¹⁹And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

²⁰Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. ²²For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. ²³Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. ²⁴Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. ²⁵But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

SAUL'S UNLAWFUL SACRIFICE

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,⁴ Saul chose for himself three thousand men of

12:8 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds and the Egyptians afflicted them. **12:10** ^aCanaanite goddesses

12:11 ^aSyriac reads Deborah; Targum reads Gideon. ^bSeptuagint and Syriac read Barak; Targum reads Simson. ^cSyriac reads Simson.

13:1 ^aThe Hebrew is difficult (compare 2 Samuel 5:4; 2 Kings 14:2; see also 2 Samuel 2:10; Acts 13:21).

SOUL NOTE



Keep on Praying (12:23) The prophet Samuel was heartbroken that the Israelites desired a king. But God told Samuel to do as they asked (8:6, 7). Despite his disappointment, Samuel stated that he would not "sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray" for them (12:23). Loved ones may make choices with which we disagree. Like Samuel, we should be committed to continuing to pray for them. Persevering in prayer is our responsibility and should be our commitment. **Topic: Prayer**

chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion. ²Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. ⁶Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the

Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. ⁷For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. ⁹Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁰And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

¹²Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud.

¹³ I have surely built You an exalted house, And a place for You to dwell in forever."

SOLOMON'S SPEECH AT COMPLETION OF THE WORK

¹⁴Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. ¹⁵And he said: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, ¹⁶"Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I

chose David to be over My people Israel.' ¹⁷Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple^a for the name of the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁸But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' ²⁰So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. ²¹And there I have made a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which He made with our

The glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.
1 KINGS 8:11

8:17 ^aLiterally house, and so in verses 18-20



SOUL NOTE

God Hears (8:22-30) Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple is one of the exemplary prayers of the Old Testament. He acknowledged the Lord God of Israel, keeper of the covenant and giver of mercy. Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of His people when they came to the temple to pray (8:30). The glorious God, who is greater than the heavens, heard and answered Solomon's prayer, and He hears and answers ours. Those who humbly come to God in reverence and awe, bringing their praise and requests, will not be disappointed. **Topic: Prayer**



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SOLOMON'S
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the son of Maacah, the
of Geshur; the
of Haggith; ³the fifth,
the sixth, Ithream, by

to him in Hebron.
years and six months,
years thirty-three years.
to him in Jerusalem:
ean, and Solomon—
daughter of Ammiel.
Elishama,^a Eliphelet,^b
Elishama, Eliada,^a
These were all the
sons of the concu-
ster.

Rehoboam; Abijah^a
Eshoshaphat his son,
his son, Joash^b his
Azariah^a his son, Jo-
son, Hezekiah his
Ammon his son, and
of Josiah were Joha-
and Jehoiakim, the
fourth Shallum.^a
Jeconiah his son

Eliah^a were Assir,^b
Achiram, Pedaiiah,

verse 54
3:3 3:5 ^aSpelled
5:14 ^bSpelled
ed Eliam in
14:5 and
4:5
10 ^aSpelled Abijam
oram in 2 Kings
2 Kings 12:1
3:15 ^aCalled
^aCompare 2 Kings
Jeremiah 22:24
Jeconiah the

Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Neda-
biah. ¹⁹The sons of Pedaiiah were Zerubbabel
and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel were Me-
shullam, Hananiah, Shelomith their sister,
²⁰and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Iiasadiah,
and Jushab-Heşed—five in all.

²¹The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and
Jeshaiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Ar-
nan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons of
Shechaniah. ²²The son of Shechaniah was
Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah were Hat-
tush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat—six
in all. ²³The sons of Neariah were Elioenai,
Hezekiah, and Azrikam—three in all. ²⁴The
sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pe-
laiiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani—
seven in all.

THE FAMILY OF

4 The sons of Judah were Perez, Hezron,
Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. ²And Reaiah the
son of Shobal begot Jahath, and Jahath begot
Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of
the Zorathites. ³These were the sons of the fa-
ther of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and
the name of their sister was Hazeleponi; ⁴and
Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer was
the father of Hushah.

These were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of
Ephrathah the father of Bethlehem.

⁵And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two
wives, Helah and Naarah. ⁶Naarah bore him
Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari.
These were the sons of Naarah. ⁷The sons of
Helah were Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan;
Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families of
Aharhel the son of Harum.

⁹Now Jabez was more honorable than his
brothers, and his mother called his name
Jabez,^a saying, "Because I bore him in pain."
¹⁰And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,

"Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and
enlarge my territory, that Your hand would
be with me, and that You would keep me
from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God
granted him what he requested.

¹¹Chelub the brother of Shubah begot Mehir,
who was the father of Eshton. ¹²And Eshton
begot Beth-Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the
father of Ir-Nahash. These were the men of
Rechah.

¹³The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Sera-
iah. The sons of Othniel were Hathath,^a ¹⁴and
Meonothai who begot Ophrah. Seraiah begot
Joab the father of Ge Harashim,^a for they were
craftsmen. ¹⁵The sons of Caleb the son of Je-
phunneh were Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son
of Elah was Kenaz. ¹⁶The sons of Jehallelel
were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. ¹⁷The
sons of Ezra were Jether, Mered, Epher, and
Jalon. And Mered's wife^a bore Miriam, Sham-
mai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. ¹⁸(His
wife Jehudijah^a bore Jered the father of Gedor,
Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the
father of Zanoah.) And these were the sons of
Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mer-
ed took.

¹⁹The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of
Naham, were the fathers of Keilah the Garmite
and of Eshtemoa the Maachathite. ²⁰And the
sons of Shimon were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-
Hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi were
Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

²¹The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were
Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of
Mareshah, and the families of the house of
the linen workers of the house of Ashbea;
²²also Jokim, the men of Chozeba, and Joash;

4:9 ^aLiterally He Will Cause Pain 4:13 ^aSeptuagint
and Vulgate add and Meonothai. 4:14 ^aLiterally
Valley of Craftsmen 4:17 ^aLiterally she 4:18 ^aOr
His Judean wife

SOUL NOTE



Bless Me (4:9, 10) Little is written about most of the people in these lists beyond their names, but Jabez is described as a man "more honorable than his brothers," who "called on the God of Israel." Jabez prayed that God would bless him and keep him from evil so he would not cause anyone pain. Because God honored his prayer, we see that we too can pray for God's blessing on our lives. Our motivation should be so that we can use God's blessing to be a blessing to others.

Topic: Prayer

- 18 He has redeemed my soul in peace from
the battle *that was* against me,
For *there were* many against me.
- 19 God will hear, and afflict them,
Even He who abides from of old.
- Selah
- Because they do not change,
Therefore they do not fear God.
- He has put forth his hands against those
who were at peace with him;
He has broken his covenant.
- 21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother
than butter,
But war *was* in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they *were* drawn swords.
- 22 Cast your burden on the LORD,
And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to be
moved.
- 23 But You, O God,
shall bring them
down to the pit
of destruction;
Bloodthirsty and
deceitful men
shall not live out half their days:
But I will trust in You.
- Cast your burden on the LORD, and
He shall sustain you; He shall never
permit the righteous to be moved.
- PSALM 55:22
- 8 You number my
wanderings;
Put my tears into
Your bottle;
*Are they not in
Your book?*
- 9 When I cry out to
You,
Then my enemies will turn back;
This I know, because God *is* for me
- 10 In God (I will praise *His* word),
In the LORD (I will praise *His* word),
- 11 In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
- 12 Vows *made* to You are *binding* upon me,
O God!

PSALM 56

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM TORMENTORS

*To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove
in Distant Lands."^a A Michtam
of David when the Philistines
captured him in Gath.*

- 1 Be merciful to me, O God, for man
would swallow me up;

56:title ^aHebrew *Jonath Elem Rechokim*



SOUL NOTE

Heard (55:17, 22) God always hears our cries. Prayer is to be a constant expression of the human soul—seeking God “evening and morning and at noon.” In prayer, we can cast our burdens on the Lord, knowing that He will sustain us.

Prayer opens heaven’s doors. There are many kinds of prayers—thanksgiving, confession, intercession, supplication, adoration. There are many ways to pray—alone, with a few others, in a large group, silently, aloud, even in song. God promises that however we pray, He will hear and sustain us. **Topic: Prayer**

governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. ⁴So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he *was* faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God."

⁶So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." ⁹Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

¹⁰Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

¹¹Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹²And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

¹³So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives^a from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it* is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

¹⁶So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." ¹⁷Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

DANIEL SAVED FROM THE LIONS

¹⁸Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians^a were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. ¹⁹Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve

6:13 ^aLiterally of the sons of the captivity

6:18 ^aExact meaning unknown

SOUL NOTE



Weigh the Options (6:10) Daniel was a savvy political consultant. He knew that his enemies were lying in wait for him, and he knew the penalty for praying to God. After weighing these concerns, Daniel concluded that they were nothing compared with the prospect of disrupting his relationship with God. So "with his windows open . . . he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed." Daniel was unwilling to change his prayer habits, even at the risk of his own safety. He knew that where *spiritual calling and everyday concerns clash, spiritual calling always takes precedence, no matter what.* **Topic: Prayer**

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JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

¹⁵So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹⁶And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. ¹⁷Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'?"^a But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'^b

¹⁸And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. ¹⁹When evening had come, He went out of the city.

THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE

²⁰Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

²²So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

FORGIVENESS AND PRAYER

²⁵"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive

you your trespasses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."^a

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

²⁷Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. ²⁸And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

²⁹But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: ³⁰The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

³¹And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ³²But if we say, 'From men'—"they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. ³³So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. ²Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

MARK 11:24

11:17 ^aIsaiah 56:7 ^bJeremiah 7:11 11:26 ^aNU-Text omits this verse.

SOUL NOTE



Mountain Movers (11:22-24) When Jesus said, "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them," He did not mean that we can have anything we want simply by praying. In other places, Jesus explained that prayer must be submitted to God's sovereign will and focused on His glory. We must not pray for selfish desires or out of selfish motives. We should pray because we love God and trust Him to do His will. Even when the request seems impossible, we can still pray. God always hears and answers. **Topic: Prayer**

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²⁸"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

²⁹Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*."

³⁰Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

³¹But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And they all said likewise.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

³²Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch."

³⁵He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

³⁷Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

³⁹Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. ⁴⁰And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

⁴¹Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

⁴³And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely."

⁴⁵As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

⁴⁶Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. ⁴⁷And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

⁴⁸Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

⁵⁰Then they all forsook Him and fled.

A YOUNG MAN FLEES NAKED

⁵¹Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵²and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

⁵³And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. ⁵⁴But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

⁵⁵Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. ⁵⁶For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

⁵⁷Then some rose up and bore false witness

SOUL NOTE



Your Will (14:32-42) In His humanity Jesus dreaded the Cross, and in the quiet of Gethsemane He spent time in prayer with His Father. He expressed His deepest desire that the "cup" be taken away, but He submitted Himself to the Father's will: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Jesus faced the

most difficult hours of His earthly life with the serenity of One who knew He was safe in God's hands. No matter what would come, God was in control. When we face a difficult time, we can pray, knowing that God walks with us. He is in control. **Topic: Prayer**

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things that were commanded him? I think not.^a 10So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

TEN LEPERS CLEANSED

¹¹Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ¹²Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. ¹³And they lifted up *their* voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

¹⁴So when He saw *them*, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? ¹⁸Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

²⁰Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’^a For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

²²Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’^a Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. ²⁴For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the

other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. ²⁵But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. ³⁰Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

³¹“In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³²Remember Lot’s wife. ³³Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”^a

³⁷And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

18 Then He spoke a parable to them, that **19** men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ²saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

^{17:9} ^aNU-Text ends verse with *commanded*; M-Text omits *him*. ^{17:21} ^aNU-Text reverses *here* and *there*. ^{17:23} ^aNU-Text reverses *here* and *there*. ^{17:36} ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit verse 36.

SOUL NOTE



Don't Give Up (18:1) Jesus' parable illustrated “that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” The parable of the unjust judge reminds us that even though we may have prayed for a long time about something, crying out to God and yet not receiving an answer, we must not give up. If human judges, with all their inadequacies, can be convinced to do the right thing, how much more can we trust God to answer our petitions and do what is right. **Topic: Prayer**

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

²⁰"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will^a believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²²And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

²⁴"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, ¹He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ²And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

⁵They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.

⁶Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," ⁹that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

¹²Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. ¹⁴Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

PETER DENIES JESUS

¹⁵And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another^a disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"

17:20 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *will*.

18:15 ^aM-Text reads *the other*.

SOUL NOTE



Talking to the Father (ch. 17) This prayer recorded by the apostle John allows a glimpse into Jesus' heart. Jesus would be passing the mantle of His earthly mission to His disciples. Jesus prayed for them, knowing the opposition would be difficult—they would experience persecutions from without and temptation and doubt from within. He prayed for believers today as well, "those who will believe in Me through their word" (17:20). Believers across the centuries know about Jesus because of the faithfulness of these first followers. We can take great comfort in knowing that Jesus prayed for us that night, and that He still intercedes for us (Heb. 7:25). **Topic: Prayer**

disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

ADDRESSING THE SANHEDRIN

⁵And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, ⁶as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. ⁷And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ⁹If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. ¹¹This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief corner-*

stone.'" ¹²Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

THE NAME OF JESUS FORBIDDEN

¹³Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

¹⁸So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰For we cannot but speak the things

4:11 ^aPsalm 118:22

SOUL NOTE



His Name Is Life (4:12) Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world—His is the *only* name on which people can call for salvation. Many people have difficulty believing that Jesus is the only way (see also John 14:6). But to doubt that is to doubt God's Word—for Scripture tells us, by way of the apostle Peter's sermon, that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." No other religious teacher, no matter how wise or good, could die for our sins and then rise from the dead to save all who believe in Him. **Topic: Salvation**

SOUL NOTE



Praise Priority (4:23-31) Peter and John had been told by the religious leaders to stop teaching about Jesus. The apostles reported back to the believers, and then they all gathered to pray and to praise God for His great works. They didn't ask for the threat to be removed, but that they would be bold in spite of it. Caught up in life's daily problems, we often forget to begin our prayer time with praise and thanksgiving. We may ask God to remove our problem, but we should also ask for wisdom, guidance, and boldness to deal with it. God will provide the strength we need. **Topic: Prayer**

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named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. ³⁰This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

HEROD'S VIOLENCE TO THE CHURCH

12 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. ²Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread. ⁴So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

PETER FREED FROM PRISON

⁵Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant⁴ prayer was offered to God for him by the church. ⁶And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. ⁷Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off *his* hands. ⁸Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." ⁹So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city,

which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

¹¹And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

¹²So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. ¹³And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. ¹⁵But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

¹⁶Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

¹⁸Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. ¹⁹But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.

HEROD'S VIOLENT DEATH

²⁰Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blas-

12:5 ^aNU-Text reads *constantly* (or *earnestly*).



SOUL NOTE

A Powerful Force (12:5) Intercessory prayer—prayer on behalf of others—is a powerful force. When Peter was in prison, believers were praying for his safety. Herod had planned to execute Peter, but God thwarted those plans in response to prayer. When we pray for others, we always pray for the best possible outcome, but we also pray for God's will to be done. Prayer makes a difference, so we know we can pray often and with confidence. **Topic: Prayer**

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are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness on earth:^a the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

⁹If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which^a He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,^a and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God.

CONFIDENCE AND COMPASSION IN PRAYER

¹⁴Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and

He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. ¹⁷All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

KNOWING THE TRUE—REJECTING THE FALSE

¹⁸We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself,^a and the wicked one does not touch him.

¹⁹We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

5:8 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek. **5:9** ^aNU-Text reads *God, that*.

5:13 ^aNU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

5:18 ^aNU-Text reads *him*.

SOUL NOTE



Whatever We Ask (5:14, 15) The promise that we will have whatever we ask is not a blank check. Believers cannot merely pray for anything and then get it. The context refers to prayers "according to His will." In other words, when we pray, we seek God's will in the matter. We make our request, but we submit ourselves to God's wisdom about what we should have. We know that when we pray, God hears and will answer in the best possible way. **Topic: Prayer**

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