

The Sovereign way of prayer

We are obsessed with praying for blessings. People want God to be like Santa Claus. People want and expect God to bless them regardless of the way they fail to honour Him and obey His only Son. People live as if disobedience and self obsession have no consequences. This is true for unbelievers and so-called believers who still live for themselves.

So, when we Pray, we first acknowledge that God is sovereign over all things. He brings both pleasure and calamity. *“That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.”*

Isaiah 45:6-7

God has a purpose for everything, nothing happens by accident. He brings judgment to the world that does not honour Him. And He uses these same judgments as trials and tribulations to train His children in righteousness. When we live for Christ being washed by His blood, every disappointment, every discomfort, every disagreement, every distasteful situation is designed by God for our good according to His plan to make us reflect the life of His beloved Son.

In our personal situation we need to ask what He wants us to do in obedience to His commands. If we are living in a way that does not honour Him, He may not be willing to bless us. If we are living for His glory, He will only prolong the trial for as long as He determines is necessary for our good. Blessings are always designed to bring us closer to honour Him and obey Him more than before.

The blessings for some will begin at the time that repent and turn to live for Christ. The blessings for others will begin when they realise that all God allows is for their spiritual maturity because He loves them and wants them to be transformed into the image of Christ.

Everything God does comes from His heart of love. Whatever troubles us is the result of God's love. Blessings and curses and two sides of the same coin.

So, our first concern in prayer is that God is sovereign over all. That He is the Lord of lords. He does nothing or allows nothing to happen just by chance. He is in control. Therefore, if we don't honour Him in the way we live we can hardly ask Him to bless us with some pleasure. If we don't honour Him, we can be assured He is using our situation to call us to Repentance and Obedience. If we don't love and obey Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we have no access to the throne of His grace.

God is not the Santa Claus of the world to give us whatever we desire we want in the world. If we live for Christ and obey Him, then we can bring all our problems to Him who cares for us and rules over us. Then we can pray knowing that He knows what is best, and He will give us only what will move us closer to Him.

I have experienced healing for my body twice in 40 years. I have experienced blessings in my trials and tribulations in many occasions by receiving the grace of His overpowering love that makes my trials seem like nothing. I was changed by love while my situation didn't change.

If we love Christ Jesus, we will be happy with whatever His love has determined is what we need at this time.

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
Heb 12:11

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified....Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor

height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:28-30, 35-39

God invented tough love. He is also the giver of love undeserved. If sin results in judgment and death, no one deserves to be blessed with His love. Jesus is the example of the way to God through suffering in the world for His name sake.

A valid pray for blessing

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:16-19

If we come to people as with some authority from God, and we give them the impression God desires to give them whatever they ask, and God disagrees with us, and doesn't give the blessings, then the blind may well decide that God can't be counted on. All because of the corruption of their minds and our false assertions.

We are not commissioned to be ambassadors for blessings for sinners. We are called to be ambassadors for Christ and His call for repentance and obedience. We are called to deny ourselves and take up our cross to follow Christ. So, we call everyone to do likeness. All blessings are connected to this end so that God alone is glorified. If Jesus Christ is not Lord of all there is, and over us, He is not Lord at all.

The ways of God are often a mystery to us

“My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”

Col 2:2-3

We often seek physical blessing in the world and fail to understand that in Christ Jesus we have received every blessing from God.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Eph 1:3

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Eph 1:9-14

He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Eph 1:20-23

Over the years there have been many requests for help in difficult times. Sometimes the situations have changed for good. Often the situation has gotten worse. God works in others in a way that is not apparent to us, just as He works in us ways that are not apparent to others. Following the example of Jesus, we should always be ready to honour God and come to our Garden of Gethsemane. Not my will but Yours.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Rom 12:1-2

Considering our spiritual state, we should know that we are blessed just because we are able to draw breath and still live above the ground. Pray that Jesus might dwell in your heart so that He is your all in all.

When we are asked to pray for the needs of others, we must always respect the Sovereign rule of God, and accept that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. The request might be met but the decision is God's alone.

The Sovereign way of prayer

The Christian life is a life of purification in righteousness. For we shall be holy as God is Holy. (Leviticus 21:8; Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 1:16)

We live and breathe by the Sovereign will of God. We are servants of His Sovereignty. We are to become conformed to the image of His Son who lived to do the will of God.

Therefore, we are to be transformed into the image of Christ. *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.* (Rom 8:29) by separation from the world and the ways of the world. *“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”*
John 17:15-16

This separation from the world for the Kingdom of God is done by denying ourselves and taking up our cross to follow Christ.

And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his ^llife will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”
Luke 9:23

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.
Col 3:1-4

We belong to the Kingdom above. Our hope is with God, not with the world and what is passing away.

The way of the cross in following the example of the suffering of Christ is a privilege not a burden. There is an enormous difference between our hearts and minds compared with that of God so we need to be renewed in our minds.

So, therefore we must enter the kingdom of God through many trials and tribulations. Acts 14:22

Difficulties and obstacles are the proving ground on which our faith is shown to be more precious than gold.

"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet 1:6-7

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing." Phil 2:12-14

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification." 1 Thess 4:3

Whatever is happening in the world is not happening because Satan is unstoppable. Whatever is happening is happening because God is in control. God is working out all things for His glory as He reconciles all things in His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the King of Glory.

"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace

through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

Col 1:13-20

Pray then like this:

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, **your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

Matt 6:9–13

*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything **according to His will** He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.*

1 John 5:14–15

Our prayer is not to be according to our own understanding but we pray in and by the Spirit so that we pray what God desires.

*With all prayer and petition **pray at all times in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.*

Eph 6:18

Prayer in the Spirit is peace in our hearts.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thess 5:16-18

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:6–7

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 4:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

James 5:16

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Rom 8:26

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matt 26:41

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. Eph 6:18

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” John 17:15

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Rom12:2

The Church is the multitude from the tribulation

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying,

“Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun ^[e]beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” Rev 7:9-17

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