Charles Spurgeon on Prayer

[From a Sermon on Jeremiah 33:3 – "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."]

WE ARE NOT MERELY COUNSELED AND RECOMMENDED TO PRAY BUT ARE COMMANDED TO PRAY. THIS IS GREAT CONDESCENSION. WHEN A HOSPITAL IS BUILT, IT IS CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT THAT THE DOORS ARE OPEN TO THE SICK WHEN THEY NEED HELP. BUT NO ORDER IS MADE THAT THE SICK MUST ENTER THE HOSPITAL'S CARE. IT IS THOUGHT TO BE ENOUGH TO OFFER ITS SERVICE WITHOUT ISSUING A MANDATE THAT MEN SHALL ACCEPT IT. SO IT COMES AS STRANGE THAT WHEN PRAYER IS CONCERNED, MAN NEEDS A COMMAND TO BE MERCIFUL TO HIS OWN SOUL.

GOD'S OWN PEOPLE NEED — OR ELSE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GIVEN IT— A COMMAND TO PRAY. BECAUSE WE ARE VERY SUBJECT TO PERIODS OF WORLDLINESS, IF INDEED THAT IS NOT OUR USUAL STATE. WE DO NOT FORGET TO EAT, OR GO TO WORK, OR GO TO OUR BEDS TO REST, BUT WE OFTEN DO FORGET TO WRESTLE WITH GOD IN PRAYER. WE GIVE OUR STRENGTH AND FRESHNESS TO THE WAYS OF MAMMON AND OUR TIREDNESS TO THE WAYS OF GOD.

YOU MISREAD CALVARY IF YOU THINK THAT PRAYER IS USELESS. **WE HAVE THE LORD'S OWN PROMISE FOR IT, AND HE IS A GOD WHO CANNOT LIE. HAS HE NOT SAID, "WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN PRAYER, BELIEVING, YE SHALL RECEIVE" (MATTHEW 21:22)? WE CANNOT PRAY UNLESS WE BELIEVE: "FOR HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM" (HEBREWS 11:6). IF WE HAVE ANY QUESTION AT ALL ABOUT WHETHER OUR PRAYER WILL BE HEARD, WE ARE COMPARABLE TO HIM WHO WAIVERS: "FOR HE THAT WAIVERETH IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN WITH THE WIND AND TOSSED. BUT LET NOT THAT MAN THINK THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE ANYTHING OF THE LORD" (JAMES 1:6-7).**

FURTHERMORE, OUR OWN EXPERIENCE LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL ANSWER PRAYER. I CANNOT SPEAK FOR YOU, BUT I MAY SPEAK FOR MYSELF. IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT I KNOW, ANYTHING THAT I AM QUITE ASSURED OF BEYOND ALL QUESTION, IT IS THAT PRAYING BREATH IS NEVER SPENT IN VAIN. MY OWN CONVERSION IS THE RESULT OF LONG,

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AFFECTIONATE, AND EARNEST PRAYER. PARENTS PRAYED FOR ME, GOD HEARD THEIR CRIES, AND HERE I AM PREACHING THE GOSPEL. SINCE THEN I HAVE ADVENTURED UPON SOME THINGS THAT WERE FAR BEYOND MY CAPACITY, BUT I HAVE NEVER FAILED BECAUSE I HAVE CAST MYSELF UPON THE LORD. I HAVE NOT HESITATED TO CHALLENGE OUR CHURCH WITH LARGE IDEAS OF WHAT WE MIGHT DO FOR GOD, AND WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ALL THAT WE PURPOSED. I HAVE SOUGHT GOD'S HELP IN ALL MY MANIFOLD UNDERTAKINGS, AND THOUGH I CANNOT TELL HERE MY STORY OF MY PRIVATE LIFE IN GOD'S WORK, YET IF IT WERE WRITTEN, IT WOULD BE A STANDING PROOF THAT THERE IS A GOD THAT ANSWERS PRAYER. HE HAS HEARD MY PRAYERS - NOT NOW AND THEN — SO MANY TIMES THAT IT HAS GROWN INTO A HABIT WITH ME TO SPREAD MY CASE BEFORE *GOD* WITH THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT WHATSOEVER I ASK OF *GOD* HE WILL GIVE IT TO ME. IT IS NOT NOW A PERHAPS OR A POSSIBILITY. I KNOW THAT MY LORD ANSWERS ME, AND IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO DOUBT IT. I AM SURE OF THIS, FOR I HAVE REAPED IT.

I PRAY YOU TAKE THIS TEXT — GOD HIMSELF SPEAKS IT TO YOU: "CALL UNTO ME, AND I WILL ANSWER THEE, AND SHOW THEE GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS, WHICH THOU KNOWEST NOT." AT ONCE, TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD. *GO* INTO YOUR CHAMBER AND SHUT THE DOOR AND TRY HIM. TRY THE LORD, PROVE HIM, AND SEE WHETHER HE IS TRUE OR NOT. IF GOD IS TRUE, YOU CANNOT SEEK MERCY AT HIS HANDS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND GET A NEGATIVE REPLY. HE MUST — FOR HIS OWN PROMISE AND CHARACTER BIND HIM TO IT — OPEN MERCY'S GATE TO JESUS, TO CRY ALOUD TO GOD, AND HIS ANSWER OF PEACE IS ALREADY ON THE WAY TO MEET YOU.

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