

Wendy's May Prayer Thoughts

Jesus is praying for us! Yes, Christ Jesus who was crucified, dead and buried, whom God raised to life and who ascended to sit on His right hand in glory is today praying for each of His followers, including you and me, just as He did while on earth.

The apostle John has recorded Jesus' intimate prayer to God, spoken less than 24 hours before His arrest and crucifixion. We are given a glimpse of Him as an Intercessor, openly showing us how deeply personal this form of prayer is. He began by opening His heart to God as He prayed for Himself. John 17:11-5. Note the love between them "Holy Father, I am about to leave this world and return to be with you." Now catch the humility of His words. "Father unveil the glorious splendour of me your Son, so that I in turn will have the privilege of magnifying your bright glory. Exalt me as I am lifted up, Father, so that I can display your splendour."

In verses 9-10 Jesus prays on behalf of His disciples. "My prayer isn't for the world, but for those you have given me; they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so that they may bring you glory." NLT. Jesus is giving us a glimpse of His future work as our great High Priest, who will act as our Advocate and Mediator with the Father. He is praying intentionally and specifically. John reminded Christians of this in his 1st Letter, likely written between 88-95 A.D. "If anyone sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sin, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 2:1. Jesus defends the faithful when persecuted by Satan, and His Father gives acquittal. We note here how Jesus is constantly concerned for the spiritual well being of those who follow Him and His teaching. He is praying for their safety, for their guidance, for their discernment and for strength, as they face a hostile environment, in their continuing His mission for God's love to be known, received and shared. They in turn are to be aware of His presence upholding them and urging them on. How blessed we are that this is true for us, the ones who are redeemed by His blood.

"My prayer is not for the world" meant in this instance as the Message translation makes clear: "I am not for the God-rejecting world." Jesus longed for peoples to have a relationship with God. We know that from the Cross He cried out "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:24. He had asked His disciples to pray for the unsaved to be reached. The Weymouth translation shows the urgency.....

"The harvest is abundant, but the reapers are few; therefore entreat the Owner of the harvest, to send out more reapers into His fields. And now go. "Luke 10:2. Christ wants us to grow His Kingdom as we declare His truth and display His character. He is interceding both for us and for the increase. Further, Jesus is not merely an observer, but He is actively participating with us through the Holy Spirit.

Knowing that Christ is continually praying for us leads us to ask questions of ourselves. **How much time do we allot to interceding for others?** It is important for us to pray in selfless love and humility as we ask Christ to intervene in the lives of others, both for their present and future needs, as we share their problems and burdens, their hopes and fears, their sorrows and regrets. Take time to read Philippians 2:2-4, and then ask how often do we put the needs of others before our own? Whenever we pray for others our Lord expects us to be earnest, and to await His answer. His answer means we are to "Knock, and keep on knocking," (Matthew 7:1-8), just like the distraught widow did before the unjust judge. Luke 18:11-18.

Vicki Bowman shared her experience with Guide Posts. For some time she had been writing and sending prayers to a prisoner in a Georgia Gaol. "Everyone knows they're out there but nobody wants to deal with them." While corresponding she and her family signed up for a mission trip to Peru... Vikki had recently lost her job, "finances were tight, but she believed she was called to go on the mission trip as much as she was called to pray for prisoners. I'll raise the money by collecting aluminium cans." She requested prayers from people, and her inmate pal for his and other inmates. One day a letter came from a prisoner named Tom, whom she did not know, saying "I'd like to sponsor you to go to Peru." It must be a joke, she thought. He wouldn't have the money!. Vikki replied giving him details. Back came his response. His mother who had recently died had left him money, and he wanted to do something good with it, "furthering the Kingdom of God," as he said. He wanted to pay for all the family. Vikki was bewildered, until a letter appeared from a law firm dealing with his finances. Shock turned to thanks, and she visited Tom for that purpose. Tom said he didn't want thanks. ;"You've made me feel a part of your family when I had no family." Both of them were in tears. Vikki continues to pray for Tom, and can see God working in his life. Intercession had transformed both of their lives.

As intercessors we deepen our faith in God, and in His ability to answer, believing as Paul told the Ephesians 3:20.
He is able to do far more abundantly beyond that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us."