

Prayer: The Unlimited Resource

Text: Luke 11: 9-13

I remember long ago, a doctor, one of my former classmates, said to those of us who were Christians, "I really envy you Christians. Whenever you encounter a problem, crisis or some unhappy event, you can pray to God for help and comfort. But as for me, being a non-believer, I have no one to turn to."

These words really left a deep impression in me and strengthened my faith in God. As Christians, we do have a special someone to talk to. We have our God who desires to receive us and listen to us. Prayer is our privilege of keeping connected with God. We are blessed!

1. Prayer – ASKing

In Luke 11, Jesus went on to give an illustration of how one was knocking at a friend's place to ask for bread. Because of the persistent knocking and pleading, the owner finally had no choice but to oblige and give the bread he was asking. Similarly, the Lord is saying to the disciples that our Heavenly Father will grant His blessing to those who keep asking, seeking and knocking. We also know that as parents who know how to give good gifts to our children, we can understand how much more our Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Luke 11:9 says: *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."* Remember this acronym: A.S.K. 'A' is for 'Ask', 'S' is for 'Seek' and 'K' is for 'Knock'. All you need to do is ASK. Indeed there is no limit to our prayer.

2. Prayer – Not Losing Heart

Are we anxious? Philippians 4:6-7 says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."*

Scriptures always remind us not to panic but to trust God. Many men of God like Abraham,

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Jacob, Moses, Daniel and David all had to face moments of anxiety in their lives, yet they never lost heart. One thing is for sure: they were strong in their prayer life.

For instance, in 1 King 19:1-3, the prophet Elijah was known to be the spokesman of God and full of zeal. But Queen Jezebel was after him and wanted him dead. So Elijah fled for his life. He went into depression and wanted to end his life. Then an angel came to minister to him, so that he could get up and eat and drink. Elijah even walked 40 days to Sinai and God spoke to him, asking him what he was doing there. I am sure the Lord knew why he was there. I believe the Lord will speak to us too. He may even ask you the same questions: *What are you doing here? How's your life right now? Are you happy with it? Are you going through some crisis?*

3. Prayer – Persevering

Another lesson I learn from Elijah's experience is that although he went through depression and loneliness, God had all the while been with him. As you read on in 1 King 19, you will notice that God had assured Elijah he was not alone. In fact another 7,000 people had remained faithful and loyal to God and had never bowed to Baal the idol. (1 King 19:18). In other words, God had preserved many who were strong in the faith. I believe this must have encouraged Elijah greatly.

This is also our assurance: God is still working in our midst no matter what happens. In Jeremiah 33: 3 and Malachi 3:10, you will notice God asking the people to call to Him and even to test Him and see how He will show forth His power and riches. So Beloved, let us reach out to God today. God, in His greatness, will never leave us living in poverty or loneliness. God, in His abundant grace, will sustain us in every situation we are in.

4. Prayer – Being Childlike

This reminds me of the story of this little boy who was very ill. One day as his mother entered the room, she discovered his palms were opened and resting on his pillows. The mother asked him, "Son, why did you put your hands out this way?" His reply was, "Mom, you know I am sick and I am unable to think of words to say in my prayer. So I put my hands up so that Jesus will see it and know what I want." This little boy's hands have become an important gesture of prayer. We thank God for such a simple faith and approach to God.

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Let me in closing share this encouraging encounter with you. In the book entitled "How to Pray" by S. D. Gordon, the author talked about a friend he knew - a godly man - and also an expert in building matters. Let call him Sam. There was a newly-built factory which housed a lot of machinery. When the steam machine was turned on in the engine room, the whole building shook. This posed a great danger to the entire operation, both for the workers and the building. So Sam the building expert was called in to inspect the building. He combed the whole building, yet he could not find the trouble spot. It would be an embarrassment to tell the owner his findings. Just then, Sam realised he could do something before he spoke to the owner. He paused and said a prayer: "Jesus you know where the trouble is. I don't. Would you tell me?"

This was a simple, childlike prayer. After saying this prayer, his thoughts instantly went to the base of a pillar not far from where he was standing. It was one of the main structural pillars of the building. In order to examine the base of this pillar, he had to get onto his knees. He discovered the foundation was not firmly laid. He quickly got the weak spot reinforced and repaired. Sam was a building expert yet he knew he was not all-knowing except God. He knew he needed Jesus' help. Turning to Jesus was an act of humility and submission. Going down on his knees to take a look at the troubled spot was an act of faith.

Beloved, is God saying something to you today? You may have to come to Him on your knees. Are there some trouble spots in your life that are unresolved? Knowing this is the only way out, would you surrender yourself to Him?

- Rev Lee Yam Kai