

Message Two

A Man of Prayer

Scripture Reading: John 10:30; 14:30b; 15:7; Luke 11:5-13; 1 Kings 8:48; Dan. 6:10; Matt. 26:39

I. With the Lord Jesus, we see the pure pattern of a man of prayer revealed in the Gospels—Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28:

- A. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was always one with God—John 10:30.
- B. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus lived in the presence of God without ceasing; He told us that He was never alone, but the Father was with Him; every moment He saw His Father's face—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32b; cf. Exo. 33:14; 2 Cor. 2:10.
- C. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus trusted in God and not in Himself, under any kind of suffering and persecution—1 Pet. 2:23b; Luke 23:46.
- D. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was a man in whom Satan, the ruler of the world, had nothing (no ground, no chance, no hope, no possibility in anything)—John 14:30b.

II. A man of prayer prays genuine prayers with the following characteristics:

- A. A man of prayer prays himself into God to receive the life supply from the Father, as depicted in Luke 11:1-13:
 - 1. Our intention in prayer should be to seek the life supply—loaves represent the riches of the land; fish represent the riches of the sea; and eggs represent the riches of something both in the air and on the earth—vv. 5-13.
 - 2. The totality of these riches is the Holy Spirit; when we pray ourselves into God, we should remain in God to receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply—vv. 11-13.
 - 3. This life supply nourishes not only ourselves but also all those under our care—cf. 1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:6; Acts 6:4.
 - 4. If our way of praying distracts us from the Lord and does not bring us into Him, we should change our way of praying; to pray is to pray ourselves into God.
 - 5. To pray means that we realize that by ourselves, with ourselves, and in ourselves, we are nothing; therefore, we do not want to do anything by ourselves; instead, we want to do everything in God, with God, and through God.
 - 6. Our prayer gives God a way to come into us, to fill us up, and to saturate our very being; then the work done by us is done only in full dependence on God.
- B. To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and that we can do nothing; this implies that prayer is the real denial of the self—Mark 8:34; 9:29:
 - 1. To pray is actually to declare, “Not I, but Christ”; our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with any situation—Gal. 2:20.
 - 2. Even such a short prayer of calling upon the name of the Lord—“O Lord Jesus!”—indicates “no longer I, but Christ”—Rom. 10:12-13.
- C. In order for God to listen to our prayers, we need to pray toward God's interests, signified by the Holy Land, the holy city, and the holy temple—1 Kings 8:48:
 - 1. The Holy Land typifies Christ as the portion allotted by God to the believers (Col. 1:12; 2:6-7; Deut. 8:7); the holy city signifies the kingdom of God in Christ (Psa. 48:1-2); and the holy temple signifies God's house, the church, on the earth (Eph. 2:21; 1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 2. During the Babylonian captivity Daniel prayed three times a day by opening his windows toward Jerusalem; this indicates that God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God's eternal economy—Dan. 6:10.

3. This means that no matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God's interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God's economy.

III. A man of prayer must be one who seeks God and God's will—Matt. 26:39; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.

IV. A man of prayer must be one who lives in God, always having fellowship with Him—15:7; 1 John 1:3.

V. A man of prayer must be one who waits constantly before God, according to the pattern of Abraham:

- A. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was an intimate conversation between two friends, a human, intimate talk according to the unveiling of God's heart's desire—Gen. 18; Rom. 4:12; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; S. S. 1:1-4; Rev. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8.
- B. God appeared to Abraham in the form of a mortal man and communed with him on a human level—Gen. 13:18; 18:1-2, 13-15.
- C. As Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom—vv. 9-22:
 1. This shows that God's intention is to work Christ into us, to bring Christ forth through us, and to destroy the "Sodom" in our home life, in our work life, and in our Christian and church life—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 5:8.
 2. In our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ—Gen. 18:14; Luke 18:27.
- D. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor—Gen. 18:17-22; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30.
- E. Genesis 18 presents a clear revelation of the basic principles of intercession:
 1. The proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God's revelation; thus, it expresses God's desire and carries out God's will—vv. 17, 20-21; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25; James 5:17.
 2. Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 14:12; 18:23; 19:1, 27-29), showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.
 3. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God—18:23-32; Matt. 6:6.
 4. Intercession is according to God's righteous way; in Abraham's intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace; he challenged God according to His righteous way—Gen. 18:23-25; Rom. 1:17.
 5. Abraham's intercession did not terminate with Abraham's speaking but with God's, showing that genuine intercession is God's speaking in our speaking—Gen. 18:33; Rom. 8:26-27.

VI. A man of prayer must be one who puts everything of himself aside, especially his ability and opinions—Acts 10:13-15.

VII. A man of prayer must be one who is willing to pay any price to yield to all God's demands—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

VIII. A man of prayer must be one whose living corresponds to his prayer—1:12; 2:10; 1 Thes. 5:17; cf. Mark 11:22; Heb. 11:5-6.