

Ray Luke - Prayer

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Sa now, friends, Brother Ray Luke of Jersey City is going to speak to us on the subject of prayer. We'll call Brother Ray's attention to the fact that we had a short business meeting that took up some time, so we're not expecting him to closed promptly at 4:00, so rather expect him to complete his talk for now, Brother Ray Luke on the subject of prayer.

Thank you, Brother Livermore. Dear friend, it is indeed a blessed privilege to be with you this afternoon. We in Jersey City have heard much of the activity and the love and the zeal which you've shown to the Lord, and we're very happy to share with you our own zeal and our faith in the precious truth that he has given. I don't want to be in danger of becoming a postscript, but I might say that I would like to echo and re echo the warmest of invitations to each of you to attend a little convention that the bread Jersey City will hold next week. We trust that the Lord's grace and favor will be with us and a rich blessing will be in store for you.

As is customary, the Jersey City Ecclesia usually delegates its elders to give a word of greeting from the Scripture, and it's my very pleasant duty to share with you the verse for this month. It's found in Psalm 68. 4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name, Jehovah, and rejoice before him. Indeed, friends, that is the sentiment of the hearts of the brethren at Jersey City, and it goes from their hearts to yours. As Brother Livermore announced, we thought we might just spend a few moments in meditation on that very vital, most important part of our lives here, I might say one of the most privileged parts of our lives, namely that of prayer.

And indeed, prayer is such an exhausting, such a broad, vast, panoramic vista of potential in our thinking, and all we can do is just pinpoint one or two phases of it and trust that by so doing we might stir up once again your new mind and to bring you into remembrance of things which you are all familiar with. Perhaps the best way to introduce these thoughts would be to tell you of a little experiment that was done at a public school not too long ago, presented to an elementary school group, and it was interesting to get the consensus of opinions of those children. What they were asked is this man doing. The results were primarily in three categories. One group, and the majority of them said, why, that man is saying his prayers.

The second group of Youngsters said, why, that man is merely talking to himself, and still a smaller group said, that man is talking with God. I feel that that very succinctly does picture some of the attitudes that we do find in ourselves and in others with regards to our prayer life. How often, brethren, is prayer merely mechanical? To the extent in which we say our prayers, in which we feel committed to open the day and close the evening by reverential concern and adoration for the Father, and, as it were, go through the motion of paying our respects to the Heavenly Father, and in a very mechanical, routine fashion, we say our prayers as though it were an obligation, as though it were a requirement rather than a blessed, wonderful, most glorious sibling.

Is not this really, as we explore it in its fullness, not too dissimilar from the presumption of other religions? They, in Buddhist lands, for example, say their prayers in a very mechanical way. Also they have a prayer wheel, and each time that wheel makes a circuit, it is supposed to be one prayer. As we think of the nominal systems they have, their methods of rendering prayer for the past dead who might be in purgatory, and by lighting a candle or by saying a routine, formal, ritualistic message, that is prayer.

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But, brethren, we know that that kind of superficial, very surface relationship is not a relationship whatsoever, but rather it is a motive inspired by ignorance, added to by, perhaps fear of consequences for not going through that ritual, and it has no direct, warm, intimate relationship with the Heavenly Father. Secondly, and how often are we guilty of this? So often as we pray, we sometimes talk to ourselves.

I'm a firm believer, brethren, that participation in meetings is a lot more than involving mere physical attendance. You know, sometimes we take a great deal of pride and virtue in the fact that we do come to meetings, that we haven't missed a meeting for the last year, two or three or ten, and merely feel that because we are present there, that is all that is necessary. I maintain, dear friends, that participation in meetings is a far greater thing than mere physical presence. Participating in meetings means to be vitally connected with what is transpiring, to vitally share oneself in all of the messages. Oh, so often as we sit in meetings and hear a brother speak or participate in a study, our minds are not where we are, but rather we're thinking of the events of the office that happened yesterday, or we're thinking about what happened at home.

Did we turn off the gas jet, or did we lock the door, or did we do something that we should not have done? And our mind becomes preoccupied not by the message of glorifying God's name. Not by the fact that we are here assembled in congregate worship for the sole purpose of being edified in this most holy faith. But rather we are allowing the things of time and sense to, as it were, creep in stealthily and separate us from the want that we should have brethren. When we get to that rather general kind of prayer and praise and attendance at meetings, it is pretty much like one's being with oneself, talking to oneself and not being in close contact with the Father.

In one of the old towers there was a little insertion which was merely reprinting a clipping from a Boston paper. It said that Rev. Blank gave the most eloquent prayer that was ever delivered to a Boston audience. Now friends, with the fact of eloquence being the criteria of prayer. Indeed that clipping was true.

That prayer went only to the Boston audience. That prayer could not go beyond the vaulted ceiling of that cathedral because that man, in his eloquence, in his desire to impress the congregation, was merely talking to himself, and the echoes really reverberated from the ceiling down to the congregation and could go no further. O brethren, how often is some careless, thoughtless, just detached attendance at meetings. Very much like that, for the benefit of outward appearance rather than for the inward edification.

And also in that very article, Brother Russell made a little incident come to light when he said that at a meeting a brother was called upon to speak and to pray, and after uttering his prayer, he sat down and rather self righteously whispered to his neighbor, I hope you like that. You see, the brother was more conscious of the effect it would have on the brother next to him and on the brethren as a whole, than it was in content of his word. Friends, I'm sure that we in our spiritual development and maturity can say that we are getting above this very elementary level, that we are beyond mechanical saying about prayers and merely talking repetitiously to ourselves, but rather we come to that third aspect, namely talking with God. It's not merely saying prayers, but rather it is the uttering of one's heart.

For indeed, prayer by definition is the heart's sincere desire, whether it's expressed or unexpressed. It's what you feel, friends, in your contact with the Lord. It's what you pour out to him. Not necessarily in words, because words are so poor vehicles of thought. Words are so stammering, broken, so incapable of grasping the full meaning of life's experiences, but rather the

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devout, earnest petition for the Father's blessing that brethren is the vital breath of the new creation.

And that is what I mean when I say we are praying, and that prayer is the privilege of us as new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is, as it were, the door of communication with the Father, and truly, if the whole purpose of our schooling in this way of life is to be drawn closer to him, and if we are to be entering the heavenly courts at the completion of our course of sacrifice here, and if we ought to be at one with our glorified head and with the 144,000 and to be with the Father at his right hand, that closeness, friends, has got to be developed here and now, and we have got to feel the intimacy and the oneness with him, or else we can never be comfortable, never be at ease in that one to one relationship when we shall see him and be with him.

And, friends, how often in this preparatory acquaintanceship with the Father, we are so indifferent to the blessed privilege that we have. I can't help but think that were you or I to have an audience with, oh, shall we say, Queen Elizabeth or a potentate here on earth, or a president or a mighty ruler. Oh, indeed, friends, that would be such a great honor that we would be all the swifter, and we would be so eager to make certain that everything that we did or everything that we would say at that great occasion would be just right. We would not want to violate protocol, we would not want to in any way stumble or not be prepared for this great honor.

But rather we would exert every effort that we would make, the proper approaches and advances. Oh, but yet, when it comes to the great king of kings and Lord of lords, when it comes to being before the great ruler of the universe, the one who is so omnipotent that the sparrow cannot fall from its course, nor can the cares of our heads go unnumbered when we appear before him so often, we come as careless ones, indifferent to the preparation necessary before one can enjoy this great honor. We come without that dignity, that majesty. We come without that importance, that glow which should permeate our being. Because by saying our prayers and merely talking to ourselves, we are not living to the utmost of this blessed opportunity.

The importance of prayer, friends, cannot be overemphasized. I liken prayers very much to a radio communication with the Heavenly Father, particularly in times of war. You know, the Christian warfare may be comparable to carnal warfare. Indeed, that was St. Paul's imagery when he referred to us as being soldiers of the cross, when he referred to the Christian armament as being comparable to that of the suits of armor, as a shield, the sandals, the buckler, the sword, as being a picture of the spiritual counterparts.

And so it is, friends, that in carnal warfare, whether it be from the earliest days of warfare or to the Second World War, when this blitzkrieg, the same strategy prevails. Namely, surround your opponent, cut him off from reinforcements and gradually starve him into defeat. That is so often the strategy of our adversary. That is so often the whole purpose of this devil who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and how often he tries to isolate us from all health and all sorts of.

And sometimes, brethren, the only means that we have to overcome the only device we have in communication out of this encirclement is through direct prayer with God. Oh, well, do we sing that lovely little hymn when all around my soul gives way he then is all my hope and faith, and as it is in the natural realm, only by means of radio communication can there be any contact with the realign. So with us, brethren, the problems of life weigh down so heavily. The trials, the temptations seem to hedge us about.

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The brethren seem to be unavailable, and we seem to be in a despair, as was the master at Gethsemane, and yet his communication, his contact with the heavenly Father was so strong, so firm, so direct and so vital that he lived, I believe, the greatest moment of his life was that experience in Gethsemane when he was able to say, nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done. It was only through the fortification of prayer that he felt this intense oneness with the Father's will for him, and therefore, in our experience, brethren, I would liken our contact with the Father as being somewhat akin to radio communication.

And just as there is in a radio, there are these various elements. Oh, there are many wires, there are the tubes, there are the resistors, there are the condensers. All of these parts go together, making up a set which are necessary if we would keep in communication with a distant point, and therefore, in our prayer life there are component elements which are vitally important, and as we know that should one simple little tube be blown out, the entire set is ruined, cannot function whatsoever.

And so, with our spiritual life, if some of these elements which compose prayer and prerequisites for prayer are not there, then it is impossible to maintain this kind of communication. For example, before one can even begin to come to the Father, he must have faith. Oh, indeed, that is one of the big tubes in this prayer set. One must believe that God is and he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Faith is the very basis upon which any relationship can be established with the Father.

So much so. Is this true that Paul in Romans 14:23 states the fact that whatever is not of faith is of sin. That indeed is a good starting point, that one cannot come to the Father unless he has this kind of basic faith in which one can realize that the Father is going to reward one who diligently seeks him, and brethren, faith in the Father is contrary to human experience. Or to be sure.

And so often faith is native to people. We all have faith in something. We all have faith in a coin. So as if we did not have faith that that coin was equal to 10 cents of American currency, we could not go out and purchase something from the local store, and once they had faith that that coin was backed up by someone who would redeem it and it would make it solvent, they would not accept this as legal tender.

So everyone has faith. A farmer planting a seed in the ground has faith that months hence the elements will bring forth the produce he seeks. But brethren, it's what we have faith in that matters, and believe me, faith in the Father as a rewarder of those who diligently seek him is certainly contrary to human experience. The human ego is so self centered, so inwardly thinking of its own situation, that it has little time to think of the great Heavenly Father and his arrangements.

And therefore anyone trying to have this communication without faith is certainly doomed to failure. Secondly, humility is an important element of prayer, and brethren, let's face the fact that all of us have some touch of pride in our lives, no matter how much we seek to eradicate it. I believe that pride is so akin to self respect, and indeed, self respect is a part of our whole human life.

If we did not have self respect, we would not care about how we look, we would not care about the normal courtesies of life. But because we do have respect for ourselves, that we wish to present ourselves as well as we can. But all too often, that which is good, if carried to an extreme, can redound to evil. Truly, it has been said, that which is quantitative is continued, will make a qualitative change, and so even such a basic thing of self respect, if carried to the limit, in which one becomes proud of his appearance, in which one places emphasis in what he is and what he

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looks like, then, brethren, that verges dangerously precariously onto pride itself.

Therefore, friends, humility is really a gem of a virtue, and humility is a grace which is attained with maturity, even though the elements of it must be achieved at the very beginning. Initial relationship with the Father. I think the word humility, friends, is sometimes misunderstood. Often we confuse humility with meekness.

But if you look at your strong concordance and you look at the Greek meaning of the word humility, you will find that it is listed as loneliness of mind. Not necessarily lowness of mind, but loneliness of mind. That gives me the thought, friends, that a humble person in this full scriptural sense is a single track, a single minded person, a one track person, who in lowliness of mind can only do this one thing, Humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God, this submissiveness, this dedication, this one thing I do, as Paul expressed it, is in its fullness, humility and one's loving submission. Because it is the will of God for that individual lovingly submitting to it. Come what may, brethren.

That is the full meaning of humility. Meekness would give the thought of foregoing one's preference of allowing another to have the right where principle is not being violated. I think Madame Doyon, in her little poem that she penned while she was wasting away in that inquisition dungeon, I think expresses what I think is close to humility. She said, I am a little bird cut off from field and air, and yet I sit and thank the God who placed me there, contented thus a prisoner to be, because my God it pleaseth thee. I submit, friends, that was humility at its greatest, that was loneliness of mind at its fullness.

That was fully subjecting one's preference to the desire of the Father. Ah, yes, friends, we should not think anything of ourselves except as the Bible tells us we should. We should come to realize that we are nothing, and as our hymn puts it, oh, to be nothing, nothing, only to lie at his feet a broken and empty vessel. Let me read that.

Only to lie at his feet a broken and empty vessel for the Master's use made meat empty that he might fill me, as forth to his service I go broken, that so unhindered his life through me might flow. That, friend, is nothingness, setting oneself apart for the full expression of God's will in and through us. But yet, friends, there are additional necessities for any communication with the Father. We need, for example, the credentials of sight. Oh, indeed, there are many who are supposedly humble.

There are many who have faith. There are many who call upon the name of the Lord for faith. But yet they are not able to have this relationship. Because, as John his master expresses it in John, if ye ask Anything in my name, I will do it. One has to ask in the name of Christ.

And having faith in the ransom sacrifice is the channel by which a blessing can be given, and the Lord will in no way, shape or form exercise any of his blessings, except it comes through this one means, through this basic, this all pervading truth of the ransom sacrifice of Christ, noted that Peter, after Pentecost, as he healed the blind man, he said, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk, and this is the only name given unto heaven and amongst men whereby ye may be saved. But even further, brethren, than the credentials of Christ, there requires an additional element for communication with the Father. Let us just consider, Cornelius, let us just consider how he was so devoted, and how he prayed to the Father for communion with him, and how his prayers went up to him as a memorial, and how it was necessary for the due time to come when the Lord would make himself apparent to him and allow him to be baptized and to come into this heavenly truth and into this heavenly family.

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In other words, dear friends, the Lord has his times and features which we cannot go contrary to, and as it was, brethren, the Disciples who follow the Master were not able to come in this full sense of the Word, until they likewise had their due time, until the provision of Christ's sacrifice, the robe of righteousness was available for them, and then after they had this means whereby the Father could accept them as sons. When they had these credentials, and when they therefore had the basis for his dealing with them, only then could they approach him as Son. Only then would they have the elements necessary to to come boldly before the throne of heavenly grace, to find grace, to help in every time of need.

Then when the robe of Christ's righteousness was available, then they were able to come and to fully experience the innermost contact with the Father. It was at that time then, friends, that we read that the brethren were in dub with powerful men high at Pentecost. Therefore they were able then to have direct access and contact at every point. We remember as the Master spoke to the woman by the well, and he told her that in olden days that they worshiped in the temples. But rather he said that the time was coming and was then present that those who would worship him would worship him in spirit and in truth.

And when one did this, their entire lives, their very hearts, were an order of consecration, and they were in tune with the Father, no matter where they were. They then were the temple of the living God. Not merely allocating a place, a temple of brick and of mortar, and using that as the center of reverence to him, and thus those who are the temple of the living God have this vital breadth of communication. Whether they be at the office, the shops, the home, the store, no matter where to where they be.

They can raise their voices in thought and in meditation and contemplation, and know that the Father does always hear him. I think of that lonely milkman that just went about his rout in the desolate hours of the morning, and who was so attuned with the Heavenly Father that as he made his round, he thought of these wonderful words, which are now a very blessed hymn that we all cherish and love so much. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our griefs and sins to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Even that lonely milk route was an occasion of prayer and of communication which nothing could come in between.

Oh yes, friends, sometimes we feel as though the Lord is remote. He doesn't seem to care. He doesn't seem to be as close to us as we would like. But yet when we pour out our hearts and tell him of the blunders, the tragedies and the mistakes, the desires and the needs of life, how often can he pour out upon us a blessing which is far beyond our ability to act and even to receive, and, friends, how often do we fail to receive that full blessing, that full measure of need, simply because we do not put in our order, we do not get our message in to the Father so that he might respond to it.

It's almost as though we were going to have an affair and invite brethren to dinner, and yet, as we are preparing the menu and we send out our order to the grocery man, we forget the main course, we forget the meat, we forget the potatoes, we forget the dessert, and then when we wonder, well, where are all these goods? Where is all this food? We realize that the man in the store could not fill that order simply because we did not give him that order.

Brethren, we are told in John 16:24, Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. Fullness of joy is contingent upon our asking, and our reception is determined by whether we ask aright, and so, friends, how necessary it is to be specific in our prayer requests to ask the Lord for something definite and expect that he will give the answer

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thereto and wait for him to overrule our affairs until it be accomplished. But yet, friends, while we may have the basic equipment available for use, while we may have the faith, the humility, the name of Christ and the robe of Christ's righteousness while we have this radio set all in, in operation.

Nonetheless, there is still another necessity before we can really be tuned in. You all know that you have a radio set and you turn it on, but yet, unless you twitch those dials, unless you're able to tune in and tune out, you will not get any reception on your radio set, and therefore, while we do have the necessities for radio reception, we too, friends, have got to act on our own and have to do something in order to pull in the blessings from the Father, and I think, brethren, that that requires a proper balance, and that, I think is the essence of proper, effective prayer in which we can tune in on God's will, on God's wavelength, as it were, so that we might keep our wishes and our desires, our aspirations in accord with His.

And this, I think, friends, is the reason why we were given that model prayer. We're given that prayer of the Master in which we are admonished to pray. You remember, friends, that the disciples knew how to pray. Indeed, they had been praying all their lives. They were God fearing men indeed.

We think of Nathanael. Nathanael was praying underneath the juniper tree when the Master passed by, and the Master saw him praying and uttered the invitation to follow. It wasn't because the disciples did not know how to pray that they made this request, lord, teach us to pray. But rather it was because the Master had a close, intimate relationship with the Father.

The Master was able to say, our Father which art in heaven, become unto the Father as a Son. That they were awed and they wanted to know how could they pray like Him? How would they be able to come into his presence with a full assurance that the Master did and in accord and ask for that prayer. We have recorded in Luke 11:1 4, the Lord's Prayer, that model prayer for a lack of time, we'll not go into reading it, but you all know it, I'm sure. My memory.

We will note that that model prayer exemplifies three important principles, and really these are the three elements of effective prayer, and it is the balancing of these elements that really determines the entombment with the Heavenly Father. We will note at first the Master said, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

That the first concern of the Master was the hallowing of the Father's name, the worshipping, the adoration, the exaltation the glorifying of the Father. That his name might be all in all, above all others, and that his reverence might be the supreme purpose in life, and secondly, the request for kingdom blessings. That God's will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Prayer on behalf of the world.

Prayer on behalf of others. Desiring a blessing to reach the others. Because eventually it is God's will that all would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, and then, thirdly, petitioning the heavenly Father for one's own personal needs and for forgiveness of sins. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, and so, friends, with these three. Prayer for God's name, for his hallowedness, prayer on behalf of others, and thirdly, our own needs. These, I believe, are the framework of any due reverence to the Father. Let us analyze them very

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briefly.

We have many instances in which those who pray to the Father were very concerned about the hallowedness, the sacredness of the Father's name. We have but to think of Moses, and you're all familiar with that very wonderful incident in that life of Moses. In which he, in worshiping the Father and in leading the Israelites, recognized that they had befallen, they had come across of the sin of disbelief. How when the Lord told them to go forth to take and the land which he would give him, the land of Canaan, how, as they were at the very portals of that land, they distrusted him and sent forth spies.

And how these spies came back with false reports. Only Joshua and Caleb, you will recall, gave a report which was indicative of the truth, and how, because of this, the heavenly Father was going to obliterate them from the face of the earth, and how he called Moses apart and told him of this, how he was going to wipe them out and make of Moses a great nation. Let us read of Moses reaction to this.

Let us read the consecrated heart reaction, and Moses said unto the Lord, then the Egyptians shall hear it. For thou broughtest up this people and thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. For they have heard that thou, Lord, are among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by daytime in a pillar of a cloud and a pillar of fire by night.

Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak saying, because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which ye swear unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. Because the Lord has not been able to bring this people into the land which he swear unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. You see, Moses was concerned about the reputation about that wonderful name of the heavenly father, and therefore ask if they be spared, the Israelites be spared. How so that God's name might not be smeared or even be criticized in the slightest by those who are unbelievers. A very similar incident is recorded soon thereafter.

For you recall that when Moses passed on and yielded the control of Israel to Joshua, Joshua too had his difficulties with the people of Israel, and you recall that blush from the victory of Jericho when they were able to just crumble those walls of this massive fortress, and following the annihilation of the city, someone in the congregation of Israel failed to carry out fully the Lord's injunction, and how, therefore, when it came to the next step in this conquest of Canaan, how they saw this little community of Ai, a small little town, which appeared to be without any defenses whatsoever, and in their very great pride and boastfulness and in their confidence, they immediately dispatched an expeditionary force to all right in to take that town over, so that the main body of the camp of Israel might move in.

And you recall what happened. They were repulsed with rather heavy losses, and how Joshua, because of this, was very much concerned, and he appeared before the Lord, and he gave and this is found in Joshua 7:6 to 9. He gave a prayer very much akin to Moses.

For he said, Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the even died he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads, and Joshua said, alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us unto the hands of the Amorites to destroy, destroy us? Would the God that we had been content and dwelt at the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their

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enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us around and cut off our name from the earth.

And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? Isn't that another way of saying, hallowed be thy name? Isn't that another way of saying, it's thy will, it's thy name that we are concerned with. Or we could go on, friends, in numerous passages throughout the Old Testament, the having one of King Hezekiah's prayer, how he prayed to the Father following the insults from Sennacherib. But Reverend I think that does suffice to raise the point that without this initial love for the Father's name and a great reverence to serve him, there can be no effective prayer whatsoever.

The second motive for prayer is concern for others and for the blessing of others. Thy kingdom come is all pervasive. It goes to all mankind. All who breathe here on earth will be covered by these precious promises, and so when we utter this prayer, we're thinking on behalf of all of humankind.

And when we pray for peace and happiness of the world in a millennium, we too, friends, are praying really for those who are being in preparation for that glorious kingdom reign. We're praying really for the church who are to be prepared in advance, as well as for the world who will be blessed when this church fully developed, Jesus had the world interest at heart. But yet his prayers were primarily for and on behalf of his disciples, or as we read the last few evenings of his life prior to his crucifixion and his Gethsemane utterances, they are all in behalf of those disciples whom he was leaving behind. But yet in his prayers, and in our prayers, friends, he for others we need to pray according to dispensational truth. We have to pray enlighteningly.

We have to pray according to the Lord's will in the matter, for example, when Jesus prayed, he knew well that he was to receive the fulfillment of the second Psalm. When the psalmist wrote that he would be given the nations for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth, or his possession, he knew that would come to pass. But he did not pray to have it then, because he knew that God's due time for this was not yet come. He knew that it was necessary first to die and to suffer, and then to have the Church fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, so that thereafter the merits of his sacrifice might be applied on their behalf, and thus we too, friends, as we do pray, must pray in harmony with his truth as revealed to us.

We are to pray because it is God's will, it is God's way, not because it is our will or our wish. As we pray, friends, for others, we pray for each other. How indeed we should constantly have the needs of one another, not merely wait until we find a brother coming to us to Ask us for his prayers or ask us to. For help, but rather to anticipate that to be able to recognize when the brother might be in need and to take the initiative and go to that brother and to ask what we might do to help. Or in a testimony meeting, so often when each of us gives our little testimony, we usually end off by asking the brethren to pray for us even as we pray for them.

Do we, at that moment, friends, up a little word of appreciation. Do we thank the Father for that testimony and request the benediction of the Lord upon that brother? So often we might forget the needs of that particular brother. We might ignore that petition, unless on the spot, at the moment we specifically include that brother's petition. When you go into a department store, I'm very enthralled by this pneumatic conveyor system.

You know, when you make your purchase, some of these stores, they have a little tube in which they put the order and the money, and they just send that tube along to a central recording place, and thereafter the change is made and the receipt is sent back to the department making the request. It's that way with us. So often we just have a specific request put into a little prayer and it's

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shut off the the heavenly courts, and then before we know it, it comes back to us.

Duly noted and duly answered, friends, as we are specific and as we pray according to need and according to the immediate situation, then, brethren, are we taking advantage of the privilege that we have? We must haste on. I see our time is coming to an end. We pray, friends, for necessities. We pray for our daily bread.

Give us this day our daily bread. We don't make any speculations, dear friends, as to the fruits, as to the vegetables, as to the delicacies, but rather we ask for the necessities. But so often is it true of us that when we do make this prayer and say our grace at the table, that sometimes when it comes to partaking of that meal, that we grumble that the corn is not as fresh as we would hope it was, would be, or that we have hamburger again, or that the hash isn't very palatable. So often we make requests for God's will to be furnished for us. But yet when it is answered, we murmur, we complain.

We wonder why the Lord didn't give us a little bit more than just the mere necessities, just the daily bread. Or we can, friends, often come a cropper of this. We can often come to the point of murmuring, even without knowing it, as did those Israelites of old to rebel against what God will provide once we've asked, and then to criticize when we have gotten the answer, then is to take back our request and to tell the Lord what we want him to do and deliver us from evil. Friends, how often we have that experience for us which we know nothing of. To merely say that we have not succumbed to a failure to a temptation, to an evil, to a mistake, is not necessarily to say that we were strong enough, therefore we did not fall, but rather it might be a way of saying that the Lord knew that we could not take that temptation in stride, and therefore he did not send it to us.

It might mean that the Lord had His guardian angels about us, keeping us from that dangerous situation, which might be more than we would be able to bear. For indeed, he did promise that nothing would be more than we would be able to bear, but withal he would give us a way of escape, and so when we do pray that we be kept from temptation, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. We are not praying that we not get experiences of life, that we not let the Lord do with us as his will dictates, but rather we're asking that give us, Lord, the grace sufficient in every time of need, and, brethren, I can say from my own experiences that I have felt that the Lord has had special protection of Brother Luke in some instances.

Because it would seem that as I look back upon it, that were it not for these guardian angels, were it not for his intervention as to strategic moments of my life, that I would not see how I was able to come through that experience and through that trial, and therefore, brethren, we are to ask for him to do with us as he sees fit, and even though, friends, in response to that prayer, it might mean physical affliction, it might be physical isolation, it might be the trials which seem to weigh heavenly upon us. Nonetheless, brethren, if we are sincere and desirous of letting the Lord take care of our needs, then this has to be the attitude of prayer. But further, friends, when we pray, we are to expect the answer to come.

I am reminded of the Midwestern town. I think this is a little story that Brother Cooper once told of a Midwestern town in which there was a draught and in which they decided to have a Sunday of prayer, and they were going to just devote the entire meeting over to petitions for rain, and coming to the meeting with this little girl with an umbrella, and as she came to the meeting, the congregation was a little bit startled.

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Well, it hadn't rained for months. What is the purpose of the umbrella? And in her beautiful, naive simplicity, she said, well, we're praying for rain, and I'm sure the Lord will answer our prayers. So often, friends, we are like the congregation. We make prayers, but yet we don't look how the Lord is going to answer them.

We don't expect their fulfillment in God's way, and therefore we rather blindly stumble on and just hope that the Lord will reveal his will in some way which is unknown to us, and then too, friends, there is a danger of not having constancy of prayer. Indeed, the Master's life was one of continuous prayer. But Brother Paul admonishes us that we should be very concerned that our prayers be thorough, that they be complete, and that they be constant.

For indeed, in his message to the church at Thessalonic, at Thessalonica, he writes that we are to rejoice evermore and pray without ceasing. This thought of praying without ceasing, friends, was a little bit difficult to comprehend until I read in the volumes and in the powers that this prayer life is the attitude of heart, that we pray without ceasing, not consciously, but rather subconsciously, that if our thoughts are so at one with the Father, that he will accept that as a prayer, and even though we may not be able to render our words to the Father in the busy hours of the day as we go about our daily tasks, but nonetheless, as the needle swings to the pole, so does our heart swing to our Heavenly Father, as the pressures and as the demands of life do relieve us, even so is that continuing in prayer, constancy of prayer. Even so is that praying without ceasing, and just as the importune widow, she asked for the favor and would not surrender until it was finally granted.

So it is with us, dear brethren, if we but keep our hearts in that attitude of consecration, that is praying without ceasing, and as we allow our lives and our words and our thoughts to be in conformity with our hearts, then, friends, we are following fully the aspirations of true prayer. Indeed, the poet has said unanswered, yet the prayer your lips have pleaded in agony of heart these many years. Doth faith begin to fail? Is hope declining?

And think you all in vain, these falling tears say not, the Father hath not heard your prayer. You shall have your desire sometime, somewhere unanswered yet? Nay, do not say unanswered. Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done. The work begun when first your prayer was uttered.

And God will finish what he has begun. Keep incense Burning at the shrine of prayer and glory shall descend Sometime, somewhere, unanswered yet faith cannot be unanswered. Her feet are firmly planted on the rocks Amidst the wildest storms she stands undaunted nor quails before the loudest thunder shock. She knows omnipotence hath heard her prayer and cries, it shall be done. Sometime, somewhere.

Friends, we need assurance that we are standing before God. We need assurance that when God speaks and puts his arms around us, that really we can feel the nearness of his presence. We need to feel constantly that he gives us the solace for our sadness, that he is always there to help and to grant us salvation in every time of need. Brethren, how that is the sweetest thing in life to be living in the core, in the center of our Master, and I think, friends, that nothing in life is more sweeter than to have this glorious continuous communion with the Heavenly Father.

When really we feel the nearness of the Lord, when we are able to commune with him so intimately that we can feel him present with us in spite of the surroundings, then I think we are getting close to what this little girl meant when someone came to her door and said that he was seeking lodging for the night, and at in seeking lodgings, he put this question to each responder. He said, did Jesus pass this way? And when the little girl heard that query, he said, no, Jesus did not pass this way,

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but rather Jesus lives here. I think when we get to that point, friends, where we're so open, so in tune with the Heavenly Father, that Jesus lives within our hearts, that Jesus is so close and warm to us, then, friends, we are verily in the very vestibule of heaven.

We are, as it were, in the full earnestness of our inheritance, living up to the full prerogative of our Christian experiences, and this, brethren, is the blessed honor that we have and can only be achieved through prayer. There is no other way, dear friends, and we trust that as a result of these rather disjunctive remarks that we might have been able to impress a little bit more fully what you already know, that the intimate personal contact is the fullness of spiritual life, and while we pride ourselves in the doctrinal achievement, and while we should, because we do have the faith, wants to live under the saints, unless we can use it in such a practical way, dear friends, that it becomes a living part of us, even though we know all things and know all mysteries, it is of no value to us as far as making our calling and our election sure.

Because unless we have this intimacy with the Father. Unless we have this fullness of love for him, we cannot develop in the various attributes that are required for those who aspire to this heavenly calling, and friends, may the Lord add his blessings.

Friends, let's close this meeting now with Brother Luke's choice number two three nine.

Before we close, would we like to send our luck to the Jersey City classes?

By the way, and we have the privilege of taking it personally next weekend 239 every to be work you further raise prayer. O our gracious and loving Father, how sweet it is to come into thy presence, and to know that thou dost here, and thou dost care, and to know that thou indeed are mindful of thine own, and how thou dost supply and grant us the praises and mercy with enchantments me and I will thank you for the meditations of the hour, and pray that if anything were said contrary to thy will as thou if I were to be there, comfort us and bless us. Not only we few gathers here, but all our dear people everywhere depend entirely upon the problems of the ecclesia. I can see where they might possibly have quite a number, and again the ecclesia may only have one.

I think that every ecclesia must decide for itself how many elders they feel they must have. If all of the brethren are fully qualified to be elders, then they by all means should be elected, because the harvest is great and the laborers are few. It is just logical that if a brother is given the opportunity or the ordination of the ecclesia to serve in that capacity, that he should use his talents to the glory of the Heavenly Father, and as the activities of any ecclesia continue to grow, there will be a wider field of service made available for the brethren, and consequently there would be a need for more elders. But I think it is a very serious mistake to feel that every brother in the ecclesia should be elected an elder, because there are definite qualifications set forth in the Scriptures, and these qualifications should be met.

I think that the brethren must they should be sound in the truth, and apt to teach, and they should give evidence of the Lord's spirit, and so in a matter, in a question of this type, it depends entirely on the ecclesia, depends on their scope of activity, and it depends on how many brethren are qualified to be elder.

This question was brought up with the National Committee for Cos. As they were making arrangements or trying to come to a certain agreement with selective service concerning the elders in our ecclesias and their possibility of their being exempt from Military training. This is just ad

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libbing to what Brother A mentioned. It was difficult at first for selective service to grasp the thought that there are maybe five or six or seven ministers in a church which may have only 100 members. They just couldn't grasp that thought.

They're used to the arrangement in the nominal system where one minister would take care of several hundred people or maybe two ministers at most. But when presented with the thought that there may be six or maybe 10 ministers in an ecclesiastical, it was difficult for them to see through it. But after it was explained to them the type of ministry that was offered by these brethren, these people, this church, for instance, will have weekday meetings, maybe four or five meetings during the week, and you need a different elder to lead each meeting, and then on weekends, these elders serve outlying cities and some of them are out, well, a good number of Sundays in the month. Well after they began to see that part of it, they could agree with Bible student groups and they could accept the thought of a multiple ministry.

And they finally put it in writing that they accept the thought of, as far as Bible students are concerned, of a multiple ministry in their ecclesiasts. So we're glad that they finally could see through that. Though a good many people in the world, when you mention the number of elders you have in your class, they say, my goodness, what do they all do? We only have one minister and he seems to have so much time on his hands. Well, it all depends, you know, our ministers really live up to their name.

All right, that's enough of that. We have one for Brother Hollister. Will the peace and safety that Israel is to dwell in be actual or relative? What prophecies are yet to be fulfilled regarding the Jews before Jacob's trouble? Now that's a little more difficult, Brother Holland.

The only place, so far as I recall, in which that term is used is in the 30th chapter of Jeremiah, and there it tells of the regathering of Israel in a time of great trouble.

I'll read a few verses. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my my people, Israel and Judah, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it, and these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord. We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

Same time that they are being returned is a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now and see Whether a man does travail with child, Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins as a woman in travail? And all faces are turned into paleness. Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like is even the time of Jacob's trouble that he has shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds.

And the strangers shall no more serve themselves of him, but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Now, evidently this covers quite a period of time, covers the regathering of Jacob and Israel to the land of Palestine, and it says that when they are being gathered back during that very period, that it isn't a time of peace and safety, but it's a time of trouble, and we are all witnesses to the fact that in the last 10 or 15 years, or 20 years, or a little more, 25, the Israelites, the Jewish people, have suffered more persecution, concentrated in a short period of time than they ever experienced before, and that it was during that time which they were being gathered back there. They were going back, apparently this passage was being fulfilled.

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They were being gathered back to their land, but at the same time, and simultaneously they were being persecuted in that period 25 years, and 6 million of them are still supposed to have been put to death there in the gas chambers and otherwise in Europe, and they have had a great deal of hardship and difficulty during the period in which they are being gathered back. Now, what we have been accustomed to speak about as Jacob's trouble, is the day of Jacob's trouble, not a point in time in which they are delivered, with apparently a period of time in which they suffer this great persecution and hardship, and then what we've been speaking about as the day of Jacob's trouble was really what we might think of as the end of the day of Jacob's trouble, the time when God interposes and delivers them. So it's speaking about here that there's a day of Jacob's trouble, but he is to be saved out of it.

And so in the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel, we have described there, and in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, apparently the conclusion of this day of Jacob's trouble, when they are finally at their uttermost emergency, and the Lord interposes and delivers Israel supernaturally, miraculously, and thus brings to an end Jacob's trouble and Jacob is saved out of it.

I can agree with what Brother Hollister has stated, of course, but largely a matter of conjecture just what is in the mind of the individual that wrote the question, in other words, the Reference in the 30th chapter, Jeremiah, with respect to Jacob's trouble we have invariably associated with the battle of Armageddon, in other words, the last final struggle, the time of trouble, such as never was in civilization and would never be repeated. Of course, we don't know exactly when that is going to occur, when it will happen, but what I wanted to comment on.