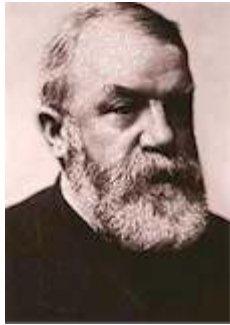


Does God Answer Prayer?

By D.L. Moody



I suppose there has been no word on Christians' lips so frequently at this time as the word "prayer," and there is not one in this hall who has not thought often, during the last forty-eight hours, of the importance of prayer.

During this week of prayer, there are a great many not only thinking about it, but talking about it. When there is a special interest and awakening in the community on the subject of religion, then it is that a great many skeptics and infidels, and a great many mere nominal professors of Christianity - we will not judge them - begin talking against "prayer."

They say, "The author of the world doesn't change His plans because of these prayers. The world goes right on. You cannot move God to change His mind or His doings." You hear this on every side. These young converts hear it. I have no doubt that many are staggered by it, and when you kneel down you say, 'Is it a fact that God answers prayer? Is there anything in it?'

I think it would do us good in the week of prayer to take the word "prayer," and run through the Bible tracing it out. Read about nothing else. I think you would be perfectly amazed if you took up the word "prayer," and counted the cases in the Bible where people are recorded as praying, and God answering their prayers.

A great many think it is only the perfectly righteous and pure that pray. But you remember who it was who prayed in this fashion, "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." You remember that Christ answered the dying thief's prayer.

We cannot but notice that every man of God spoken of in the Bible was a man of prayer. You have therefore very good authority and encouragement for asking God to hear your prayers, and for praying on behalf of others, as we are daily requested to do. Many are surprised at these requests. But many mothers and fathers are rejoicing that they sent them in. The prayers offered up here have been answered, and their children have been saved.

Last night I was more confirmed in my views regarding the power of prayer than ever. "This is all excitement," some say; "it is got up by earnest appeals that work on the feelings of people, and move their impulses, making them uneasy and anxious." Now, for example, there was nothing said last night to speak of, and I never was more disgusted with myself than I was on Sunday -night. It seemed as if I could not preach the Gospel, as if my tongue would not speak. But still the number of inquirers was extraordinary.

Last night, when there was no speaking at all, and when I just came in and asked that any inquirers might follow me into the moderator's room, taking a few with me, and expecting to come in and ask out a few more when I had seen these, the number was so great that came out without solicitation that I did not need to return. I saw over a hundred inquirers last night, and there were from fifty to seventy that I had to close the door on, being unable to see them.

A great many who have not been at the meetings at all, have been converted in their own homes. God is working, not we. Oh! that we would keep ourselves down in the dust, and every one of us get out of the way, and let God work. It would be so easy for Him to go into every dwelling in Edinburgh, and convict and convert ten thousand souls.

Look at the 6th verse of the 4th chapter of Philippians. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything" - mark that - "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." He doesn't say He will answer all, but He says, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

He tells us to make our wants known; to make our requests known to Him by prayer and supplication. It is right to come and make our requests known. He has told us to come and pray for the conversion of souls.

It is said by many people that God does not do anything supernatural in answer to prayer; that the God of nature moves right on and never changes His decrees. Read the first six verses of the 20th chapter of 2nd Kings, and see - "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death: and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him, and said unto

him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David, thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears, behold I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord, and I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

Was not that a direct answer to prayer? Hezekiah was only praying for his own life; we are come together to pray for the life of others, and not their temporal but their eternal welfare. He was not praying for Christ's sake as we now do, but we can come to-day and ask God to save the souls of men for Christ's sake, not only for our sake, but for the sake of the beloved Son. He loves to honor that Son, and to see Christ honored. We can come now and ask Him to save souls, that it might bring glory and honor to the Son of His bosom, and glory and honor to the Son He delights to honor. "I will," He says to Hezekiah, "defend the city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." That is only one instance.

Look also at Daniel praying. It was his prayers that took the Jews back to Jerusalem. It was his prayers that turned Nebuchadnezzar to the God of Israel, and brought Gabriel down from heaven to tell him he was greatly beloved. He had power with God.

See also how God answered Jacob's prayers and Isaac's prayers. All through the Bible we have records of the answers to prayers. It would be terrible to think that God did not delight to answer prayer.

Turn to the 20th chapter of 2nd Chronicles. There we read that the Moabites, the Ammonites, and others coming against Jehoshaphat, he was afraid, "and set himself to seek the Lord," and that afterwards Judah "gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord." That is what we want - to seek the Lord not only here in the public assembly, but alone. If you have got an unconverted friend, and are anxious that he should be saved, go and tell it privately to Jesus, and if a blessing does not come, like Jehoshaphat, spend a few days in fasting, and prayer, and humiliation.

"If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in Thy presence (for Thy name is in this house), and cry unto Thee in our affliction, then Thou wilt hear and help."

When I go into the streets, and see the terrible wickedness, and blasphemy, and drunkenness that is in them, it seems dark, but I look up and think that God can repel those dark waves of sin and iniquity. Let us pray that God will bless this land of Scotland, bless and save all the people in it. It would be a great thing for us, but very little for God. May God give us faith!

Dwight L. Moody
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