

# Prayer Ministry

## *The Doctrine of Prayer*

### Lesson 2

- I. Opening
- II. Ministry Prayer
- III. Lesson: The Christian Life and Prayer

What the Scripture says regarding the Christian life and prayer will be introduced under five headings: (Christian Doctrine, Vol 3, Francis Pieper)

- 1. The Inseparable Connection between Christian Life and Prayer
- 2. The Requisite for Prayer
- 3. The Power of Effect of Prayer
- 4. Things for Which a Christian Prays
- 5. Additional Matters

#### **1. The Inseparable Connection between Christian Life and Prayer**

How might prayer be defined?

Ps. 27:8 seeking god – the conversation of the heart with God

Rom. 8:26-27 Intercession – helped by God Himself

Is. 65: 24 God's answering the heart – even before works

What can you conclude about prayer from these passages? It is a personal conversing of the Christian with God This is prayer

Of what is prayer the natural and reasonable consequence? Faith in the forgiveness of sins a continuous longing for God.

At what point in time does the prayer life of the Christian begin? At conversion

A Christian prays even when, as often happens, while fulfilling his earthly calling, he is not conscious of praying. This is true even when by reasons of great sorrow and grief he imagines that he cannot pray.

Prayer has been properly compared to the heartbeat of physical life. Luther says: "Where there is a Christian, there is the Holy Ghost, who is always engaged in prayer. For though the Christian does not continually move his lips to utter words, never-the-less the heart is beating and pulsating, like the arteries of the heart in the body unceasingly sighing: O dear Father, may Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done among us and all people, etc. And as attacks, trials, and troubles press and crowd harder, also such sighing and begging become more urgent, even audible. So, then, you cannot find a Christian who is not always praying, as little as a living person is without a pulse, which never rests, but beats continuously, though the person is not aware of its beating."

While this is true, discuss what danger there may be in taking this analogy to far . . . particularly considering our struggle with the flesh?

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*Ceaseless prayer*

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*Prayer closet (WHEN YOU GO)*

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It is possible to divide our prayers into one of the two following categories:

1) *Thanksgiving* (praise and adoration)

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2) *Petition* (supplication, confession)

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## 2

### The Requisite for Prayer

We have touched on this already but let's look into this a little more.

What do you think prayer to the Father presupposes?

*Justifying faith (not a feeling of dependence upon God)*

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Only faith in the forgiveness of sins for Christ sake makes prayer authentic. Prayer "in the name of Christ," and only prayer in the name of the Savior has God's command and promise. (John 16:23,; 14:13-14)

In the name of Christ, who then do we approach when we prayer? *The Father*

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It is only because of Christ's work that we have the boldness to approach the Father in prayer.

Discussion: What do you think the "old man" want us to believe concerning the requisite for prayer? In other words, how do people react to this requisite for prayer?

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The prayers of all saints have been based on Christ's righteousness, on God's grace and mercy in Christ, never on their own worthiness (Dan. 9:18). And so today and to the end of time

every Christian, entirely disregarding both his own worthiness and his unworthiness, derives his confidence and boldness to pray solely from the reconciliation effected by Christ and from God's command and God's promise to hear.

### 3

#### **The Power of Effect of the Christian Prayer**

Since God preserves this world only for the sake of Christians, in order that they may execute their Christian calling in the world (Matt. 24:24; 28:19-21), and since the will of Christians as expressed in their prayers coincides with the all-sustaining and governing will of God (1 John 5:14: questions: what is His will? Answer: that we live by faith.) it follows that the Christians' prayer sustains and governs the whole world. In other words, the prayer of Christians has its effect on all occurrences in the Church and the world. By prayer the Word of God is spread over the earth. In fact, Charles Spurgeon says something to this effect, "Nothing great for God is begun unless it first begins by prayer."

Let's see if this is Scriptural.

2 Thes. 3:1 *Begin with prayer, praying for the workers that the word of God be spread*

Col. 4:2-4; Eph. 6:19-20 *Word of God is spread over the earth*

Rom. 15:30:32 *Deliver from danger*

Jer. 29:7 *the status preserved by prayer*

1 Tim. 2:1-3; Ps. 76:6 *peace is preserved and restored*

Ps. 5:6, 10; 55:23 *bloody and deceitful men are destroyed*

Here we keep in mind the Office of the Keys. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss how this might be applicable also in the case of prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

Luther's description of the importance of prayer in the civil sphere . . . (read Pieper, vol. III: p. 81.)

". . . We are indeed poor beggars, says St. Paul, 2 Cor. 6:10, but we make many rich; we have nothing and yet possess all things. And this also is true: all that kings princes, lords, burghers, and farmers possess that have not because of their blond hair, but they owe it to Christ and His Christians. . . . Lords, burghers, and farmers have their land and its inhabitants, their power, honor, and goods because of the Christians living among them, though they do not see it and reward it with evil . . . . Therefore the Christians are truly helpers and saviors, yes, lords and gods, of the world, as God said to Moses (Ex. 7:1): 'I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.' . . . . Do

not overlook these things: God is telling us that whatever the world has and can do it has as a loan from these beggars who have nothing and yet possess all things; all that God gives the world He gives because of these beggars; all these things are declared to be works and miracles of the Christians which they perform until Judgment Day, and when they stop working God will also make an end of the world and burn it all with fire. . . . The world gapes only on what appears high and great, is rich and powerful, and parades in splendor and show; and yet it does not recognize from whom men get these things. "But if you are baptized," says Christ, "and believe in Me, you are the man who has and can do more and greater things, yea, who does the very works and greater ones than I do. For I shall make of you believers lords whose works shall count for more and accomplish more than those of any king or lord on earth; you shall bring about and achieve whatever you desire and shall help Me rule spiritually over souls for their salvation, and also as to material things you shall obtain through your prayers all that there is on earth; men must receive all at your hands and unwillingly live on you."

#### 4

### Things For Which a Christian Prays

The Christian is told to pray of God everything that is covered by the divine will and the divine promise.

What assurance do we have when we pray in Christ's name?

Matthew 21:22     *All that we ask will be received*    

What do you think the "old man" would have us think when we hear this? \_\_\_\_\_

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When considering Jesus praying in Gethsemane and when reading the Lord's Prayer what supreme principle regulates our prayers?     *"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."*    

Read 1 John 5:14 and deduce what happens when our prayers go beyond God's

command and promise.     *Whatever petitions go beyond God's command are a priori null and void*    

When we are praying for spiritual blessings, necessary for our salvation, we should ask unconditionally; when praying for other gifts we should ask that God grant them to us if it be His will.

On what basis can this be said?

Rom. 8:32-39 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 12:9 \_\_\_\_\_

There are prayers known as "heroic faith." These prayers ask for temporal blessings

unconditionally. What do you suppose happens with such prayer?

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Do you think there may be lessons to learn when such prayers are not answered? \_\_\_\_\_

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Concerning the Lord's Prayer: (page 423, in Tapperts addition of The Book of Concord, Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, line 22ff.)

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**5**  
**Additional Matters**

Is. 63:16; I Kings 8:39 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 4:10 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Tim. 2:5-6; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2; Rom. 8:31-32

Discuss: Is there a certain "position" one should take when he prays?

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