

## The Life of God in the Soul of Man

I am finishing up a book which, started some weeks ago, will most certainly go on record within the top twenty books I've ever read as a Christian. Although it contains multiple theological subjects, the longest chapter and the one I paused to ponder more than the others, was focused on prayer. Without question, there is no other Christian duty that is more misunderstood or more abused, as prayer. There is much that passes for prayer with man that is not prayer with God. What is the foundation of true prayer? "Thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite spirit. . ." (Is. 57:15) In the words of a great Puritan theologian, "Send up a whole heart, and He will return it a broken heart; send up a broken heart, and He will return it a healed heart. Send up a cold heart, and He will return it a loving heart. Send up an empty heart, and He will return it a full heart. Send up a praying heart, and He will return it a praising heart." Whether it is a desire, a groan, a tear, a sigh – they are all the necessary ingredients of true prayer. Although mixed with coldness, formality, wandering thoughts, groans, inarticulate confessions, or quivering lips, our great majestic high priest will intercede and 'wash' our prayers: "Christ also hath loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." (Eph. 5:2)

E.M. Bounds, in his outstanding book on the Power of Prayer, quotes one of the early fourth century church fathers by the name of John Chrysostom, the most prolific preacher of his time. I leave you with his words on the subject of this most comforting of all our spiritual privileges:

"Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which never is exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a haven unruffled by storms; it is the root, the fountain, and the mother of a thousand blessings. I speak not of the prayer which is cold and feeble, and devoid of energy; I speak of that which is the child of a contrite spirit, the offspring of a soul converted, born in a blaze of unutterable inspiration, and winged like lightning for the skies. The potency of prayer has subdued the strength of fire; it has bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished the wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction; it has stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt: in a word, it has destroyed whatever is an enemy to man. I again repeat, that I speak not of the prayer engendered by the lips, but of that which ascends from the recesses of the heart. Assuredly, there is nothing more potent than prayer; yea, there is nothing comparable to it. A monarch vested in gorgeous habiliments (clothing) is far less illustrious than a kneeling suppliant, ennobled and adorned by communion with his God. Consider how august a privilege it is, when angels are present, and archangels throng around; when cherubim and seraphim encircle with their blaze and throne; that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence, and converse with heaven's dread Sovereign! When a Christian stretches forth his hands, and invokes his God, in that moment he leaves behind him all terrestrial pursuits, and traverses on the wings of intellect the realms of life; he contemplates celestial objects only, and knows not of the present state of things during the period of prayer, provided that prayer be breathed with fervency. Could we but pray with fervency; could we pray with a soul resuscitated, a mind awakened, an understanding quickened, then, were Satan to appear, he would instantaneously fly; were the gates of hell to yawn upon us, they would close again.

"Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked mariner, an anchor unto them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs that totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, a security to the rich, a healer

of disease, and a guardian of health. Prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings, and dissipates the cloud of our calamities. O Prayer! O Blessed Prayer! Thou art the unwearied conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, the source of ever-during joy, the mother of philosophy! The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extremest indigence, is richer than all besides; while the being who never bends the knee, though proudly seated as a monarch of nations, is of all men most destitute. Let us, then, direct our thoughts to Him that was poor, yet rich; rich, because He was poor. Let us overlook the enjoyments of the present, and desire the blessings of the future; for so shall we obtain the blessings both of the present and the future. Oh, may we all obtain then through the grace of Christ our Lord, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all glory, now and for evermore!"

**"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."**

**– Isaiah 40:31 –**

– Article submitted by Chuck Wetzel, 04.22.20  
(full Chrysostom quote excerpted from various sources)