Prayer Part 3: Prayers Of The Righteous

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday September 1st, 2019

Text: James 5:16-18

### Intro

1. Prayer is the privilege of the righteous (saints)! (I Peter 3:12)
2. God’s people (no matter what time period) have always been people of prayer.
   1. Js. 5:16-18: James tells us the reason we are to pray for each other: the prayers of the righteous accomplish much! *(Equally important to be righteous!)*
   2. He references Elijah, a righteous man of prayer, with a nature like ours.
3. God wants us to pray.
   1. Jesus spoke a parable to show men “ought to pray and not to lose heart” – *Lk. 18:1*
   2. We are to be devoted to prayer – *Rom. 12:12*
   3. We are to “pray without ceasing” – *I Thess. 5:17*
4. The prayers of righteous men still serve as example for us today! (Js. 5:17-18)
   1. Rom. 15:4: The O.T. gives instruction and encouragement for today!
   2. The prayers of the righteous in times past serve as great examples!
5. The effective prayers of the righteous accomplish much!

#### Moses

* 1. Moses had been timid and fearful *(Became a great prophet – Deut. 34:10)*
     1. *Ex. 3, 4:* He offered God several excuses for not doing as God commanded.
     2. He was insecure and frightened at going back to Egypt.
     3. But one by one, God removed all excuses and Moses did all he was told.
  2. Moses prayed an intercessory prayer for his people (bravely prayed to God)
     1. Ex. 32:9-14: The people committed idolatry with the golden calf and God said He would destroy them and make a new nation out of Moses.
        1. Moses reminded God of His promises (as if God needed reminding).
        2. God listened to Moses’ prayer.
     2. Ex. 32:30-32: Moses asked God for forgiveness of the people!
        1. God’s answer was the one that sinned would be punished.
  3. Application: We are to pray intercessory prayers:
     1. For all the saints – Eph. 6:18
     2. For preachers of the gospel – Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:2-4
     3. For all men – I Tim. 2:1
     4. For governing officials – I Tim. 2:1-4
     5. For erring children of God – Acts 8:24 (They must still repent!)
     6. For those who confess sins – Js. 5:16
  4. Moses’ prayer saved his people from the wrath of God!

#### David

* 1. David, a man after God’s own heart (I Sam. 13:14), acknowledged sin without:
     1. Rationalizing, justifying, or shifting blame
     2. II Sam. 12:13: When confronted with the horrors of his sins, he admitted guilt and said, “I have sinned against the Lord.”
  2. He acknowledged his sin was against God and prayed for forgiveness!
     1. Ps. 51: David recognized sin was against God & He is just in judgment (51:4).
     2. II Sam. 12:13-14: David was forgiven but he had to bear the consequences!
  3. He prayed to be right in his heart – Ps. 51:10
  4. Application: We have fellowship with God when our hearts are right with Him – Ps. 15
     1. David is example today of a contrite heart (Ps. 51:17), and we must have the same heart to ask God for forgiveness when we sin – *I Jn. 1:9*
  5. David acknowledged his sin and prayed to God for forgiveness!

#### Elijah

* 1. Elijah boldly prayed for God to intervene in nature – Js. 5:17-18
     1. I Kings 17:1; 18:41-46: Ahab and Jezebel had led Israel into sin *(I Kings 16:30)* so God sent Elijah to pronounce famine! James reveals Elijah prayed!
     2. God was demonstrating His power over nature, and their dependence on Him!
  2. Elijah boldly prayed for the son of the widow of Zarephath – I Kings 17:20-21
     1. Entreated God as, “O LORD *(YHWH H3068*) my God *(Elohim H433)*!”
     2. God heard and brought the boy back to life – I Kings 17:22
  3. Elijah boldly prayed on Mt. Carmel – I Kings 18:36-37
     1. Contest of the false prophets of Baal & Asherah and God of Israel.
     2. In contrast to their crying out in loud voices, it says, “he said” to God.
     3. He boldly addressed God and acknowledged Him as the God of their forefathers.
     4. He asked for God to show the people He alone is God, and that Elijah is His servant.
     5. God answered with fire from Heaven! (I Kings 18:38)
  4. James said he was “a man with a nature like ours” (Js. 5:17) and his prayers accomplished much.
  5. Application: We need to pray to God with confidence and ask Him for anything!
     1. Jn. 14:13-14: Jesus said to ask in His (Christ’s) name (I Jn. 5:14-15).
     2. Js. 1:6-7: We must ask things of God in faith (never doubting!)
  6. Elijah confronted a king and a nation, and showed great compassion through prayer!

#### Daniel

* 1. Daniel was a man of consistent prayer – Dan. 6:10-11
     1. He prayed three times a day looking toward Jerusalem.
     2. His peers couldn’t find any fault in him (Dan. 6:4) so they had the king sign a decree stating for 30 days no prayers but to the king could be made (6:7).
     3. In this, they caught Daniel *(His regular prayer schedule is what got him!)*
  2. He prayed to God when it was illegal! – Dan. 6:10 *(6:6-9)*
     1. Dan. 6:16: For his constant schedule of prayer he was cast into the lion’s den!
     2. God protected Daniel from harm – Dan. 6:22
     3. The pagan king acknowledged God! – Dan. 6:25-28
  3. He prayed an intercessory prayer for his people – *Dan. 9* (vss. 1-10, 19)
     1. He reminded God the 70 years of exile (from Jeremiah) were almost up.
     2. He acknowledged the sins of the people and asked for forgiveness!
  4. Application: Are we people of constant prayer, regardless of circumstances?
     1. Eph. 6:18: We are to “pray at all times”!
     2. I Thess. 5:17: We are to have the habit of unceasing prayers!

## Daniel’s unceasing prayers influenced a pagan king to praise God!

## Conclusion

1. God hears and answers our prayers:
   1. I Pet. 3:10-12: God hears the prayers of the righteous!
   2. I Jn. 5:14: God hears us (if we ask according to His will).
2. No reason not to pray!
   1. Despite those who might harm us *God holds the answer!*
   2. Despite how busy we might feel *God holds the answer!*
3. Do you pray as you should, and as often as you should?
4. We are to be righteous and pray for one another to accomplish much in each other’s lives!
5. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
6. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!