

James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

This is a very important Scripture in connection with having our prayers answered, and answered prayer is one of the foremost goals in a Christian's life. It is one thing to pray, and multitudes do so, but it is quite another thing to pray an EFFECTUAL prayer. That is, to pray a prayer that is EFFECTIVE, one that God hears and answers. According to our Scripture, the first step toward praying such a prayer is to humble ourselves by confessing our faults one to another. We often feel quite comfortable confessing another person's faults, but this is not the command! We are told to confess OUR OWN FAULTS, and this can be a very humbling experience.

The next part of our Scripture admonishes us to pray one for another. Usually, we waste no time praying for ourselves when adversity strikes, but here we are told to be concerned and have compassion, for those around us who are in a time of trouble. Rom. 13:9 is a companion Scripture to our text, "...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We do well to remember a statement by Brother William Branham, who said, "If I can enter into suffering with the person I am praying for, something always happens." May I say that this is at least one reason why we Christians experience suffering at times; it gives us compassion for others that we may pray effectively for them?

Now, we are down to the part of our text Scripture that I would like to base the sermon on. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a RIGHTEOUS MAN availeth much." Very few

THE PRAYERS OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN

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people that I have ever talked with like to open their mouth and confess, "I am as RIGHTEOUS as God." In fact, I have learned by experience that to make such a confession brings about wrinkled brows and an embarrassing silence. You can almost see the wheels turning beneath those brows as the thought crosses their mind, "Who does this man think he is, do we have another man who supposes he is Jesus Christ?"

No Friends, far be it from any man to think such a thing as that! Yet, our text says that God listens to the prayers of a RIGHTEOUS MAN! And in Matt. 6:33, we read, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." If God says we must SEEK THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, then how can it be wrong to do so? We must seek His Kingdom (through the New Birth) and also seek His Righteousness after we have come into His Kingdom. Is God telling us to seek something that it is impossible to find? Will God play games with us? Never! Then how are we to find this Righteousness which we are told to seek? There is a process involved. Jesus said, "Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God." That is to say, we must be Born-Again. We must be *Justified, Sanctified* (set aside for His service), and then *receive the Holy Ghost*. It needs to be made very clear that until

it is proven to us, both by His Word, and by experience, that our own Righteousness is to God as, "A pile of filthy rags." (Isa. 64:6), we will not truly seek God's Righteousness. We will feel quite safe with our good works and our own righteousness. But once we understand that, in our flesh, we cannot perfectly keep God's Holy Law Standard, and because of our failure to do so we come under the teaching in the Book of James (James 2:10), "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL," then we see our desperate plight without God's Gift of Righteousness.

But, we have no need to fear, Bride of Christ, for we read in Rom. 5:17 that God has offered us a free "Gift of Righteousness." "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of Grace, and OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." We often say this Gift is free, and it is in one sense, yet in another real sense, it will cost you your life in the world. Those people with one foot in the Church and the other foot in the world will find it impossible to believe they have been made as Righteous as God! The Revelation is to the obedient, (John 7:17).

One of the main Scriptures on which we base this teaching is II

Cor. 5:21, **“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”** All Scriptures are powerful, but none in all the bible is more powerful than this! To have been made as righteous as God, Himself, while still here on Earth in flesh bodies, contains a powerful, breath-taking truth! It means we are ready to be caught up in a Rapture, and spend Eternity with our God! And this is true in spite of our failures in the flesh!

Now, if the task of making ourselves as Righteous as God had been left up to us, and if God proclaimed all guilty and lost who failed in His Law, then would all men be lost, and that without remedy. But thanks be to God, we were not left to try and make ourselves Righteous; our God provided the remedy. Before the world was ever formed, our Father knew that once we were sent into the world and **“Made subject to vanity”** (Rom. 8:20), that we would have **“A law in our members, warring against the Law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the Law of sin which is in our members,”** (Rom. 7:23) (Rendered incapable of keeping the Law perfectly).

Our God, knowing that He would allow His Bride to be made **“Partakers of flesh and blood also, Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”** (Heb. 2:14) This was the remedy. Our God, whose Name is Jesus Christ, came down and took part in the same kind of a flesh body you and I have, living in it for thirty-three years, yet without sin. In God’s mind, it was perfectly LEGAL for the One who made the Law of Sin and Death, to fulfill it in any way He chose. God is free to form His own

council, and make His own Laws, and who will accuse Him of doing wrong? If God chose to live a perfect life in flesh such as ours, then make us to benefit from it by offering us His Righteousness, who is the man, or devil, who will set aside what He has done? Who can change **“Thus saith the Lord?”**

QUOTE: THE FIRST SEAL, PAGE 129, “How can a man say that the Bride of Christ goes into the Tribulation? I can’t understand it! She’s took away from the Tribulation. If the Church has been judged, and they have judged themselves and have accepted the Blood, how can God judge a man that is perfectly, totally sinless? You say, ‘There is no such a person.’ Every Born-Again Believer, true Believer, is perfectly, absolutely sinless before God. He is not trusting in his works, but the Blood of Jesus that his confession’s dropped into....The Bible says so. See?”

CONT. QUOTE: “I John 3:9, **‘He that is born of God does not commit sin for he cannot sin.’** How can you make a man a sinner when the bleach of the Blood of Jesus Christ is between him and God? That would scatter sin ‘til there be nothing left of it. How can that pure Blood of Christ ever let a sin pass there? He cannot.

Jesus said, **‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.’** And how could we even start the thought of being perfect, but Jesus required it. And if Jesus required it, he has got to make a way for it - and He has - His Own Blood.” (End quote)

Were these only the thoughts of the man, William Branham, or did he receive them from the Scriptures? He was quoting the Word of our God!

Rom.8:31-39, **31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**

32 He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?”

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s Elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Please notice particularly verses 38 and 39. **“For I am persuaded that neither death nor LIFE, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come” Verse 39, “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Notice that Paul said our LIFE cannot separate us from the Love of God! Do you see it friends? Our life in these flesh bodies, with all our sins and failures, cannot separate us from the Love of God! It was Himself that **“MADE US SUBJECT TO VANITY,”** but it was also Him who set us free from it! Did He fail in His

Plan of Redemption? When we put on His Robe of Righteousness, is it not enough? Has the Blood of His Cross lost its Power in this modern, evil day? Has **“Thus Saith the Lord”** failed?

How dare the enemy bring such vile thoughts to a Born-Again Christian! As the Scripture says, “Who does he think he is, trying to bring charges against the Elect of God? God has justified us, and no devil, or group of devils, can change it! We are not speaking of the plan of weak, frail man, but of the Creator, who holds all of His Creation in the palm of His hand. Hear what He said in Heb. 9:12, **“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but BY HIS OWN BLOOD He entered ONCE into the Holy Place, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION FOR US.”**

We are ETERNALLY REDEEMED, safe under His Wings, on the way to Eternal Life, guilty but innocent, washed in His Blood, made Holy and without blame before Him in Love, as Righteous as God is, because He has made us so! Rejoice, Little Bride, give glory unto the Eternal One, shout His praises for all ears to hear, lift Him up that others may be drawn to His bleeding side. We haven't much more time to work, gross darkness covers the earth, work while there is a shaft of light still left.

Back to the title of our sermon, “The Prayers of a Righteous Man.” What a powerful revelation to understand that in the eyes of our Lord, we have been made totally Righteous, Holy, and without blame before Him in Love! From the platform of this mighty revelation, we are to pray, understanding that our prayers have now become EFFECTIVE, and that they are availing MUCH with God. There is no man that can understand “God's Much”. It is too high for us, but it is safe to say that His

“MUCH” will be enough, as we pray **“Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.”** (Matt. 6:10)

I have heard it said that to pray **“Thy will be done”** shows a lack of faith on our part. There is no plan, or thought of our own, that can improve on the perfect Will of God. We have been taught that the first thought God had about any subject was the right one and never needs to be changed. With a revelation in our hearts concerning the Perfect Character of our Lord, we lose all fear of His will being done in any situation. This is true because we know that His decision was made from His storehouse of perfect wisdom, knowledge, and love. His love for us is perfect, and therefore, His plan for us is perfect and is always for our spiritual good.

The Bride Revival that is now in progress is the result of the Bride laying aside her own thoughts and plans and praying to be shown God's perfect will in every situation. That is to say, they are praying, **“Lord, Thy will be done.”** Even the Lord Jesus, in His flesh body, did the same. He said, **“I only do what I see the Father do.”** Again He said, **“My meat is to do the will of the Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.”** (John 4:34)

Please note that I am not teaching that an individual who believes the teaching of the Scriptures about healing should wonder whether or not God wants to heal him. The Scriptures are very clear on this point. But, when it comes to praying for another person, it is wise to be sure there is nothing in their life to hinder God keeping His Word. In other words, there are times when God cannot afford to heal, until certain things are moved out of the way, or made right! The Lord never violates His own Word, and healing is for those who desire to serve and obey Him. Otherwise, even if we are

healed we will lose it! **“Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.”** (John 5:14)

A Christian who is walking in all the light God has given him, and who constantly desires more Truth, with all his sins repented of and under the Blood, does not have to wonder whether or not it's God's will to heal him. To such a person our merciful Lord says, **“Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.”** (Ps. 103:2-3)

Luke 11:1, **“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”** In verse two Jesus said, **“When ye pray, say Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO IN EARTH.”**

I wonder if we are aware of the depth of commitment it takes to pray such a prayer? Do we understand that without a revelation of the perfect character of our Lord, we will not, and cannot, turn all circumstances of our lives over to Him? When our financial future seems to depend on a certain business venture going well, can we give it to Him, and say, **“Lord, Thy Will be done?”** When our *theology apple-cart* has been turned upside down, and years of denominational church teaching has been proven wrong, can we leave it all and say, **“Lord, Thy Will be done?”** When a loved one is lying on a sick bed with a dangerous disease, can we, with complete trust, turn them over to the One who created them, and say, “Lord, you know the end from the beginning, you therefore know what would be for the spiritual good of my loved one.” And though we know that healing is

the Children's Bread, if more days of suffering come, can we trust Him to have done the right thing? And what if He takes our loved one on to their eternal reward, what then?

This has happened in this writer's life several times, and I have been left to ponder the situation with a very heavy heart. Dare we question the fact that God's will was done? If so, we question His Sovereignty, and can only conclude that the enemy overruled Him! This we cannot do and retain our perfect faith in our perfect God! Do we dare suppose that we can improve on the will of God in ANY SITUATION? Born-Again people will surely answer, "Not so!"

Does it strike fear into our hearts to pray, "Lord, Thy Will be done in my life, and in the lives of all those I pray for, including my own family?" Surely, the flesh will draw back from anything that would cause it suffering, yet from the depths of the New Soul there comes forth faith-knowledge that cries, "He will do thee no harm." (Gen. 18:25, ".....shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?) He cannot do wrong, and though He breaks our bones and our heart, He has done so in love, and for the good of all concerned.

And what good will it do us to pray for anything different than His Will? For it is written, ".....He worketh all things after the council of HIS OWN WILL." (Eph. 1:11) Our God had an eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (Eph. 3:11) therefore, as our Prophet declared, we do not pray to change God's mind. His mind does not need changing. His first

thought (plan) was perfect. We pray and study His Word until we can submit ourselves, our plans, our loved ones, and all other things we pray about, into His all-knowing, all-loving hands. It is then that, "**The prayers of a Righteous Man availeth much.**"

There is a warning that must be heeded concerning the prayers of Righteous People. Although, Mark 11:24 says, "**Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them,**" we must not isolate Scripture from other Scripture. True understanding of the Bible takes in all that it says on a subject. For example the Scripture says in Rom. 8:26, "**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.**"

Therefore, the true teaching of Scripture is that our desires are granted to us by a loving God only when they are in agreement with God's desires, for He never gives us what would be harmful to the Spiritual Man just to pacify our carnal desires. I John 5:14, "**And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; Verse 15, "And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."**

This does not take away from the powerful fact that "**The effectual, fervent prayers of a Righteous man availeth much with God.**" It is only a safeguard in God's Word

that protects us from ourselves. Somewhere around 35 years ago, this writer was preaching a meeting in Odessa, Texas. The subject was Faith, and after the service, a Brother and a Sister came up to me and desired me to pray with them that God would give them a new Oldsmobile car. I had to confess to them that I did not have the faith to believe for the car. They were somewhat taken back, for they said, "You just preached on Great Faith, and we supposed you could believe God with us for the new car." They were evangelists and I ask them if they knew where they would be three months from that date? They answered that they were not booked up that far ahead. Then I asked what they would do with a new Oldsmobile in case God sent them to Cuba, and there they would need a mule to travel the unpaved roads.

The situation turned rather comical when the Sister replied. "Brother Wood, don't you pray for us to get a mule, we want a new car." I replied that I could not pray with any faith for a new Oldsmobile, but if they would agree, I could pray that the Lord meet their transportation need, and believe it with all my heart. Finally, they agreed, and we prayed. I never knew what kind of transportation the Lord furnished them, but I based my faith on His promise to "**Supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.**" (Phil. 4:19)

When a RIGHTEOUS MAN prays and leaves it up to God to answer in His own way, there will be no unanswered prayers. This is called "Commitment in its final stage." Amen!

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