

(1). "The Essential Contact..."

"How to get prayers answered."

Introd:- (1). Let me begin with some pertinent questions.

1. Do you get your prayers ans'd? "Sometimes..not often ..embarrassed."
2. Is this important? To you? Does prayer matter?
3. Are you satisfied with your prayer life? Is honest ans. ~~is~~ "No..I wish the answers were more definite.. clear..sure."?
4. Isn't it true that there are a lot of things in life the we can't handle..and that we need God to inter- pose His power when we ask Him?
5. Isn't it evident that if we can get prayers ans'd we can get anything we want..or ought to want?
Dr. Torrey says: "You can have revival if you want it"
The "wanting" includes asking and getting answer.
6. Isn't it high time we found out why some prayer is not being ans'd? c/f Telephone not ans...Cheque bounced.
WE WOULD BE PERTURBED..DO SOMETHING..And Prayer?

(2). Is not the normal state that of a man speaking to God and God speaking back to him? Not for unsaved man who has no relationship with God..Prov. 28:9...Ephes. 4:17-19. But for X'n..child of God..member of His fami ..this:- Gen. 3:8...Dan.9:20-21.

(3). SO.. because ans. to prayer is the norm..we have to approach prob. from negative side. No ques. about the normal state..no argument..nothing wrong with it. BUT I MUST SEARCH..FIND OUT WHAT WRONG WITH ABNORMAL STATE ..PRODUCING IT. You willing to approach this way? Not speculative..but Biblical...Clear statements from God.

I. I choose as first road-block that one called UNBELIEF.
I do not have to remind you that unbel. keeps men out of heaven. But per. we do need to be reminded..keeps X'ns out of place of blessing...power...effective X'n living. Classic O.T. example is that recorded in Heb. 3:16-19. And in N.T. this illus:- Matt.17:14-20.

Not just matter of believing HARD enough..sort of self-hypnotism..Coeism..mind over matter.
Real faith rests wholly on revealed word and will of God. Heb. 11:6...Ephes. 3:20-21. This is foundation for faith and ans'd prayer..GOD IS ABLE. I Cor. 15:58.
Do we believe..without reservation..GOD IS..AND GOD IS THERE.."The Lord is "AT HAND". Right there...here...?

II. Second hundrance to ans'd prayer very personal one.

(a). UNLOVELY HOMES. Much difficulty in X'n living begins at home..often unseen..unsuspected. Voice may be pious in prayer meet..mean, bitter, hateful, selfish at home. Joshua met up with this..Josh. 6:17-19..7:1..5-13..20-21. Note the four steps..in sin..Saw, coveted, took, hid.. IN HIS TENT. Progress of Isrel stopped..AND PRAYER MADE USELESS.."Get up!" We affect others around us.

Now N.T..I Peter 3:1-7.

How many X'n homes living up to this?

Wife is to be meek. Rebellion is sin of fallen angels.

Husband is to take place as head of home..leader..Priest..

carry heavy burdens..love...Oblig. on BOTH sides..c/f

Ephes.5:24-25. TWO SIDES. Or prayers hindered.

God make us like this..Gen. 18:19...Josh. 24:15.

Old-fashioned! Yes, and God blessed!

III. Third one is another intensely personal one.

UNRIGHTED WRONGS. Matt. 5:23-24. "Ought against thee".

-- A legitimate claim..grievance..The person you have wronged..gossipped about..Used hot words..sarcastic, sutting remark..Insulted..Some debt unpaid..or apology owed..Bill unpaid..grocer..butcher...Sharp deal..Cheating.

--LEAVE GIFT AT ALTAR..GO MAKE THAT RIGHT FIRST...for until you do..God is not listening!

Some pray long and God never hears.

Some give, and their money is abom. to God.

Some toil long in church work..and God hates it.

Wrongs of OTHERS have cried and reached ear of God first.

God said to Cain.."Thy brother's blood crieth.."

c/f Exod. 22:22-23. God hears cry of widow before one who oppresses...Cry of fatherless bef. prosperous.

God loves to listen to cry of helpless child..He will

ans. his prayer first..and turn ear away from others who

have cheated out of living.

ARE THERE SOME THINGS TO BE PUT RIGHT?

Are you "at outs" with some X'n bro..sister?

PUT THINGS RIGHT! I waited 5 yrs to pers. apol. to missic Zacchaeus..Lk. 19:8

Phil jailor washed stripes he had helped put on. And that night his family all saved.

VI. Here is another practical matter we ought examine.
UNPRACTICED DOCTRINE. The danger that besets fundamental church people. Liberals often sneer at us. Totally unjustified in most cases. Ev. missionary doc..nurse is challenge to this charge. BUT THERE IS A DANGER. Isa. 58:1-11 clear. Sometimes Bible believing X'n..with sound doctrine..delighting in church service..bows head ..fasts..prays..argues truth..debates..with pious show.. BUT FAILS IN SIMPLY PRACTICAL HELP. Head in clouds.. "So heavenly minded..no earthly good" (Opposite can be true also!)

Ture..our chief business is to feed on bread of life..send Gospel out..missionaries..BE SURE TO DO THIS.
But don't fail in this other area...c/f Gal. 6:10
Per. please God more by doing a washing..tending sick.. preparing a meal..mowing lawn for sick neighbour..than by trotting off to prayer meeting! DO IT!

VII. And another one dealing with matter of our service.

(a). UNSANCTIFIED SERVICE. Micah 3:5-7..11.

Per, this more for preacher than layman..yet it can apply to all of us when we do something in the service of God. WHY DO IT? It can be done for self-gain.

Some preachers are "professionals". Preach for money. TRUE! And world scoffs. This is the one Jesus called "the hireling", not a real shepherd who serve because he loves the sheep..no matter what it COSTS him. This is "juke-box" preaching..put money in, out comes sermon!

BUT..some laymen have quit bec. not praised..service not recog..appreciated. Nobody patted on back.."Thank you". Not "paid off" in bit of glory. And lost prayer-effective ness. Found selves like bride in Song of Sol..5:6.

VIII. Now turn to some very serious matters..3 of them.

UNSEPARATED LIFE. Which is the unsacrificed life.

Rom. 12:1-2 Let no X'n think he can know the intimate leading of H.S. without this. Conformity to the world may win friendship of world..but loses companionship of God.

James. 4:3-4 We "recieve not" bec. of this. No man can walk hand in hand with world..and still reach hand of God. SERIOUS! Two is company..three a crowd..and God retires!

I Sam. 8:18. Israel chose to have king..like nations round about ..c/f vs. 19-20. Aping world. And there was a consequence! Rely on flesh..not enjoy pres. of God.

IV. Fourth one is almost mirror-twin to third..Other side
UNFORGIVEN BROTHER. Mark 11:24-25.

In this case it is YOU who have the grievance. Someone has been mean to you! What do about THAT?

Here you come to worship..and God reminds you that you have a grudge..legit. enough..against a brother. What do? THIS TIME, DON'T GO AWAY from altar...But while right there, praying..FORGIVE..utterly, willingly, gladly! Not like this:- Illus:- "If I get better, old grudge still atands." Useless. "Forgive but can't forget" is a miserable cover up for a bitter heart.

Better say:- "I forgive..and will do utmost to forget." Keep short accounts with fellows. Clear the decks. c/f John 20:22;23..To ALL disciples..not just Pope Peter! What choose? To retain until judgment seat of X? Or get it all put away? And have God hear..ans. prayers! Note:- Acts 7:60..and our Lord.."Father, forgive them." Would not die with even enemies unforgiven. AND WE? "Suppose not let forgive?" Can't stop you!

V.Fifth one may hurt a little..or a lot! Take it?

UNPAID TITHES. and offerings.. Mal. 3:8-12.

The heavens are sometimes as brass because of this PHYSICAL FACT.

O.T....? Yes, and N.T..too. Heb. 7:7-8. Present tense! Jesus commended a widow's mite..all her living.

Would you do that..if God so led..challenged you?

"O but..what would I do?" Is God able? Takes us back to matter of UNBELIEF, in very prac. sense, doesn't it? Illus:- "If I gave God \$1,000.00 saved for old age..will He take care of me?" What ans. give? If God so leads.. certainly He will. "Them that honour me, I will honour"

Illus:- Woman broke alabaster box. Why? Bec. afraid she might be like we too often are.."O! nearly gave more than 10th..One drop more. Cork it! Rest for me!"

True stewardship holds ev. dollar at His disposal..UTTERLY Unreservedly..and spends it only under His direction. on ANYTHING.. Think of that! Gadget..furniture..car.. amusement..food.

Why eat? "To live". Why?/?? FOR GOD..or what?

Talked about this once. On way home God said: "You have an alabaster box" "What is it?" Told me. I told wife. She said: "Good, let's break it" Thank God.

Some sing, "O hoe I love Jesus"..and don't love Him a dime's worth in a dollar.

I am NOT collecting money! But trying help us all get PRAYERS ANSWERED. And withheld tithes too big a price to pay for unanswered prayer.

II Cor. 6:14-18 But is not God Father of ev. X'n?
True. But real father-son relationship is only poss.
to separated X'n. A divided heart is useless..worse..
c/f marriage.

c/f Lot. No prayers answered in Sodom. Abr. had to rescu
c/f Samson. Played with sin..no ans..until renewed his
vow on day he died. MOST SERIOUS MATTER TODAY. God help
us keep our standards high!

IX..Another one equally important is here before us..in
UNCONFESED SIN. Psalm 66:18 God can, but "He WILL NOT"
Isa. 1:15...59:1-2. Same statement. "He WILL NOT".
God stops His ears.

But do not all X'ns sin? With sorrow we confess this.
Much we know..much more God will show us day by day.
What then? If it is TOLERATED in the life..unforsaken..
dallied with..held to boscm..looked on with somplacency..
even enjoyed.."regarded"..IT STOPS GOD'S EARS.

And then we are called to confession and repentance.

II Kings 22:19....II Chron. 7:14...I John 1:9.

We are called to seek God..to put matters right..

Keep SHORT ACCOUNTS with God!

X. The last one..and per. the paramount one..upon which
all rest really depend.

UNYIELDED HEART. The heart in which self-will still rules
Proverbs. 1:24-28

Zech. 7:8-13.

And an example in real life..that we und. so well..

I Sam. 15:20-23.

Saul went own way..decided he could better direct his
own life than God. But day came when in deep trouble.

Failed..and CRIED TO GOD..BUT..I Sam. 28:5-6.

Reached most miserable place a man can ever reach..unable
get ans. from God. Ran to occult practices..and then
COMMITTED SUICIDE..ended it all.

WHERE IS YOUR HEART SET...PSALM 91:14-15. ?

Remember this in Rev. 4:11

Agree to that? "What will the great God of heaven find in
my life today that brings Him PLEASURE?"

We can go own way..to money, security..ease. Would teach
us this from infancy. BUT THERE WILL COME TIMES WHEN
WE NEED GOD DESPERATELY.

What God do? Answer? Why should He? "Young man, remember
..we said "Good-bye" long time ago. You left me..deserted
my way..work. Said you sound make own way..Good-bye".

That happened to Saul..It happend today!

God help us all..Keep right with God..Then..I John 3:21-2