

***“Ask and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find;  
Knock and it will be opened to you” (Mt 7:7)***

We shall continue our meditation on the Sermon on Prayer.

□ **Mt 5:44**, “Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

Christian life is delightful when we obey, and difficult otherwise. The commandments of Christ are not unreasonable or impossible. When we start praying for those who contradict us or conspire against us, the love of God overwhelms us so we can love them with the same love. The Lord purposely puts us with difficult persons. It is part of our discipline. Grace sufficient to live with hostility and misunderstanding is granted to us when we pray. Prayer prevents bitterness enter our hearts, and uproots if there’s any against the person who has hurt us and for whom we are praying.

□ **Mt 6:5,6**, “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray that they may be seen by men... But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place.”

Of all spiritual disciplines, prayer can most easily become a show-off. It is pharisaic to go around telling how many hours one prays everyday. Impressing people has no other reward. Prayer is not for parading. The secret of praying is praying in secret. Unless we run to a place of solitude, we will miss the whisper of the Spirit amidst all the bustle.

□ **Mt 6:7,8**, “When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Prayer is not to tell God what He knows not. It is to verbalise our feelings to a Father as a child. Simple prayers are sublime. Remember the Publican who simply cried, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (Lk 18:13). A father knows the child’s needs; but he is delighted when the child asks him. That enlivens the relationship. The mother knows when to feed her baby, but her maternal instincts are stimulated when it cries for milk.

*Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.  
Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try;  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach the Majesty on High!*  
*(James Montgomery, 1771-1854)*

Almighty God,

We worship You as the One who delights in the prayers of Your people. We are thrilled to know that You seek our communion and fellowship. Your knowledge is far superior to ours. Your power is far superior to ours. Nevertheless You have found us precious in Your sight. This is too difficult for us to understand, O God! We give You glory and strength. We worship You and tremble before You. We will sing to You as long as we live. Praise be to Your holy Name! Even thousand tongues or years won't be enough to praise You!

Thank You, Father, for the precious lessons Your Son has taught us about prayer. We confess that our prayer difficulties are simply too many. We are not able to pray to You to bless our opponents and persecutors. We are too stubborn to do that, O God. Break us with the love of the Cross. Melt our hard hearts with the revelation of Your love manifested in Calvary. Did not Christ die for us while we were still Your enemies? Did not Christ ascend to receive gifts for us the rebellious? Forgive us, O Lord, for holding grudge against our offenders. Deliver us from the spirit of vengeance. You have forgiven our sins which are more in number than the sands of the sea. Pour into our hearts the same love to forgive those who work against us.

Dear Lord, forgive us for our show-off in spiritual exercises. Help us die to the lust of the applause of men rather than a desire for Your approval. Remind us, O God, again and again of our unworthiness and nothingness. Forgive us for not spending at least an hour with You each day in solitary prayer. We do not enjoy fellowship with You as much as we enjoy the company of worldlings. Heal our backsliding, O God. Send us Your fire on our prayer altars. Let the hour of prayer become sweet again to us.

Lord God, we often forget Your fatherhood when we pray. Let our praying become an expression of our relationship with You as Your children. You are not an employer paying us salaries. No, Lord, You are our Father, You are our Abba. What You know of our needs is much much more than what we ourselves know about them. You only know what's best for us. You only know when to give us and what. Draw us nearer and nearer to You, Lord, everytime we kneel down in prayer. We fall into Your bosom as a little child on its mother's lap. We thank You for this blessed privilege.

In Jesus' Name, Amen!

*(Psa 68:18; 84:10; 105:4; 145:18; Mt 5:44; 6:6-13; 27:44; Lk 23:34;  
Rom 5:8; 8:15,16; Eph 4:31,32; Isa 56:7)*