

PRAYER

Morgan County Correctional Complex, June 2, 2007

Introduction for Rickey Beamon

Good morning everyone.

[Comments about today's lesson]

In a few minutes, we'll be reading from the book of James, chapter five.

But before we do the reading, I'd like to say a few words to you about a key scripture contained in verse 16. The text in that verse reads, "**The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**"

The adjective "effectual" means "producing an intended effect: ADEQUATE"

"Fervent" means "1: very hot: GLOWING 2: marked by great intensity of feeling"

This is a passionate prayer, constructed by the examples and dictates of Scripture, therefore it's an adequate prayer – effectual.

Jesus' disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." And in the 11th chapter of Luke, our Lord gave them an outline of an effectual prayer:

Praying to our Father in heaven and **hallowing** His name. Showing honor, reverence, and respect for God ...

Seeking His kingdom to come to this earth and His will to be done here – just as it is done there, in heaven; prophecy, obedience, loyalty ...

Depending on Him each day for our physical needs; putting trust and reliance in His sovereignty ...

We go on to seek forgiveness of our sins, just as "we also forgive" – **or in proportion to our forgiveness of** – those who sin against us.

You see, God requires things from us. Just as Greg pointed out last week, God is not a genie in a bottle; a coin tossed into a well. This is the **Great Creator God**, and He's made a covenant, a contract, an agreement with you – "Do what I say and I'll give you what you ask."

Notice I didn't say, "Give you what you want." Scripture is clear, our motives in prayer should never be selfish or greedy. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume

it upon your lusts.” [James 4:3]

Jesus closes His example of Godly prayer with a spiritual plea for protection and deliverance from the pulls of the flesh and the evil of this world.

The record in Luke continues with His teaching of a parable illustrating the need for persistence in prayer, or as the King James says, “importunity,” which means “to urge or beg with troublesome persistency.”

Now let’s not misconstrue this to mean repetition. Chants, mantras, memorized prayers, and at times, the Scriptures themselves, can become a stumbling block; a practice in religious futility. For the truly converted, God is your Father, and like any parent, He desires to have a conversation with you.

You wouldn’t use archaic language, repetitious or scripted words when speaking to your physical father – so why would you employ this speech with God? He only desires your sincerity and honesty, even respectful complaints. The book of Psalms gives several examples of candid honesty in prayer.

Honesty is a must. As I said before, God requires things from us. James says it’s the prayers of a **righteous man** that get results.

Scripture tells us, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” [Isaiah 64:6] “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” [Romans 3:23]

Naturally, we have no right to ask anything of God. But through the sacrifice of Christ, we can be justified freely by His grace. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation – **a sacrifice of atonement** [NIV] – through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past ...”[Romans 3:25]

Only true heart-felt repentance will remove your past sins and take away the barrier between you and God. Isaiah told his Jewish brethren, “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” [59:1-2]

Prayer is a privilege, and the foundational tool of spiritual growth.

As Mr. Beamon brings the message today, I want you to reflect on your life, search your heart for any unrepented-of sin, any lust, anything contrary to the will of God as defined by Scripture.

The Bible says in 1 John 3:4 that “sin is the transgression of the law,” and in Romans 6:23 “the wages of sin is death.”

Sometime death comes quickly. Sometimes it comes slowly, through ageing, illness and disease. Several weeks ago I asked you all to pray for my mother's health, for the restoration of her legs. As I was able to share with many of you the following weekend, she began to improve from that day. [Relay conversation with mom]

God has been merciful to my family and I thank you all for your continued prayers ... But more importantly, I thank you for your obedience to the Living God.

If you would, please open your Bibles to the book of James, Chapter five, beginning at verse 13. When you've found your place, please stand for the reading of God's Word. [Read James 5:13-20]