

PRAYER MEETING
"SPIRITUAL GROANINGS"

Introduction

1. There is more to prayer than order.
2. I refer to fervour, spirituality, life.
3. **ILLUSTRATION**: my experience in Glasgow, etc.
4. Some have a gift of prayer.

1. PAUL HERE REFERS TO "GROANINGS" IN PRAYER

- 1) This passage refers to various spiritual experiences: Ex:
 - (i) v.13: mortify
 - (ii) v.14: led
 - (iii) v.15: cry
 - (iv) v.16: assurance
 - (v) v.23: the soul yearning for glory

OBSERVE: These are all experiences of a believer.
- 2) Amongst such experiences is that of groaning in prayer (v.26)

DOCTRINE: There is a spiritual fervency in prayer and this we must expect!

ILLUSTRATION: "That really was prayer!"

2. WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD CAN HELP US WONDERFULLY IN PRAYER

- 1) Even Paul confesses the difficulty of prayer as we see at v.26.
- 2) Many remedy this in the wrong way:
 - (i) prayer book: but the heart is first
 - (ii) mere words: but this is not enough
- 3) How has God helped us in prayer?
 - (i) Christ in glory intercedes for us.

- (ii) Christ's Spirit intercedes in us
OBSERVE: We are to express the Holy Spirit to stir us up as we pray.

- 4) How the spirit does this: by working within our soul's faculties so as to burden us – arouse us – enable us to pray with animation.

Examples:

- (i) Abraham for Lot in Sodom
- (ii) Jacob at Peniel: "I will not let thee go..."
- (iii) Moses: his hands lifted up in the conflict with Amalek
- (iv) Christ: prayed all night / "strong crying and tears..." / "great drops of blood".
- (v) The Early Church: "the place was shaken".
APPLICATION: So there is this aspect of "wrestling" in prayer.

- 5) Notable examples in history:

- (i) The "Thundering Legion"
- (ii) Martin Luther for Melancthon
- (iii) John Knox for Scotland
- (iv) John Elias of Wales

4. PAUL USES AN ENLIGHTENING ILLUSTRATION HERE: "HELPETH OUR INFIRMITY"

- 1) The word "helps" is significant: "synantilambanomai". I shall quote two great theologians on the idea here:
 - (i) Charles Hodge: "To take hold of anything with another – take part of his burden or work."
 - (ii) John Calvin: "The Spirit takes part of the burden with which our weakness is weighed down."
- 2) **ILLUSTRATION**: a father and son lifting a weight.
- 3) The burden is the cause of Christ in this world.
 We labour in prayer and are supported by God's Spirit.
- 4) Prayer is generated in the believer's soul by the action of two things:
 - (i) God's promise

- (ii) Contrary providences
ILLUSTRATION: The upper and nether mill-stone.

5) Prayer in the soul is registered in our consciousness as "groaning" = a yearning to see God's glory advanced in a world where God's glory is so much hated.

APPLICATION: Have we felt this powerful influence of God's Spirit in our praying?

4. **LET US DESIRE MORE OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN OUR PRAYERS**

1) I offer certain tests to measure if we are familiar with this concept of "groaning" in prayer:

- (i) When you forget the world for a time
- (ii) When your emotions overflow
- (iii) When you feel constraint, agony
- (iv) When the soul is amazed

ILLUSTRATION: Before the 1859 revival in Scotland.

2) O that God would teach us all to pray in the Spirit (TEXT)!

CONCLUSION

Jeremiah Lanphier in New York before the 1857/8 revival there. Is not this an inspiration to us?

<p>PSALM</p> <p>75: 1 – 6</p> <p>77: 1 – 5</p> <p>77: 6 – 10</p>
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