

Prayer Changes Things

"Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my groaning.² Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.³ O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.⁴ For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.⁵ The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.⁶ You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.⁷ But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.⁸ Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.⁹ For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.¹⁰ Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you.¹¹ But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.¹² For you bless the righteous, O LORD; you cover him with favor as with a shield." (**Psalm 5, ESV**)

On this Mothers-day I was reminded of something about prayer that impacted me as a kid. As a young boy I remember my mother having a small wooden plaque on the wall of our home that said, "Prayer Changes Things." I remember passing that little sign many times and wondering what it really meant. Did this mean that God really *changes things*? Even as a boy, I'd heard different ideas about prayer. Some individuals expressed the view that God is off in the distance somewhere and no longer involved in the affairs of humans. I'd heard that God will change people if they would cooperate with Him. I'd heard also that God lets things happen in our lives that change us for the better if we keep our faith. I'd heard others say that God is in control of everything so it really didn't matter whether we prayed or not. I'd heard some say, "do not ask God to change the situation, but rather, ask Him to give you the strength to endure it." Later on I learned, in the proper context, many of these concepts about prayer had a certain level of truth in them, including the sign, "Prayer Changes Things."

When we come to God in prayer we can believe that He changes things. He is a *prayer answering God*. It is true that sometimes He chooses not to change

a situation immediately after we pray, but that doesn't mean that He will not change it in some way eventually. Many times there are so many other issues involved that we do not understand or cannot see that God chooses not to change the situation when and how we desire. He is the all-wise God. One thing is for sure, if it is the right thing to be done, God will do it (Genesis 18:25). We can pray confidently and know if it is His will, God will do it (1 John 5:14-15). Yet many things will never change if we do not pray (James 4:2). God has told us to "ask." We are working together with God in this. Certainly God can do anything He wants. Yet He has chosen to use us and our prayers as the means to change many things. We are co-laborers together with God. Prayer is a tool He has chosen to use to us as well as to change *things*. Let's look at that word "things" for a minute.

That word "things" is a gospel word. It is a "prayer" word. It is found in scriptures talking about prayer all through the Bible. Allow me to share a couple of instances. "And whatever **things** you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive (Matthew 21:22)." "Therefore I say to you, whatever **things** you ask for when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24)." We see here that the gospel is about *things*. "How beautiful are the feet of those, who bring glad tidings of good **things** (Romans 10:15)." God wants His children to have good *things* in their lives (John 10:10). He has chosen believing prayer to be a primary method He uses to bring many of these *things* into our lives. He bids us to believe Him to release His power and presence into our lives. He says, "Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty **things**, which you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3)." To "call" means to call Him by name. To say "Our Father" is to address the all-powerful and all-loving God who cares about you. If you ask in His name, God will answer you. Jesus encourages us to ask the Father in His name for the things we need (John 16:23-24). He will answer you and change things. Every situation can be made better. There is light at the end of every tunnel for those who pray. God will even show you the *things* you didn't know so you can make the right decision about your situation (Jeremiah 33:3). He will give you the wisdom you need for the situation if you ask for it (James 1:5-8). *Things* can change. If the situation doesn't change then He will change you and others by it and bring about something even greater (Genesis 50:20). Pray about the **things** in your life. God can change more in a minute than we can in a lifetime. I don't know whatever happened to the plaque on the wall but I know this still, "Prayer Changes Things." Amen.

Our Father,

We come before You today knowing that You encourage us to call upon You for the many *things* in our lives that we have concern about. We appreciate all the many blessings You have given to us in our personal lives and in our community. We thank You especially today for promising to save us and be with us to the very end of our lives here and throughout eternity.

Now we come asking you for some *things* for which we need Your help. We ask You to show us the path to take in the days ahead. Teach us to trust You more faithfully and to believe more fully. Guide us in the way You would have us go, aid us in our decision making, and encourage us to do right by our fellow man.

Bless our families and keep them in the palm of Your strong hand. We ask You to cover our city and surrounding areas with Your favor and blessings. Guide us in the way everlasting as we give You all the praise, honor, and glory. For it's in Your Name we pray, Amen.