

"Waiting Upon the Lord"

11/15/56
M.M.
A.M.

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Luke 18: 1. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

Introduction:- My text declares, that men ought always to pray. This means waiting on God. What does it mean to wait upon God? It something intensely real and practical. This sense of the "presence" of God is a spiritual affair. Even between human beings in the same room, it is a very relative matter, and it never is a matter of mere physical closeness. It is a matter of sharing, of awareness, of accessibility. Suppose you talk to someone on the telephone. Your friend or loved one may be a thousand miles from you, but as soon as you recognize his voice you are in each others presence. You are more present to each other than you are to someone in the room while you are using the telephone. Why? Because you are through the medium of the telephone, accessible to each other. You are sharing with each other. Thus you see, all experience of the "presence", as between persons is fundamentally an inner, that is to say, a spiritual experience.

A famous American business organization has as its advertising slogan; "We are as close as your telephone. That is what Heaven says to earth, what God says to men: "We are as close to you as the inner telephone of prayer." All God is asking for as a receiving set in your heart and a sincere call from your soul. He will answer.

I.

Waiting on God is a form of spiritual listening. You and I have gone only a little distance in the practice of prayer unless we have learned that prayer's highway carries a two-way traffic. It is not monologue; it is dialogue. Actually, the listening side of it, getting what God says to us, may be more important than the speaking side, the offering of our desires and words to God. In the 130th Psalm the opening petition is a desperate

cry: "Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." But a moment later the psalmist speaks more quietly and, perhaps more wisely: "Wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope." (V. 5)

You speak to God. God speaks to you. Dr. Stanley Jones closes his book, "The Way to Power & Poise" by telling of an early morning prayer time when the Holy Spirit drew his attention to the fine response that Ananias made when he was guided to the help of Saul of Tarsus, as is recorded in the 9th chapter of Acts. "Behold, I am here, Lord," said Ananias. Dr. Jones says, the Inner Voice said to me, "If you will say that in every situation, "Here am I, Lord", then I will take care of the rest. If you will put yourself at my disposal in every situation, then you won't have to worry about anything, success, power, poise, it will be yours." Then an indescribable calm came over the soul of God's servant. It was the harvest of the listening ear. It was the reward of waiting on the Lord.

II.

A third thing that belongs to the soul's exercise of waiting on God, is a form of spiritual confidence. Hebrew scholars will tell you that the word translated "wait" means not idle or listless passing of time; it means looking with expectation. It means an active faith.

You show your faith in a man by taking his word for something. You show your faith in a bridge by walking across it. You show your faith in a chair by resting your weight in it. You show your faith in God by taking confidently those resources of strength that come to you in prayer and let them carry you through your duty, or your difficulty, or your danger, or whatever it may be that confronts you. For in prayer, you see, you have the renewing of your strength. It is the soul's blood-transfusion. It sees you through. You have the strength to soar high, for the prophet says, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles". Above the low things of life you can rise. You have the

strength to surge ahead, for the prophet says, "they shall run and not be weary." In the emergencies you can break through and amke advances. You need not be thrown back and covered with shame. You have the strength to slog on, for the prophet says, "they shall walk, and faint not". "Slog on", said the foot-weary soldiers of the first World War. It's strength to take the ordinary in stride, to deal with the commonplace without boredom, to make something fine out of the "everydayness" of life.

"Give me Thy strength for my day, Lord,
That wheresoever I go,
There shall no danger daunt me,
And I shall fear no foe;
So shall no task o'ercome me,
So shall no trial fret,
So shall I walk unwearied
The path where my feet are set."

Many men and women have found that prayer is a way of life; a way of success. Dr. George Washington Carver, the world famous negro scientist, was one of these. Some years ago, when addressing a great audience of 2000 in Minneapolis, he opened his address with the following paragraph. "Years ago I went into my laboratory and said, "Dear Mr. * Creator, please tell me what the universe was made for? The great Creator answered, "You want to know too much with that little mind of yours. Ask for something more your size."

"Then I asked, "Dear Mr. Creator, tell me what man was made for". Again the Creator replied, "Little man, you are still asking too much." Cut down the extent of your request, and improve the intent." Then I asked, "Please Mr. Creator, will you tell me what the peanut was made for?" "That's better." What do you want to know about the peanut? "Can I make milk out of the peanut? What kind of milk do you want, good jersey milk, or just plain boarding-house milk? "Good jersey milk". Then the Creator taught me how to take the peanut apart and put it together again; and out of these processes have come forth all these products. To make a long story short, he discovered 300 new uses for the peanut and 150 new uses for the sweet potato, and before he was through he had rebuilt the agricul-

ture of the south. One of Dr. Carver's favorite passages of Scripture was the 29th verse of the first chapter of Genesis, "And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat."

An interview of a small party of friends with Dr. Carver followed. One of the party said to him, "Dr. Carver, it is true that you taught yourself how to play the piano. Is it true that your playing helped to defray your expenses through collage."

"There is literally nothing that I ever wanted to do, that I asked the Creator to help me do, that I have not been able to accomplish."

When one of the party exclaimed at the marvel of it, Dr. Carver replied, "Not at all; it is all very simple when you know how to talk with the Creator. It is simply seeking the Lord and finding him. You remember what he said in the proverbs, "Those who seek me early shall find me." So I just follow his advice, and find him." Some one asked, "Do you really seek him early?" His reply was "Yes." All my life I have risen regularly at 4:00 o'clock and have gone into the woods and talked with God. There he gives me orders for the day. Alone there with things I love most I gather specimens, and study the great lesson nature is so eager to teach us all. When people are still asleep I hear God then, and learn my plans."

Conclusion:- Rebuilt southern agriculture. By prayer.