

"Keep Cool and Pray"

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Union
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Scripture:- I Peter 4:1-10.

Text:- I Peter 4: 7.

Introduction:- An exhortation is given by Peter in his first epistle. "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Moffat's translation of this passage reads, "Now the end of all is near. Steady then, keep cool and pray."

The fourth chapter of First Peter is a chapter which has much to say about suffering and danger. Prayer in this chapter is associated with danger. The apostle says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the firey trial which is to try you and some strange thing happen unto you."

In the midst of these trials and dangers the apostle gives an exhortation to prayer. The state of the world was such, at that time Peter wrote these words, that the end of all things seemed to be at hand. In every period of great and universal catastrophe, men have seriously discussed the end of the world.

Such a discussion is not contrary to the Scriptures, for they teach plainly there will be a great catastrophe in history, and the Scriptures also teach plainly that there is to be a great Armageddon.

Thus, in every age, when catastrophe has become widespread Christians have taken an inventory as to whether or not the period might be the time spoken of in the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus taught that no man can know the exact day or time that this climactic period is to come in history. Jesus does set forth certain signs we are to take into consideration in evaluating the signs of the times. It is quite interesting to note that in the early days of the Christian Church the apostles give a list of conditions that would indicate that all things might be coming to an end.

I.

The important thing for Christians to learn is not the time or exact date of this great event in history, but rather the proper attitude to assume and the course to pursue in the presence of these periods whether or not they prove to be the end spoken of in the Bible.

What is to be the attitude of the people of God in the days of great peril that come upon the earth? Peter's admonition is, "Be therefore sober, watch unto prayer", or to use the words of the Moffat translation, "Keep cool and pray".

Real praying is more than asking for things. Prayer is a vital contact between the soul and God. There is a vast difference between making a vital contact with God, and just asking for things. The weakness in most praying is that it consists of selfish petitions, the asking for things that will make life a little more safe and comfortable and to our liking.

To make a vital contact with God means a yielding to God's will. The yielding to God's will means the surrender of the things in our lives that are contrary to his will. Real prayer is both emptying and filling. We are emptied of the things contrary to the will of God. When emptied of these things God comes in with his presence and power to fill us.

Time is an element in prayer. If we rush hurriedly into the presence of God, we may miss the emptying process. It is through tarrying and waiting before God that the revelation comes concerning the things that are contrary to his will. There was an emptying process in the ten day prayer meeting at Pentecost. After the emptying process had been complete the filling came into the lives of the one hundred and twenty that tarried together in the upper room.

When the soul makes vital contact with God, strength is given for the realization of the specific things of life that we pray for. When the soul becomes enamored of God the specific things of life find their solution.

Jesus prayed for the specific things. He prayed

for Peter that his faith would not waver. He prayed for the sup to pass from him in the Garden. The climax of the prayer of Jesus in the garden was not when he prayed for a specific thing in asking the cup to pass from him. The climax of the prayer in the garden was when Jesus prayed for the will of the Father to be done. In that prayer he prayed for the vital contact between himself and the Father to remain unbroken.

II.

One of the chief purposes of prayer is to keep the contact unbroken between the soul and God. When contact becomes broken with God life is no longer normal. Life is then abnormal. It is the normal thing for man to live in contact with God. All of the sin and wreckage of the world is abnormal. It is contrary to the will of God. A loose connection may cause the lights to go out by shutting off the current. Prayer bridges the loose connection, and keeps us in touch with the source of divine power.

George Mathewson wrote, "Whether thou comest in sunshine or in rain, I would take thee into my heart. Thou art thyself more than the sunshine. Thou art thyself compensation for the rain. It is ~~thee~~ not thy gifts, I crave."

God is sufficient for us, and if the chief object of our praying is to be certain of specific things we have missed the highest purpose of prayer. The primary object of prayer is to come in contact with the living God. That our lives may become so filled with his presence that we may be able to speak freely to God about the specific things of life.

Conclusion:- When we come into this relationship with God through prayer, it will be the normal and natural thing to talk with him about the specific things of life that concern us. When we are in vital contact with God, our major emphasis will not be upon securing the things that we ask for, but upon doing the will of our heavenly Father, and walking in the way which he would have us to