**April 21, 2019**

**Session 77: Prayer Principles**

Principle number two: Prayer works to activate the doctrine in our spirit.

Okay, prayer changes us, but how does that happen?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The change in us, which takes place by prayer, is a spirit motivated change. We hear the word (or read it) and that word takes root in our spirit.

We normally say, body, soul and spirit, but notice that Paul puts these in reverse order; spirit, soul and body. He does that because this is the order in which we are changed. Change takes place in our spirit, then in our soul and lastly in our body.

Our spirit involves our mind; the way we think. When we think about things differently, we have a different attitude or emotion (which involves our soul), and then it affects our conduct and behavior (our body).

The change that God generates in us through prayer happens from the inside out; beginning in our spirit.

The third principle: God speaks to men through the person of His Spirit

This process of prayer (interaction with God) works how? It is going to happen in our spirit, for that is the part of us which was created to allow us to have fellowship with God.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Men’s relationship with God is spiritual in nature, therefore worship takes place in our spirit. But how does God connect to our spirit?

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

In vs. 16, is God communicating something to us or are we communicating something to Him? He is communicating something to us. What is He communicating? The Spirit is bearing witness with our spirit (what we think; our mind) that we are the children of God.

In scripture, when God wants to communicate something to men, it comes through His Spirit. And, in this dispensation of grace, how does God communicate through His Spirit; what is the means by which He does that? It is through His word; the completed revelation of Scripture.

In other words, what does the scripture say? Paul used the expression over and over.

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Romans 11:2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

Galatians 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.**

The Spirit of God communicates using words; language. The whole reason God created language is so He could communicate with men. The spirit is the part of us which allows verbal communication. Ideas, thoughts and abstract concepts are understood through verbal communication.

When communication is by us to God, it is only on the merits of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 For *there is* one God, and **one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**

We approach God because of the merits of Jesus Christ and we have those merits because we are “in Christ.” We have unlimited and unrestricted access to God because of our being in Christ.

So, when God speaks to us, it is by the Spirit. When we speak to God, it is by His Son. When the Spirit speaks to us, it is by God’s word. That is what happened when Jesus was praying in the garden; God spoke to Him by the Scriptures. Why else would Jesus say:

Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Do you want to know what happened when Christ was praying? The Spirit communicated God’s words (the Scriptures) and He knew that His Father’s words needed to be fulfilled; that was His Father’s will, and thus it became the Son’s will also.

So, let’s go through it again. When God speaks to men, He does so by His Spirit. The Spirit communicates by means of God’s word. And how did we get God’s words? Peter said that “holy men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost.” That means that they wrote down words which God revealed to them by His Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

As we have said before, God communicates by His word which was communicated to men by His Spirit. Those words were written down and now they become God’s communication to us.

Take for example, Romans 8:16.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

How does the Spirit bear witness that we are the children of God? He bear witness to that by the written word of God. We know we are God’s children not because we “feel” it, but because He has told us we are His children.

Paul wrote about this same issue in Galatians 4.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

When we speak to God, it is through the mediator Jesus Christ. The Spirit communicates to us on God’s behalf, Jesus Christ communicates to God on our behalf.

**Father**

**Spirit**

**Us**

**Son**

With these principles in place, let us go back to Romans 8:26 and see what we know.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

When Paul prayed for his “thorn in the flesh” to be removed, did Paul know what to pray for as he ought? He did not, at least not in the beginning.

So when Paul says the Spirit makes intercession “for us,” which direction is the communication going? It going from God to us. When the Spirit intercedes…

Romans 8:27 **And he that searcheth the hearts** knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

Who is searching the hearts? God, the Father.

Acts 15:8 And God, **which knoweth the hearts**, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

So, God knows our hearts. Now back to Romans 8:27.

Romans 8:27 And **he that searcheth the hearts** knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

God searches the hearts; He knows our hearts.

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts **knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit,** because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

The same God who searches the hearts also knows the mind of the Spirit. What do it mean that God knows the mind of the Spirit? It means that God knows what the Spirit is telling you. And how does He know?

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, **because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.**

Because God knows the Spirit is speaking the Father’s will.

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God knows the mind of God. God knows the mind of the Spirit because the mind of the Spirit is the mind of God. They are one in the same.

Romans 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.**

The Spirit is not making intercession randomly. The Spirit makes intercession based on the will of God. And the intercession the Spirit is making is in the form of God’s words.

When Paul originally wanted God to take his problem away, the Spirit interceded in the sense that changed Paul’s thinking about his problem. That intercession was in the form of “my grace is sufficient for thee.” That changed Paul’s attitude and then he began to pray about the problem the way he ought; “I will rather glory in my infirmities.”

Paul changed. The Spirit’s intercession changed Paul.

So, to sum up vv. 26-27, the comfort we have right now is knowing that God is using His Spirit to intercede (by means of God’s word) on our behalf in the midst of our infirmities to change us, so that we might begin to pray in accordance with the will of God, so that we might see our circumstances differently, so that we will respond to them differently.

I took longer on vv. 26-27 than I thought I would, but remember what we are doing. We are talking about the comforting ministries that are available to us while we “with patience” wait for the redemption of our body as we endure the sufferings of this present time.

The next comforting issue is:

* + The certainty of the doctrine of God’s counsel that stabilizes us vv. 28-30

God’s counsel is that all of our sufferings have the potential to work together for our spiritual good. Through those sufferings, we are being conformed to the image of God’s Son. That is to say, sufferings are opportunities for Christ’s life to made manifest in us. This is the ultimate goal of our sanctification.

God is the one who put this whole process into motion and He has done everything necessary in order for it to succeed as long as we respond properly to the doctrine.

* + The comforting doctrine of the Five Probing Questions – vv. 31-39
* Sufferings of Christ
  + Identify your greatest need

Education Prayer

1. **Hear and Understand**: We hear the doctrine at church. We hear the explanation. We understand what the doctrine is designed to do. We understand what the doctrine is saying.
2. **Believe**: The next step is to believe the doctrine will work for you.
3. **Pray**: The next step is praying about our understanding of the doctrine. We talk to God as much as we can about what we know about the doctrine; what it is designed to do. We learn to value the doctrine for what it is to God. We learn to love God for what this doctrine is meant to produce in us. We meditate on the doctrine. We pray some more. We meditate some more. We pray some more. We read the verses. We pray some more. We look over the notes or listen to the audio. We meditate some more. We talk to other saints about the doctrine. We talk to God about the doctrine. We read the verses again. We think about what we have read. Get the picture? It is a process like this that moves the words on the page to become a living reality in our hearts.
4. **Evaluate**: The next step is to ask the questions:
   1. What do I know God has said about this issue?
   2. What is this doctrine designed to produce in me?
   3. Is this doctrine beginning to change my thinking?
   4. How will this doctrine impact my behavior?
5. **Pray/Apply**: Once this doctrine is getting itself established in our thinking, we begin to live out of it, accompanied by prayer without ceasing and continuing instant in prayer.
6. **Evaluate/Pray**: As this process takes place, we ask the questions:
   1. Have I confused the “human” version of this with the godly version? In other words, am I doing what I am doing because of what the doctrine says, or am I putting this to work in the energy of my own flesh?
   2. Are my thoughts in line with the doctrine?
   3. Are my words/actions in line with the doctrine?
   4. Talk to your Father about the process of living out of the doctrine

Praying for Others:

* Prayer for fellow sons
  + Prayer moves us to action
* Praying for everyone else
  + Prayer moves us to action