

WHEN THE PROPHET PRAYS

By

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In an article entitled “Praying Together: Annoying or anointed?” in the May/June, 1998, issue of “Pray!” magazine, Alice Smith speaks of prophetic intercessors as hearing from God almost as much as speaking to Him. “Exhortation, faith, wisdom, words of knowledge, and discernment flow from the prophetic intercessor. God often shares His heart and the strategies of His work with them. At times, He even reveals the plans of the enemy.”

Jeremiah challenged: “If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of Hosts.” (Jeremiah 27.18) Because the sins and wounds of our heart taint our prayer life, we must pray for the heart, our own, above all. Peter moved from a confession of Christ whose source was a revelation from the father to an intercessory plea amounting to counterfeit spiritual authority because it came from self-assertion, from human thoughts and human wisdom, a false source. And so, in Matthew 16 we read all about it. Jesus calls Peter a Satan. Presumption is the main pitfall of the Christian in relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We must never presume on our relationship with the Godhead.

We might ask, “What happens when the prophet prays?” To begin, let’s look at Jeremiah 15.16:

*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the
Joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name,
O Lord God of hosts. (NKJV)*

Jeremiah is a true prophet. He is called by the Lord God of hosts. He not only seeks for the Word of his God, but He swallows them. He takes them into his system and lives off their nourishment. Those words bring joy and rejoicing to his heart. Jeremiah is appointed, anointed, and abiding.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah (1.2, 4). That word “came” signifies that it took possession of him, ruled him, made him willing to speak what the Lord told him to speak, to do what the Lord commanded, obligating him to obedience and working that very obedience. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” God is the father of spirits and forms the spirit within a man, within a woman (**Numbers 16.22; Hebrews 12.9**) He formed Jeremiah. He was in control of the circumstances of Jeremiah’s life. He set Jeremiah apart. He appointed Jeremiah. He called Jeremiah to be a prophet, to be God’s mouth to the nations, nations like Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Judah, and others. Jeremiah will speak for God. And Jeremiah is to speak right things about God. He must ingest God’s words. He must know God personally. His life is governed by the Lord God of hosts. Read about him and you will find that he was commanded not to marry or have children to illustrate God’s message that judgment was pending. His heart ached, for he carried the burden of the Lord.

As to the prophet, God has anointed him, setting him apart. He abides in God, in His Word. He knows who has called him. He knows God as a Person, personally. He knows God’s place and his place.

“I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand. For You have filled me with indignation.” (15.17) Jeremiah will lament. Jeremiah will pray. (Read Jeremiah 15.18-21.) Jeremiah talked things over with God, and God answered him.

Jeremiah did not approach God in rebellion, but to understand. The prophet pours forth words. He speaks what he sees. He is a watchman, watching, looking intently, guarding and keeping, watching over the moral and spiritual condition of God's people. He is to behold God and function as a channel of the Divine Word.

Many more prophesied than those who were actually in the office of prophet. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19.10)

Prophets who pray do so from the heart of God, from the word of God, and from the will of God. Prophets pray the heart of God that God might bring forth His will on earth as it is in heaven. True prophets do not play Holy Spirit and analyze and figure out solutions based on the facts, data, or knowledge available to them. They do and can, intercede.

Abraham interceded for Sodom (Genesis 18.16ff). He and God had a little talk, and Abraham made his plea, his appeal. They came to a mutual understanding of the heart, mind, and will of God. Moses interceded for the newly redeemed people of God when God's anger burned against them for their corruption. (Exodus 32) Moses and Aaron interceded because of the rebellion of the people of God. (Numbers 14, 16) The people entreated Samuel to pray so that they wouldn't die for their sin of asking for a king. (1 Samuel 12.19)

Examine the life of the prophets, and you will see them intercede. They speak for God and know of whom they speak. They make their appeals as they converse with the Godhead. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for the saints (Hebrews 7.25), but ultimately, the Holy Spirit comes forth with a scripture or "rhema," a living word whose source is God and one which God desires to perform and will perform. At that point, the prayer of the prophet ceases. He must proclaim the final decision of the almighty.

Daniel received a prayer mandate from God and performed it with a divine anointing. The prayer was appointed and anointed by God to bring about the purposes of God according to the heart of God. Daniel's name means "God is my Judge." Daniel understood that God controls human history and that God is sovereign over the destiny of men and nations. Daniel prays: **Daniel 2.20-23**

Deported in 605 B. C. to Babylon as a young person, Daniel merged from character tests and tests for loyalty and obedience as trustworthy. God tests His spokespeople. There are tests, like the loyalty/love test (1 John 4), the moral test (2 Timothy 2, 3), the truth test (Jeremiah 23), the honor test (2 Timothy 2, 3). Trained in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Daniel had dreams and could interpret dreams. He had visions. He had learned to seek God to seek the meaning. (Daniel 8.27)

In Daniel 9 we have another glimpse of when the prophet prays. Perceiving the word of the Lord through Jeremiah, Daniel set his face toward the Lord to make intercession. He contrasted the people of God with God Himself. (9.1-23) As he prayed in the prophecy of Jeremiah and in answer to his prayer and because of his abiding, he received explanation and prophecy, the destiny of history as determined by a sovereign God.

The true prophet prays from the heart of God, the word of God, that the will of God might be done. Let's consider Hosea. His name means "salvation." His marriage to Gomer and the names of his children were appointed by God and symbolically communicated the heart of a holy God toward a people of apostasy and harlotry. (Hosea 12.1) Hosea felt the heart of God, wrenched and churning. The spirit of harlotry keeps people from knowing God and enslaves the heart. (Hosea 4.11-13, 5.4) God's heart churns. (Hosea 11.8, 9) Yahweh, the Covenant Lord, will declare in the agony of His love rejected the judgments that will bring deliverance to Israel, just

as Hosea sought and bought back Gomer with disciplines designed to bring return and restoration.

Let's briefly consider Habakkuk. His name means "embrace." His sense of justice moved him to seek and embrace the One who creates and redeems life. You can listen in as the prophet prays in the little book by his name.

Jonah. His name means "dove." He was the only prophet sent to the Gentiles. He was sent to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh during the time of Jeroboam II, a time in the northern kingdom of Israel of great prosperity alongside ever-increasing apostasy. Nevertheless, Jonah (4.2), comprehending God's compassion, did not want to take God's message to Nineveh, for hearing of impending destruction the people might, and did, repent and receive mercy of the Lord, while Israel for 150 years had been rejecting the message of the prophets. Nineveh, not yet destroyed, would go on as the chastening rod of the Lord. Jonah, however, became his message as he discovered the depth of God's heart of compassion for all the creation, not just national Israel. Provincialism must go.

The true prophet prays from the heart of God the word of God in order that the will of God might be done. The true prophet is appointed, anointed, and abiding in God. The prophet "sees" and speaks for God. Paul will come to pray that the eyes of our heart be opened, that we might understand, that we might "see." (Ephesians 1.17, 18)

Isaiah was brought into the presence of God that he might "see." (Isaiah 6.1) Isaiah prayed, confessing his own unworthiness. After having presented six woes just prior, he pronounced a woe on himself. He is undone, unclean. With his sin purged and his iniquity taken away, Isaiah is to "go." He will be the messenger of God's message to the people.

Appointed, anointed, abiding. Praying from the heart of God, the word of God, for the will of God to come to pass means it's all about the source. It's about being sent, being called. It's about speaking right things about God. It's about words. It's about loyalty, obedience, love, morality, truth, and the honor of the one, true, and living God. If you know God's heart, His nature, you will know His voice.

Jesus did. Jesus focused on obedience to His Father, not results, not the response of the people. Jesus did nothing from His own initiative. As he heard the Father speak, He spoke. As He saw the Father do, He did. Jesus is the Word Incarnate, truth manifested in the physical realm for us. He passed every test...loyalty, obedience, love, morality, truth, honor. He was appointed, anointed, and abiding in the Father. He was sent. He is the last word, according to Hebrews 1.

Jesus was conscious of His relationship with His father. In Matthew 11.25-27 Jesus prays: "I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

Jesus would send the multitudes away and go up into a mountain apart to pray. He would be with His Father alone. Away, apart, alone. (Matthew 14.23) Solitude enabled hearing the Father clearly, without disruption, without the human reasoning of well meaning friends. Jesus thanked God for material blessings, saying "grace" at meals. (Matthew 14.19) He escaped the perils of popularity and political forces by withdrawing Himself into the wilderness to pray. (Luke 5.16) **The prophet who prays must not gaze into the gleaming eyes of humanity and the world, but into the eyes of the Father of heaven and earth. Watch, withdraw, wait before the Lord, want His Word purely without corruption.**

Preparing His disciples for His destiny, “Jesus took Peter and John and James up into a mountain to pray. As Jesus prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.” (Luke 9. 28, 29) Jesus maintained communion with His Father. He obtained guidance and power. He was transfigured. Prayer can transfigure a person’s countenance and character, for you become what you behold.

Jesus reveals the heart of the Prophet when the Prophet prays His prayer recorded in John 17. His overarching concern is the glory of the Father and the Father’s plans and purposes, to honor His Father. He intercedes with a petition for the glory of the Father and the son, each through the other. Jesus calls God His Father, Holy Father, Righteous Father. Jesus confirms that He has fulfilled His commission, all that He was sent here to do. He has glorified the Father on earth. He has finished the work given to Him to do. He has manifested the Father’s name. He has given the Words the Father gave Him to give. After this position of established relationship, He prays for His own to be preserved from the evil one and sanctified through the truth. The Father’s Word is truth. The other father’s words are lies. The seed of the serpent will battle the seed of the Word. He prays that we be kept by the power of God, that we might have His joy fulfilled in us. Then He prays for all those who will believe in Him. Some day all will know that Jesus was the Sent One from the Father, the Word Incarnate. He closes with a plea for the glory of oneness, the glory of the union of love, for the Father loves His own even as he loves Jesus, the same quality, the same quantity. This is the prayer for the manifestation of the true sons of the true God; the sons of the glorious light of the gospel of grace. This is the joy set before Jesus, the joy that would enable Him to endure the suffering and humiliation of the cross, the only way to overcome the Serpent and his seed.

As He approached His destiny, the cross, Jesus “fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.”” “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Your will be done.” (Matthew 26.39-44) Jesus fell on His face in the Garden, the place of the oil press. Luke tells us that He knelt down and prayed. An angel came to strengthen Him, and yet He was in such agony that He prayed all the more earnestly. (Luke 22.39-46) He presented the same circumstance three times. Let the cup pass. If it cannot pass, Your will be done. “Save Me from this hour.” Nevertheless, “Father glorify Your Name.” (John 12.27, 28)

From the garden, the place of the oil press, we learn submission to the good and perfect will of the Father and the necessity of watching and paying, Jesus the Prophet prays in the will of the Father. He is not afraid to die. He abhors evil, the taking in of our corruption, our sin, becoming sin for us. Here He is touched with the feeling of our iniquity, the bent of our hearts shrinking back from the pleasures of the Father, shrinking back from the Word and will of God. But Jesus does not shrink back. He is perfected in suffering, in obedience even to death of the cross.

The bottom line statement of faith, the heart of the prophet when the prophet prays, is found in two questions. The first was asked by Abraham as he interceded for Sodom.

Genesis 18.25: *That be far from You to do after this manner,
to slay the righteous with the wicked:
and that the righteous should be as the wicked,
that be far from You.
Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*

Prophetic intercessors, appointed, anointed, abiding in Christ, watching, guarding, seeing, knowing, pray in the plan and purposes of the one true God, carrying the burden of His heart,

compelling the manifestation of His Word without compromise, calling forth the revelation. The second question arose in the life of Jesus. Knowing all things that would come upon Him, Jesus was under arrest. Peter, who never did like the idea in the first place (Matthew 16), cuts off Malchus' ear. Jesus says to Peter,

*Put your sword into the sheath.
The cup which the Father has given Me
Shall I not drink it?
John 18.11*

Example: Karen Andrews was in a hospital, in cardiac care. Psalm 73:26 "My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." I asked the Lord what He desired in the situation. I walked around the room for about an hour saying that verse over and over. Then it became apparent that that word was to be delivered directly to Karen. I didn't know exactly how that was to come about, so I left it to the Lord to arrange. When my husband Jim came home, it turned out that he knew the hospital she was in and he was planning a pastoral visit. We both went. Jim did as God instructed him. I delivered the word as God instructed me. That word penetrates you, body, soul, and spirit. Karen had a miraculous recovery after that visit. "He sent His Word and healed them." (Psalm 107:20)

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