

On Prayer V (Leaning on God)

By: Mozelle Davis-Weeks

A serious problem with praying that is more common than some might realize is trusting someone other than God. To avoid this we need to understand the provision that Jesus has made for us through his resurrection and ascension. Let's consider Heb 7:25-

'Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him, since he ever lives to make intercession for them.'

Notice the phrase, 'Those who come to God through him.' He's not going to save to the uttermost those who come to God through a saint, Mary, a pastor, an apostle, or any other human. He's only going to save to the uttermost those who come to God 'through him.' This is not an attack on Catholics. This 'hail Mary syndrome' is as much a protestant problem as any thing else.

Jesus is our High Priest (prayer warrior) and is fighting for us. Heb 7:26-27 says, 'Such a high priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the peoples, for this he did once for all when he offered up himself.'

Do you believe these verses – that Jesus lives to make intercession for you? Do you believe that you don't need anyone else to be your high priest? Too many of us don't see him as a high priest. We see him as savior and Lord, but rarely as high priest. We need to see him as all three. The first important aspect of Jesus we need to understand well is that of savior if we are to gain an inward assurance of forgiveness and justification. People (like me) who are saved as children often have a greater struggle gaining assurance of their salvation than those whose lives undergo a dramatic transformation. I found myself doubting my salvation.

I was convinced finally that, if my salvation depended even 1% on me, I was going to hell. I realized that my faith had to be either in the blood of Jesus or in my works. I realized that my only hope of escaping hell was his blood. I know there are probably thousands of people or even more who grab the last part of Phil 2:12 (completely out of context) and say, 'You have to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'

If any of us could 'work out our own salvation' we would not need Jesus. For a long time I was a victim of hearing so many preachers use this out of context. Rarely do these well-meaning folks look at the rest of it in verse thirteen, 'For it is God who works in you to will and to work for his good pleasure.' Sometimes I want to say to those people that it would be better said, 'If you work out your own salvation, you better do it with fear and trembling.'

To understand the basis for this misunderstanding, we actually have to go back to Phil 2:5-8, where Paul tells them (us) to have the mind of Christ. The command is to the entire group, not to any individual, since the Greek for 'you' is plural. He is speaking of their corporate salvation. The Greek word translated 'work out' is borrowed from the first century author Strabo, who uses it to describe digging silver out of silver mines. Thus salvation is compared to a huge gift to be dug

out. Paul encourages the Philippians to dig out their corporate salvation, not to work for their salvation. Then he adds that it is God who does it.

I John 1:7 became an anchor for me: 'But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we will have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin.' When I began to place my faith in the blood of Jesus and to understand he was my savior, I had the assurance of my salvation.

An assurance is different than salvation itself, but still, it is necessary for a healthy, peaceful life in God. It comes only from trusting completely in one thing – the blood of Jesus Christ.

The second important aspect of Jesus' ministry we need to understand well is his position as resurrected Lord. When we truly internalize the resurrection of the Lord, we see that he not only died for us but also rose for us and lives within us. With this revelation we gain victory and sanctification. Stop for a moment and consider this wonderful realization: that he lives within us, not in theory but in reality. If you become cognizant of the fact that the power of the Godhead is inside you, you will conquer lust. You will conquer hate, resentment and Unforgiveness. You will conquer any of these things.

Paul articulated this reality in Gal 2:20 – 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

When you see what Paul saw, you will begin to see also your potential.

Let me explain this potential by saying this: If you are in Christ, and you trust in him and not in yourself, you don't have to spend one more second trying to get Jesus in you. He is in you. He is never going to get 'in' you anymore than he already is. The real issue is whether you are going to let him out. Let him out to those around you. All his power, all his faith, all the things that he did that he said we would do as well (greater things than these will he do) come out of you attached to the love of Christ that is in you already. You can get up every morning and say, 'I am a river of love, joy, peace, gentleness, patience, goodness, and meekness. I am going to let Jesus out of me.'

You will finally see your potential. Knowing your potential in God is different than knowing you are forgiven. But to walk in both peace and victory, you must grasp both the forgiveness found in Jesus as savior and the potential found in Jesus as Lord.

The third important aspect of victorious living in Christ is being able to grasp an understanding of Jesus' exaltation. When he ascended to the Father, his ministry did not end. He is alive right now, praying for you. Please hear this: The key to prayer is to find out how the High Priest is praying; whenever you pray in agreement with him, you will receive an answer.

Who are you agreeing with? Jesus – a High Priest who 'is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him, since he ever lives to make intercession for them.' He is going to save us to the uttermost because he is exalted and sits at the right hand of God and prays for us.

At my church there is a box for prayer requests. It is common knowledge that my husband and I and our pastor review these requests and pray over them. Every week at least one person drops in a list of 25 prayer requests with 8 requests for healing, 10 requests for salvation, and every other kind of need. The person will literally take the time to write 4 or 5 pages of prayer requests and then say, 'Sister Mozelle, will you pray for these people?'

Ave Maria is the prayer used primarily by Catholics. Part of the prayer says, 'Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death.' The problem with this prayer and the mindset behind it is that it ignores the fact that it is Jesus who is the high priest. Make no mistake; it is not merely a Catholic problem. It is just as much a Protestant problem.

It is one thing to ask someone to pray in agreement with you, but, if we are not praying, and asking someone to pray instead, we are saying three things. First, we are saying, 'I know my prayer will not be answered.' Second, we are saying, 'I need to get someone to pray for me who I know can get her prayers answered.' Third, we are saying, 'I know I am not right with God, and I am not willing to repent to get right with God. And since I have no plans of repenting, I am looking desperately for a mediator. If it is not Mozelle Weeks, maybe Joyce Meyers, Kenneth Copeland, or Creflo Dollar will do.'

This all shows a lack of revelation and understanding that the Son of God himself, who 'is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and...higher than the heavens,' is sitting on the throne saying, 'I want to save you to the uttermost. I live to make intercession.' 'Never mind, Jesus. I am going to Pastor Soand- so.' Isn't that stupid? Many of us go to others and say, 'Hail Pastor, full of grace...' 'When we approach our pastor, or some other person and say, in essence, 'Hail Mozelle, Hail Johnny, Hail Sally Ann – pray for me in the hour of my need' we are doing what many of our Catholic brothers and sisters do with the 'saints' and Mary. We are placing our faith in someone other than the High Priest.

People do this because the third aspect of Jesus' ministry is not real to them. We have seen him as Savior and Lord, but many have never seen him as High Priest waiting for us to pray. He is waiting right now.

Nobody anywhere can possibly match Jesus as High Priest. Why do we look for someone else? We need to be reminded of the High Priest's function. Jesus did not go back to heaven to just sit down and say, 'You're on your own, folks.' There are many people who treat God as if he just wound up the world after he created it like a clock and just lets it tick away on its own. When Yeshua went back to heaven, is that what he did? Did he say, 'Now, I died for you, rose for you, and indwelt you. Good luck, I hope you make it'? Not on your life! The Bible says that he is able to save to the uttermost all those who come to God through him and that he ever lives to make intercession for us.

Therefore, it is a sin to make any person other than Jesus a mediator between us and God. Say that out loud. It is as much a Protestant problem as it is a Catholic problem. I Tim 2:5 tells us, 'There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.' How many mediators are there? One! When we run with a list of prayer requests to anyone, we are asking

that person to be our High Priest.

Would you ask a pastor or a prayer warrior to be your Savior and Lord? Then why ask one of those people to be your High Priest? If you can get in your spirit a sense of Jesus' High Priesthood, your prayer life will be transformed. If the High Priest lives to make intercession, and if he is the mediator, then the key to prayer is for you and your one mediator to talk about your situation. If you can find out what the Lord is saying instead of just what you are saying, then you will get God's perspective. Effective prayer involves more listening than talking. Prayer absolutely requires you to be a listener. You may believe that the solution to your situation is discipline. You may say, 'Lay on the discipline,' but God may say, 'Lay on the love.' If a situation requires discipline and you give it love, or if it requires love and you give it discipline, you can bring death. You must have a daily up-to-date relationship with Jesus that consists of both talking and listening. If you are not hearing from God you are in big trouble and will have to depend on man for advice.

This is what happened to King Saul. Unable to hear from God anymore, he went to a witch. If God will not talk to you, it will do no good to anywhere else. If he is not talking to you, it is your move. Get on your knees literally, and pray until the Spirit of God speaks to you. This problem of prayer, this 'Hail Mary Syndrome,' is simply transferal, which is removing the responsibility from one person and placing it upon another person. It is saying, 'I am going to remove from myself the responsibility of praying for that person and place it on my pastor, or my godly friend.' Ultimately, we are attempting to find someone other than Christ to be a mediator.

If you transfer the responsibility of praying to a pastor, consider this: No human now on earth can touch God for hundreds of people. It is almost always impossible for someone to pray for your loved ones as well as you can. You know them. You love them. The heart, the love, and the compassion will be in your prayer. Let us stop entering into prayer meetings and transferring our responsibilities.

Sometimes God will lead us to ask someone to agree with us in prayer, but never to transfer our own responsibility because he has provided us with a High Priest.

You will never understand intercession until you understand the High Priesthood of Jesus. To be able to move into a deeper prayer life, you must understand what is meant in Heb 2:17-18:

'Therefore, in all things he had to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted.' The Greek reads, 'He is able to run to the aid of those who are tempted.'

This verse tells us that, as a human being, Jesus suffered and gained sympathy for us. He knows what it is to be tempted by anger. He knows what it is to be tempted to entertain wrong thoughts and wrong motives. He has sympathy for us – a clear and complete idea of what it is like to live in a human body. He was the Son of Man as well as the Son of God.

The one who sits at the right hand of God is able to run to the aid of those who are tempted.

What kind of aid? He prays for us. He who died for us now sits in heaven mentioning us by name to God the Father. Knowing this will increase your faith and change the way you word your prayers. It's like getting a government job. It's not what you know, but who you know.

Once while praying for a lady after church, I took her hand and said, 'Let's pray in tongues for a minute.' As I stood there praying in tongues, I thought, Jesus wants this prayer answered more than I do, and he is holier than I am. He is perfect and ever lives to make intercession for us. I knew that the Holy Spirit had been born in me as an intercessor.

If the intercessor inside me is praying what the intercessor is praying at the right hand of God, then I will see and answer to prayer.

I took hold of that lady's hand and began to pray. The first part Mozelle prayed. Then, suddenly, I realized that I had reached a different level and was praying in agreement with Jesus. Tears began to flow as I realized a miracle would occur because the High Priest and I were praying the same thing. So far everything I have said has laid the foundation for understanding, Heb 3:1, 'Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.'

Jesus is the High Priest of our confession, not his confession! Whatever we speak, he turns to the Father and prays. We affect what Jesus prays for us by what comes out of our mouth! Perhaps you get up each morning and say, 'I don't have any joy. I'm tired of it all. Life is a rat race; which horse am I going to ride today?' Jesus, who spilled his own blood for you, will turn to his father and say, 'I can't pray that!' Instead, what if you got out o bed and said, 'The Bible says the Lord is my strength, my courage, the love that is in me. He is my fortress and my strong, high tower. I am complete in him, and I don't care how I feel! All that Christ Jesus is lives in me.' That will make the High Priest get excited and turn to the Father and say, 'Did you hear what she said? Be her strength, Father. Be her courage, her joy and her peace. Be her fortress. When Jesus turns to the Father and prays that prayer, the Father releases it, and the Holy Ghost pours it out on you.

Jesus is the High Priest of what you speak. You determine what he prays for you by your own confession, as long as it is clearly scriptural. This same concept is also seen in Prov 18:20- 21, 'A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.'

If you speak it, you have to eat it. You spread the table of your life with your own mouth. If you begin to increase what you speak, you will increase what you receive. If you begin to speak faith and joy, Jesus will become the High Priest of what you have spoken. He will pray what you confess. This is not the same thing as 'name it and claim it.' You will not be confessing a new sports car or any other selfish prayer. You will eat what you speak.#