

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR JANUARY 2012

Rewards Received in the Closet of Prayer

(Matthew 6:6)

(Sunday, January 1, 2012)

Our Savior promises a reward to those who truly pray. In Hebrews 11:6 we find a similar truth affirmed. *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”* The Bible testifies from the beginning to the end that God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

I. Misconceptions Concerning Prayer

We find there are many misconceptions concerning the nature of this precious privilege of Prayer. Prayer is not a blank check on which God’s signature appears guaranteeing us anything on which we set our hearts. Neither is prayer a rabbit’s foot or other charms warranted to preserve us from misfortune. Prayer must not be considered as a parachute project to be reserved for use in some extreme urgency. Certainly prayer is not a child’s letter to Santa Claus. True prayer is never an attempt to change God’s mind or bring Him around to our way of thinking. Prayer is not a begging proposition in which we attempt to secure this sympathy of God. The Savior would assure us that the heavenly Father knows our needs even before we ask and is more eager to bestow His blessings upon us than we are to receive them.

(Sunday, January 8, 2012)

II. The Rewards of Prayer

Someone might raise the question, **“Just what are the rewards of prayer?”**

- A. One of the greatest blessings and one of the greatest rewards of prayer is a consciousness of the presence of God that comes to the person

who is praying. By its very nature, prayer is the bringing of one's self into God's presence, in the surrender of the mind and the surrender of the will to God.

- We come into His presence to confess our sins.
- We come into His presence to express our gratitude.
- We come into His presence to make intercession for other.

Thus prayer is a bringing of one's self into a consciousness of the immediate presence of the living God.

(Sunday, January 15, 2012)

- B.** Another great reward that comes as a result of prayer is an awareness of the sin that is in one's individual life. Isaiah went into the Temple and there he was blessed with a vision of God. His first reaction was an awareness of personal sin and guilt that led to confession. He said, ***“Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” [Isaiah 6:5].*** And close to this confession of sin, God gave to Isaiah a consciousness of cleansing, as he was made clean and pure from sin. Thus the young prophet was enabled to enjoy a blessed fellowship with God and at the same time he was equipped to serve God and others.

(Sunday, January 22, 2012)

- C.** Also, with this consciousness of sin and this awareness of cleansing from sin, there comes to the heart of the prayer an inflow of divine power, of spiritual power. Jesus speaks concerning the fact that the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. We need this divine power that will enable us to overcome the difficulties and the hardship, the troubles and trials of life. Isaiah spoke concerning this fact, ***“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run***

and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint” [Isaiah 40:31]. Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” [Philippians 4:13]. And thus there comes as a reward to him who consciously prays and inflow of the divine power.

(Sunday, January 29, 2012)

- D.** The Apostle Paul also speaks concerning another reward that comes as a result of prayer. In Philippians he speaks of a peace that passes all human understanding. He says, *“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be mad known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” [Philippians 6:7].* Thus we discover a peace in the presence of God that is found in no other place. Isaiah said, *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” [Isaiah 26:3].*

Let each one of us this year put forth an effort to enter a private closet of prayer and talk to our heavenly Father concerning our individual needs and also concerning the needs of others. Let us approach Him because we are His children and He is our Father. Let us approach Him in the faith that He wants to give to us the blessings that we need.