

6. CONDITIONS OF ANSWERED PRAYER SERIES

THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS

When you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25, 26.

When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God, we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? If we expect our own prayers to be heard, we must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, as we hope to be forgiven.” - Steps to Christ, page 101.

“But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God's pardoning grace. In God's forgiveness the heart of the erring is drawn close to the great heart of infinite love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner's soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace. But “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” He is alienated from God, fitted only for eternal separation from Him...

We are not forgiven because we forgive, but as we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God; but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own. Wherefore Christ says, “With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.” - Christ's Object Lessons, page 251.

Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren.

After completing the Lord's prayer, Jesus added: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” He who is unforgiving, cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances. and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, we are to pardon all who have done evil to us.” - Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, page 166.

PUTTING AWAY ALL INIQUITY

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 66:18.

If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.” - Steps to Christ, pages 99, 100.

With fasting and earnest prayer, with deep heart searching, stern self-examination, lay bare the soul; let no act escape your critical examination. Then, with self dead, and your life hid with Christ in God, offer your humble petitions. If you regard iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear you. If He had heard your prayers, you would have been exalted. Satan has stood by, prepared to make the most of the advantage he has gained.

Oh, how important it is that faithfulness in little things characterize our lives, that true integrity mark all our course of action, and that we ever bear in mind that angels of God are taking cognizance of every act that which we mete to others shall be meted to us again. A fearfulness should ever attend you lest you should deal unjustly, selfishly. By sickness and adversity the Lord will remove from us much more than we obtain by grinding the face of the poor. A just God truly estimates all our motives and actions.” Testimonies, Vol. 11, page 158.

Christ has chosen us out of the world, that we might be a peculiar and holy people. He “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people,

zealous of good works.” God's workers must be men of prayer, diligent students of the Scriptures, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that they may be a light and strength to others. Our God is a jealous God; and He requires us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, in the beauty of holiness. The psalmist says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” As workers, we must take heed to our ways. If the psalmist could not be heard if he regarded iniquity in his heart, how can the prayers of men now be heard while iniquity is regarded by them?” - Ibid., Vol. V, pages 591, 592.

One Short Hour

Lord, what a change within us one short hour Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make! What heavy burdens from our bosoms take, What parched grounds refresh as with a shower! We kneel, and all around us seems to lower; We rise, and all, the distant and the near, Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear. We kneel, how weak; we rise, how full of power! Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, Or others, that we are not always strong, That we are ever overborne with care, That we should ever weak or heartless be, Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer, And joy and strength and courage are with Thee? -ARCHBOSHOP TRENCH.

SENSING OUR NEED

I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon your offspring. Isaiah 44:1

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing cannot be received.

Our great need is itself an argument, and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” And “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” - Steps to Christ, page 99.

If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself. We need not seek to quench our thirst at shallow streams; for the great fountain is just above us, of whose abundant waters we may freely drink, if we will rise a little higher in the pathway of faith.

The words of God are the wellsprings of life. As you seek unto those living springs, you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect. Texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning, as a flash of light; you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you. A divine Teacher is at your side.” - Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 35, 36.

It is to the thirsting soul that the fountain of living waters is open. God declares, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” To souls that are earnestly seeking for light, and that accept with gladness every ray of divine illumination from His holy word, to such alone light will be given. It is through these souls that God will reveal that light and power which will lighten the whole earth with His glory.” - Testimonies, Vol. V, page 729.

Ho, every one that thirsts,
Come to the living stream,
And satisfy your longing soul
While silver fountains gleam.

Come, weary, faint, and hungry:
Before you now is spread
A rich supply for all your needs,
Receive the living bread.
MAY WAKEHAM.