

Faith and the Inspiration of Jesus' Prayer Life

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[0 : 0 0] Hebrews 5 at verse 7. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears,¹ to whom he was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

And so on down to the end of verse number 10. Now we know that faith is at the very centre of the lives of the people of God, and when we read this letter we begin to understand something of the challenges faced by faith in this world.

We come to chapter number 11 and we have a list of those people who were faithful, but right along through the letter there are those who are close to losing their faith because their faith is not working as it should.

And I'm sure for all of us here together this evening that one of our main problems in the Christian life is that our faith does not work as it should.

And here in this letter as we come to this chapter we can see the verses before us as a way in which the writer wants to encourage the hearers of the letter with the example of the faith of the Lord Jesus and how that faith is working.

[1 : 2 8] And that is part of his great objective in the letter to highlight to them the significance and the importance of Jesus, the Son of God, as their Saviour and as the Great High Priest.

And in highlighting that, the writer does make it clear that there are two special emphases with regard to the Lord Jesus that he is faithful in his service of God and that he is also faithful in his service to his people.

So we want to think of faith this evening. We want to think of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus. We want to think of Jesus and the example of his faith and how it was working and to think especially of faith and the inspiration of the prayer life of the Lord Jesus.

We see first of all that there is prayer in verse number seven and it is happening in the days of his flesh. In other words, the days in which Jesus spent here in this world, the whole of his life, the days of his flesh, the days of his worldly and earthly experience, all of these days, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications.

It gives to us a sense of two particular things. Prayers give to us that the sense of being in lack or of being in need.

[2 : 5 7] And sometimes we can journey on through life and we are not too much aware of what we lack or too much aware of what we need. But as soon as we are face to face with what we lack and what we need, if we have grace in our hearts, then faith moves us to pray.

And interestingly and perhaps surprisingly, the reference here is to Jesus in the days of his life here in this world, that he was aware of a particular lack and of a particular need and because of that he prayed.

And along with that, there is the idea of supplication, which is more specific than prayer in general, which focuses upon a specific need and which highlights the way in which definite help is required.

And it draws our attention to the fact that when these words are written, they are specific to one particular need at one particular time in the experience of the Lord Jesus.

And in pointing us to that one particular time and that one particular need, it gives to us an example of the way in which Jesus prayed all of his life.

[4 : 19] And when we do read these verses as we go through them, we can remind ourselves that they are descriptive of the experience of the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And we saw something of that on the Lord's Day, the way in which Jesus was in the garden and he was tested. And here are words which give us another angle and another viewpoint of what Jesus was going through in the garden.

But at the moment we're looking at the way in which there is prayer because there is a sense of need and because there is a requirement for help in a particular way.

And it shows to us the way in which Jesus lived his life in communion with God. And this evening, if we have faith, this should be typical of our own lives.

This is how faith works on our journey. Perhaps even today itself, suddenly we are aware of a great need. Suddenly we're aware of something that we could not manage ourselves.

[5 : 27] And our hearts, perhaps without anything vocal taking place, in our hearts we are reaching out to God. And we are doing so because we need specific help in this specific moment.

And so our lives, as we look back, they are dotted with moments like that when prayer reflects our faith. Prayer arises because of our communion with God and we are looking for God's help.

prayer arises because of our communion with God. And we see that the depths of the of the anguish of the Lord Jesus here in these verses with loud cries and tears.

There is a real depth of distress. We saw in Matthew 26, the way in which Jesus was in agony, the way in which he was sorrowful, even up to the point of death, the way in which he was distressed.

And to the extent that that Luke reminds us in chapter 22 that in that moment of distress and of testing that his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

[6 : 44] And there was an intensity to his experience and to his prayer that is probably unique to himself in that moment of great need.

His whole being wrestling out to the object of his faith, the God who was his father and who is his father, reaching out to that God because of one particular reason in this case.

And that reason being God's ability to help him in his specific need.

To him who was able to save him from death. We saw on the Lord's day, the way in which Jesus is exploring the possibility of it.

If it is possible, Lord, let this cup pass from me. There is a sense of exploring beyond the present boundaries. But here there is the conviction that what the Lord Jesus needs is possible to God.

[7 : 56] And the power, the ability that God has is to save him from death. To rescue him from the very thing that is causing his distress.

And when he is persuaded that God is able to save him from death. First of all, let us think about what that does not say. And this does not say that Jesus was praying that he wouldn't die.

Jesus knew that that's where he was going. Jesus knew that the time would come when he would give himself to death. So we don't think for a moment that when he prayed to God was able to save him from death.

That he was praying to be saved from the status of being dead. Because that's what he came to.

But what it does mean is that he was praying for the one who was able to save him from the penalty of death. From the experience of the forsakenness of Calvary.

[9 : 02] And rescuing him from the darkness into which he must descend. His mission was to triumph over death.

To pay the ransom price. To suffer the penalty. And the prayer is that in that moment. I was reading Psalm number 69.

Do not let the pit swallow me up. And there is that gaping darkness facing the Lord Jesus. That causes this prayer to ascend to the Father.

The Abbas into which his mission will take him. And praying that in that Abbas that he wouldn't be lost. Able to save him from death.

And at the same time able to save him not in the sense of not going through it. But save him in the sense of taking him through it.

[10 : 01] To the other side and to the grave and to victory. And when you and I often pray.

Our feeling is and the weakness of our prayer is that we are praying that we would avoid a certain situation. That we wouldn't have to go through a certain situation.

And we would do anything to avoid being where we are. And we would perhaps praying and asking God take me out of here.

So that I won't have to go through this thing. And what we should be doing is following the example of the Lord Jesus. And recognizing the will of God.

And doing so by asking God to help us through the dark moment of trial. To bring us safely out on the other side.

[10 : 58] So that the devil will not swallow us up and swallow up our faith if it were possible. But that we arrive safely on the other side of the time of darkness through which we must go.

And Jesus was heard because of his reverence. Because of his godliness.

Because of his piety. Because of his devotion to God. Because of his desire to do everything that was to the delight of the God to whom he prayed.

It's devotion. It's the reverence of giving oneself. Submitting oneself. To the whole will and purpose of God.

And that's what makes the prayer effective. And how often do you and I pray. When that key element is actually absent.

[12 : 02] When there is no piety. When there is no devotion to God. And I'm facing a great crisis. And I pray and nothing happens.

And so often that's because. My life of devotion to God has been lost. And my life of walking in the light with him. Has ceased to exist.

And I wonder why God isn't answering my prayer. And I look to God. And perhaps blame God. Because he does not answer. Instead. Of looking to myself.

And recognizing. That the fault rests with me. Because of my lack of devotion. Because I'm praying for the wrong thing. And because I'm not asking God.

For what he has purposed. To give to me. And to do for me. So there is the prayer. Secondly. The prayer is connected.

[13 : 03] To the program. There is something going on here. God is doing a work. There is a program.

Which God has set out for his son. We see that's something in chapter 12. With regard to faith. That we run the race set before us. There is a program.

As well as a destination. And here we see in verse number 8. Although he was a son. He was not exempt.

From following the program. On the other hand. Because he was a son. He had to follow the program. And we are the children of God.

The people of faith. And the program is for us. But the remarkable thing here is. That the son of God. That he himself has to live.

[14 : 03] In accordance with the same program. Following the same path. And doing so in accordance with the will of God. Although he was a son. The holy perfect.

Son of God. Coming to walk by faith. In the path of obedience. And he learned. Obedience.

We could. Summarize what that means. And we could say that he was a faithful. Disciple of God the Father. Because the word that's used.

And translated learned. Is the same word. That's used for discipleship. It's manthano. It's the call of Jesus. Take my yoke upon you. And learn from me.

Jesus is the master disciple. He is the example of what disciples should look like. The disciple that seeks to direct their own minds to the person being followed.

[15 : 10] To learn what the teaching that is being passed on. There is that sense of being swallowed up. Intellectually as well as spiritually.

And with all of the heart. To what is to be learned. That Jesus. Has a mission which is shaped by the word of God.

And that Jesus. Who has that kind of mission. Has his own particular kind. Of discipleship. I have come to do your will.

Oh my God. In the volume of the book. It is written for me. Here is the curriculum. Jesus knows. He understands. That there is a process of education.

And that he must go through that process. In accordance with the curriculum set out by God for him. From the very beginning of the Bible to the end. He must learn.

[16 : 12] At each different stage. The things that God has set down for him. He learned obedience.

Through what he suffered. He learned. What his people didn't learn. He learned what the Old Testament people of God didn't learn.

He learned obedience. He went through that process. Of discovering more and more. Of what obedience meant. And so we can think of the Lord Jesus.

Who in the Gospel of Luke. He grew in wisdom and stature. He is developing stage by stage. We think of school curriculum. And there is stage by stage development.

To reach to the higher level of the curriculum. And the learning has to be stage appropriate. And that is what we see happening with Jesus here.

[17 : 19] It is not that he was disobedient. It is not that he must unlearn what he had learned. It is not that he was ignorant at the stage at which he was walking.

But in his development. He had to grow more and more. In an understanding of what obedience meant. And that is what takes him.

Into the garden. To cry. That cry of distress. He knew that he had come into the world. To give his life a ransom for many. He was learning the Old Testament scriptures.

And understanding more and more of what that meant. But as he comes to the garden of Gethsemane. There is a graduation to a higher level.

And to a deeper understanding. And to a clearer knowledge. Of what God's curriculum for him meant. And that is why he cried that prayer. He was learning obedience.

[18 : 21] By what he suffered. The things outside of himself. That he endured in his times of testing. These were the things that caused him.

Grief in his heart. And sorrow in his heart. Caused him to be tested. At each and every stage. He was tried. And he was tested. And he passed the examination.

And he graduated on to the next stage. And so he goes on. Until at last. He reaches that end. That level. That higher level. When he has that full understanding.

Of what it means. And Jesus refers to the disciples. In Luke chapter 22. And he says with regard to them. That you are the ones. You have stayed with me.

In my trials. The trials. Through which I learned. What suffering meant. You are walking with me. And of course. When it came to Gethsemane. And the cross.

[19 : 22] They failed to continue walking with him. As he stood the test. They failed the test. But there is. That program. Of learning.

Through suffering. And how much is there. A lesson there. For you. And for me. That we have so much to learn.

In our faith. So much to learn. About a relationship with God. And God's relationship with us. We see at the end of the chapter. That he compares them to.

To infants. Who are dull of hearing. They can't deal with. The higher level. They have stopped progressing. And we understand.

That by faith. Tonight. We are going to develop. And grow. As the children of God. Then we are going to suffer. It may be physical.

[20 : 18] It may be an outward affliction. It may be something. That is completely. Private in your life. It may be something. That goes on. In your heart. And in your mind. The struggles of faith.

And the struggles of temptation. But we can be sure. That we are not going to heaven. Without a struggle. And it is through these struggles.

That we learn. To be obedient. And that learning. Is described in the Bible. In different ways. Purifying. Of silver and gold.

Taking away of the impurities. Learning. Obedience. With God. God's chastisement. God working in our lives.

In his love. To wean us away. From the distractions. Of the world. To cut us off. From the things. That take his place. Doing so.

[21 : 15] By suffering. And by bringing into our lives. The corrections. That we have so much need of. As we journey on. Along life's way.

There is. A program. And when we understand. That God has a program. That he is sovereign. That he does things.

That I don't understand. Who relies. Above everything else. That in his sovereignty. He orders. What we. Have need of.

He purposefully. puts in place. The things that will. Make us better. And the things that will make you better tonight. Will perhaps be very different.

To things that will make me better. Or make the next person to you better. We all have our own. Kind of unique needs. As well as. As our common needs. And God.

[22 : 13] Works. Accordingly. And it's in that. It's self marvelous. That God deals with us. Passionately. In the light of our unique characteristics.

That others don't have. That such is his understanding of us. Such is his interest. And his care. And such are his resources. That he can supply.

Individual needs. And in our learning. That he can bring us. Through. The classroom. Of specific. One-to-one learning.

So that we may. Indeed. Grow up. In our faith. And when. As I said. When that. Informs our prayer life. It changes.

What. We. Are asking for. And we understand. That God knows. Better. And we understand.

[23 : 11] That because he knows better. And he knows the end. From the beginning. That what he is doing. Is right. That it is. For. Our ultimate. Good.

So there is a prayer. There is. A program. And there is. Perfection. That. That came. That came. The time.

And the experience. Of the Lord Jesus. When the. Process. Of education. Was complete. When the work. Of discipleship. Had arrived. And achieved.

Its goal. Being. Made. Perfect. Perfect. He reached. To the conclusion. Of God's program. For him. The conclusion.

That. Included. Going through. The. The. Suffering. The penalty. Of death. And the darkness. Of the cross. What included. Being. His body. Being. Being.

[24 : 06] Lain. In the grave. What included. Is being. Raised. From the dead. And. Dostimated. To be. Glorified. At God's right hand. God.

Proclaiming. That. In his eyes. He is now. Fully. Qualified. He is. Fully. Qualified. To exercise.

What he was. Trained. To do. In God's. Program. For him. He became. The source. Of eternal. Salvation.

To all. Who obey him. Being designated. By God. A high priest. After the order. Of. Melchizedek. Being. Designated.

And. We could think. Of the. Words. That we have here. In. In verse number five. In verse six. From psalm two. And psalm 110. That these. Proclamations.

[25 : 03] With regard to. The way in which God. Designates a son. That we could. Think for a moment. About the possibility. Of. These being. Private moments.

Between the father. And the son. When the son. Comes into. Glory. That could have been. Let's think. That could have been. Something. Private. Designate. When.

God. Is rewarding. His son. For completing. The kush. But the word. Designated. Speaks to us. Of something. That happened.

In the. Word. The world. Of the writer. Something. That happened. In the very marketplace. That there was. A public. Statement. Made. In the public.

Square. With regard. To giving a person. A name. Or a position. Is so that. The whole. Assembly. Could hear. And could know. What this person's.

[25 : 59] New name. Was. And that's. The gospel. Isn't it? God. Did not say. Secretly. To his son. In the day. That he went into glory.

He did not say. Secretly. You are my son. Today. I've begotten you. He did not say. Secretly. Sit at my right hand. You'll be a priest. Forever. Until your enemies.

Are your food store. Instead. They're public. Proclamations. That make the gospel. What it is. And make. The gospel. What it is. That he is the source.

Of eternal salvation. To all who. Obey. Him. It comes back. To faith. We saw. His obedience. But there is.

Eternal salvation. To all those. Who obey. Him. In other words. Will follow him. On the same journey. If we are obedient.

[26 : 55] To God. Through faith. In Jesus Christ. The Christ. Who. Entered into. The eternal. Kingdom. Of God. Will ensure.

That we. Ourselves. Will follow him. To be there. And there is the. Encouragement there. As well as the challenge. To go forward.

In faith. Being faithful. Obeying the Lord Jesus. And having the. Sure and certain. Hope in our hearts. Of the. Eternal.

Salvation. That. Christ has secured. Through his. Finished work. So that. The day will come. When our graduation.

Will take place. And when we'll graduate. From this world. Into the eternal kingdom. When we'll rise. From. The graves. Into which death. Will take us.

[27 : 49] And we will rise. Into. Surrounding the throne. Of God. And there. In that moment. God will designate. Us. As his sons. As his children. In a public way.

That's what. Awaits us. So let's be. Encouraged this evening. Inspired by. The way. In which we see. The faith. Of the Lord Jesus. Working in prayer.

And let's be. Encouraged that. When we are struggling. That these very things. Are there. Because. God is preparing us. For his. Glory. And I close with.

The words of. C.S. Lewis. In his book. The problem of pain. He said. Your place. In heaven. Will seem to have. Be made for you. And you alone.

Because you are. Made for it. Made for it. Stitch by stitch. As a glove. Is made for your hand. It will be a. Perfect fit.

[28 : 47] A perfect match. And to God. Be the glory. That from all of our struggles. And in all of our struggles. That God is shaping. And preparing. And the places.

Will be so fit. And so suited. To our needs. That we will be comfortable. That we will be at peace there. And that it will be. To us. The paradise of God. For the whole of eternity.

An eternity. That shall never. Come to an end. May God bless these. Thoughts to us. From his own word. And be encourage us. From them as well. So we're going to.