

## PRAY UNTO THE LORD

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(Taken from handwritten talk, not used, no date)

I have no hesitancy in saying that every person who prays—according to the divine standard and in the divinely approved way—will be saved in the celestial kingdom of God.

The scripture itself says: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13.)

I fancy I hear someone ask: “You mean all we have to do to do where God and Christ are, and to receive the wonders and glories of a celestial heaven, is to pray?”

I answer: “Yes—emphatically and positively—all we have to do to save our souls is to call upon the name of the Lord—according to the divine standard and in the divinely approved way.”

If my thesis is correct—and it is—it becomes a matter of surpassing import to learn how to pray in the way the Lord designed and intended that we should. It is far beyond any talent or capacity with which I am endowed to teach, in all its perfection and beauty, the true order of prayer. But I can name some of the basic principles upon which each person must build to attain that state in which he actually communes with his Maker.

Jesus prayed; his disciples listened intently; one of them asked; “Lord, teach us to pray.” And so say we:

Oh, thou by whom we come to God,

The Life, the Truth, the Way!

The path of prayer thyself hast trod;

Lord, teach us how to pray.”

(Hymns No. 222)

As part of a much longer response, the Lord Jesus said: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (Luke 11:1-13.)

Let us then, consider the basic verities which underlie this glorious concept that mortal man—weak, full of faults, scarcely more than the dust of the earth—can gain attention and come into the presence of Him, by whose all word all things are. “Let us,” Paul expressed it, learn how “to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16.)

The first great and eternal verity is that there is a God in heaven—our Father, the Father of our spirits—who has ordained and established the way whereby we may commune with him here and now while we are mortal, as a necessary prelude to entering his presence and dwelling with and being like him in a state of immortal glory hereafter.

The next great truth is that access to the Father is available only through the Son. “I am the way,” he said, “no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6.)

And the next is that the Holy Spirit of God—their minister who bears record of them both—is the Revelator who guides men in perfect prayer, signifying to them what they should ask—all in harmony with the revelation which says: “He that asketh in Spirit shall receive in Spirit,” for, “He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh.” (D&C 46:28-30.)

Another eternal verity which opens the door to perfect prayer is the principle that all things are governed by law, and that “when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” (D&C 130:21.)

Yet others are that before divinely approved prayers come faith in Christ, confession of sin, repentance, the receipt of the Holy Ghost, and the perfecting of one’s life through personal righteousness.

As to faith in Christ preceding perfect prayer, Jesus said: “Ye must watch and pray always and your children may be blessed.” (3 Nephi 18:18-21.)

As to confession of sin preceding perfect prayer, we point to the classic prayer of Daniel. “I prayed unto the Lord my God,” he said, “and made my confession, and said, O Lord, . . . we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.” (Dan. 9:3-19.) This and much more fell from his lips as he sought to get in tune with the Lord so as to gain the petitions he so devoutly sought.

As to repentance preceding perfect prayer we harken back to the great command given of God to Adam, for him and for his posterity forever: “Thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.” (Moses 5:8.)

As to praying by the power of the Spirit which comes to those who are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, we have already seen that all such prayers are always

answered; and as to the perfecting of one's life though personal righteousness preceding perfect prayer, we point to the revelation which says: "And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask." (D&C 50:29-30.)

Perfect prayers are more than mere words. They must be spoken and heard. It is one thing to draw near to the Lord with our lips, but quite another to unite our hearts and feelings with his. Prayers of the mouth are heard as far as the voice can send the word. Prayers of the heart ascend to heaven and are had in remembrance before the Eternal Throne.

In the light of all these things may we give this counsel relative to praying according to the divine standard and in the divinely approved way:

Pray unto the Lord for salvation—remembering that we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling before him; that salvation consists of overcoming the world and gaining the attributes of godliness; that salvation comes only to those who keep the commandments.

Pray unto the Lord for his Spirit—remembering that the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle; that the Spirit is promised to those who repent and are baptized; that the Spirit comes to those who worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Pray unto the Lord for mercy—remembering that mercy cometh because of the atonement; that mercy is the child of repentance and obedience; that mercy is reserved for those only who believe and obey.

Pray unto the Lord that you may see the face of his Son and stand in his presence while you yet dwell in mortality—remembering that he has said: "It shall come to pass that I am." (D&C 93:1.)

Pray unto the Lord that he will make your calling and election made sure—remembering that those only are sealed up unto eternal life who have been proved at all regards and who have shown that they will abide in the covenant even unto death.

Pray unto the Lord for the gifts of the Spirit—prophecy, miracles, healings, testimony, revelations, visions, and so forth—always remembering that he has said: "Seek ye earnestly the best gifts," and that they are given for the benefit of those who love him and keep all his commandments, or who seek so to do.

Pray unto the Lord for a testimony of the truth and divinity of this great latter-day work—remembering that he has given the Book of Mormon to prove that Joseph Smith was a prophet; and that every person who will read this book, ponder its truths, and ask God the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ—if he asks with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ—will come to know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that it is true.

Pray unto the Lord for what you will—for knowledge and wisdom; for crops and herds; for seed time and harvest; for health of body and mind; for food and drink; for houses and lands and properties; to understand the doctrines of salvation and the mysteries of the kingdom; to receive revelations and to see visions; to cause the lame to leap; the deaf to hear; and the blind to see; to raise the dead and quell the storms, and move mountains—pray for what you will, no matter what it is—remembering that with God and by faith all things are possible and that he will answer our prayers if we abide the law qualifying us to receive.

We need to perfect our prayers, strengthen our faith, and walk in the glorious light of that everlasting covenant which God has revealed anew in this our day. If we do so, our prayers, ascending as they will to the heavens above, will prepare the way for us and in the providences of Him who is Eternal we shall in the end dwell in his presence and commune with him face to face.

God grant that it may be so for all of us, I pray, with full appreciation of the significance of the prayer so uttered and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.