

The Prayer of Intercession

Texts: Isaiah 59:1,2; 12-16; Ezekiel 22:30

Job 9:33: "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both."

Intercessory praying is the action of praying on behalf of another person or people.

The word we translate as intercession is from the Hebrew word *paga* that can also be translated "come between;" "to intreat;" "to meet together;" or to reach. The word we translate as intercession in Greek is the word *huperentugchano* meaning "to intercede in behalf of."

"Intercession is the truly universal work for the Christian. No place is closed to intercessory prayer: no continent, no nation, no city, no organization, no office. No power on earth can keep intercession out" (Richard Halverson, Chaplain of the United States Senate under President Ronald Reagan).

Charles Bent said, "'Intercessory prayer might be defined as loving our neighbour on our knees."

Oswald Chambers said, "One of the most subtle burdens God ever puts on us as saints is this burden of discernment concerning other souls. He reveals things in order that we may take the burden of these souls before Him and form the mind of Christ about them. It is not that we bring God into touch with our minds, but that we rouse ourselves until God is able to convey His mind to us about the one for whom we intercede."

Charles Spurgeon said, "No man can do me a truer kindness in this world than to pray for me."

Austin Phelps said, "We are never more like Christ than in prayers of intercession."

1. God Himself is involved in intercessory work:

Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34; Luke 22:31, 32; Romans 8:26, 27

2. Samuel considered it a sin not to pray the prayer of intercession for God's people.

1 Samuel 12:23: "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way."

3. Paul could not minister effectively without intercessory prayer:

Ephesians 6:18, 19; Colossians 4:3

4. The prayer of intercession brings peace:

I Timothy 2:1, 2

One of the greatest prayers of intercession came when Israel had defiled themselves by returning to the wicked ways of Egypt. The population of Israel was now between 2 and 4 million people. And God was going to destroy them from the face of the earth as revealed in Exodus 32:9 and 10. Let's examine the events surrounding one of the most powerful prayers of intercession ever made:

I. THE DANGER OF MISINTERPRETING DELAY

Exodus 32:1

II. THE DESECRATION OF DESIGNING OUR OWN GODS

Exodus 32:2-6

III. THE DAMNATION AWAITING THE UNREPENTANT

Exodus 32: 7-10

IV. THE DEMARCATION LINE IS DRAWN

Exodus 32:15-26

"...Who is on the LORD'S side?..." (Exodus 32:26b).

V. THE DISOBEDIENCE IS ADDRESSED

Exodus 32:27-30

Out of the millions who received the message and responded to the call to choose sides, it appears that three thousand became a commentary on James 1:15: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Even the death of these thousands did not atone for sin. Exodus 32:30: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." (Exodus 32:33-35; Exodus 33:7; Hebrews 13:10-12; Hebrews 9:11-17).

VI. THE DELIVERANCE THAT ACCOMPANIES INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Exodus 32:11-13

Moses asked the LORD to:

A. Remember His power (Psalm 62:11).

B. Remember His purpose (Isaiah 46:9, 10).

C. Remember His promise (II Corinthians 1:20).

Exodus 32:31, 32 informs us that there is intercession that leaves us speechless. But God interprets our deepest longing that reaches beyond our words!

Over 450 years later God records through David that God heard and honored a prayer that was too deep for words:

Psalm 106:23: "Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them."

Intercessory prayer was available to save an entire civilization. Genesis 18:23-33. God was willing to save Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain for 50, 45, 40, 30, 20 and if only 10 righteous people could be found.

Intercessory prayer succeeded in freeing Peter from prison and a death sentence as found in Acts 12:5-19. Acts 12:5: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

Charles Spurgeon said, "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for."

-Pastor Pope-