

Discovery Hour

The Importance of Prayer Class

Summary of the teachings from Dutch Sheets in "Intercessory Prayer"

Session #2 – "The Necessity of Prayer" (Philip Cardella)

Discussion centered on God's sovereignty and the reasons we are called to pray with regard to His ultimate plan for creation and mankind. Sheets referenced the teachings of other well known prayer warriors who contend that God's plan "needs" for us to pray, not because God can't complete the task on his own, but because God chose to limit himself in this way in order that mankind may have choice in the matter. God chose from the time of creation to work on the earth through humans, not independent of them. My asking of God is an exercise of my choice—it releases Him to do something in my life and the lives of those for which I intercede.

- "Prayer is striking the winning blow . . . service is gathering up the results." S. D. Gordon
- "God does nothing on the earth save in answer to believing prayer." John Wesley
- "God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil . . . The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon earth. God conditions the very life and prosperity of His cause on prayer." E. M. Bounds

God owns earth but he assigned governance of it to humanity. Adam (humans) was made in God's image and given dominion over the earth. Therefore, we are God's watchmen on earth: managers, mediators, and representatives.

*¹⁶The heavens are the heavens of the LORD,
But the earth He has given to the sons of men. (Psalm 115 NASB)*

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. (Genesis 2:15 Holman Christian Standard)

Adam was God's representative on earth. He is made in God's image, is the illusion of God and thus re-presents the will of God. Humanity was crowned with God's own glory, therefore mankind represents God with full authority.

²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (Genesis 1 NASB)

⁵Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! (Psalm 8 NASB)

God's plan for creation always included choice.

So complete and final was Adam's authority over earth that he, not just God, had the ability to give it away to Satan (the ruler of this world)

⁶And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷"Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." (Luke 4 NASB) (see also John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

So complete and final was God's decision to do things on earth thru humans that it cost God the incarnation to regain what Adam gave away. (He had to become human to maintain his plan.)

God chose, from the time of the creation, to work on the earth through humans, not independent of them. He limits himself by choice. My asking of God releases Him to do something.

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5 NASB) (see also 1 Kings 18)

Andrew Murray's premise for the absolute need for prayer is that God's giving is inseparably connected with our asking . . . only by intercession can that power be brought down from heaven which will enable the church to conquer the world. He contends that in some situations our prayers actually release cumulative amounts of God's power until enough has been released to accomplish His will.

¹²Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. (Daniel 10 NASB)

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5 NASB)

Suffice it to say that God makes the decision in heaven and a human is called upon to enforce that decision on earth through intercession and faith. Therefore, according to His plan, God "needs" our prayers.

³⁰"I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. ³¹"Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads," declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 22 NASB)

"Prayer is essentially a partnership of the redeemed child of God working hand-in-hand with God toward the realization of His redemptive purposes on earth." Jack Hayford