

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist – Chicago

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

Subject: ***Pray without ceasing***

What does it mean to “Pray without ceasing,” as Paul says in I Thessalonians in the Bible? Is this even possible to do? If it is possible, how does one go about it? These readings explore these questions.

Hymns: 6, 68, 286

Holy Bible

Matt. 6:6 when thou prayest

when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them

I Thess. 5:5, 6, 12-18

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Acts 16:16-21 (to 3rd.), 22-36

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe,

And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely:

Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.

And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

Rom. 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, By Mary Baker Eddy

492:7-28

Being is holiness, harmony, immortality. It is already proved that a knowledge of this, even in small degree, will uplift the physical and moral standard of mortals, will increase longevity, will purify and elevate character. Thus progress will finally destroy all error, and bring immortality to light. We know that a statement proved to be good must be correct. New thoughts are constantly obtaining the floor. These two contradictory theories — that matter is something, or that all is Mind — will dispute the ground, until one is acknowledged to be the victor. Discussing his campaign, General Grant said: "I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer." Science says: All is Mind and Mind's idea. You must fight it out on this line. Matter can afford you no aid.

The notion that mind and matter commingle in the human illusion as to sin, sickness, and death must eventually submit to the Science of Mind, which denies this notion. God is Mind, and God is infinite; hence all is Mind. On this statement rests the Science of being, and the Principle of this Science is divine, demonstrating harmony and immortality.

95:5-10

Paul said, "To be spiritually minded is life." We approach God, or Life, in proportion to our spirituality, our fidelity to Truth and Love; and in that ratio we know all human need and are able to discern the thought of the sick and the sinning for the purpose of healing them.

231:8

If God heals not the sick, they are not healed, for no lesser power equals the infinite All-power; but God, Truth, Life, Love, does heal the sick through the prayer of the righteous.

206:10

Will-power is capable of all evil. It can never heal the sick, for it is the prayer of the unrighteous; while the exercise of the sentiments — hope, faith, love — is the prayer of the righteous. This prayer, governed by Science instead of the senses, heals the sick.

4:12, 27-30

The habitual struggle to be always good is unceasing prayer. Its motives are made manifest in the blessings they bring, — blessings which, even if not acknowledged in audible words, attest our worthiness to be partakers of Love.

Audible prayer can never do the works of spiritual understanding, which regenerates; but silent prayer, watchfulness, and devout obedience enable us to follow Jesus' example.

15:14

In order to pray aright, we must enter into the closet and shut the door. We must close the lips and silence the material senses. In the quiet sanctuary of earnest longings, we must deny sin and plead God's allness. We must resolve to take up the cross, and go forth with honest hearts to work and watch for wisdom, Truth, and Love. We must "pray without ceasing." Such prayer is answered, in so far as we put our desires into practice. The Master's injunction is, that we pray in secret and let our lives attest our sincerity.

3:12

The Divine Being must be reflected by man, — else man is not the image and likeness of the patient, tender, and true, the One "altogether lovely;" but to understand God is the work of eternity, and demands absolute consecration of thought, energy, and desire.

9:32 (to .)

Consistent prayer is the desire to do right.

2:23

God is Love. Can we ask Him to be more? God is intelligence. Can we inform the infinite Mind of anything He does not already comprehend? Do we expect to change perfection? Shall we plead for more at the open fount, which is pouring forth more than we accept? The unspoken desire does bring us nearer the source of all existence and blessedness.

1:10

Thoughts unspoken are not unknown to the divine Mind. Desire is prayer; and no loss can occur from trusting God with our desires, that they may be moulded and exalted before they take form in words and in deeds.

454:17

Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching. Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way. Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action. Love is priestess at the altar of Truth. Wait patiently for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind, and form the perfect concept. Patience must "have her perfect work."

13:5

In public prayer we often go beyond our convictions, beyond the honest standpoint of fervent desire. If we are not secretly yearning and openly striving for the accomplishment of all we ask, our prayers are "vain repetitions," such as the heathen use. If our petitions are sincere, we labor for what we ask; and our Father, who seeth in secret, will reward us openly. Can the mere public expression of our desires increase them? Do we gain the omnipotent ear sooner by words than by thoughts? Even if prayer is sincere, God knows our need before we tell Him or our fellow-beings about it. If we cherish the desire honestly and silently and humbly, God will bless it, and we shall incur less risk of overwhelming our real wishes with a torrent of words.

11:21

Petitions bring to mortals only the results of mortals' own faith. We know that a desire for holiness is requisite in order to gain holiness; but if we desire holiness above all else, we shall sacrifice everything for it. We must be willing to do this, that we may walk securely in the only practical road to holiness. Prayer cannot change the unalterable Truth, nor can prayer alone give us an understanding of Truth; but prayer, coupled with a fervent habitual desire to know and do the will of God, will bring us into all Truth. Such a desire has little need of audible expression. It is best expressed in thought and in life.

367:17-29

A Christian Scientist occupies the place at this period of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Let us watch, work, and pray that this salt lose not its saltness, and that this light be not hid, but radiate and glow into noontide glory.

The infinite Truth of the Christ-cure has come to this age through a "still, small voice," through silent utterances and divine anointing which quicken and increase the beneficial effects of Christianity. I long to see the consummation of my hope, namely, the student's higher attainments in this line of light.

15:25-30

Christians rejoice in secret beauty and bounty, hidden from the world, but known to God. Self-forgetfulness, purity, and affection are constant prayers. Practice not profession, understanding not belief, gain the ear and right hand of omnipotence and they assuredly call down infinite blessings.

From Concord Express - A Christian Science Study Resource: The King James Version of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's published writings