

CARING ENOUGH TO PRAY

CMBC January 22, 2017

1 John 5:13 – 17

I was having breakfast with a young businessmen talking about church matters, when he got into telling me about a challenge he was facing at his business. I asked if he had prayed about it, and his response was that God probably had bigger things to do. I reminded him of the hymn we had just sung in church.

What a friend we have in Jesus

All our sins and griefs to bear.

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer

Oh what peace we often forfeit

Oh what needless pain we bear

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer

That hymn takes on a new meaning when we read these verses from 1 John 5:

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. [14] This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. [16] If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. [17] All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

1. God's Powerful Evidence Of Eternal Life

- a. "Come and ask!"
 - i. The amazing statement from God is that the all conclusive evidence that Jesus is the Holy One send from God, is that all that needed to save us from our sin and separation from God has been done, and through Jesus we have eternal life.
 - ii. Then to verify this statement, God goes one step further, declaring that you are welcomed to boldly talk to God, boldly ask for what is on our heart.
 - iii. That statement occurs again and again in the Bible, "Come talk to me, ask."
 - iv. We come with confidence, boldness, because we are invited by God to come.
- b. The barrier has truly been removed
 - i. There could not be any more certain evidence that the barrier that sin created between us and God has been removed.
 - ii. Where is there any God like this?
- c. He is our Father

- i. It is the loving open relationship that there is between a father and his child.
- ii. Certainly, this is a relationship of respect, but also a relationship of love, a relationship of understanding.
- iii. It is also a relationship of belief, of trust.
- iv. **ILL.** President Trump's children had no problem with sleeping in the White House last night.
- v. Being invited by God is far more amazing.

2. The Boldest Request Before God

What do you think is the boldest request that we could ask God?

- Could it be for success?
- Could it be for healing?
- The boldest request you could make is:
 - a. A plea for a friend
 - i. This friend is rebellious, disobedient,
 1. He is a dirty, foul mouthed
 2. He is arrogant, dishonest, a liar
 3. He is a bad influence,
 - ii. We are not just asking if he can come over for dinner
 1. Or even to spend the night
 2. We are not asking even if he can live with us
 3. We are asking if God would make him family, one of the brothers or sisters.
 - iii. That is a bold request
 1. A lot of changes will need to happen
 2. We are asking God to do that
 - b. The desperate need of my friend
 - i. But maybe this isn't as bold as we think
 - ii. When God tells us to boldly approach Him, He makes the suggestion of what that request might be.
 - iii. **[15] And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. [16] If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life.**
 - iv. When we are told to ask according to God's will, this is definitely it.
 1. In fact it is the context of this verse.
 2. **[14c] if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.**
 3. This is God's passion
 4. And He invites us to be partners with Him in this.
 5. He offers to give us His passion for the person in sin.
 6. We pray and God gives him life.

16 he should pray and God will give him life.
 - v. What prayer can God answer?
 1. There is this troubling statement:

- a. **[16] If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death,**
 - b. **I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.**
- vi. What is this sin unto death?
 - 1. I have often had people terribly fearful that they had committed the sin to death, the “unpardonable sin”.
 - 2. There are many examples in the Bible of people committing the worst sins thinkable: murder, adultery, murder to cover up adultery, - sins which God forgave.
 - 3. There is one sin that will not be forgiven: rebellious, disbelief and rejection of Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God, the only way to eternal life. An arrogance that says, “I’ll show you God. I don’t need you.”
- vii. Followers of Jesus commit some terrible sins. Actually, John says, “All sin is terrible,” **[17] All wrong doing is sin.**
 - 1. And he adds, **there is sin that does not lead to death.**
 - 2. It is the sin that we struggle with, feel guilty about, and confess to God.
 - 3. If you feel fearful that you have committed the unpardonable sin, you haven’t.
 - a. If you had, you wouldn’t care.
 - b. What you feel is the Holy Spirit talking to you about sin you need to confess.
 - 4. However, it is dangerous for us to let sin in our lives slide and our hearts be hardened to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- viii. But should we not pray for those who have committed the sin unto death?
 - 1. John doesn’t forbid to pray.
 - 2. He simply says: **16c There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.**
 - 3. An Old Testament example was the urgent continuing prayer Samuel had for King Saul. Samuel’s ministry was on hold, and God was saying, **“There is no use. Saul won’t change. Get on with anointing a new king.”**

3. The Urgency Of Prayer

There is an urgency to pray for those who are being hindered by sin.

- a. Sharing God’s burden
 - i. God calls on us to join Him in the urgency of people we know needing to pray
 - ii. What would that look like?

Here is how we often deal with other people’s sin

 - 1. We criticize
 - 2. We gossip

3. Pray with an attitude of self-righteousness
 4. Sometimes it is not anguish, but glee at proof that we are better than they.
- b. The heart of God in prayer
- i. Agonize with your brother
 1. Love him
 2. Carry his burden with him
 3. **Galatians 6:1,2** [6:1] Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. [2] Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [3] If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
 4. Watch that you don't become an arrogant legalist.
 - ii. We need each other in helping with our spiritual growth.

4. Who will pray for me?

- a. We too need prayer.
 - b. We need to let people know about our spiritual struggles, our sins.
 - c. Their prayers are so important to help us
 - d. But so often we hide our struggles
 - i. We run the risk of coldness, bitterness, rebellion setting in
 - ii. And then who knows what that will lead to.
 - iii. **James 5:16** applies here.
Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
 - e. Some say that confession is between me and God. But God tells to get involved, to pray for you in your sin.
- Pray for people who are struggling with sin
 - Don't criticize
 - Love them so that they can trust you
 - Don't gossip
 - Develop the love and trust so that you will have their support when you need prayer
 - With prayer there is assurance of life.
 - Without prayer we run a terrible risk.