

FAITHFUL ONE

THE PROMISE AND THE PAIN

Part 4: *Friendship with God*

APPETIZER: Some Assembly Required

Human beings are made with the capacity and need to grow. Our souls come "SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED". Like Adam being taught creativity by naming the animals. Like Jacob wrestling with God. Like Moses arguing with God about his own lack of qualification. And like Abraham learning how to care and how to pray. Like God giving Paul a thorn in his flesh, or Paul teaching that God waited to give us the New Covenant because we had to grow up to be ready for it. Humans do not automatically self-actualize. It is a struggle, and God is our partner in the struggle. He's not going to do it all for us, because that won't help us grow. Salvation – that's a free gift of grace. Growth – that takes work.

NOTE:

See "Radical Christians & the Word of God" blog series at bruxy.com.

DINE IN: Intercessory Prayer

Genesis 18:16-33

I no longer call you servants... Instead, I have called you friends.
~ Jesus (John 15:15)

Proverbs 11:11; also see 14:34; Matthew 5:13-16

THE PROBLEM OF PILING ON...

When we see God's wrath or judgement fall upon a person or people, if we are not in tune with the Holy Spirit, we can lean toward pride rather than humility, and want to pile on rather than thank God for his grace.

**1 John 5:14-15; Psalm 66:17-19; 1 Peter 3:7
James 4:2-3; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

THE BLESSING OF UNANSWERED PRAYERS

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.

TAKE OUT: Teach Your Children Well

1 Timothy 2:1-4; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:4-9; Psalm 78:4-7

I will endeavour to pray every day this week (and beyond!)...

HOW:

- The Our Father (Lord's Prayer)
- Conversational Prayer through Bible passages
- Praying the prayers of other saints of the church (e.g., a prayer book)
- Praying evangelistically, for opportunities to participate with Jesus in sharing his good news (Matthew 9:35-38).
- Interceding on behalf of others, for their good – for leaders, family, friends, and enemies.

WHEN: _____

WHERE: _____

FOR: _____ min.

This summer, I plan to invest in my children's spiritual growth by...

- Daily Bible reading and discussion (at meal time or bed time or ?)
- Praying together daily (at meal time or bed time or ?)
- Partnering with them to bless others (write some specific ideas):

- Other: _____

NEXT WEEK: The destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19)

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. This week we want to reserve extra time to pray in our huddles at the end. Keep that in mind for timing. Now for starters, talk about what you remember being most interesting, encouraging, or perplexing in Sunday's message.

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

2. Read **Genesis 18:16-33**. Remember to use these questions more like a menu to choose from than a list to be fully completed.
 - a. Is there anything in the text that catches your attention?
 - b. Why do you think God sometimes appears human, limited, needing to travel and to learn and to wrestle (e.g., **Genesis 3:8; 18:20-21; 32:24-30; etc.**)?
 - c. Have you ever “wrestled” with God in a conversation about something, like Jacob or Moses, or like Abraham does here? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of adopting this approach to prayer and other spiritual practices?
 - d. How would you respond to someone who, after hearing about this story, said, “I can't believe you would worship a God who would kill all those innocent lives?”
 - e. How would you respond to a Christian who claimed that a natural disaster today that wiped out a city was actually God's judgement?
 - f. Abraham was already declared righteous POSITIONALLY because of his trust in God (**Genesis 15:6**), and yet God wanted him to live out his righteousness PRACTICALLY (**Genesis 18:19**). Talk about how both are also gospel truths for us as members of the New Covenant. Use Scripture to support your thinking if possible.

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

3. Who are you praying for this week? Share your requests for others and spend time in intercessory prayer together.

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