



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – January 5, 2014

Heart to Heart...

How much time would you say you spend in prayer? It seems that we speak about prayer, preach on prayer and have classes on prayer yet it still seems to be one of the most ignored parts of our spiritual lives. In fact, even with all the teaching and studying it seems many times we don't know much about prayer. People can say a lot of good things about prayer but what do we really know, or better yet, what do we really practice?

People complain that the church isn't this or that. Complaints can arise against the elders, deacons, preachers or just one another because two can't get along. Attitudes start to develop (and not godly ones) and if anyone will listen, we will let our complaints be known about someone or something not being done or handled!

What about prayer instead of complaint? Do we really see that God is the real answer in all this or is it because we want things our way? Has it ever occurred to you that what you complain about might be the will of God? Some would protest and say, "*No way! God wants us to do this or that! He wouldn't allow or want...*" and on we go. But how do you know? Many times in the OT the Lord God allowed people to follow a certain path or attitude as part of His will to get things where they need to be. Maybe someone's cup of evil needs to fill to the top? (Complainers beware!) Maybe someone needs to go through something to get to God's intended goal? I don't know but God sure does.

Paul instructed the church at Thessalonica to "*pray without ceasing.*" Why? Because all answers and directions lay with the Lord! Prayer is faith! Prayer entrusts our lives to Him! Prayer is submission! Prayer is our attitude toward the Lord! Prayer is what keeps our attitudes pure and proper! Prayer is work that calls us from time to ourselves to time with our Savior and the Sustainer of our lives. Prayer is not something rehearsed or "canned words". It's not about reciting some words written. Prayer is a heart of faith expressing to God their dependence and need on Him for everything.

Next time you find yourself upset at another or the direction of the church as whole, tell God! Express your concerns to God but be willing to leave those concerns on Him, to allow Him to do with it as He pleases. It's called submission. If you will do this, you will find your life settle around life and peace (Romans 8:6) and see things more clearly. It's then you start learning how to really love His people as He loved. If the work of the church isn't going the way you think, don't complain. PRAY! Complaining always takes one away from the Lord! (Philippians 2:14-16) I remember, years ago, asking a lady when she was complaining about a situation that had arisen in the church that disturbed her if she believed the Lord is the head of the church. She replied, "*Yes!*" I asked if she prayed in faith about this. She never answered that question and today, she is bitter and resentful toward certain ones because that situation was never addressed in her mind. This pattern prevails too many times and seems to be the result of too many prayer-less people!

Pray! Those first century saints prayed fervently. If we want to see things change, pray depending on God for that change and it begins with me! It's His body, it's His work in His body and it's His body He is going to bring home. Prayer is not what we believe in. God is who we believe in and because of our faith in Him, submitting to His will, we pray! Think about it!!!

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