

Forward on Our Knees

by Stanley E. Sayers

Of Jesus on the night of His betrayal, it is written, “And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed” (Matthew 26:39). Unlike the popular portrait of His hands folded in quiet serenity, with halo hovering above His head and eyes gazing into heaven, Matthew and the other gospel writers tell us Jesus *fell* prostrate upon the ground and buried Himself in the arms of God!

Soon, He was to go to the cross. The baptism with which He was to be immersed (Luke 12:50) was immediately in front of Him. Seeking sustenance for the final hour, He left His disciples lingering in the shadows. After He went a little farther, He fell upon His face and emptied Himself to God. As the Hebrew writer related it, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Hebrews 5:7). He resigned Himself to the will of His Father, a will which for our sakes demanded His sacrificial, agonizing death (Romans 5:6–9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 12:1–4).

PRAYER AND PROGRESS—The church which He purchased with His blood, like Jesus, must strip itself of all pride, envy, and selfish ambition, go a “little farther,” and fall on its face before its God. We shall be no stronger or spiritual than our life of prayer. Our prayers will reach no higher than the depth of our longing and the quest of our contrition. Are we earnestly engaged in talking and walking with God? I look up to Moses, admire Abraham, fear God with Noah, look into heaven with Elijah, weep with

Jeremiah—but *covet the walk of Enoch*. “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24). I am glad the Holy Spirit recorded *this personal nearness of a man to his God*.

If the world would see Jesus *through* us, it must see Jesus first *within* us! If God would empower our lives, we must spend time with Him who is the Source of spiritual power.

PRAYER AND CHANGE—Is the phrase “like Jesus” followed with a question mark or an exclamation point? Too few of us have really been to the foot of Golgotha. Beneath its shadow is the Gethsemane of prayer. Is there pleasure or pain in the words “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt”? The world is out in search of *proof*. Without prayer, much prayer, we shall never convince a life that it really ought to change.

PRAYER AND GOD—Andrew Murray has left with us a candid setting for the life alone with God:

Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or irritated or sore or disappointed. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace as in the deep sea of calmness when all around and above is trouble.

I am told of a deeply religious college in which many gospel preachers are schooled and trained. Many of their ministerial students have desired smaller, more humble, and private rooms for the simple reason they want to be alone with

God. It is not surprising to discover that Jesus spent time alone with God before He manifested Himself to mankind. He was always “about His Father’s business.”

We each need that solemn retreat—a time and place of prayer—for among the crowd we are prone to be shaped and molded by the crowd. Alone with God we gain the disposition that is so markedly His.

APPLICATION—There is a march called prayer. God’s soldiers advance one confession, one adoration, and one praise at a time—ever forward on our knees! “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.
—Abraham Lincoln

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