

I Have Prayed for Thee

by Andrew Murray

The sermon explores how Christ's intercession empowers believers to engage in a transformative prayer life rooted in faith and community.

Scripture: Luke 22:32, John 16:26, John 17:20, Hebrews 7:25

Topics: "Intercession", "Prayer Life"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the profound significance of Jesus' intercession for believers, illustrating that true spiritual growth is rooted in understanding Christ's role as our life and strength. He explains that prayer is not a burdensome task but a natural expression of our union with Christ, who prays in us and through us. Murray highlights that Jesus' intercession is essential for our faith and prayer life, enabling us to participate in His divine work. The sermon calls believers to recognize their identity in Christ and to engage in prayer that aligns with His will, ultimately for the glory of God and the salvation of others. The message culminates in a plea for believers to seek a deeper relationship with Christ, asking Him to teach them to pray.

Transcript

'But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'--Luke xxii. 32.

'I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.'--John xvi. 26.

'He ever liveth to make intercession.'--Heb. vii. 25.

ALL growth in the spiritual life is connected with the clearer insight into what Jesus is to us. The more I realize that Christ must be all to me and in me, that all in Christ is indeed for me, the more I learn to live the real life of faith, which, dying to self, lives wholly in Christ. The Christian life is no longer the vain struggle to live right, but the resting in Christ and finding strength in Him as our life, to fight the fight and gain the victory of faith. This is specially true of the life of prayer. As it too comes under the law of faith alone, and is seen in the light of the fulness and completeness there is in Jesus, the believer understands that it need no longer be a matter of strain or anxious care, but an experience of what Christ will do for him and in him--a participation in that life of Christ which, as on earth, so in heaven, ever ascends to the Father as prayer. And he begins to pray, not only trusting in the merits of Jesus, or in the intercession by which our unworthy prayers are made acceptable, but in that near and close union in virtue of which He prays in us and we in Him. 3 The whole of salvation is Christ Himself: He has given HIMSELF to us; He Himself

lives in us. Because He prays, we pray too. As the disciples, when they saw Jesus pray, asked Him to make them partakers of what He knew of prayer, so we, now we see Him as intercessor on the throne, know that He makes us participate with Himself in the life of prayer.

How clearly this comes out in the last night of His life. In His high-priestly prayer (John xvii.), He shows us how and what He has to pray to the Father, and will pray when once ascended to heaven. And yet He had in His parting address so repeatedly also connected His going to the Father with their new life of prayer. The two would be ultimately connected: His entrance on the work of His eternal intercession would be the commencement and the power of their new prayer-life in His Name. It is the sight of Jesus in His intercession that gives us power to pray in His Name: all right and power of prayer is Christ's; He makes us share in His intercession.

To understand this, think first of His intercession: He ever liveth to make intercession. The work of Christ on earth as Priest was but a beginning. It was as Aaron He shed His blood; it is as Melchizedek that He now lives within the veil to continue His work, after the power of the eternal life. As Melchizedek is more glorious than Aaron, so it is in the work of intercession that the atonement has its true power and glory. 'It is Christ that died: yea more, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.' That intercession is an intense reality, a work that is absolutely necessary, and without which the continued application of redemption cannot take place. In the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus the wondrous reconciliation took place, by which man became partaker of the Divine life and blessedness. But the real personal appropriation of this reconciliation in each of His members here below cannot take place without the unceasing exercise of His Divine power by the head in heaven. In all conversion and sanctification, in every victory over sin and the world, there is a real forth-putting of the power of Him who is mighty to save. And this exercise of His power only takes place through His prayer: He asks of the Father, and receives from the Father. 'He is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make intercession.' There is not a need of His people but He receives in intercession what the Godhead has to give: His mediation on the throne is as real and indispensable as on the cross. Nothing takes place without His intercession: it engages all His time and powers, is His unceasing occupation at the right hand of the Father.

And we participate not only in the benefits of this His work, but in the work itself. This because we are His body. Body and members are one: 'The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of thee.' We share with Jesus in all He is and has: 'The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.' We are partakers of His life, His righteousness, His work: we share with Him in His intercession too; it is not a work He does without us.

We do this because we are partakers of His life: 'Christ is our life;' 'No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.' The life in Him and in us is identical, one and the same. His life in us is an ever-praying life. When it descends and takes possession of us, it does not lose its character; in us too it is the every-praying life--a life that without ceasing asks and receives from God. And this not as if there were two separate currents of prayer rising upwards, one from Him, and one from His people. No, but the substantial life-union is also prayer-union: what He prays passes through us, what we pray passes through Him. He is the angel with the golden censer: 'UNTO HIM there was given much incense,' the secret of acceptable prayer, 'that He should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar.' We live, we abide in Him, the Interceding One.

The Only-begotten is the only one who has the right to pray: to Him alone it was said, 'Ask, and it shall be given Thee.' As in all other things the fulness dwells in Him, so the true prayer-fulness too; He alone has

the power of prayer. And just as the growth of the spiritual life consists in the clearer insight that all the treasures are in Him, and that we too are in Him, to receive each moment what we possess in Him, grace for grace, so with the prayer-life too. Our faith in the intercession of Jesus must not only be that He prays in our stead, when we do not or cannot pray, but that, as the Author of our life and our faith, He draws us on to pray in unison with Himself. Our prayer must be a work of faith in this sense too, that as we know that Jesus communicates His whole life in us, He also out of that prayerfulness which is His alone breathes into us our praying.

To many a believer it was a new epoch in his spiritual life when it was revealed to him how truly and entirely Christ was his life, standing good as surety for his remaining faithful and obedient. It was then first that he really began to live a faith-life. No less blessed will be the discovery that Christ is surety for our prayer-life too, the centre and embodiment of all prayer, to be communicated by Him through the Holy Spirit to His people. 'He ever liveth to make intercession' as the Head of the body, as the Leader in that new and living way which He hath opened up, as the Author and the Perfecter of our faith. He provides in everything for the life of His redeemed ones by giving His own life in them: He cares for their life of prayer, by taking them up into His heavenly prayer-life, by giving and maintaining His prayer-life within them. 'I have prayed for thee,' not to render thy faith needless, but 'that thy faith fail not:' our faith and prayer of faith is rooted in His. It is, 'if ye abide in me,' the ever-living Intercessor, and pray with me and in me: 'ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

The thought of our fellowship in the intercession of Jesus reminds us of what He has taught us more than once before, how all these wonderful prayer-promises have as their aim and their justification, the glory of God in the manifestation of His kingdom and the salvation of sinners. As long as we only or chiefly pray for ourselves, the promises of the last night must remain a sealed book to us. It is to the fruit-bearing branches of the Vine; it is to disciples sent into the world as the Father sent Him, to live for perishing men; it is to His faithful servants and intimate friends who take up the work He leaves behind, who have like their Lord become as the seed-corn, losing its life to multiply it manifold;--it is to such that the promises are given. Let us each find out what the work is, and who the souls are entrusted to our special prayers; let us make our intercession for them our life of fellowship with God, and we shall not only find the promises of power in prayer made true to us, but we shall then first begin to realize how our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us makes us share in His own joy of blessing and saving men.

O most wonderful intercession of our Blessed Lord Jesus, to which we not only owe everything, but in which we are taken up as active partners and fellow-workers! Now we understand what it is to pray in the Name of Jesus, and why it has such power. In His Name, in His Spirit, in Himself, in perfect union with Him. O wondrous, ever active, and most efficacious intercession of the man Christ Jesus! When shall we be wholly taken up into it and always pray in it?

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! In lowly adoration I would again bow before Thee. Thy whole redemption work has now passed into prayer; all that now occupies Thee in maintaining and dispensing what Thou didst purchase with Thy blood is only prayer. Thou ever livest to pray. And because we are and abide in Thee, the direct access to the Father is always open, our life can be one of unceasing prayer, and the answer to our prayer is sure.

Blessed Lord! Thou hast invited Thy people to be Thy fellow-workers in a life of prayer. Thou hast united Thyself with Thy people and makest them as Thy body share with Thee in that ministry of intercession through which alone the world can be filled with the fruit of Thy redemption and the glory of the Father. With more liberty than ever I come to Thee, my Lord, and beseech Thee: Teach me to pray. Thy life is prayer, Thy life is mine. Lord! teach me to pray, in Thee, like Thee.

And, O my Lord! Give me specially to know, as Thou didst promise Thy disciples, that Thou art in the Father, and I in Thee, and Thou in me. Let the uniting power of the Holy Spirit make my whole life an abiding in Thee and Thy intercession, so that my prayer may be its echo, and the Father hear me in Thee and Thee in me. Lord Jesus! let Thy mind in everything be in me, and my life in everything by in Thee. So shall I be prepared to be the channel through which Thy intercession pours its blessing on the world. Amen.

NOTE.

'The new epoch of prayer in the Name of Jesus is pointed out by Christ as the time of the outpouring of the Spirit, in which the disciples enter upon a more enlightened apprehension of the economy of redemption, and become as clearly conscious of their oneness with Jesus as of His oneness with the Father. Their prayer in the Name of Jesus is now directly to the Father Himself. "I say not that I will pray for you, for the Father Himself loveth you," Jesus says; while He had previously spoken of the time before the Spirit's coming: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you the Comforter." This prayer thus has as its central thought the insight into our being united to God in Christ as on both sides the living bond of union between God and us (John xvii. 23: "I in them and Thou in me"), so that in Jesus we behold the Father as united to us, and ourselves as united to the Father. Jesus Christ must have been revealed to us, not only through the truth in the mind, but in our inmost personal consciousness as the living personal reconciliation, as He in whom God's Fatherhood and Father-love have been perfectly united with human nature and it with God. Not that with the immediate prayer to the Father, the mediatorship of Christ is set aside; but it is no longer looked at as something external, existing outside of us, but as a real living spiritual existence within us, so that the Christ for us, the Mediator, has really become Christ in us.

'When the consciousness of this oneness between God in Christ and us in Christ still is wanting, or has been darkened by the sense of guilt, then the prayer of faith looks to our Lord as the Advocate, who pays the Father for us. (Compare John xvi. 26 with John xiv. 16, 17; ix. 20; Luke xxi. 32; I John ii. 1.) To take Christ thus in prayer as Advocate, is according to John xvi. 26 not perfectly the same as the prayer in His Name. Christ's advocacy is meant to lead us on to that inner self-standing life-union with Him, and with the Father in Him, in virtue of which Christ is He in whom God enters into immediate relation and unites Himself with us, and in whom we in all circumstances enter into immediate relation with God. Even so the prayer in the Name of Jesus does not consist in our prayer at His command: the disciples had prayed thus ever since the Lord had given them His "Our Father," and yet He says, "Hitherto ye have not prayed in my Name." Only when the mediation of Christ has become, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, life and power within us, and so His mind, as it found expression in His word and work, has taken possession of and filled our personal consciousness and will, so that in faith and love we have Jesus in us as the Reconciler who has actually made us one with God: only then His Name, which included His nature and His work, is become truth and power in us (not only for us), and we have in the Name of Jesus the free, direct access to the Father which is sure of being heard. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the liberty of a son with the Father, just as Jesus had this as the First-begotten. We pray in the place of Jesus, not as if we could put ourselves in His place, but in as far as we are in Him and He in us. We go direct to the Father,

but only as the Father is in Christ, not as if He were separate from Christ. Wherever thus the inner man does not live in Christ and has Him not present as the Living One, where His word is not ruling in the heart in its Spirit-power, where His truth and life have not become the life of our soul, it is vain to think that a formula like "for the sake of Thy dear Son" will avail.'--Christliche Ethik, von Dr. I. T. Beck, Tübingen, iii. 39.

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See on the difference between having Christ as an Advocate or Intercessor who stands outside of us, and the having Him within us, we abiding in Him and He in us through the Holy Spirit perfecting our union with Him, so that we ourselves can come directly to the Father in His Name,--the note above from Beck of Tübingen.

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