

A Man Sent From God, Whose Name Was John

by George Kulp

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of prayer through the life of John Smith and the importance of maintaining a prayerful relationship with God.

Scripture: Luke 18:1, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Godly Living"

Description

George Kulp preaches on the importance of unceasing prayer, emphasizing that prayer is the channel through which divine power is brought to bear upon our lives, making our efforts effective. He highlights the need for perseverance in prayer, drawing inspiration from the examples of our fathers, apostles, martyrs, and reformers who were men of prayer. Kulp also shares the life story of John Smith, a man who exemplified the power of prayer and godly upbringing, showcasing the transformation that can occur when one surrenders to God and lives for His glory.

Transcript

"I would that men should pray always."

"Pray without ceasing."

Author Geo. H. Hubbard, in his book "Spiritual Power at Work." evidently has given much thought and prayer to the subject says: "No religion can be dynamic without prayer. A prayerless religion is a mere philosophy, and philosophy at best is static, not dynamic. Prayer is the channel through which the divine power of the Holy Spirit is brought to bear upon our human machinery to make it effective in accomplishing desired results. Religion without prayer is like a trolley line with tracks all laid, cars in good condition, but no wires connecting with the power house."

We must keep in touch with God, heed the exhortations of His Word, use the means therein indicated, if we would prove every promise true. Our fathers were men of prayer. Apostles, martyrs, reformers, men who were pioneers for God, and blazed the way we should follow, were eminently men of prayer. The promises that encouraged them are still on record, and we may prove them and know experimentally their power. God has had witnesses in all ages, the path that leads to eternal triumph is marked by the footprints of men who took His way, followed His precepts, and won many souls who shall shine in the diadem of Jesus "while light and life and being last, or immortality endures." The need of the church militant today is men and women who pray; not "say prayers," but pray -- wait on God. The divinest

element in prayer is perseverance. "Wait, I say, on the Lord."

John Smith -- not Rev. John Smith, D. D., LL. D., -- but plain John Smith, sent of God, and by godly parents named John, was a living example and exemplar of the power that energizes the soul, body, thoughts, words and labors of the man who minds God and prays unceasingly. He was known among his brethren, and wherever he labored, as "John Smith." It is quite refreshing in these days when men are angling for titles, pulling wires for "honorary degrees," having petitions sent in to Boards of Trustees begging for a title, putting names on door plates and hotel registers with "D. D." attached, to find a strong character known, loved, revered, and sought after as, John Smith. A perusal of these pages will reveal the secret of his power. He was a man pursuing Bible methods, minding the Holy Spirit, and living for the glory of God. He had a passion for souls, an intense longing to get people saved, that impelled him to vehemently urge them to forsake sin and yield themselves unto God. Nothing that men could add by way of "honors" would have increased his power; he looked unto God, kept yoked to Omnipotence by faith, and almost lived in the "power house."

Victor Hugo says: "If you would civilize a man, you must begin with his grandmother." Godliness in parents is profitable unto their children. The subject of these pages was born of godly parents at Cudworth, England, January 12th, 1794. His father for many years was a class-leader and local preacher in the Methodist Church, while his mother adorned her profession and exerted a holy influence in her own home, neighborhood, and church that told for God. From his earliest infancy he was placed under the direction and loving restraints of a model Christian home, where he was carefully instructed in the verities of God's Word and the truths of Christianity.

The Spirit wrought with him at a very early age, and when but nine years old he was powerfully affected by a concern for his soul under a sermon by a local preacher from Psalm 144:15, "Happy is the people ... whose God is the Lord." His serious impressions wore off and he manifested an ardent and headstrong spirit. At times he was mischievous, and the result at one time would have been of the most serious kind had it not been for a merciful Providence. His sports were of a bold, boisterous and wicked kind.

He would even attend the prayer-meetings held in his native village to collect material for the mirth of his ungodly companions, and being endowed with extraordinary powers of mimicry, he would amuse them by striking and ridiculous imitations of the peculiarities which he had observed in the pious persons who conducted these means of grace. During the time that he remained at home, he was, of course, prevented from the full indulgence of his depraved propensities; but when about fourteen years of age, being placed as an apprentice with a grocer at Sheffield, and of consequence more free from control, he became decidedly wicked.

He conducted himself generally in so irregular a manner, that, after two years, his employer, unable any longer to endure his bad conduct, sent him back to his parents. He then obtained a situation at Barnsley, in the same line of business. Here he even gave up attendance at a place of worship, and thus broke the last link which seemed to connect him with the principles and example of his pious parents. He associated himself, without restraint, with other ungodly young men, and had his natural corruption increased, and his habits of evil confirmed, by their example and counsels.

He imitated their profane language, and learned to blaspheme the God of his father. As far as his means permitted, he became a gambler, and contracted a strong passion for wrestling, and other athletic exercises, especially for pugilistic contests. He often traveled considerable distances to attend prize fights,

and actually put himself under the training of scientific boxers. These pursuits led him into debasing society, which was congenial to his corrupt affections. He became an adept, and an enthusiast in vice, and gloried in the awful distinction which an athletic body and a desperate mind enabled him to maintain among his sinful associates.

But even in this course of sin, there could easily be discerned indications of the same natural character which afterwards, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, rendered him so distinguished a Christian and minister. Here was the energy which in good or evil allowed him to be satisfied with nothing like a medium of feeling or exertion. Here was the strong, concentrated passion urging him on by its hurricane power, to the utter abandonment of religion, which, in a brighter era of his life, became the impulse of generous sacrifice, self-devotion and labor. If he now spurned reproof, rejected all care of reputations, and hardened himself against every suggestion of peril on account of sin, he was equally daring and independent when "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" became the object of his emulation. The popularity which, by his highly social qualities, he acquired among the vain and worldly persons by whom he was at this time surrounded, was succeeded, in a more honorable period of his history, by the warm Christian attachment of all who had the privilege of his intimacy. It is a melancholy fact, also, that he was a sinner of influence; and there were some of his companions in vanity who, according to human probability, were prevented from the choice of a religious life, only by the fascinations of his society. How fully, as a Christian and a Christian minister, he exerted a similar power over those with whom he associated, the succeeding pages will tend to show.

The extreme profligacy of some who have had a religious education is no evidence of their having forgotten the pious instructions of their childhood. In fact, paradoxical as it may appear, their resolute abandonment of themselves to vicious practices is, in not a few cases, a proof of the depth and permanence of their previous impressions. Next to making him virtuous, the best effect of admonition on a sinner is to make him unhappy. Dissipation is an indication of a mind ill at ease. The natural posture of happiness is calmness and repose, and where men are not fully stupefied by the influence of sin, the love of reputation, and many similar principles of counteraction, will frequently lead them to moderation in pursuit of forbidden pleasures. On the other hand, where there still remains a considerable degree of moral sensibility, the spirit seeks, in the perpetual hurry of business or vice, to still the voice of conscience, and to overcome the striving of the Spirit. This, of course, will be more apparent in persons of such great power of feeling as was possessed by the subject of these pages.

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