

# Prayer

by George Kulp

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*The sermon emphasizes the significance of prayer in all aspects of life, encouraging believers to communicate with God about both big and small matters.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:7, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Spiritual Guidance"

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## Description

George Kulp preaches about the power and importance of prayer, emphasizing that there is no size limit in what we can bring to God in prayer. He highlights various stories and examples that illustrate how prayer, even for seemingly small or mundane things, can lead to significant answers and transformations in our lives. The sermon delves into the concept of surrendering to God in prayer, seeking His guidance, and experiencing His compassion and love through communication with Him.

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## Transcript

### NO SIZE IN PRAYER

I remember hearing it said of a godly man, "Mr. So and-so is a gracious man, but he is very strange; for the other day he prayed to God about a key he had lost." The person who told it to me regarded with astonishment the idea of praying to God about a lost key; and he seemed altogether surprised when I assured him that I prayed in like manner. What! pray about a key? Yes. Please tell me how big a thing must be before you can pray about it? If a certain size is appointed, we should like to have it marked down in the Bible, that we might learn the mathematics of prayer. Would you have it recorded that, if a thing is so many inches long, we may pray about it; but if it happens to be a quarter of an inch too short, we must let it alone? If we might not pray about little things, it would be a fearful calamity; for little things cause us great worry, and they are harder to deal with than great things. If we might not pray about minor matters, it would be a terrible loss of comfort.

--Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

### PRAYER ANSWERED IN A LUMP

The Rev. Dr. Kidd, of Aberdeen, had a hearer -- a good and converted man, as everybody but himself judged -- though troubled with doubt as to his own salvation. The Doctor said to him one day: "Well, Thomas, how long have you been praying?" "For forty years." "And what have you got?" "I canna say I

ha'e gotten any thing." "I wonder you are not tired, then, and don't give up that kind of hopeless work." "Nay, sir, we mauna dee that." Well, when Thomas lay dying -- was very near his end -- Dr. Kidd called, and asked, as he always did when he was going to pray: "What shall I pray for?" "Give thanks," said Thomas, "give thanks, for my forty years' prayer answered in a lump."

## TELEGRAPH TO JESUS

Several years ago I was traveling on a train in the West. Among the passengers in our car was a young mother traveling alone with her first baby. There was also a fashionably dressed lady with two children, the elder a boy of about twelve years, and the younger a rollicking little chap of four. The latter was so cute and merry and restless, that he attracted universal attention.

At noon our train stopped at a station for dinner, and all the passengers left the car except those of us who had lunch with us.

A few minutes later the conductor came through and ordered us to move to the car forward, as the train was to be broken into sections. After some switching about, our train was made up, and the bell began to ring as a signal to the absent passengers.

All at once we were startled by a loud scream, and turned to see the young mother rushing frantically through the car, followed by the conductor and brakeman. She had left her sleeping baby and her luggage in the car we had formerly occupied, and had foolishly gone away to dinner without asking anyone to watch over the child. Consequently, in the hurried change of cars, it had been unnoticed, and now the car and baby had gone.

Our train was held while the trainmen and passengers hurried about searching for the lost child. Several trains had pulled out of the station, and the chances were that the missing car had been attached to one of them.

All of us were much excited -- none more so than the little four-year-old boy, who had danced about and asked innumerable questions of everyone.

He was standing up in one of the foremost seats of the car, his cheeks flushed, his eyes shining with excitement. In an interval of silence his clear baby voice floated down the car:

"Why don't they telegraph to Jesus? That's what I'd do if that was my baby."

Tears started from my eyes at these words of childish wisdom. His face had turned to the sure Source of help and deliverance; and I do not doubt that many "telegrams" went up at once from that crowded car.

In a few minutes the baby was found and delivered to its mother, the trainmen returned to their posts, and our journey was resumed. But the "seed sown by the wayside" by a baby's hand, had surely "sprung up and brought forth fruit" in more than one heart.

-- Mary McCrae Culter

## IS GOD DEAD?

In Mariposa, Cal., there lived a large-eyed, beautiful little prattler -- Mary Cannon. One evening, when all was silent, she looked up anxiously into the face of her backslidden father, who had ceased to pray in his

family, and said: "Pa, is God dead?"

"No, my child. Why do you ask such a foolish question as that?"

"Why, pa, you never talk to Him as you used to do." These words haunted him till he was reclaimed.

#### POWER FOR THE PULPIT

Mr. Galloway, in speaking of the power of prayer, said: "We are told that Livingstone, before he preached the great sermon at Shotts, when five hundred sinners were converted to Christ, spent the whole previous night in prayer. William Burns, who was perhaps one of the most successful ministers Scotland has ever seen, never entered the pulpit without wrestling for an hour on his knees with the Lord. The saintly Robert Murray McCheyne's experience was the same; he waited at the Throne of Grace before he ascended the pulpit, and there was shed upon him the invincible power of God."

#### LUTHER'S PRAYER AT THE DIET OF WORMS

"Almighty, eternal God! what a strange thing is this world! How doth it open wide the mouths of the people! How small and poor is the confidence of men toward God! How is the flesh so tender and weak, and the devil so mighty and so busy through his apostles and the wise of this world! How soon do they withdraw the hand and whirl away and run the common path and the broad way to Hell, where the godless belong. They look only upon that which is splendid and powerful, great and mighty, and which hath consideration. If I turn my eyes thither also, it is all over with me; the spell is cast and judgment is pronounced. Ah God! Ah God! O Thou my God! Thou my God, stand Thou by me against the reason and wisdom of all the world. Do Thou so! Thou must do it. Thou alone. Behold, it is not my cause but Thine. For my own person I have nothing to do here before these great lords of the world. Gladly would I, too have good, quiet days and be unperplexed. But Thine is the cause, my Lord; it is just and eternal. Stand Thou by me, Thou true, eternal God! I confide in no man. It is to no purpose and in vain. Everything halteth that is fleshy, or that savoreth of flesh. O God! O God! Hearest Thou not, my God? Art Thou dead? No, Thou canst not die. Thou only hidest Thyself. Hast Thou chosen me for this end? I ask Thee? But I know for a surety that Thou hast chosen me. Ha! then may God direct it. For never did I think, in all my life, to be opposed to such great lords; neither have I intended it. Ha! God then stand by me in the name of Jesus Christ, who shall be my shelter and my shield, yea, my firm tower, through the might and strengthening of Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! where stayest Thou? Thou my God! where art Thou? Come, come! I am ready, even to lay down my life for this cause, patient as a little lamb. For just is the cause and Thine. So will I not separate myself from Thee forever. Be it determined in Thy name. The world shall not be able to face me against my conscience though it were full of devils. And though my body, originally the work and creature of Thy hands, though it be shattered in pieces -- Thy word and Thy Spirit are good to me still! It concerneth only the body. The soul is Thine, and belongs to Thee, and shall also remain with Thee forever. Amen. God help me. Amen.

-- Hodge's "Prose Writers of Germany."

#### THE FOOL'S PRAYER

The royal feast was done; the king

Sought some new sport to banish care,

And to his jester cried, "Sir Fool  
Kneel now and make for us a prayer!"  
The jester doffed his cap and bells,  
And stood the mocking court before;  
They could not see the bitter smile  
Beneath the patient grin he wore.  
He bowed his head and bent his knee  
Upon the monarch's silken stool;  
His pleading voice arose,  
"O Lord, Be merciful to me, a fool!  
"No pity, Lord, could change the heart  
From red with wrong to white as wool  
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,  
Be merciful me, a fool!  
"'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep  
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;  
'Tis by our follies that so long  
We hold the earth from Heaven away.  
"These clumsy feet still in the mire  
Go crushing blossoms without end;  
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust  
Among the heart-strings of a friend.  
"The ill-timed truth we might have kept  
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?  
The word we had not sense to say  
Who knows how grandly it had rung  
"Our faults no tenderness should ask,

The chastening rod must cleanse them all;

But for our blunders -- oh! in shame

Before the eyes of Heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;

Men crown the knave and scourge the tool

That did his will; but Thou, O Lord

Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose

The king and sought his garden cool,

And walked apart, and murmured low,

"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

#### MOTHER'S LAST LESSON

A mother lay dying. Her little son, not knowing of sorrow coming to him, went, as was his custom, to her chamber door, saying:

"Please to teach me my verse, mamma, and then kiss me and bid me good-night! I am very sleepy, but no one has heard me say my prayers."

"Hush!" said a lady who was watching beside her, your dear mother is too ill to hear your prayers tonight," and coming forward, she sought gently to lead him from the room. Roger began to sob as if his heart would break.

"I cannot go to bed without saying my prayers -- indeed I cannot."

The ear of the dying mother caught the sound. Although she had been insensible to everything around her, the sob of her darling aroused her from her stupor, and turning to her friend, she desired her to bring her little son to her. Her request was granted, and the child's golden hair and rosy cheeks nestled beside the cold face of his dying mother.

"My son," she whispered, "repeat this verse after me, and never forget it: 'When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.'" The child repeated it two or three times, and said his little prayer. Then he kissed the cold face, and went quietly to his bed.

In the morning he came as usual to his mother, but found her still and cold.

This was her last lesson. He has never forgotten it, and probably never will as long as he lives.

-- The Christian Woman.

#### COMMUNICATING WITH HEAVEN

## How A Little Girl Utilized A Telephone

A mother living not very far from the Post Office in this city, tired with watching over a sick baby, came downstairs for a short while the other day for a few moments' rest. She heard the voice of her four-year-old girl in the hall by herself, and, curious to know to whom she was talking, stopped a moment at the half open door. She saw that the little thing had pulled a chair up in front of the telephone and stood upon it, with the piece pressed against the side of her head. The earnestness of the child showed that she was in no playful mood, and this was the conversation the mother heard while the tears stood thick in her eyes, the little one carrying on both sides as if she were repeating the answers:

"Hello!"

"Well, who's there?"

"Is God there?"

"Yes."

"Is Jesus there?"

"Yes."

"Tell Jesus I want to speak to Him."

"Well?"

"Is that you, Jesus?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Our baby is sick and we want you to let it get well. Won't you, now?"

No answer, and statement and question again repeated, finally answered by a "Yes."

The little one put the ear-piece back on its hook, clambered down from her chair, and with a radiant face went for mother, who caught her in her arms.

The baby, whose life had been despaired of, began to mend that day and got well.

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A quaint writer tells of a very good prayer which was once offered. "A brother was praying with much noise for faith -- soul-saving faith, sin-killing faith, devil-driving faith. There was a quiet friend near him, to whom the noisy brother owed a large bill. 'Amen,' said the quiet friend; 'Amen, and give us debt-paying faith, too.' My friends, we need that faith now-a-days. People do not believe in religion that does not do that. And they might well not believe in it, for he that does not do his duty to his brother, whom he has seen, how will he do his duty to his God, whom he has not seen?"

-- Zion's Watchman.

STRIKER STOWE'S WAY

For years Striker Stowe, a tall, powerful Scotchman, held the position of "boss striker" at the steel works. Nearly all of the men in his department were hard drinkers, and he was no exception to the rule.

But one day it was announced among the workmen that he had become religious, and sure enough, when pressed to take a drink with them, he said:

"I shall never drink mair, lads. Na drunkard can inherit the kingdom o' God."

The knowing ones smiled and said, "Wait a bit; wait until hot weather -- until July. When he gets as dry as a gravel-pit. He can't help it then."

But right through the hottest months he toiled, the sweat pouring off in streams; yet he seemed never to be tempted to drink.

Finally, as I was taking the men's time one evening, I stopped and spoke to him.

"Stowe," I said, "you used to take considerable liquor. Don't you miss it?"

"Yes," said he emphatically.

"How do you manage to keep away from it?"

"Weel, just this way. It is now tan o'clock, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, today is the twentieth o' the month. From seven till eight I asked that the Lord would help me. He did so, and I put down a dot on the calendar, right near the twenty.

"From eight till nine He kep' me, and I put down another dot. From nine till tan He kep' me, and noo I gie Him the glory as I put down the third ditto.

"Just as I mark these, I pray, 'O Lord, halp me -- halp me to fight it off for another hour.'"

"How long shall you keep this up?" I inquired.

"All o' my life," was the earnest reply. "It keeps me sac full o' peace and happiness that I wouldn't give it up for anything. It was just as if He took me by the hand and said, 'Wark awa, Striker Stowe, I'm Wi' ye. Dinna be fearful. You teck care of yeer regular wark, and they hall na troble ye.' "

-- H. C. Peason, in the Contributor.

#### A MOMENTOUS SUNDAY EVENING WALK

At a recent meeting in the East End of London, the Earl of Shaftesbury related the following incident, illustrating the value of Sunday Schools and the influence of little children. "A gentleman visited a man whom he had known as a very godless, bad fellow, but who had recently displayed a blessed change of mind, and had with his wife, also notorious as a reckless, wicked character, appeared at religious services. He asked how this had happened, and the man replied, 'I will tell you; my wife and I were out walking one Sunday evening, and were passing by Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle.' They turned in out of curiosity, and Mr. Spurgeon, who was preaching, spoke forcibly of the consequences of a careless, sinful life, and entreated

the unconverted to pray to God for pardon. The man and his wife went home very much affected. He said to his wife, 'Sukie, did you like what the preacher said?' 'No, Jack,' she replied, 'I didn't like it at all.' 'Do you remember what he told us to do?' 'Yes, he told us to pray, but I hardly know what it is. I have never prayed, have you?' 'Never at all,' said the man, 'but I'll tell you what we'll do; there's our little Mary upstairs, she knows.' They awakened the little girl, a scholar in a Sunday School only nine years old, and she prayed with much fervor, and the father says, 'From that time I was a new man.'"

#### AN EVENING HYMN OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

"The day is past and over:

All thanks, O Lord, to Thee!

I pray Thee now that sinless

The hours of dark may be.

O Jesus! keep me in Thy sight,

And save me through the coming night.

"The joys of day are over:

I lift my heart to Thee,

And ask Thee that offenseless

The hours of dark may be.

O Jesus! make their darkness light

And save us through the coming night.

"The toils of day are over:

I raise this hymn to Thee;

And ask that free from peril

The hours of dark may be

O Jesus! keep me in Thy sight,

And guard me through the coming night.

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"Be Thou my soul's preserver,

O God! for Thou dost know

How many are the perils

Through which I have to go.

Lover of men! O hear my call,

And guard and save me from them all."

-- Anatollus --

## REASONABLENESS OF PRAYER

A renowned man of scientific attainments thus writes:

A naturalist should be the last man in the world to object to the efficacy of prayer, since prayer itself is one of the most potent of natural forces. The cry of the young raven brings its food from afar without any exertion on its part, for that cry has power to move the emotion and the muscles of the parent bird, and to overcome her own selfish appetite. The bleat of the lamb not only brings its dam to its side, but causes the secretion of milk in the udder. The cry of distress nerves men to all exertions, and to brave all dangers, and to struggle against all or any of the laws of nature that may be causing suffering or death. Nor, in the case of prayer, are the objects attained at all mechanically commensurate with the activities set in motion. We have seen how the prayer of a few captives, wrongfully held in durance by some barbarous potentate, may move mighty nations, and cause them to pour out millions of their treasure to send men and material of war over land and sea, to sacrifice hundreds of lives, in order that a just and proper demand may be answered. In such a case we see how a higher law overrides the lower, and may cause even frightful suffering and loss of life, in order that a moral or spiritual end may be gained. Are we to suppose, then, that the only Being in the universe who cannot answer prayer, is that One who alone has all power at His command? The weak theology which professes to believe that prayer has merely a subjective benefit, is infinitely less scientific than the action of a child who confidently appeals to its Father in Heaven.

## A CHILD'S TESTIMONY

A little child's prayer furnished decisive evidence in a suit in a court at Fresno, Cal., on June 7th. A man had deserted his wife and two children, and had been found in Fresno. His wife and her brother had an interview with him and endeavored to induce him to return. He refused and when the law was invoked he defended his conduct in court. He testified that his wife was a wicked woman, with whom he could not live, and that by word and example she corrupted her children. "Don't believe him, judge," said the wife; "I have done my best with my home and my children, and I have reared them as they should be." The man still persisted, and between so much cross swearing the judge was puzzled. At last he asked if the children were in court. A little girl three years old came forward, and the judge questioned her. One or two questions were answered intelligently, and then the judge said, "Could you say your prayers?" Without a moment's hesitation the little girl knelt in the court room, closed her eyes, clasped her hands, and in a reverential voice began, "Our Father, who art in Heaven." Before she reached the end of the prayer, tears stood in the eyes of the judge, and the deep silence of the courtroom was broken by sobs from more than one rough fellow to whom the words recalled childhood's memories. There was no doubt in the minds of anyone as to the justice in the case, when the girl added to the Lord's prayer an earnest petition for her father, which she had evidently been in the habit of putting up night and morning during his shameful absence from his family. The judge would hear no more evidence, and in a voice broken with emotion, he gave his decision against the father. The mother could have had no idea, when she so trained her child, that the result would be so valuable to her in the crisis of her life, but she did her duty, and her child

enabled her "to answer him that reproached her."

(Prov.xxvii, ii.) -- The Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times.

#### PRAYING IN HALF A ROOM

In a large and respectable school near Boston, two boys -- from different states, and strangers to each other -- were compelled by circumstances to room together. It was the beginning of the term, and the two students spent the first day in arranging their room, and getting acquainted. When night came, the younger of the boys asked the other if he did not think it would be a good idea to close the day with a short reading from the Bible and a prayer. The request was modestly made, without whining or cant of any kind. The other boy, however, bluntly refused to listen to the proposal.

Then you will have no objection if I pray by myself, I suppose?" said the younger. "It has been my custom, and I wish to keep it up."

"I don't want any praying in this room, and won't have it!" retorted his companion.

The younger boy rose slowly, walked to the middle of the room, and standing upon a seam in the carpet which divided the room nearly equally, said quietly:

"Half of this room is mine. I pay for it. You may choose which half you will have. I will take the other, and I will pray in that half or get another room. But pray I must and will, whether you consent or refuse."

The older boy was instantly conquered. To this day he admires the sturdy independence which claimed as a right what he had boorishly denied as a privilege. A Christian might as well ask leave to breathe as to ask permission to pray. There is a false sentiment connected with Christian actions which interferes with their free exercise. If there is anything to be admired, it is the manliness that knows the right and dares to do it without asking any one's permission.

--Youth's Companion.

#### A DEACON'S PRAYER

A deacon living in a Berkshire town was requested to give his prayers in behalf of a poor man with a large family who had broken his leg. "I can't stop now to pray," said the deacon (who was picking apples for the city market), "but you can go down into my cellar and get some corned beef, salt pork, potatoes and butter -- that's the best I can do."

#### PRAYING TO THE POINT

A new church in the West was recently dedicated. After the beautiful temple had been formally set apart, the pastor supplemented the service with a consecration meeting -- a meeting for the promotion of holiness. At this meeting a good sister presented herself at the altar, and being called on to pray, supplicated as follows:

"O Lord, we have been taught in this meeting that we must ask for just what we really need. Now, Lord, Thou knowest if I should ask for just such things as I want, the congregation would be astonished. O Lord, I want Thee to help Brother C\_\_\_\_\_ to quit selling tobacco. Thou knowest that it is a filthy weed, that it is polluting the house of God in a most insulting manner. I do want Thee to give him grace to abandon the

traffic.

O Lord, my husband uses tobacco. Thou knowest that I love him and respect him above all other men, but I hate this filthy habit. Thou knowest that if he had saved the money he has wasted on tobacco in the past year, he could have paid twenty-five dollars more in this new church. O Lord, help him to quit the use of tobacco.

There is another thing, Lord, which I desire greatly -- some of our church members attend circus shows. Now, Lord, Thou knowest that it is wrong for a Christian to go to circuses. Thou knowest that I never attended but one of these miserable places in my life, and then I came near fainting. And Thou knowest it was not altogether from the heat; my conscience oppressed me more than the heat. Lord, help these church members to keep away from these shows.

Now, O Lord, I want Thee to bless and save my boys. I have prayed and wept over them in secret for years, and still they resist the Spirit. O Lord, if there is mercy for them, save them speedily. And now, O Lord, remember me. I am not as good as I want to be. I feel there is some filthiness still remaining. Lord, if Thou canst do anything more for me than Thou hast done, I pray Thee do it. Thou knowest that I want to be all that Thou wouldst have me to be. Now, Lord, I have told Thee just what I want; grant me all for Jesus' sake. Amen."

#### SOMETHING GIVES WAY

A Christian woman in a town in New York desired to obtain a school house for the purpose of starting a Sabbath School, but was refused by a skeptical trustee. Still she persevered, and asked him again and again.

"I tell you, Aunt Polly, it is of no use. Once for all I say you cannot have this school house for any such purpose.

"I think I am going to get it," said Aunt Polly.

"I should like to know how, if I do not give you the key."

"I think that the Lord is going to unlock it"

"Maybe He will," said the infidel; "but I can tell you this, He will not get the key from me."

"Well, I am going to pray over it, and I have found out from experience that when I keep on praying something always gives way."

And the next time she came the hard heart of the infidel gave way, and she received the key. More than this, when others opposed the school he sustained it, and great good was done for perishing souls.

"Something gives way." Sometimes it is a man's will, and sometimes it is the man himself. Sometimes there is a revolution, and sometimes there is a funeral. When God's Spirit inspires a prayer in a believing Christian's heart, Omnipotence stands ready to answer it. "Something gives way."

#### FATHER'S KNEELING-PLACE

The children were playing "Hide the handkerchief." I sat and watched them a long while, and heard no unkind word, and saw scarcely a rough movement; but after a little while Jack, whose turn it was to hide the handkerchief, went to the opposite end of the room, and tried to secrete it under a big chair. Freddie immediately walked over to him, and said in a low, gentle voice, "Please, Jack, don't hide the handkerchief there; that is father's kneeling-place."

"Father's kneeling-place!" It seemed like sacred ground to me, as it did to little Freddie; and, by and by, as the years roll on, and this place shall see the father no more forever, will not the memory of this hallowed spot leave an impression upon the young hearts that time and change can never efface, and remain as one of the most precious memories of the old home? Oh, if there were only a "father's kneeling-place" in every family! The mother kneels in her chamber, and teaches the little ones the morning and evening prayer, but the father's presence is often wanting. Business and the cares of life engross all his time, and though the mother longs for his assistance and co-operation in the religious education of the children, he thinks it is a woman's work and leaves it all to her.

-- Sydney Advocate.

#### ANSWER TO PRAYER

Here is a case of prompt answer to prayer. Two little boys were arrested in Holyoke, Mass., recently for stripping the leaves from the trees in the park. Soon after they had been locked up an officer heard their voices and peeped into the cell. Both of the children were down on their knees, with their hands clasped and tears running down their cheeks. "O Lord, please let us out of this place, and we'll never do it again, never, never," prayed one sobbing culprit, while the other was repeating the Lord's prayer. "Pray harder," said one of them, "and speak your words plain, or God won't understand you." "I try to, Jimmy, but I'm crying so I can't," said the other, and then both redoubled their prayers. The officer slipped away, got the keys, and compounded their felony.

#### THE FATHER'S LOVE

It is fairly pathetic what a stranger God is in His own world. He comes to His own, and they who are His own kinsfolk keep Him standing outside the door while they peer suspiciously at Him through the crack at the hinges.

To know God really, truly, is the beginning of a normal life. One of the best pictures of God that I ever saw came to me in a simple story. It was of a man, a minister, who lived in a New England town, who had a son, about fourteen years of age, going to school. One afternoon the boy's teacher called at the home and asked for the father, and said: "Is your boy sick?"

"No. Why?"

"He was not at school today."

"Is that so?"

"Nor yesterday."

"You don't mean it!"

"Nor the day before."

"Well!"

"And I supposed he was sick."

"No, he's not been sick."

"Well, I thought I should tell you."

And the father said, "Thank you," and the teacher left. And the father sat thinking. By and by he heard a click at the gate, and he knew the boy was coming, so he went to open the door. And the boy knew as he looked up that his father knew about those three days. And the father said: "Come into the library, Phil." And Phil went, and the door was shut. And the father said: "Phil, your teacher was here this afternoon. He tells me you were not at school day, -- nor yesterday, -- nor the day before. And we supposed you were. I have always trusted you. I have always said, 'I can trust my boy Phil.' And you have been a living lie for three whole days. And I can't tell you how badly I feel about it."

Well, that was hard on Phil to be talked to quietly like that. If his father had spoken to him roughly, or had asked him out to the woodshed for a confidential interview, it would not have been nearly so hard. Then, after a moment's pause, the father said: "Phil, we'll get down and pray." And this thing was getting harder for Phil all the time. He didn't want to pray just then. And they got down. And the father poured out his heart in prayer. And the boy knew as he listened how badly his father felt over his conduct. Somehow he saw himself in the mirror on his knees as he had not before. It's queer about the mirror of the knee-joints. It does show up so many things. Many folks don't like it.

And they got up. And the father's eyes were wet. And Phil's eyes were not dry. Then the father said: "My boy, there's a law of life that where there is sin, there is suffering. You can't detach these two things. Where there is suffering there has been sin somewhere. And where there is sin there will be suffering. You can't get these two things apart. Now," he went on, "you have done wrong. And I am in this home like God in the world. So we will do this. You go up to the attic. I'll make a pallet for you there. We'll take your meals up to you at the regular times, and you stay there as long as you have been a living lie -- three days and three nights."

And Phil didn't say a word. They went upstairs, the pallet was made, and the father kissed his son and left him alone with his thoughts. Supper time came, and the father and mother sat down to eat. But they couldn't; eat for thinking about the boy. The longer they chewed the food, the bigger and drier it got in their mouths. And swallowing it was clear out of the question. Then they went into the sitting-room for the evening. He picked up the evening paper to read, and she sat down to sew. Well, his eyes weren't very good. He wore glasses. And this evening he couldn't seem to see distinctly -- the glasses seemed blurred. It must have been the glasses of course. So he took them off and cleaned them very deliberately and found that he had been holding the paper upside down. And she tried to sew. But the thread broke, and she couldn't seem to get the needle threaded again. How we do reveal ourselves in the details.

By and by the clock struck nine, and then ten, their usual hour for retiring. She said, "Aren't you going to bed?" And he said, "I think I'll not go yet a bit; you go. "No, I guess I'll wait a bit, too." And the clock struck eleven and the hands worked around toward twelve. Then they arose, and looked up, and went to bed, but -- not to sleep, and each one knew the other was not asleep. By and by she said, (women are always the keener), "Why don't you sleep?" And he said gently, "Well, I just can't for thinking of the boy up in the attic." "That's the bother with me," she replied. And the clock in the hall struck twelve, and one, and two.

Still no sleep came.

At last he said: "Mother, I can't stand this any longer; I am going upstairs with Phil." And he took his pillow and went softly out of the room and up the attic stairs and pressed the latch-key softly, so as not to wake the boy if he were asleep, and tiptoed across the attic floor to the corner by the window, and looked. There Phil lay awake, with something glistening in his eyes, and what looked like stains on his cheeks. And the father got down in between the sheets with his boy, and they got their arms around each other's necks, for they had always been the best of friends, father and boy, and their tears got mixed up on each other's cheeks. Then they slept. And the next night when bedtime came the father said, "Goodnight, mother. I'm going upstairs with Phil." And the third night again he said, "Mother, goodnight. I'm going up with the boy again." And the third night he slept in the place of punishment with his son.

You are not surprised to know that today that boy, a man grown, is telling the story of Jesus with tongue and life of flame in the heart of China.

Do you know, I think that father is the best picture of God I ever saw. God could not take away sin. It's here. He could not take away suffering out of kindness to man. For suffering is sin's index-finger, saying, "There's something wrong here." So He came down in the person of His Son, and laid Jesus alongside of man for three days and three nights. That's God -- our God. And beyond that He comes and puts His life alongside of yours, and mine, and makes us hate the bad, and long to be pure. To be on intimate terms with Him, to live in the atmosphere of His presence, to spend the day with Him -- that is the true, normal life.

-- Selected.

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