

Intercession - God's High Calling

by G.W. North

Intercession is a high calling and sure ground, but it requires identification with the needs of others, self-forgetfulness, and a deep understanding of the heart-needs of others.

Scripture: Romans 9:2

Topics: "Sacrificial Love", "Intercession"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the profound calling of intercession as exemplified by Paul, who experienced deep sorrow for the lost and identified with their plight, even wishing to be accursed for their sake. He highlights that true intercession requires self-forgetfulness and a heart attuned to the needs of others, mirroring Christ's own sacrificial love. North explains that the intercessor must be assured of their own salvation to venture into the depths of prayer, understanding the weight of eternal consequences for those they pray for. He asserts that intercession is a divine privilege that connects the believer to God's redemptive purposes, necessitating a willingness to suffer alongside Christ for the sake of others. Ultimately, intercession is a ministry that transcends self-interest, rooted in the love and grace of God.

Transcript

Paul, an experienced intercessor, mentions some of these here: great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart; so powerful and real were these to him that he was able to enter into the sense of terror that would grip souls when, perhaps too late, they realized that they were being cut off for ever from God. This man found himself bordering on a wish to be accursed from Christ for the sake of those for whom he prayed. He completely identified with these people, many of them dear to him, and he prayed for them knowing their needs, and feeling pain to which, most likely, they were dead; feeling God's pains for them too. He knew heart desire, not for himself but for others. To intercede properly the heart of the intercessor must understand, that is to say it must be brought into this state of realization of the heart-needs of others; it must be quite unconcerned about itself to the point of self-forgetfulness. Being assured of his own eternal security in God's love and that he cannot be separated from it, the intercessor can venture out into the further reaches of Gethsemane and Golgotha, where it seems that he himself is threatened with eternal loss.

What greater privilege can be granted a man than this? And what more sure ground can he stand upon? Christ, the heavenly intercessor, was elected for this, and trod this way Himself. Although it would be more than foolish to judge with any degree of finality on this matter, it would seem that in these things Paul went

further than any other man. Two of the three men who, at a later date, Paul regarded as pillars of the church at Jerusalem, were chosen to accompany their Lord to Gethsemane's place of prayer, but could go no further than they could drive their weak flesh that day. Jesus went there to become accursed from God for their sakes, while they went to sleep. They did not know of course, nor did He tell them, He only complimented them; their spirit was willing. Perhaps in the great afterwards, of which He had earlier spoken to them, they reached the place of intercession -- almost certainly they did -- but Paul is the only one who speaks of intercession in the language of one who understood and entered into it. This is the reason why he took such pains to set down the details of the way of life in the Spirit, and to explain the truth. We must come to grips with it. Every man must perfectly understand this, and clearly see the reason why Christ in God, and the Spirit in us, ceaselessly intercede.

How wisely are we led up to this by the Spirit of God. The man who enters into the death and resurrection of Christ by the Spirit of holiness, and is flooded with the love of God, is led by the Spirit to this place of intercession. The heart that knows the constant miracle of death and resurrection working in him becomes aware of a sense of indebtedness to God for this; the Spirit creates it in him. The very working of the law of the Spirit of life within him is the greatest contributory factor to and the surest guarantee of reaching this high calling, for this law sets a man free from tyrant self and base self-interest, liberating us for the ministry. Except this should be so, no man can exercise an intercessory ministry. Intercession is as far removed from thought of self and self-benefit as is east from west. Intercession arises from identification with the redemptive purposes of God and the need of His creatures around us, ruined by sin and groaning under it. These seem so far removed from each other that it is almost impossible to think that there could ever be any relationship between them. However, the person who has been brought from the groanings of the sin-cursed world into the glorious liberty of the sons of God knows that the relationship between them is a very real one. The suffering, groaning Christ bridged the gulf between God and man, and man and man, with His redeeming blood. God loves His creation, and cries out for those who will love it with Him enough to give themselves over to intercession for it, entering into its sufferings and groans. But let all His sons know that no man can enter into this ministry with God unless he is prepared to suffer for it with Christ.

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