

SIGNS OF FAITHFULNESS:

Prays Constantly

July 8, 2018

2 Corinthians 9:

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

As people of faith, what can we look for as the signs of faithfulness?

Signs of faithfulness include:

- Loves God
- Rejoices in God
- Gives Thanks
- Prays Constantly
- Loves Others

These next few weeks, let us take a look at how we as people of faith can live faithfully.

Our Life is prayer at all times... Are you paying attention or are you not paying attention.

MATTHEW 6:

Concerning Prayer

5 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

AND:

7 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

AND:

9 'Pray then in this way:

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.*

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

*Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

*¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

AND:

MATTHEW 14:

²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone

AND:

The whole of our Bible that is a library uses the word Pray 526 times. In the Psalms: 69 times

AND:

Psalm 5.2:

*Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.*

Psalm 54.2:

*Hear my prayer, O God;
give ear to the words of my mouth.*

Psalm 66.19:

*But truly God has listened;
he has given heed to the words of my prayer.*

Psalm 66.20:

*Blessed be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me.*

**As much as it is about the words we choose and recite ...PRAYER is about listening
Lord God ...Whisper words of wisdom, let it be.**

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

3 helpful prayers:

Serenity Prayer #459

God, grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the
wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. Amen.

AND:

A Refuge amid Distraction #535

“Like an ant on a stick both ends of which are burning,
I go to and fro without knowing what to do,
And in great despair.
Like the inescapable shadow that follows me,
The dead weight of sin haunts me.
Graciously look upon me.
Thy love is my refuge.”

(Trad., India, #535, “A Refuge amid Distraction, United Methodist Hymnal, 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House)

AND:

Thomas Merton

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.
Amen.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

Listen to James Corden and Paul McCartney:

LET IT BE
The Beatles

*When I find myself in times of trouble
Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be
And in my hour of darkness
She is standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be¹*

*Let it be, let it be
Let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be*

*And when the broken-hearted people
Living in the world agree
There will be an answer, let it be
For though they may be parted
There is still a chance that they will see
There will be an answer, let it be¹*

*Let it be, let it be
Ah, let it be, yeah, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be*

*And when the night is cloudy
There is still a light that shines on me
Shine on until tomorrow, let it be
I wake up to the sound of music,
Mother Mary comes to me*

Speaking words of wisdom, let it be

Prayer comes from many sources ... and We believe in that truth ... “Whisper Words of Wisdom, Let it be!”

Listen to the whispers is what prayer is about.

As much as it is about the words we choose and recite ... PRAYER is about listening

Lord God ... Whisper words of wisdom, let it be.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴*Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.*

Sweet Hour of Prayer

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 496

Text: William Walford, 1772-1850

1. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!
2. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn
with strong desires for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place
where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!
3. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

This hymn goes to the heart of one of the most intrinsic Christian practices: prayer. For William W. Walford (1772-1850), prayer was an intensely private affair where one seeks refuge from temptations and trials and pours out the depths of one's soul before God who already knows our “wants and wishes.”

The kind of prayer fostered in this hymn is private prayer, rather than prayers of the body of Christ gathered in worship.

Stanza one focuses on petitionary prayer that responds to “seasons of distress and fear.” Stanza two focuses on prayers of thanksgiving where the singer shares “the joys I feel.” Stanza three returns to petitions, but the focus is on the God “whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless.”

The text appears to come from Walford, an obscure, blind lay preacher who served in the hamlet of Coleshill, Warwickshire, England, in the mid-19th century. He owned a small trinket shop in the village.

The story goes that a Congregational minister and friend, Thomas Salmon, stopped by Walford's shop one day in 1842. Walford asked if Salmon would write down his new poem on the subject of prayer.