

11.a. CONSEQUENCES OF FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS

When Christ gives Himself to the soul, then He loves that soul forever. And when the soul gives itself to Christ "they love him in sincerity".

As a bridegroom delights on his wedding day in the love of his bride, so Christ delights in His people every day. Christ is well pleased with the delight He will enjoy with His saints from the time of their rebirth into eternity.

From eternity God chose a people out of sinful mankind whom He intended to save. These souls have been entrusted to Christ, whom God appointed as Saviour of this remnant. Christ agreed to take on this work which culminated in His death on the cross at calvary. Not only are the saints His bride, but they are the subjects of His Kingdom, who He will eternally care for. As Christ is head, the saints are the body of His temple.

Spiritual wisdom, or the secret things of God are revealed only to the elect. This is the enlightening that we receive from the Holy Spirit. This wisdom is not for the unregenerate. We only share our most intimate secrets with one who we can trust. This grace of trust has been imparted to us, and we can therefore "pour out our hearts" to the Lord in our anguish, and in our joy. Where we are passionately grateful to the Lord for what He has done for us, does it not bring tears to our eyes? And we are not ashamed of these emotions of a heartfelt gratitude, because we have now been enabled to comprehend the magnitude of this precious gift. It is this understanding that has enabled us to accept the sceptre of His rule, and obedience to the gospel for our eternal good. 1 COR 2:12 "We have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us", and the Spirit of God leads us into all truth. What is this truth? It is Jesus Christ our Saviour "I am the way, the truth and the Life". These things are not revealed to unbelievers, because they have no fellowship with the Master.

Now, there is a great difference between understanding the doctrine of Scripture, and truly knowing the mind of Christ. We may say here that to understand is to grasp the general principle of an argument, whereas to know is to have a clear and certain perception of the deeper truths of the subject. So, knowing the mind of Christ is to understand Christ's love for us, and the sacrifice of His life on the cross that we may receive the pardon for our transgressions.

Now that Christ agreed to carry out God's plan of redemption, He delights to reveal Himself to His saints. This revelation is of all His Grace, desirableness, and loveliness. This is the pearl of great price. These attributes are hidden to the world. Also, Christ delights to reveal His Kingdom to His saints. We will communicate freely with our Lord. Sharing our tails with Him here, and our joys. Praising Him for His faithfulness to us and indwelling us until we reach glory (REV 22:1-6) Here we have that special channel of communication with Christ in prayer. The way that Adam had to communicate with God was shut down by sin. This has now been restored by Christ. And this is only open to believers. We have been given access to the very throne of God Himself, and this by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Please pay particular attention to this next section of today's study, as it contains some important lessons for some of us, and important reminders for others of us. Prayer is an extremely important aspect of our Spiritual lives, yet how we neglect it. We are so apt to take things into our own hands or rattle off some request to the Lord which is either meaningless or selfish. That is not good enough for God and will get us nowhere.

Now, we must look at something of great importance. What is the difference between a true Spiritual revealing of our minds to Christ, and praying merely because we think we ought to pray?

God has given us the means of true effective prayer, and that is by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, to the throne of grace.

In true prayer, the Spirit of Christ reveals to us our true needs. This is so that we may take them to Christ as our needs arise. We cannot know our true needs in our own understanding. Once we understand, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, what our true needs are, we are more than half made in our supplications. Through the power of the Holy Spirit our hearts are lifted up to bring our burdens to Christ. Through the enlightening of the Spirit our minds are cleared to understand that it is more through the weariness of sin than the guilt of it that we are now able to pray. So, without the Holy Spirit, there is neither the desire or the prayer.

In true prayer, the Spirit of Christ helps us to express our desires in words. The deep desires of the heart are not easily expressed by us. It is for this reason that the Spirit intercedes for us. **ROM 8:26** "... but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us "Men's words go beyond or fall short of their desires and intentions. How often have we been dissatisfied with our own prayers? It is because they are not a work of righteousness to be trusted in. If we were to be judged on the quality of our prayers, we would fail miserably. The more we speak to Christ, the more we find that which we have left unspoken.

In true prayer, the Spirit of Christ helps the saints to pray according to the mind (will) of God. This is of crucial importance. Because God is the supreme ruler of providence, it is God's will that we are to seek, otherwise **JAM 4:3** tells us "When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives" Jesus pointed to this very truth in Our Lord's prayer, when He said, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven".

How do we know when we are praying according to the will of God? It is when we pray according to the promises of scripture. However, it is possible to pray for that which has been promised, but not according to that promise. (**JAM 4:3**). That is because we do not have the same idea or understanding of that promise as God has. Things promised by God must be seen as things promised in Christ - through the meditation and purchase of Christ. God the Father gives the promise, Christ by His death has procured that promise for us.

If we pray for things that God has promised, we need to ask for them for the same reason that God promised them to us, not for the satisfaction of our sinful lusts. When we ask for pardon for our sins, but secretly nurture those sins in our hearts, we will not receive that pardon. The purposes of God's promises are that we might cleanse ourselves from the pollution of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

If I may offer an illustration of what I mean by praying for the wrong things, we could take the example of Oom Sarel who stubbed his toe against the dining room table leg in the middle of the night, as he stumbled about the house looking for the brandy bottle. A common reaction would be to pray for the healing of Oom Sarel's toe, which is understandable, at the neglect of the condition of his heart. Remembering that every incident in our lives is as the result of the plan of the omnipotent and omniscient God.

We need to be more circumspect in our approach to prayer. We are familiar with many of the promises contained in scripture, but many of them have specific preconditions, and these all point to the glory and honour of the triune God, through obedience.

JN 15:17 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" If we remain in Christ, we will have Christ's mind, which is the will of God.