

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

Volume 35 Number 6

www.southeastchurchofchrist.org

June 2020

The Alphabet Prayer

Vernon Teagarden

I came across this article the other day by an unknown author entitled, "The Alphabet Prayer."

"Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged with man. Now the story goes, a little shepherd boy was watching his sheep one Sunday morning and he heard the bells of the church ringing. And watching the people walk along the pasture where he was, he happened to think to himself, 'I would like to communicate with God! But, what can I say to God?'

He had never learned a prayer. So, on bended knee, he began to recite the alphabet. Repeating this prayer several times, a man passing by, heard the boy's voice and peeped through the bushes. He saw the young boy kneeling with folded hands, eyes closed, repeating the alphabet.

He interrupted the boy. 'What are you doing, my little one?' he asked. The boy replied, 'I was praying sir.' The man seemed surprised and said, 'But why are you reciting the alphabet?' The boy explained, 'I don't know any prayers, sir. But I want God to take care of me, and to help me care for my sheep. And so, I thought, if I said all I knew, He could put the letters together into words, and He would know all that I want and should say!'

The man smiled and said, 'Bless your heart, God will!' And he went on to church knowing full well that he had heard the finest sermon he could possibly hear that day.

Maybe if we thought like little children and let God put together the letters, what we should want, and what we should say, things would probably work out a lot better than we planned!!!"

Now think about this story for a minute and ask yourself: "When it comes to prayer, haven't I felt just like that little shepherd boy?" I believe the answer would be: "Yes, I have!"

I believe that, on occasion, there are urgings and longings in the heart of every sincere child of God that he cannot express, or struggles to express to God in prayer.

This sometimes leaves us feeling helpless, or of a deep need, without knowing what that need really is, or what would meet the need. Perhaps even now, during this covid-19 situation we are facing you might indeed feel this way.

Although we, as children of God are taught to pray, even commanded to pray (1 Thess. 5:17), and even though we believe in the power of prayer and we do our best to utilize this avenue of communication God has provided for us through His Son; sometimes we do not know what we should pray for or how to go about it. But, the Holy Spirit knows!

He knows perfectly both what we need and how to ask for it. This is a blessing and a comfort available to the child of God that, I believe the apostle Paul brings to our attention in Romans, chapter eight. Take note of what Paul wrote in (Rom. 8:18-27). "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation*

Southeast Church of Christ

35 Walnut Ct

Mogadore, OH

330-628-7432

Service Times:

Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm

Wednesday: 7:30 pm

groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps with our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (NKJV)

You will notice that Paul brings to our attention that there is something that helps us endure afflictions, and that something is: Hope! Hope, an anchor for the soul both steadfast and sure, is what the Hebrew writers teaches us in Hebrews 6:19. And, Peter teaches us that it is a “living” hope (1 Pet. 1:3). Living because it lives in each true child of God.

But, not only do we have hope to help us endure afflictions, in like manner, the Spirit helps us in our infirmities. I have to admit, that perhaps, there is more in this than we know.

The infirmity here mentioned, I believe, is that we often know not how to pray as we ought to pray. It is true that what we already know about how to pray we learned through the teachings of the Holy Spirit through the word He has revealed. However, that being said, again there are times when we feel just like that little shepherd boy. There are urgings and longings in the heart that we cannot express. It is what Paul calls “groanings which cannot be uttered” (v. 26).

It is the groaning within ourselves mentioned in verse 23. These are silent groanings, unutterable feelings of need. The Spirit helps us in these groanings for He understands our needs and longings and can make them known to God; when we either cannot or struggle to do so.

Comforting thoughts for us, are they not? Especially now during this troublesome time. And although I cannot and would not try to explain the mechanics of how the Spirit accomplishes this work, by faith I will accept what Paul teaches about the subject in these few verses.

Brethren, think on these things. May they be of some benefit to you as you contemplate the advantages you have as a child of God in the troublesome world in which we live.

And as the apostle Paul said to the church at Corinth in (1 Cor. 15:58) - “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Note: This article is one of the weekly uplifting messages posted on our “members page,” on our web-site. We have been delivering a weekly message since the beginning of April. I realize that not all of our members have access to the internet. Therefore, I thought it good to put one of the messages in the monthly bulletin for you.

Remember:

Starting in May we began to meet again in a very limited capacity. I want to remind you that in June we have expanded our meeting times. We are meeting now on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 for a half hour of Bible study followed by a brief invitation, an invitation song, closing announcements and closing prayer (the service lasts approximately 45 minutes). Beginning June 7, we will meet at 10 am for a half hour of Bible study followed by an abbreviated worship service at 10:40. (**Note**—not our usual 10:50). Also beginning on the same Sunday we will meet for our regular 6 pm service (which also will be an abbreviated service of about 40 minutes).

We are still working on a plan for beginning children’s classes again that we trust will be a safe plan for all.

Thank you for your patience as we work through these “uncharted” waters.