

Message Six

The Prayer of Intercession

Scripture Reading: Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Acts 12:5; Col. 1:9; 4:2

I. In His heavenly ministry Christ is interceding, and we need to respond to His intercession—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1-2:

- A. In Romans 8:34 Christ intercedes for us to be glorified (vv. 17, 30), and in Hebrews 7:25 Christ intercedes for us so that we may be saved to the uttermost; being saved to the uttermost is the equivalent of glorification.
- B. Christ is our High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek, interceding for us—5:10; 7:24-26:
 - 1. Christ died for us, He was resurrected, and now He is in the heavens interceding for us and caring for us; God has appointed Him to take care of us, and He is now taking care of us by interceding for us—Rom. 8:34.
 - 2. As the One who intercedes for us, the Lord is able to save us to the uttermost, that is, completely, entirely, perfectly, for all time and eternity, and to the end—Heb. 7:25.
 - 3. Christ undertakes our case by interceding for us; He appears before God on our behalf, praying for us that we may be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose—1 John 2:1; Heb. 9:24; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
- C. Christ's intercession requires our response; we need to become on earth the reflection of Christ's intercession in His heavenly ministry, praying the prayers of the interceding Christ—Rom. 8:26-27, 34.

II. In order to respond to Christ's heavenly intercession, we need to know the significance of the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10:

- A. The incense altar is a type not of Christ's prayer but of His person; it signifies Christ praying, Christ interceding—Heb. 7:25.
- B. The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people; without such an interceding Christ, the proper relationship between God and us could not exist and could not be maintained—Exo. 30:1-6; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1.
- C. Today the intercessor is not merely Christ Himself but Christ with His Body; as members of the Body of Christ, we should participate in Christ's interceding life by praying in Him as the golden incense altar—Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 1:9; 4:3, 12:
 - 1. After His resurrection and ascension, the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ; thus, before God today not only is the individual Christ interceding, but the corporate Christ, the Head with the Body, is interceding as well—1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 12:5, 12.
 - 2. Christ the Head is interceding in the heavens, and the church the Body is interceding on earth—Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Acts 12:5, 12.
 - 3. As the members of Christ and parts of the Body-Christ, we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession, carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession—Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:1.

III. The interceding Spirit helps us, sympathizes with us, sustains us, comforts us, and supports us by interceding for us—Rom. 8:26-27:

- A. The Spirit, who indwells us, helps us in our weakness; in particular, the weakness referred to in Romans 8:26 is weakness in prayer:
 - 1. Because we are weak in God's interest and in the divine things and do not know what kind of prayer God desires, the indwelling Spirit works in us to help us in our weakness in praying.
 - 2. The Spirit joins in to help us "in like manner"; in whatever manner we are, He also is—v. 26a.
 - 3. The Spirit helps us in every kind of situation, for He knows our needs, problems, and shortcomings, and He sympathizes with us, supports us, and sustains us.
- B. The Spirit intercedes for us with groanings in our manner—v. 26b:
 - 1. Apparently, this is our groaning, but in our groaning is the groaning of the Spirit.
 - 2. While we are groaning from deep within our spirit, the Spirit, who dwells in our spirit, joins in with our groaning, interceding for us mainly that we would have the transformation in life for growth in life unto maturity.
- C. As the Spirit works in us by helping us in our weakness and by interceding for us, He infuses His according-to-God mind into us in our prayer—v. 27:
 - 1. Ephesians 4:23 speaks of the spirit of the mind, but Romans 8:27 speaks of the mind of the Spirit; the spirit of the mind is for renewing, and the mind of the Spirit is for interceding.
 - 2. The Spirit's mind is mingled with our mind; our mind is set on the spirit, making our mind one with the mind of the Spirit—vv. 6, 27.

IV. In Acts 12 we have the intercessory prayer of the church, and in Colossians 1:9-11, the intercessory prayer of the apostle Paul:

- A. When Peter was in prison, "prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him"—Acts 12:5:
 - 1. Behind the scene there was a battle of spiritual forces, a battle between God and His enemy, Satan—vv. 4-6.
 - 2. By prayer the church fought the battle with God against Satan, the evil one—vv. 5-23.
- B. Paul prayed that the saints would "be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"—Col. 1:9:
 - 1. Here the will of God concerns the all-inclusive Christ as our portion—v. 12.
 - 2. The will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living the all-inclusive Christ; God's will for us is that we know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, live Christ, and have Christ become our life and our person—Phil. 3:7-10; 1:21a; Col. 3:4; Eph. 3:17a.

V. We must persevere in prayer and respond to Christ's intercession by seeking the things which are above and by setting our mind on them—Col. 4:2; 3:1-2.