



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,



*If we are His children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and
joint heirs with Christ... Romans 8:17*

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?...
I Corinthians 6:2

"The fate of the world is in the hands of nameless saints..."
Paul Billheimer, Destined for the Throne

Have you ever been at least a bit troubled by the entire concept of prayer? Troubled by the way we refer to it? "I'll be praying for you" can be so easily used as a false religious cliché. We may not mean to not mean it. Thankfully, there are some folks who, when they say "I'll be praying for you," mean it. And what exactly do they mean?

They mean that they understand some things about the reality of the universe and how it is set up. This understanding gives them an awareness of what prayer means, how it functions (for lack of a better phrase) and that when they engage with God in prayer for this person, power for good on that person's behalf will be set in motion, power which would not automatically be set in motion unless we pray. We know this confidence in the effectiveness of our prayers is not arrogance. It is humility. For it is humility to agree with God and to not define ourselves by opposite circumstances or contradictory evidence like our feelings, our self image, or our current state of success or failure in some aspect of our private lives. We know that faith in God's promises please God. **(Hebrews 11:6; I John 5:14-15)** So when we set out to actually pray for the person we said we would pray for, and

we hear a negative word telling us we are presumptuous and foolish to think our prayers matter, we humbly ignore that lie, and take a stance of faith and love on behalf of that person who is in need. We believe when we pray there is direct immediate action taken in response to our humble faithful prayers. (**James 5:16-18**) And because we believe that, we are able to respond fully and with integrity when we say “I will pray for you.”

So, what are we saying when we say we are joint heirs with Christ? Obviously we can do nothing apart from Him. (**John 15:5**) But if we understand joint heirs, we must also accept that that also means He will not do certain things without us. (**II Chronicles 16:9; Ezekiel 22:30; Revelation 1:5-6**)

Few things make my heart hurt more than when I sense a misunderstanding about prayer in those I minister to. Prayer is first and foremost a conversation with God. It is to actively engage in the ongoing relationship with our loving Father. Our daily communion with Him deepens and strengthens our capacity to know His heart and share His love with others. But there are some folks who miss this most foundational truth. Instead, I sense their inner conflict over what prayer even is. They therefore have no idea as to the purposes and promises of prayer. They may intellectually know the truths I am describing here, but have no experience of togetherness with God in prayer. Prayer to them is a strange mystery that comes out of and re-enforces an inner view of God as One who is arbitrary, capricious, distant, and reluctant, needing to be convinced by our prayers. There is a wrong-headed view that even if they do try to pray, they won't know the right words or fear they won't present the correct form that will 'make the prayer work.' What God wants is relationship. Prayer is not a magic spell to convince God to do it our way. It is a yielding of our way in adoration as God's way then becomes incarnate in our everyday living. It is about practicing His presence with us as we grow in deeper relationship day by day. We do life in union with Him, in togetherness. We talk with Him, and He talks with us.

Have I ever prayed for things that didn't happen the way I was asking? Yes, maybe even most of the time. But I have never prayed in childlike faith in the One I love and trust that He did not eventually (sometimes quickly, sometimes sloooowly) move and arrange circumstances into place for my good and His glory. And His glory is by the way not even about His glory. His glory is the manifestation of His goodness in our lives. So even His glory is a giving to us, never a taking from us.

But I won't be telling you the whole story if I only quote that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We are. But the verse doesn't stop there. Paul goes on to say that we also suffer with Him that we may share His glory. There is a direct relationship with suffering and glory. It would be an entire study to pursue that fully. But let me just close with this truth. The Lord Jesus Christ is both God and Man. As God, He rules the universe. As Man, He knows the feeling of our infirmities. That

means whoever suffers, He suffers with them. This is the meaning of compassion: **co-passion**. There is a place in prayer that goes well beyond just asking for things. There is the fellowship of His suffering. It is related to the fellowship He has with your suffering. Somehow in ways far beyond our understanding, but not beyond our participation, we are invited in to His Throne room. When we come with our personal private needs on behalf of our selves and others, He loves and welcomes us. But if we come often enough and become acquainted with His heart, we become privy to what is going on in His heart. A common phrase that sums this up well is to break our heart for what breaks His heart. And suffering and glory mix together in prayer for the breaking in of His Kingdom where it has not yet entered. (I have been praying for the collapse of North Korea for two years now.)

Let every encounter with others where you feel the need to say “I will pray for you” become a joyful reminder of your calling as a joint heir, and an invitation to come further up and further in.



To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood,
and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father –
to Him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Revelation 1:5-6

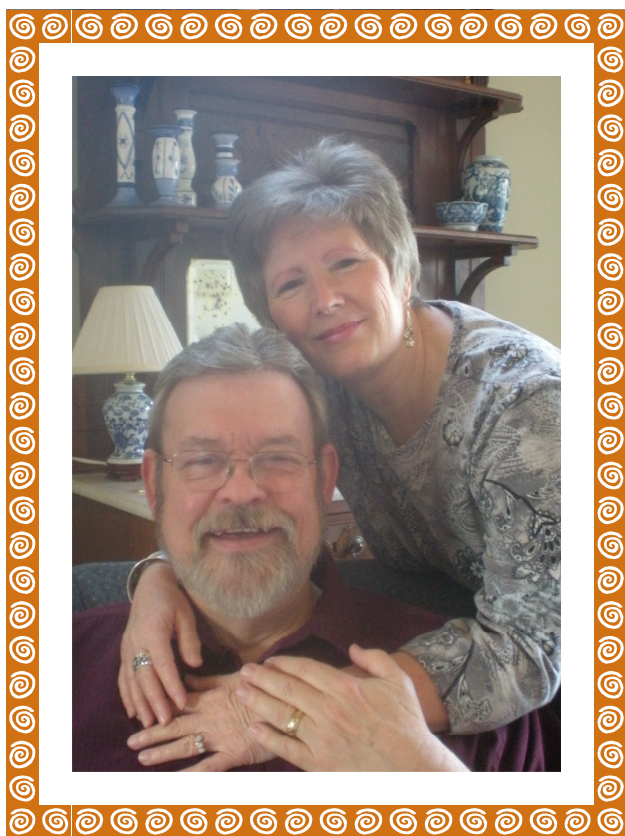


Closing Thoughts...



*There is a place beyond being redeemed by love.
It is the place of being engaged with love,
where you love what God loves
and you self sacrifice as He does...
take up that which particularly relates to this present age,
to bring it through to its consummation by prayer...*

T. Austin Sparks



With Love, Clay & Mary

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