

December 11, 2011

God knows our heart; the words out of our mouth need not be a long formal prayer. He is looking for our sincere concern about someone else. In those times, God wants us, "...to pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16 *).

The man who looked back that morning and prayed for others recalled another time that a sister, praying for her brother on the battlefield, got God's attention, as it were. On a day sometime after the battle, the brother and sister compared notes. They learned that 'something' had told the soldier to move at the same time the sister was in prayer. The next mortar round mortally wounded the soldier's friend who took his place in the foxhole. God does hear and answers the earnest, sincere prayer for others.

As this message is written the Holy Spirit bears witness of the need for intercessory prayer and our need to look back with Thanksgiving and praise. The man's thoughts went back to the time he received an urgent electronic mail.

As he read the message slowly, his eyes filled with tears of gratitude for God's goodness. The message was from a person with whom he communicated over a period of months. The one sending the message had, only a few days before, reached a critical and serious time in his life.

Earnest prayers were offered on behalf of the one sending the message. The prayers of the faithful few had touched Heaven and the one sending the message was saved from the drastic action contemplated. Praise God for knowing that, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28 *).

There is not a blessed thing that has already happened, or is happening right now, or in the future but that God will cause it to work for our good and to bring to pass His will!

Comments by Harry Bain

* (New American Standard Bible; i.e., NASB)*



Look Back

"Look to the rock from which you were hewn." (Isaiah 51:1)*

Sometimes it does one good to look back, remember the past, and see just how far the LORD has brought them. The scripture above is a prophet's advice to a nation thousands of years ago. Still, it is good advice today for the individual pursuing righteousness.

The word was spoken by Isaiah, "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who pursue the LORD; Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug" (Isaiah 51:1 *).



The man reflected on the words as he sat quietly reading a publication from the business world. He thought about others and the opposing forces at work in the world today. The man was aware of the growing intensity of the forces as scholars warn of the approaching return of Jesus to Earth.

His thoughts returned to the pressures he once faced in his work-a-day world.

He looked back and remembered the stress, the false accusations against himself, his own indifference from time to time, the temptations placed before him, and the opposition of the very ones he tried his best to help. The man stopped and thanked God for His forgiveness and protection through the years.

The man realized anew the goodness of God in helping him carry out the duties of his office. He thanked God for the times that he had been spared from so many things that might have been. The man asked the LORD to have mercy on the ones who came to mind as he sat there. He knew, perhaps more than the ones prayed for, the tremendous opposition that awaits any that will 'pursue righteousness' in the workplace.

A shiver ran up the man's spine as he recalled a day when God caused him to see the evil one present in the eyes of a person who was verbally attacking him for some perceived minor infraction of some obscure rule. The attacker had the then-young man's future, his very livelihood in his hand. .

The man sat in silence as he considered the future of his wife and young children. How would they ever 'make it' in the world if he lost his job? The young man knew enough about his responsibilities as a husband, father, and provider that he was very concerned.

As the man sat, he remembered the account of Joseph and his sale into slavery by his own jealous brothers. Despite all that his brothers did to him, God used the situation for good. Years later Joseph saved a nation and his own family from starvation during a severe famine.



After their father died, the brothers thought that Joseph would seek revenge. They sent a message to him. When Joseph received the message from the brothers, he wept.

The Bible tells us that the brothers were ready to become servants to Joseph. Joseph said to them, *"Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? ...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.' So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them"* (Genesis 50:19-21 *).



God intervened in a miraculous way in the man's situation because someone, somewhere, was praying for the young man. Someone cared enough to intercede for him. It would be many years later that the man began to realize just how good God was in bringing him into seemingly hopeless situations and rescuing him from sure destruction.

The man looked back and recalled the time that he saw the evil one reflected in his attacker's eyes. God caused him to remember the commitment given at that time. As the then-young man sat silently, he recalled the attitude of Joseph. He was led to vow, that, if he were ever in a position of authority over others, he would not, God willing, treat them as he was treated.

The episode shaped the young-man's life as God prepared him for increased responsibility over the years. Many were helped over the ensuing decades because of the commitment made the day he endured the attack. As the man reflected, he thanked God anew that God caused him to behold things that were intended for evil turned to good. God had, in fact, *"meant it for good in order to bring about this present result."* Praise God.

The power of an earnest prayer on behalf of someone we care about is a powerful force. The earnest prayer from a sincere heart may save someone from destruction this very day.

God may cause us to look back and put a person on our mind. As God leads, we want to take the person to the LORD in prayer.