

Prevailing Prayer

A.W. Tozer:

It is written that Christ died for our sins, and again it is written that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). These two texts are written of the same company of persons, namely Christians. We dare not compel the first text to invalidate the second. Both are true and one completes the other. The meaning of the two is that since Christ died for our sins if we confess our sins they will be forgiven. To teach otherwise is to attempt to fly on one wing. I have met some who claim that it is wrong to pray for the same thing twice, the reason being that if we truly believe when we pray we have the answer the first time; any second prayer betrays the unbelief of the first; ergo, let there be no second prayer. There are three things wrong with this teaching. One is that it ignores a large body of Scripture; the second is that it rarely works in practice, even for the saintliest soul; and the third is that, if persisted in, it robs the praying man of two of his mightiest weapons in his warfare with the flesh and the devil, viz., intercession and petition. For let it be said without qualification that the effective intercessor is never a one-prayer man, neither does the successful petitioner win his mighty victories in his first attempt. Had David subscribed to the one-prayer creed he could have reduced his psalms to about one-third their present length. Elijah would not have prayed seven times for rain (and incidentally, there would have been no rain, either), our Lord would not have prayed the third time saying the same words, nor would Paul have "besought the Lord thrice" (2 Cor. 12:8) for the removal of his thorn. In fact, if this teaching were true, much wonderful Biblical narrative would have to be rewritten, for the Bible has much to say about continued and persistent prayer.