

**Andrew Murray:**

Just as God gave the apostle Paul as an example in his prayer life for Christians of all time, so he has also given George Mueller in these latter days as a proof to his church how literally and wonderfully he still always hears prayer. It is not only that he gave him in his lifetime over a million pounds sterling to support his orphanages, but Mr Mueller also stated that he believed that the Lord had given him more than thirty thousand souls in answer to prayer. And that not only from among orphans, but also many others for whom he (in some cases for fifty years) had prayed faithfully every day, in the firm faith that they would be saved. When he was asked on what ground he so firmly believed this, his answer was: 'There are five conditions which I always endeavour to fulfil, in observing which I have the assurance of answer to my prayer:

1. I have not the least doubt because I am assured that it is the Lord's will to save them, for he willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (see 1 Tim. 2.4); and we have the assurance 'that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us' (1 John 5.14).
2. I have never pleaded for their salvation in my own name, but in the blessed name of my precious Lord Jesus, and on his merits alone (see John 14.14).
3. I always firmly believed in the willingness of God to hear my prayers (see Mark 11.24).
4. I am not conscious of having yielded to any sin, for 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me' when I call (Ps. 66.18).
5. I have persevered in believing prayer for more than fiftytwo years for some, and shall continue till the answer comes: 'Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?' (Luke 18.7).

Take these thoughts into your hearts and practice prayer according to these rules. Let prayer be not only the utterance of your desires, but a fellowship with God, till we know by faith that our prayer is heard. The way George Mueller walked is the new and living way to the throne of grace, which is open for us all.

**Hudson Taylor**

When Hudson Taylor, as a young man, had given himself over unreservedly to the Lord, there came to him a strong conviction that God would send him to China. He had read of George Mueller and how God had answered his prayers for his own support and that of his orphans, and he began to ask the Lord to teach him also so to trust him. He felt that if he would go to China with such faith, he must first begin to live by faith in England. He asked the Lord to enable him to do this. He had a position as a doctor's dispenser, and asked God to help him not to ask for his salary, but to leave it to God to move the heart of the doctor to pay him at the right time. The doctor was a good-hearted man, but very irregular in payment. This cost Taylor much trouble and struggle in prayer because he believed, as did George Mueller, that the word, 'Owe no man any thing' (Rom. 13.8), was to be taken literally, and that debt should not be incurred.

So he learned the great lesson to move men through God - a thought of deep meaning, which later on became an unspeakably great blessing to him in his work in China. He relied on that - in the conversion of the Chinese, in the awakening of Christians to give money for the support of the work, in the finding of suitable missionaries who would hold as faith's rule of conduct that we should make our desires known to God in prayer and then rely on God to move men to do what he would have done.

After he had been for some years in China, he prayed that God would give twenty-four missionaries, two for each of the eleven provinces and Mongolia, each with millions of souls and with no missionary. God did it. But there was no society to send them out. He had indeed learned to trust God for his own support, but he dared not take upon himself the responsibility of the twentyfour, if possibly they had not sufficient faith. This cost him severe conflict, and he became very ill under it, till at last he saw that God could as easily care for the twenty-four as for himself. He undertook it in a glad faith. And so God led him, through many severe trials of faith, to trust him fully. Now these twenty-four have increased, in course of time, to a thousand missionaries who rely wholly on God for support. Other missionary societies have acknowledged how much they have learned from Hudson Taylor, as a man who stated and obeyed this law. Faith may rely on God to move men to do what his children have asked of him in prayer.

Read the book, Hudson Taylor's Early Years by Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor. There will be found in it a treasure of

spiritual thought and experience concerning a close walk with God in the inner chamber and in mission work.

## Light from the Inner Chamber

'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly' (Matt. 6.6).

Our Lord had spoken of the prayer of the hypocrites who desire to be seen of men and also of the prayer of the heathen who trust in the multitude of their words. They do not understand that prayer has no value except it is addressed to a personal God who sees and hears. In the text our Lord teaches us a wonderful lesson concerning the inestimable blessing which the Christian may have in his inner chamber. If we would understand the lesson aright we must notice the light that the inner chamber sheds on

### 1. The wonderful love of God

Think of God, his greatness, his holiness, his unspeakable glory, and then on the inestimable privilege to which he invites his children, that each one of them, however sinful or feeble he may be, every hour of the day, may have access to him and hold converse with him as long as he wishes. If he enters his inner chamber, then God is ready to meet him, to have fellowship with him, to give him the joy and strength which he needs with the living assurance in his heart that he is with him and will undertake for him in everything. In addition he promises that he will enrich him in his outward life and work with those things which he has asked for in secret. Ought we not to cry out with joy? What an honour! What a salvation! What an overflowing supply for every need!

One may be in the greatest distress, or may have fallen into the deepest sin, or may in the ordinary course of life desire temporal or spiritual blessing; he may desire to pray for himself or for those belonging to him, or for his congregation or church; he may even become an intercessor for the whole world - the promise for the inner chamber covers all: 'Pray to thy Father which is in secret; he will reward thee openly.'

We might well suppose that there would be no place on earth so attractive to the child of God as the inner chamber with the presence of God promised, where he may have unhindered intercourse with the Father. The happiness of a child on earth if he enjoys the love of his father; the happiness of a friend as he meets a beloved benefactor; the happiness of a subject who has free access to his king and may stay with him as long as he wishes; these are as nothing compared with this heavenly promise. In the inner chamber you can converse with your God as long and as intimately as you desire; you can rely on his presence and fellowship.

Oh, the wonderful love of God in the gift of an inner chamber sanctified by such a promise! Let us thank God every day of our lives for it as the gift of his wonderful love. In this sinful world he could devise nothing more suitable for our needs than a fountain of unspeakable blessing.

### 2. The deep sinfulness of man

We might have thought that every child of God would have availed himself with joy of such an invitation. But, see! What is the response? There comes a cry from all lands that prayer in the inner chamber is, as a general rule, neglected by those who call themselves believers - . Many make no use of it; they go to church, they confess Christ, but they know little of personal intercourse with God. Many make a little use of it, but in a spirit of haste, and more as a matter of custom, or for the easing of conscience, so that they cannot speak of any joy or blessing in it. And, what is more sad, many who know something of its blessedness confess that they know little about faithful, regular, and happy fellowship with the Father, all the day, as something which is as necessary as their daily bread.

Oh, what is it, then, that makes the inner chamber so powerless? Is it not the deep sinfulness of man, and the aversion of his fallen nature for God, which make the world with its fellowship more attractive than being alone with the heavenly Father?

Is it not that Christians do believe the word of God, where that word declares that 'the flesh' which is in them, 'is enmity against God', and that they walk too much after 'the flesh', so that the Spirit cannot strengthen them for prayer? Is it not that Christians allow themselves to be deprived by Satan of the use of the weapon of prayer, so that they are powerless to overcome him? Oh, the deep sinfulness of man! We have no greater proof of it than this despite that is done to the unspeakable love which has given us the inner chamber.

And what is still more sad is that even ministers of Christ acknowledge that they know they pray too little. The word tells them that their only power lies in prayer: through that only, but through that certainly, they can be clothed with power from on high for their work. But it seems as though the power of the world and the flesh has bewitched them. While they devote time to and manifest zeal in their work, that which is the most necessary of all is neglected, and there is not the desire or strength for prayer to obtain the indispensable gift of the Holy Spirit to make their work fruitful. God give us grace to understand in the light of the inner chamber the deep sinfulness of our nature.

### 3. The glorious grace of Christ Jesus

Is there, then, no hope of a change? Must it be always thus? Or is there a means of recovery? Thank God! There is.

The man through whom God has made known to us the message of the inner chamber is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who saves us from our sins. He is able and willing to deliver us from this sin, and will deliver. He has not undertaken to redeem us from all our other sins and left us to deal with the sin of prayerlessness in our own strength. No, in this also we may come to him and cry out, 'Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean' (Matt. 8.2). 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief' (Mark 9.24).

Do you wish to know how you may experience this deliverance? By none other than the well-known way along which every sinner must come to Christ. Begin by acknowledging, by confessing before him, in a childlike and simple manner, the sin of neglecting and desecrating the inner chamber. Bow before him in deep shame and sorrow. Tell him that your heart has deceived you by the thought that you could pray as you ought. Tell him that through the weakness of 'the flesh', and the power of the world, and self-confidence, you have been led astray and that you have no strength to do better. Let this be done heartily. You cannot by your resolution and effort put things right.

Come in your sin and weakness to the inner chamber, and begin to thank God, as you have never thanked him, that the grace of the Lord Jesus will surely make it possible for you to converse with your Father as a child ought to do. Hand over afresh to the Lord Jesus all your sin and misery, as well as your whole life and will, that he may cleanse and take possession of you and rule over you as his very own.

Even though your heart be cold and dead, persevere in the exercise of faith that Christ is an almighty and faithful Saviour. You may be sure that deliverance will come. Expect it, and you will begin to understand that the inner chamber is the revelation of the glorious grace of the Lord Jesus, which makes it possible for one to do what he could not do himself; that is, to hold fellowship with God, and to experience that the desire and power are received which fit a man for walking with God.