



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

Oct. 30, 2022

Jump Start #3046

Matthew 26:39 “And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

Our verse comes from the dark moments in the garden. Judas was gathering up troops to come and arrest Jesus. The disciples were sleeping. Jesus was eyeing the cross. The moment was here. Once things started, the events would move very quickly. There would be chains, beatings, scourging, nails, and a very, very painful death. It’s one thing for Jesus to have gone through those things for us, but He went with His eyes wide open. He knew what was going to happen. He knew the intensity of the torture that was about to happen.

So, on this dark, dark night, He begs His Father to “let this cup pass.” Find another way. Let’s skip this. Do I have to? But deep inside, He knew. He attached to these words, “Not My will, but Thy will be done.” And, you and I know the story. Judas came. Jesus was arrested and taken to the Jewish hierarchy. Then to the Roman Governor. The crowds wanted His death and death He received.

Did you notice that God said, “No,” to the Jesus’ prayer? He didn’t utter those the word ‘No,’ but He did not keep Jesus from the cross. He did not let this cup pass from Jesus, as the Lord wanted. God said “No,” to Jesus’ prayer. And, if God said “no,” to His prayer, there will be times when God says “No,” to our prayers. Understand, “No,” is an answer. Sometimes we might think God didn’t answer our prayers. The truth more accurately might be that God didn’t answer our prayers the way we wanted them answered.

And, this takes us to the interesting thought of ‘Why does God say ‘No’ to our prayers?’

First, from this account with Jesus, we know that saying “No,” isn’t because God doesn’t like us. Sometimes a child comes to that conclusion when their parents tell them no. God loved Jesus. He said that to the world several times. The disciples heard God say that. Because your prayer is answered “no,” does not mean that you have done something wrong or are no longer in favor with God.

(OVER)

Second, saying "No," to your prayer may be necessary for God's plan. God's plan was for Jesus to die on the cross. The crushing of Satan's head had been prophesied since the days of Adam and Eve. God has appointed times and plans that we do not see, understand or grasp. What you have asked for, just may not fit in God's plans. Thy will be done.

Third, God may be using a situation to strengthen you or bring someone back to Him. The circumstances may be intense and we may pray for relief and deliverance. But rather than ending the pressure, God may want you to strengthen your faith. It is upon the anvil of adversity that our faith is forged. If I am always walking in sunshine and everything is always going my way, my faith can become weak. The trials and testing of our faith is what produces some powerful spiritual qualities in our lives. God has more than just you in His vision and in His heart. While we pray for what we think is best, God is also considering others. Saying 'yes,' to your prayer may not be the best means to awaken someone and get them coming back home to God. God is always interested in salvation first. That is more important than our health and our happiness.

Fourth, God may say 'No,' simply because you have asked too late. God is not using miracles these days. That is His choice. It's a little late to pray for oars when your boat is going over the waterfalls. You should have been praying upstream. To start praying for your marriage after your mate has filed for divorce may be too late. To start praying for the recovery of health when a person is hours from death may be too late. The time to start praying for a marriage is before the ceremony and the "I dos" are exchanged. The time to pray for a child is not when he heads off to college, but the moments after his birth.

God does not owe us salvation, nor does He owe us a "yes" to everything we pray. God doesn't buy our love and our affection. He is God. If He never answered our prayers, we still need to honor Him and glorify Him. And, we must never forget to thank the Lord for hearing our prayers and for the blessings when He does say "yes."

Inside one of my Bibles I have taped an old "Family Circus" cartoon. The mother, sitting on the edge of a bed, says to her little boy, "God answers All our prayers. But sometimes the best answer is 'no.'"

Let this cup pass...

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
