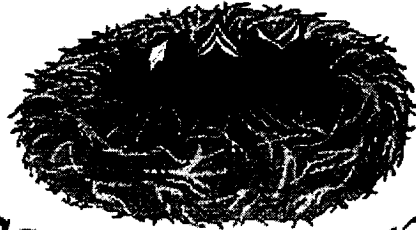


They shall mount up...

ON EAGLES' WINGS



AERY NUGGETS

...with wings as eagles.

Isaiah 40:31

September 2011

Prayer Mark 1:32-38

Steven J. Faulkner

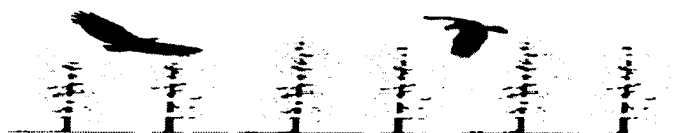
In the peaceful stillness of the pre-dawn hours of one cool June morning here in North Iowa, I and my daughter rose up from our beds. With bleary eyes, we made our way down our front walkway, while most of the neighborhood yet slept, and we pushed forward to the bicycle trail south of our house; our objective was to observe the sunrise. This bike trail wound its way southeastward beyond the houses on the extreme southern border of our town, and soon we were in an open field of gently rolling grassland. The morning air was cool, and the silence of this early morning walk was broken only by the rhythmic taps of my cane on the trail, and the sounds of hundreds of birds in their early morning chorus. When we had reached the southern-most extent of the trail, the eastern horizon had begun to lighten just a bit. Then, as we watched with anticipation, a golden glow formed low in the sky, bordered by shades of pink and burnt orange. Soon, the intense gleam of the sun burst forth to our delight, driving the darkness back and cheering our hearts with the realization that a new day had arrived. And there, in the quiet stillness of the early morning, my daughter and I knelt down and began our day in prayer.

The early morning is such a lovely time of day—I do so enjoy the beauty of the dawn. While it is my habit to rise early each day, I often find that the cares of the day rise with me and tend to consume my time and thoughts—getting ready for work, dealing with issues that haven't as yet developed, worrying about what may be. Yet, if I can but set aside a little time and seclude myself in some way, I find that the early morning is such an excellent time for prayer. While the world yet sleeps, there are few distractions, and one can spend time in unhindered prayer at the beginning of the day.

Our Lord Jesus began His day in prayer as we see in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark. In this portion of

Scripture, the Lord Jesus was in Capernaum; and on a certain evening, after the Sabbath had ended, the citizens of Capernaum began to collect at the door of Simon Peter's home to see Jesus. It seemed that wherever Jesus went, people gathered about Him. On this evening, all the people from the city who had infirmities were coming, because they had heard of the miraculous works of healing which He had done. The news about Jesus had spread all over the region of Galilee. So, they all came to Jesus, and none were turned away. We read in verses 32-34, "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him." I imagine that the Lord Jesus worked late into the night healing all those who came to Him, providing relief from the misery brought on by sin. It must have been a very late night indeed for our Lord with "all the city" gathering to see Him; and, in the morning, a needy world would again press upon Him. Yet, early the next morning, Jesus set aside a time for prayer—He was up before dawn, and before any of His disciples: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed," (verse 35).

What was it that caused our Lord Jesus to arise before sunrise and to go forth into a solitary place at such a time of day? It was not the desire to see a beautiful sunrise; but, indeed, it was so that He might spend time alone with His Father in prayer before beginning a new day. This was His time of communion with His Father, and He did not allow that time to be interrupted.



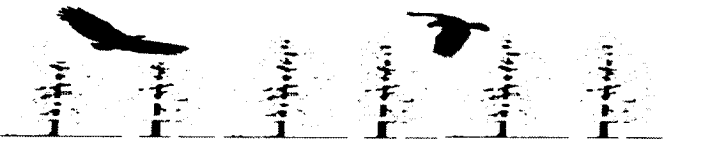


Now, if it was important for the Son of God to begin His day in prayer, what about you and me? Perhaps we do not rise up a great while before day, but as children of God, do we not need a daily time of communion with Him through prayer and through reading His Word? When we pray, we talk to God; when we read His Word, God talks to us. This is how we learn His will for our lives, and how we receive instruction in the way in which we should go. This is the time when we can bring our concerns and cares, our anxieties and fears, before the throne of Grace, before the One who Himself walked here below. There before the Throne of Grace, we will find mercy and help, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

In our portion in Mark 1, we read that at length, the disciples got up out of bed and began to seek the Lord Jesus. When they found Him, they clearly expected that He would return to Peter's house as more people with diseases and other concerns were gathering at the door. But, Jesus would not return this day. We read in verses 36-38, "And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." The Lord Jesus must move on to the next city; He knew the will of His Father for the day before Him because He spent time alone with His Father in prayer. If we would serve the Lord, we must know His will, and I believe we learn that will and receive the grace needed for each day in times of communion with our Lord.

Whether we arise before sunrise, or whether we get up later in the day, it is so critical to the life of a Christian that we spend time alone with our Lord in prayer. Nothing so characterizes a child of God as prayer, for prayer is dependence on the Lord. Are we struggling with anxious fears or temptation?

Come quickly to the Lord in prayer. Do we want to know the will of our Father? Be often in prayer—fervent prayer, and that with thanksgiving. We read in Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."



In everything, we are to pray, being thankful to God. And, what is the outcome of our prayer and supplication with thanksgiving? "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," (verse 7). When we bring our needs and cares before the Lord fervently, often, and with thanksgiving, God's peace will guard our hearts in Christ Jesus—that is God's Word.

My dear friend, are we known for having a consistent pattern of prayer? David was known for coming to God regularly in prayer. In Psalm 5:1-3, we read, "Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Each and every morning, the Lord heard David's voice; and in Psalm 63:5, 6 we read, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

He prayed each day, at the beginning of the day for sure, and he prayed and meditated at night as well. We read in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that the children of God should "pray without ceasing."

Are you a believer in Christ? Have you trusted Him for salvation? If you have, then you are a child of God. And, that same Lord Jesus who once walked in Galilee, is now at the right hand of the Father; He longs to hear your voice in supplication and He waits to help you—He is only a prayer away. On the other hand, if you have not yet believed on Christ, you will not know this peace of God; you will not know the comfort and help that comes from prayer. The good news is that you can believe on Christ just now and become one of His children through faith in His finished work on Calvary. We read in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care, and bids me at my Father's Throne make all my wants and wishes known; in seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and often escaped the tempter's snare, by thy return, sweet hour of prayer."
--William Walford, 1845

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