

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Help...My Prayers Are Stale

(Jerry Fite)

**D**O you find yourself praying the same prayers day after day? Yes, you offer prayers of thanksgiving. Yes, you go to God in prayer with godly requests for yourself, and on behalf of others. You are praying without ceasing, but the themes, and how you express words to fill those themes seem to be redundant. My life in Christ is not mechanical, why should consistency in prayer become so?

Repeating the same requests in prayer was not condemned by the Father, when Jesus and Paul prayed. Jesus prayed, “*My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from thou wilt*” (Matthew 26:39). He soon went aside to pray saying, “*My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done*” (Matthew 26:42). He prays the same prayer while conveying more than His first request, revealing what it means if the cup is not allowed to pass away from Him: He will drink it. But then He prays the third time, “*the same words*” (Matthew 26:44). Did the Father not hear His prayer? Paul prayed three times that the thorn in his flesh be removed (2 Corinthians 12:8). Was it not removed because he crossed the line into “*vain repetitions*” (Matthew 6:7)?

No, Paul and Jesus were not praying the same words thinking they would be heard by their “much speaking”, but both had an urgent need deserving emphasis. Their repetition was not mechanical, though

expressed with the same words. Urgency of the moment produced vibrant prayer.

Has your prayer for the sick of the congregation become a general cover- them- all- prayer? “Father, if it be thy will, I pray for our sick that you will heal them, and comfort each one as only you can.” Or, do you pray for each one comprising the sick of the congregation. Each person has specific needs, and they are changing as they deal with their illness and go through rehabilitation. Each week, as you look with interest into individual’s needs, your prayers will probably be filled with new “specific requests” that will truly help your brother and sister.

Christians, in the early church, included Scripture in their prayers, which were fitting for the occasion. When the disciples were being threatened by the authorities in Jerusalem, they opened their prayer by exalting God as their universal Creator. But they also quoted the first part of Psalm 2, which David had been inspired by the Holy Spirit to write. “*...The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed*” (Acts 4:26, Psm. 2:1-2). Governmental authorities fulfilled this Scripture by putting the Lord to death. Concerned brethren now ask God to look upon threatenings against His people, and “*grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with boldness*” (Acts 4:29).

Why not follow the same pattern, and incorporate Scripture as you speak to a present need? You know God refused to allow the Israelites to enter the promised land due to a lack of faith in God which led to disobedience (Hebrews 3:18-19). So, could you pray that God will help you to be more “diligent” so you can enter into Heaven, and not “*fall after the same example of disobedience*” (Hebrews 4:11)?

Reading new Scripture every day offers new thoughts for new prayers. We know we should pray in the Holy Spirit, and according to the will of God (Ephesians 6:18, 1 John 5:14). Opening up a fresh place in Scripture every day, we have both what the Spirit has revealed, and God’s will for us to follow. Fresh ways of expressing our desires and thanksgiving are before us. After reading Colossians 2:10, exalt Christ in prayer thanking God that in Christ you are “made full.” Be sobered at the same time, and ask God to guard you from thinking that man’s philosophy will make you more complete?

Many of the Psalms are prayers. Incorporate them. Ask God, “*incline my heart unto thy testimonies...*” (Psalm 119:36); “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*” (Psalm 119:18); “*...unite my heart to fear thy name*” (Psalm 86:11); and “*Oh satisfy us in the morning with thy lovingkindness, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days*” (Psalm 90:14). Be gone “stale prayers!”