

## JACOB'S WRESTLING AND OUR PRAYER

Some people have a view of prayer, that somehow prayer can coerce God, to give us, what otherwise He would be reluctant, to give us, but we must not regard prayer, as some kind of a spiritual exercise, in which we get God in a hammerlock, that is, we get His arm locked behind Him and we twist enough until God says, uncle, and gives us what we ask.

Consider Jacob's wrestling with the Angel, at the Brook Jabbok. It's referred to in Genesis 32:22 "And he (Jacob) rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok. 23 And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He (the man wrestling with Jacob) touched the hollow of his (Jacob's) thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with Him. 26 And He said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he (Jacob) said, I will not let You go, except You bless me. 27 And He said unto him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. (that is, deceiver or supplanter) 28 And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel (that is, he who strives with God or God strives): for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Your Name. And He said, Wherefore is it that you ask after My Name? And He blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (Pen nile): for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

In this passage, there seems to be, something akin, to what we speak of in the derogatory sense, of thinking that we get God in a hammerlock. Is that the case? Was there a reluctance on the part of this Strange Visitor, Who was obviously not an ordinary man, or even an ordinary or mere angel, this was a manifestation of God Himself, in the Person of the Angel of the Lord, and many believe a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ the Eternal Word, but obviously He is One Who can give blessing upon Jacob, and as Jacob wrestles with Him, there seems to be a reluctance on the part of this Strange Visitor. He says let Me go, and Jacob says, no, I won't until You bless me, and Jacob wrestles with Him and prevails.

Now is this the case of someone, who is overcoming reluctance in God, by virtue of persistence in prayer?

Who was Jacob? In the purpose of God, where did Jacob stand? Was he just an ordinary Christian?

Jacob already had the birthright and he already had the promise of God, that God's covenant engagements with His people, would be carried on in a unique way, through Jacob. So he had the promise of God, with respect to his unique place in the history of redemption. Here's an important principle. Whenever we look at an incident in Scripture, we must seek to relate that incident to not only the immediate

context, but the larger context of where does this person fit into the plan and purpose of God.

The Old Testament is not a collection of little interesting historic snippets with a few moral lessons interspersed. It is the history of what God is doing, to accomplish His own redemptive designs. We have that initial promise in Genesis 3:15, that God would establish this enmity between the seed of the woman, and between the seed of the serpent, and flowing out of, that seed of gospel promise, we see the purposes of God, coming in a peculiar way to terminate upon Jacob. So with respect to Jacob's unique place in the purpose of God, the unique promises given to him, was Jacob asking for something for which he had no promise or warrant from God, or was he pleading for something God had already intimated it was His will to give him?

It was the latter. Obviously the promise of God was to be fulfilled through Jacob. It was to be fulfilled as he became, under the blessing of God, the man that God intended he should be. When Jacob is asking for the blessing, he's not asking for something, to consume upon his own lust. **James 4:3** "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it in your pleasures." But he is asking in terms of the framework of the promise and purpose of God, already revealed to him.

Was his wrestling real? Or is this just some kind of a charade? Was his desire real that God would bless him?

This is no fake wrestling with God. He was in a real crisis.

What about God's dealings with him? Was God playing games with him, when He seemed to desire to withdraw before He blessed him? What was God doing?

There is an incident in the New Testament where Jesus did something similar to this.

The Syrochene woman - Jesus blessed her because of her faith. She was a woman of great faith. He was testing, purifying, drawing out, that expression of faith.

**Mark 7:25** "But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of Him, came and fell down at His feet. **26** Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrochene by race. And she besought Him that He would cast forth the demon out of her daughter. **27** And He said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. **28** But she answered and said unto Him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. **29** And He said unto her, For this saying go your way; the demon is gone out of your daughter. **30** And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out."

**Mat 15:22** "And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, You Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. **23** But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she cries after us. **24**

But He answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 But she came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 And He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. 27 But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto you even as you will. And her daughter was healed from that hour."

Can you think of another incident, in which it is said our Lord made as though He would leave them?

On the Road to Emmaus **Luke 24:28** "And they drew near unto the village where they were going, and He made, as though He would go further, and they constrained Him saying, abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent."

So we don't have God playing games, but in the interaction between Jacob and God, what do we have in this incident in Genesis 32? [and it's true of all of God's dealing with His people] Did God know that He had purposed to bless Jacob in this way? Yes. Had God sovereignly decreed it? Yes.

Had God sovereignly decreed to bless Jacob apart from his wrestling? No.

The same God who had decreed to bless Jacob, the same God who had decreed to bless him on that occasion, has decreed to bless him in the context of Jacobs wrestling for the very blessing, God had decreed to give him.

That's the great stumbling block of the biblical doctrines of God's fixed decrees, and the reality and the validity, of the means, by which, those decrees come to pass, in the life experience of God's people.

Left to ourselves we will do one of 2 things:

Some will say if prayer is a real interaction between a real, living, sensitive, caring, loving, responding, God and a real, needy, pleading child of God, then God cannot be the God whose purposes and plans are fixed by eternal decree.

Then others say, since the Bible is so clear, that known unto God are all His works from the beginning, and He works all things after the counsel of His will, He does according to His will in the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand and say unto Him, what do You do? If God is truly sovereign, and if God has decreed everything, from eternity, and His decrees are fixed, then prayer cannot be the real interaction between a real, sensitive, loving, caring, responding, God, and a real needy, pleading, child of God.

So left to ourselves, when we confront those 2, parallel, revelations of God, we will either opt:

- to take God off His throne, to preserve what we think is the validity of prayer, or
- we'll so put God on His throne and think we need to preserve His enthronement, as to destroy the reality of prayer.

IF GOD IS ENTHRONED, PRAYER IS NOT REAL.  
IF PRAYER REAL, GOD IS NOT ENTHRONED.

And so you have most segments of the Christian church divided right down the middle on that issue, and though we may theoretically deny that, practically, we are continually pulled, to one extreme or the other. It is only the grace of the Spirit of God working in us, that can help us to hold those realities, so that we both:

**\*ACKNOWLEDGE WITH JOY, THE ENTHRONEMENT OF GOD, AND  
ENGAGE WITH FERVENCY IN THE ACTIVITY OF PRAYER.**

### **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Daniel said from the Scripture that he understood from reading the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the captivity in Babylon would last 70 years, and he said understanding that, he said, I set myself, to seek the Lord by prayer and fasting. Well wait a minute, if God prophesied, and His Word, cannot fail, though heaven and earth pass away not one jot or tittle will pass, shouldn't Daniel just have said, God is on His throne, the 70 years is up, boys let's pack up and get ready to go home. But he didn't do that. \*He set himself to seek the Lord, and he began to pray for the very thing, that God has decreed, to bring to pass.

**Luke 11:5** "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; **6** for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; **7** and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needs."

Our Lord goes on from that parable to drawl this conclusion:

**11:9** "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. **10** For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened."

In the context it indicates, that it is not an act of asking, casually, or even once, these are present tense verbs, keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking, and in the context, we see a parallel.

The friend came, knocked, and got no response. He didn't say, oh well, it must not be the will of my friend to give me anything or maybe he doesn't have any, I'll try somewhere else. No. He knocked again, until he awakened his friend, and his friend yelled out and said, go home, it's late, my kids are with me in bed. But he kept right on pounding the door, so finally he said, this guy is so insistent, I need to get up and give him what he needs to get him off my back.

The point of this passage is, that it is not the friendship that made him get up, but it was that \*insistence and continuance, that became, the thing that caused the man in

bed, to realize the condition of that need and he arose gave him as much as he needed.

**Luke 11:11** “And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? **12** Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? **13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” The Father is not like the man who was asleep. He is a good and gracious Father. We have the principle of asking, and the encouragement to ask because of Who He is.

Here is an example from the Old Testament brought over into the New Testament. Another example of a divine promise, an intimation of divine purpose and \*rather than being a negation of the necessity of prayer, it forms the basis upon which, we do pray.

For over 3 years there had been no rain; the heavens had been shut up. There shall be no dew nor rain but according to my word said Elijah, but then God said, there is going to be an abundance of rain and yet, the prophet did not simply sit back and say, oh well, there'll be rain, but he prayed, and sought the face of God, and James then picks it up and says, **James 5:16** “Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working. **17** Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Christ Himself, subjected Himself to the law of His own kingdom, which is, “ask of Me and I will give the nations ~~of~~ for thy inheritance and the outermost parts of the earth for ~~life~~ possession.” **Psalm 2.**

**John 17** – The very things our Lord was commissioned to do as the appointed Mediator of sinners, He pleads with God for those things, to come to pass. So even our Lord, is eminently, a man of prayer. What He received as the Perfect Man, He received, as we, receive those things. He received them in the posture of being dependent. He received them as He asked for them, of His Father. Our Lord Himself is the great example, of prayerfulness, but not a posture of presumption, because God had purposed and decreed something, it would automatically come to pass.

**Luke 18:** we have a similar passage. The focal point of emphasis is a bit different, but the principle is nonetheless the same. Our Lord gives the example of a judge who has no common grace, and no special grace. He has no fear of God, which anyone administering justice ought to have, and he has no sympathy or concern for human beings, which a judge ought to have.

There is a widow who has been wronged, so apparently she approached him either in an unofficial way, or whether sitting upon his bench, but she plagued him with her request that he would interpose on behalf of someone who had wronged her.

**Luke 18: 1** “And He spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; **2** saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: **3** and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. **4** And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; **5** yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. **6** And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says. **7** And shall not God avenge His elect, that cry to Him day and night, and yet He is longsuffering over them? **8** I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily.”

There is no promise that He will avenge them, if they do not cry. Though they are His elect, He will avenge them as they cry to Him, Day and night.

What about the aspect of asking for our daily bread with reference to our basic necessities of life?

What we commonly call the Lord's prayer, in part answers the question, Jesus said, after this manner pray ye, that it is the will of God that we should make as a matter of regular prayer, the supply of our basic, temporal, needs. “Our Father Who art in heaven, ... give us this day our daily bread...” But in doing so what must be our attitude?

**DOES GOD ALWAYS SUPPLY THE TEMPORAL NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE? WILL THE CHILD OF GOD EVER BE HUNGRY?**

There are some incidents in Scripture where we have no reason to believe, that it was through lack of industriousness or because of a chastisement for unconfessed sin, that a servant of God went hungry.

Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16. Here is a clear example, of someone who lived and died in abject poverty. He was a beggar. He was a believer. **Luke 16:19** “Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: **20** and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, **21** and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs come and licked his sores. **22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. **23** And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. **25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that you, in thy lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted and thou art in anguish.”

The Scripture does not say this, but it could be that he died of hunger.

**Philippians 4:11** “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. **12** I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. **13** I can do all things in Him that strengthens me.”

In 2 Corinthians 11 we have an outlining of the afflictions Paul has endured as an apostle in

**2 Cor. 11:25** “Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; **26** in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; **27** in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

Here we have set in very clear, descriptions, his difficulties. There were fastings, yes. That would be voluntary relinquishment of the normal intake of food, but in addition to fasting, there was hunger and there was thirst.

If our Lord has taught us to pray for our daily bread, and if the Scriptures tell us that God will supply all of our needs, how do we reconcile this \*apparent discrepancy, between what God actually does with some of His children, as recorded in Scripture, and certainly in the subsequent history of the church, and these general, promises?

Why would this condition exist?

The whole incident of Job in which God is going to make it evident to principalities and powers, and to make a statement that there is such a thing as serving God not for the blessings that He brings upon us, but cleaving to Him for Himself, while submitting to dark and strange providences.

Some other purposes – God seeks to create a classroom or a show case to display the sufficiency of His grace as in 2 Corinthians 12 and also in that passage, by allowing Paul to feel the pressure of this physical affliction, He was keeping him, from the sin of pride. **2 Corinthians 12:7** “And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. **8** Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. **9** And He hath said unto me, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10** Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

\*The principle, that there is something more important than life and a full belly and a healthy body comes to the surface.

What does that say, with regard to the general emphasis of some branches of the charismatic movement? That God always wants you happy and healthy, the best cloths on your back, the best food in your belly, and all the rest. What does this principle say, about that emphasis?

It is a totally distorted view of what God's purpose in redemption really is. He has purposed to conform us to the image of His Son, and that work now, is primarily a work in the renewal of the inner man not outer man according to 2nd Corinthians. Though the outward man is perishing, the inward man, is renewed day by day. But their emphasis is, how can you be a good testimony to the world if you go around with a gimpy back and you go around with asthma... What a poor testimony that is, how can that speak of the goodness of God and the power of Christ salvation? When you go around bouncing around with a lot of health, then you're a testimony to the goodness of God. What's wrong with that emphasis? It's easy to glorify God with everything going right, but you often have to walk by faith and not by sight.

What is part and parcel of the world's experience? Affliction. Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward, and remember the great teaching of 2nd Corinthians 1; God Who comforts us, in all our affliction and tribulation. Why? In order that we may be able to comfort others by the comfort where with we ourselves are comforted of God. There is something more important, than our being "a good testimony" by being the picture, of the most healthy person under the sun. What about the person, who amidst all the affliction, gives glory to God? Think of the testimony of a 28-year-old girl, who was on the small side and strapped into what looks like a baby stroller, and she had Spina bifida, and 2 years ago she was brought to the knowledge of Christ, and she gives her testimony, thanking God, that no one thought it their duty to let her die when she was born with spina bifida, and then she went on to say how grateful she was, that she could speak of the goodness of God.

You talk about God being glorified and the triumph of grace in the midst of an unusually difficult circumstance, that magnifies the power of God's grace to put people's whole perspective, into proper focus with regard to what is important in life.

It also has latent within it, everything that you need to become a Job's comforter, that when the people of God go through affliction or suffering and are not the picture of health, because if the only reason that you suffer, is because of some lack of faith or some sin on your part, then when you find that the people of God are in these things, then you become a Job's comforter, and what you do is you come to the people of God and then you accuse them, you play the part of the devil, in seeking to accuse and to say there must be something hypocritical about you, there must be some secret wickedness with respect to you, otherwise, this affliction wouldn't be upon you, otherwise the spina bifida you have, you must not have faith, you must be lacking some basic thing, God is evidently punishing you ~~from~~ some sin.



*affliction*

Or if it's not some sin prior to the affliction, it's the unbelief you have shown in the face of that affliction, if only you had believed hard enough, God would take away.

**Philippians 2:25** “But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; **26** since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick: **27** for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow. **28** I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when you see him again, you may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. **29** Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy; and hold such in honor: **30** because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.”

He was sick up to the very point of death and in the presence of an Apostle, and he did not get well, until he said, the Lord mercied him. Paul uses a verbal form of the word mercy. He had to pray and supplicate like any other Christian, the Apostle Paul who raised the dead couldn't help Epaphroditus. God let him come right to death's door, and then Paul didn't say God delivered me from my unbelief so I could heal him, he said God mercied him, God sovereignly put forth His hand to raise him up.

Psalm 34:9–10

34:9 “Oh fear Jehovah, ye His saints;  
For there is no want to them that fear Him.  
The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger;  
But they that seek Jehovah shall not want any good thing.”

Here is the statement from the Psalmist, fear the Lord, that is, walk with that perspective in which God's smile is your greatest delight, and His frown is your greatest dread, fear the Lord His saints, for, there is no lack, no want, no being shortchanged to those that fear Him. Young Lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not lack any food, any money, no. Shall not lack any good thing.

Now there is the heart of what is being said. Who determines what is the highest good for God's children? His children or God?  
As a parent, who determines what is the highest good for your children, your children or you? Have you ever denied them what they thought was absolutely essential for their happiness, but you knew was not in their best interest? Many times, and in our folly, often, as His children, we ask God for that which we are absolutely convinced is essential for our good. 2 Corinthians 12. Paul said, for this cause I sought the Lord 3 times, apparently referring to 3 intensive periods of prayer, probably prayer joined with fasting because Paul said, I can not accomplish my ministry with this affliction. Lord it is inconsistent with my good as a servant of Christ, and until God broke through with a differing perspective, Paul thought that good, equaled, deliverance from that thorn in the flesh. The Lord answered Paul and

said no, My grace is sufficient. There is a higher good that you are ignorant of at this point and that is, keeping you in the humble posture, in which alone I can use you, therefore I will withhold the good of the healing, in order to secure the good of your humility. My grace can take a physically weak man and make him powerful in the Spirit, but I resist the proud. My grace will not work in a proud man, so I would rather have you physically afflicted and humble, and in the midst of that weakness My power will be shown, then physically virile and strong and proud, and thereby, ~~the~~ unfit for My use.

So any of these promises must be taken in light of that broader context, that what is the good thing, is ultimately determined, not by our shortsightedness, but by God's perfect knowledge of what He is doing with us, at any given stage of His unfolding purposes for our lives.

I have been young and I have been old but I've never seen the righteous forsaken nor His seed begging bread. **PSALM 37:25**

Matthew 6 In the entire passages the Lord Jesus is dealing with having our priorities straight about the fact that you can't serve 2 masters. You can't serve God and riches. In verse 25 he brings the whole subject about anxiety with reference to those things that will preserve your life, namely, food to eat, something to drink, clothes to wear. In the midst of that, He gives a promise which seems to indicate that the normal pattern of the people of God will be that God will provide food for them and cloths for them and drink for them.

**Matthew 6:25** "Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? [then He gives a couple of illustrations of that in verses 26-29] **26** Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value then they? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? **28** And why are you anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: **29** yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** But if God does so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? **31** Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. **33** But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. **34** Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

It seems to be a general promise – all these things – food, cloths, raiment – all these things, shall be added unto you. In the context of having your priorities straight and seeking 1st the kingdom of God.

There does seem to be a general promise, not just with respect to good things, which can be interpreted in various ways, but specifically with respect to food, and clothing, and raiment.

**\*A HELPFUL PRINCIPLE IS THAT ANY GENERAL PROMISE PERTAINING TO THE PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OR THE SUPPLY OF THE PHYSICAL NEED OF THE CHRISTIAN, ARE CONDITIONED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S COMMITMENT AND CONCERN, FOR, THE HIGHER PRIORITIES OF A PERSON'S DEVELOPMENT IN GRACE.**

SO THAT IN ANY TIME THE GENERAL PROMISE, MAY HAVE, WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN EXCEPTION, IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHILD OF GOD.

Now in our ordinary prayers what is to regulate our praying? The general promises of God.

So we are warranted to pray, give us this day, our daily bread... We are warranted to pray as our priorities are straight, Lord, You have promised, if I seek 1st Your kingdom and Your righteousness these other things will be added, I need not be like my pagan neighbors, who give their minds and energies totally to the seeking of things. There are higher concerns. There are concerns, peculiar to me as a believer, and that should be our general pattern of prayer, based upon the general promises, but then if God brings us into a situation, where, after more intense prayer, with respect to those promises, and they seem to be unfulfilled, then we must recognize there is another set of principles that comes in, and we are called upon then to submit to God, sometimes, utterly ignorant, of what He's doing with us and what His purposes may be. And in those circumstances, \*our faith is tested, and purified, and brought to new levels of resignation to God. You see this with our Lord Himself. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." If there is any way, for Me to do Your will and have an avoidance of this cup, if it be possible, nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done. And that must always be a posture of our hearts.

I hope this has been helpful and you have been armed with some principles that when the Lord brings you into difficult circumstances, where His general promises seem to be contradicted by your experience that you don't begin to doubt, the validity of the promises but recognize that there are these broader concerns.