

## AVAILING PRAYER

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

As we have sought to make preparation for our revival services next week, it has been the joyous privilege of some of us to assemble in prayer meetings in different homes and in our mid-week service here at the church to engage in seasons of earnest prayer.

Prayer implies two things, namely, that man is dependent, and that man is capable of fellowship with God. Prayer is an avowal of our creature dependence. It is an expression of man's sense of helplessness and dependence. It also implies that God is interested in man and his welfare. Prayer is laying hold of God's will rather than man's will. Prayer is far more than asking God for something. Prayer is putting ourselves at God's disposal to do what He wills in and with and through us.

What are some of the elements of prayer. One element is that of adoration. This is the act of approaching God with a becoming sense of His goodness, greatness, majesty, and glory. Adoration includes reverence, esteem, and love. A second element of prayer is confession. Confession of sin is necessary. Prayers will not be answered as long as sin is unconfessed. God's Word says: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). It is easy to see and confess the faults of others, and some delight to do this, but the ones who do so resent their being mentioned, or deny that they have committed them.

A third element of prayer is that of thanksgiving. How thankful we should be for what God has done for us! He has created us, sustained us, preserved our lives, protected us from harm, redeemed us, saved us, blessed us, and used us in His service. We should be grateful to Him for what He has promised to do for, in, with, and through us. A fourth element of prayer is intercession. Prayer reaches its peak in intercession, which is the act of one pleading for another. This is both a privilege and an obligation, the neglect of which is sin. A fifth element of prayer is petition. This is the making of specific requests for definite objects. None of us can improve upon the prayer of the Chinese Christian: "Lord, send a revival, and let it begin in me." We must realize that we are dependent upon God for power. When we try to do things in the energy of the flesh, God refuses to bless us and to use us.

Prayer is a duty that we owe to God, to others, and to ourselves. It is as necessary to the soul as food is to the body. Through it we get renewed strength, heavenly wisdom, greater love, and a closer walk with God. Prayer is also a precious privilege. Of all God's creatures, man only is permitted to ask of God. Christ said: "Ask and ye shall receive." Prayer is the greatest resource of any life. The mightiest thing that any Christian can do is to pray. Prayer pleases God. When His children pray, it brings great joy to His heart. Then, prayer accomplishes so much. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). By prayer we fasten God's omnipotence to our impotence. Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God. A Christian can conquer anything by prayer, but he does not have any power without it.

The prayer that God can answer must come from the heart and lips of one who knows Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour, it must be made in faith, it must be made to God in the name of Christ, it must be made in an unselfish spirit, it must be for something that is needed, it must be for the glory of God, it must come from a life that is being lived in obedience to God's will and commands, and it must be prayed by one who is willing to help God answer his own prayer. No praying means no results, little praying means a few results, and much praying of the right sort means great results. Let us pray personally, earnestly, believingly, and perseveringly.