



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)

March 2, 2025

Jump Start # 3696

Daniel 9:23 "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision."

There are places in both Job and Psalms where the silence of God is bothersome. Prayers are uttered and nothing. Just silence. The Psalms and Job question whether God is a stranger. We build upon those passages to help us understand that our prayers may not bring an immediate response from Heaven. In His time, we tell each other.

But, how rarely do we consider the other side of that topic. Our verse bears that out. Rather than silence, before the prayer is finished, God has sent an answer. Notice the expressions in our verse today. At the beginning of your supplications...not at the end. At the beginning, as you started praying, the command was issued. God responded immediately.

Another example of a rapid and quick response to prayer is in the example of Hezekiah. In 2 Kings 20, the prophet Isaiah is sent to tell the king to get his house in order because he is going to die. Hezekiah turns to the wall and prays. Before Isaiah left the palace, the Lord told the prophet to turn around and go back and speak to the king again. "I have heard your prayer and I have seen your tears; behold I will heal you." An immediate response to prayer.

Some thoughts for us:

First, the response time to a prayer is up to God. Why did Daniel and Hezekiah get such quick answers from Heaven and at times the Psalmist waited and waited for a response? There are things we simply do not know. I don't think it is about what was prayed. Some things take a higher priority than other things, that may be how we operate down here, but God is capable of answering all prayers immediately.

Nor ought we to think that God favors some or some are in better standing than others. Are we to think that Daniel was more righteous than Job? Both are illustrated in Ezekiel 14 along with Noah as being very righteous. God said that there was no one on the face of the earth like Job. We cannot

(OVER)

conclude that the more righteous one is, the faster his prayers are answered.

Second, as a parent teaches a child patience by making them wait, it may well be that the Lord does the same to us. While we wait, we are to trust. While we wait, we look to the Lord and not the problems and trials. God made a promise to Abraham that was not fulfilled for more than two decades.

While we wait for God to answer our prayer, do we become discouraged? Do we get angry with the Lord? Do we stop worshipping? We like an immediate response, but waiting may be better for our character and faith.

Third, in His grand sermon, Jesus reminds us, "your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." So, God doesn't have to hear all the prayer before He knows what He should do. In fact, God knows before we ask. The question arises, if God knows, then why even pray? He knows. The answer to that is that the Lord wants us to pray. Prayer shows our dependence upon Him. Prayer reminds us that He is in control, not us. Prayer teaches that God is greater than we are and God is greater than any of our troubles.

At the beginning of the prayer, the command was issued. God moved quickly. God sent Gabriel to deliver a message to Daniel. That transition is amazing to us. We send a text or an email and we wait. Texts and email are much faster than writing and mailing a letter. The person receiving may be busy at the moment and not see our message for a while. They may have to think about how they will respond to us.

Daniel prayed. At the start of his prayer, a command was issue and Gabriel was sent. I don't know where Heaven is at. I cannot even guess, using earth measurements of miles, how far Heaven is from earth. Our words reach Heaven immediately. And, immediately, an angel is sent. Faster than you can drive to a store, fly to another city, Gabriel was there. The next verse reads, "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel...came to me" (21). The prayer wasn't finished. Daniel was still praying and Gabriel showed up.

Heaven can be quick.

Something to think about as you pray.

Roger
