

## 219 Stating our Case

In recent Weekly Reflections we have been considering how we can bring our own prayer habits more into line with the Lord's wishes, that our prayers may become more effective in His service in these challenging times. We do not have to look too far into God's Word to find numerous examples of sound prayer habits and answered prayers.

In Deuteronomy 9 for example is recorded for our benefit Moses' address to the people as they stood on the verge of Jordan, looking across into the Promised Land. As always, Moses does not "pull his punches" with the people! – for he knows them all too well (see Deuteronomy 9.7 and following). He reminds them how he "fell down before the Lord", fasting and pleading for the sinful people for forty days and forty nights, for he was so afraid of the "anger and hot displeasure" of the Lord" against them (vv 18-19). See how he was able to say, from experience, "But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also".

But the people had just gone on in their God-defying, sinful ways (v 24) – "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you", prompting Moses to fall down before the Lord for forty days and forty nights a second time (v 25): that is not a bad example of what to "pray without ceasing" can involve!

And look at the content of Moses' desperate, persistent prayer here (vv 26-29). At the start Moses addresses the Lord by His proper name and title - "O Lord God" – the God who is sovereign, righteous, in charge, and on this occasion angry! The headline of Moses' "asking prayer" is clear and to the point – "please Lord, do not destroy thy people ...". Then he states his case – another vital prayer principle for us - showing the Lord the solid grounds for Moses' plea on behalf of the wayward people: they are the Lord's people and inheritance; He has redeemed them through His own greatness; He has brought them forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand (v 26).

Moses pleads with the Lord to remember His former servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to "look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin" (v 27). Again this pleading is backed up: were the Lord to act in judgement on His people, the Egyptians could sneer that the Lord only did this because He was not able to bring them into the land He had promised to them after all; and indeed, because He hated them so much, He had only brought them out into the wilderness to destroy them anyway (v 28). Moses finishes his prayer where he started – the people for whom he is pleading are the Lord's people and inheritance, who were brought out of bondage by His own mighty power and stretched-out arm (v 29).

So we see from this example that Moses is reverent, earnest and clear as to Whom he is speaking, as to what he is asking, and in “stating his case” as to why he believes that the Lord should grant his requests.

Interestingly we see that this “stating his case” is nothing about Moses himself, is very little about the people themselves, and is largely about the Lord Himself – His power, faithfulness and glory. That still applies in our asking prayers today. The Lord loves us also to “state our case” before Him as to why we believe He should grant our prayer requests, rehearsing before Him as we do so His promises and His character. When all is said and done, our prayers, like those of Moses, are hardly about us, or even about the people or concerns within our prayers, but about the Lord and His glory.

For the Day is coming when Almighty God, now fully revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be acknowledged by His creation in all His glory as being Who He truly is – summed up in these simple words repeated dozens of times in Scripture, “They shall know that I am the Lord”. So the more our asking prayers can “fall into step” with this direction and destination of the Lord, then the more effective they will be, in their small way, in bringing that wonderful Day to pass.

No wonder we end our prayers with those words that say it all - “Lord, may thy will be done!”.

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