

The Thorn Remained

"Three times I besought the Lord
about this, that it should leave me"
(2 Corinthians 12:8)



PAUL had a thorn in the flesh. The Bible does not say what it was, but this "stake" (for that is what the word means) indicates savage pain and physical suffering. It was so distressing that Paul earnestly prayed about the matter *three* times. (It is necessary to persevere trustingly in prayer according to Luke 11:8). What was the result? The thorn remained!

You have been taught, "Ask and ye shall receive." You have been reminded, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." You believe in God and His ability to answer prayer, but time and again your special request has gone unanswered. You expected *asking* to be followed by *having*, but such was not the case. Being a practical person, you relegated prayer to the background as a useless expenditure of time. You ceased to pray.

Now a word or two about Paul's prayer. First, God answered his prayer. God said, "No." Second, the Lord informed Paul that it was better for him that the thorn remain. Third, God gave the revelation of a better way: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

The prayers of God's people are not unheard, nor unheeded. But every believer must learn the lesson that God's answer to a particular petition, as with Paul, may be "no," plus the revelation of some better way.

Harold Lindsell has written, "Beloved, God may send you a thorn which He does not intend to remove. Others may be blessed by your distress. But God does not leave His children in distress. He will give you grace to bear it and glory for Himself worth far more than the thorn. Rejoice in your thorn, for it brings with it the rose in all its beauty."
- John Gipson

DON'T GIVE UP PRAYER

Prayer is communication! It's communication with God! A wonderful privilege! Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, it is laying hold of His highest willingness.

Truly, "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." In the fourth chapter of Philippians, Paul says to "worry about nothing" and "pray about everything." Nothing is too great for His power; nothing is too small for His Fatherly care.

God hears! God answers! Jesus told several parables with the simple, but emphatic message ... God answers prayer! (Luke 11:5-13; Luke 18:1-8).

Jesus teaches us how to pray. The pulse of prayer is praise. "Hallowed by thy name."

The heart of prayer is gratitude. "In everything give thanks" (1 Thess. 5:18). We let our requests be made known to God "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:6).

The voice of prayer is obedience. "Thy will be done." Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies beyond God's will.

The arm of prayer is service. Prayer fails when we expect God to do things for us which He desires to do through us. Put action into prayer. That which is prefaced by prayer should be punctuated by practice.
- Charles Cash, *Bulletin Digest*

By perseverance, the snail reached the ark. - Charles Spurgeon

News & Notes

CARE & SHARE BEARS: Resumes this Tuesday, June 27th at 9:00 a.m. All ladies are invited to participate.

BIBLE STUDY: This Wednesday, June 28th instead of song practice.

MEN'S BREAKFAST: Next Saturday, July 1st, 8:00 a.m. at Connie's Corner.

NURSING HOME DEVOTIONAL: Next Saturday, July 1st, 2:30 p.m. at Fox.

CONGREGATIONAL COVERED DISH DINNER: Next Sunday, July 2nd at about 12:00 noon at the Multipurpose Building. All are invited.

SUMMER BIBLE CAMP: July 10-15 at Tomlinson Run State Park. Turn in camp applications ASAP. If you can help teach at the camp, sign up on the sheet on the desk in the foyer.

CHESTER'S AREA WIDE SONG SERVICE: Friday, July 14th, 7:00 p.m.

PANTRY ITEM: Toilet paper & soap.

SICK & SHUT-IN: Melissa Barr, Eva Stefl, David McCoy, Betty Henthorne, Blondenia Orr, Doris Dunham, Lewis Call (Cindy Miskimen's dad). **WEIR-TON MEDICAL CENTER:** Bill Robinson. **LIFELINE, WINTERSVILLE, OH:** Jim Smith. **CLEVELAND CLINIC:** Connie Goppert (Eva Stefl's daughter-in-law). **FOX NURSING HOME:** Mary Nelson. **CROSSROADS:** Sarah Miller, Jim Mick. **CALCUTTA HEALTH CARE:** Ella Beagle. **IN FLORIDA:** Ilene Rayl.

REMEMBER WITH PRAYER & CARDS: **Susie Haught** (daughter-in-law of Skip & Sue), 220 Rexroad Drive, Weston, WV 26452. **Margie Chisler** (Peggy Williams' sister), 1596 Daybrook Road, Fairview, WV 26570. **Angie Malcolmson** (daughter-in-law of David & Janet), 2322 S. 8th Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546.

AND GOD SAID NO

I asked God to take away my pride, and God said, "No." He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole, and God said, "No." He said her spirit is whole; her body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience, and God said, "No." He said that patience is a by-product of tribulation; it isn't granted, it's earned.

I asked God to give me happiness, and God said, "No." He said He gives blessings; happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain, and God said, "No." He said suffering draws me apart from worldly cares and brings me closer to Him.

I asked God to make my spirit grow, and God said, "No." He said I must grow on my own, but He will prune me to make me fruitful.

I asked God to help me love others as much as He loves me, and God said, "Ah, finally you have the idea."
- Claudia Minden Weisz

God does not always answer yes
To every prayer I pray;
Sometimes He answers, "No, My child,
I have a better way." - Sherbert