

YOUR PRAYER MATTERS

(Fifty Days of Prayer for the Coming of the Holy Spirit; Message Four)

Revelation 8:1-7a

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

²*And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*

³*Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.*

⁶*Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.*

⁷*The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. (Revelation 8:1-7)*

⁹*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed. (Revelation 6:9-11)*

A. Revelation 6 is a statement of hope the midst of the pain of life

B. Revelation 8 is about how prayer transforms world events

THE SILENCE (8:1)

A. God listens

B. The prayers of the faithful must be heard

THE SITUATION [8:2,6)

A. Our prayers can be traumatic, transforming and powerful

B. God takes our prayers seriously; we should take our prayers seriously

THE SPOT (8:3)

³*Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.*

⁵*Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. (Hebrews 9:3-5)*

A. The omni - presence of God

B. The special presence of God

THE SACRIFICE (8:4)

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:2)

²*But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. (Hebrews 10:14)*

A. The work of Christ for our salvation is finished - Tetelestai

B. Our prayers are mingled with the blood of Christ (8:3,4)

C. Our prayers become a sweet fragrance before God

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. (2 Cor 2:14)

D. Our prayers become as the cry of a child to his/her father

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba Father." (Romans 8:15)

THE SEQUEL (8:5)

A. God helps us pray

²⁶*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:26-27)*

B. God works everything out perfectly

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

C. God responds to the prayers of his saints (8:5; 8:7ff)

THE SUMMARY

A. Our prayers matter to God

B. Our prayers appeal to the heart and grace of God

C. History is transformed when we (his saints) pray