

IN YOUR CLOSET

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18, ESV

April, 2021

At Easter we remember God's provision of Jesus, the Son and our Savior, as the perfect and final sacrifice for our sins. So John 3:16 does become the cornerstone for our salvation. As we pray, meditation on these pivotal words of promise should provide us with solid material for our prayers.

For God so loved the world . . .

These are the words which rocked Nicodemus' world that night Jesus shared them with him. Never had he imagined such hopeful, such dynamic, such life-changing words. They essentially exploded in one moment all that he had so painstakingly built his life upon . . .

**. . . that he gave his
one and only son . . .**

This is the height, the depth, and the breadth of the love of God. He chose to give to this world his one and only son.

. . . that whoever believes in him . . .

So, it all comes down to believing, and this believing is prepared for by God's calling through His Word, through His Living Word (that is Jesus), through His Holy Spirit wooing, convicting, even pleading, and through the wondrous created world around us—ultimately this believing is accepting God's unspeakable gift of Himself.

. . . shall not perish . . .

This instantaneous, this once-and-for-all act of faith and belief, opens up our entire being to Jesus' own entering in and beginning eternal, forever-and-forever fellowship with us—reversing the inevitable death and separation from our Maker and our Savior which had been taking place—now it's a miracle of resurrection, re-birth, and rejoicing going on in our whole hearts, souls, minds and strengths.

. . . but have eternal life . . .

This is the most extraordinary promise ever. God will give "whoever believes in Jesus" eternal life—life removed from the ups and downs and the good days and the bad days and the merely living and dying and the pondering and wondering and all that goes with our old and always struggling lives—He will freely give us rather, eternal life, secure and fulfilled and loved and directed and protected by Him—reborn into life as God Eternal, the Beloved Father, and Creator, always wanted us to live. We are irretrievably His and He is ours.

**Our prayers to Him are our rich and rare
privilege as those His Love
welcomes by His Son
into the blessings
of eternal life.**

If prayer is a privilege, and it most certainly is—it is so rare a gift, it brings with it a sense of awe, a reverence born of humble gratitude, and a sense of opportunity which cannot be ignored.



We, who are deeply marred by our selfish sinfulness and disobedience, suddenly discover ourselves cleansed, reborn from the very doom of death into resurrection power for worshipping our good and holy God and serving others in His blessed Name.

We are invited, welcomed into His Presence. Even as He redeems us He invites our praise, our confession, our thanksgiving, and our requests.

Because we are His children His love invites us into a miraculous sense of relationship which encourages us to open up all our hearts and minds to Him who is not only our Holy God but also our loving Father.

As His children we should pray, not because we have to, but because we want to—to tell our Father everything; good, bad, and in between.

This loving prayer relationship reflects our personal faith relationship based solely on God's provision and our acceptance. It all begins with God's perfecting love offered by His grace and our acceptance. So, it's God-loving and our responding. It's all about His glory and our absolute dependence on His goodness and mercy.

How, then, can we not pray, when we are being given such a privilege? When we are given such a bountiful gift, will we refuse to use that gift?

We need to remember the remarkable opportunity we are freely given, as John 3: 16 proclaims. Through Jesus, we have, not earth-bound, temporal life, but eternal life. The ears of Heaven are our Father's ears.

Our Father's Ears

**Our Father's ears are bending near,
His love is beckoning us,
He draws us close and holds us
dear
inviting us to trust.**

**Our father's heart is keen to hear
the thoughts which fill our minds,
our deepest hopes, our dreams, our
fears;
His mercies we will find.**

**Our father's arms are reaching out
to draw us close to Him
if we will put away our doubts—
He welcomes us to Heaven.**