

PRAYER AND FASTING

BIBLE TEXT : Genesis 18:23-32; 32:9-12, 24-28; Isaiah 58:1-11; Daniel 9:3; 10:1-3, 10-12; Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-17; Matthew 6:16-18; Luke 18:1-14

LESSON 267 **Senior Courses**

MEMORY VERSE: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 18:23-32

²³ And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

²⁴ Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

²⁵ That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

²⁶ And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

²⁷ And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes:

²⁸ Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of* five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

²⁹ And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

³⁰ And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

³¹ And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

³² And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

Genesis 32:9-12

⁹ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Abraham's Intercession

- 1 Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah, entreating the Lord to spare them, if 50 righteous persons were found in them, Genesis 18:13-26;

James 5:16-18

¹⁶ **Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**

¹⁷ **Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.**

¹⁸ **And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.**

- 2 Abraham continued to intercede until the number was brought down to ten, Genesis 18:27-33

II Jacob's Prevailing Prayer

- 1 Jacob humbled himself before God and prayed for deliverance, Genesis 32:9-12
- 2 Jacob wrestled all night with the angel in prevailing prayer, Genesis 32:24-28;

Ephesians 6:12

¹² **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

III Daniel's Prayer for Israel

- 1 Daniel's desire was for the restoration of Israel,

Daniel 9:1-3

¹ **In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;**

² **In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**

³ **And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:**

Jeremiah 29:10

¹⁰ **For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.**

2 Chronicles 36:21

²¹ **To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.**

- 2 Daniel prayed and fasted and received assurance that his prayer was heard, Daniel 10:1-3, 10-12;

Romans 8:16

¹⁶ **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

1 John 3:24

²⁴ **And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in**

mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

¹¹ Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children.

¹² And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Genesis 32:24-28

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

²⁵ And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

²⁶ And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

²⁷ And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob.

²⁸ And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Isaiah 58:1-11

¹ Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

³ Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

⁴ Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

⁶ *Is not this* the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the

him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 5:6

⁶ **This is he that came by water and blood, *even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.***

IV Fasting

1 The Lord shows the difference between a hypocritical fast and the fast He has chosen, Isaiah 58:1-11; Matthew 6:16-18

2 We are to seek for God's salvation and not our own self-justification, Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-17; Luke 18:9-14

3 The Lord will avenge His own elect, Luke 18:1-8

4 The early Church fasted at special times when asking God for guidance and particular enduement,

Acts 13:2-3

² **As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.**

³ **And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their hands on them, they sent them away.***

Acts 14:23

²³ **And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.**

5 Paul fasted frequently,

2 Corinthians 6:5

⁵ **In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;**

2 Corinthians 11:27

²⁷ **In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.**

NOTES:

Fasting

Fasting has, in all ages and among all nations, been much in use in times of mourning, sorrow, and affliction. Its rightful purpose has always been to chasten and humble the soul and help one draw near to God that he might obtain some particular request or favor from the Lord (**Psalm 35:13** ¹³ **But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. Psalm 69:10** ¹⁰ **When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach**). No fast was specified in the Mosaic Law, and from Scripture we can see that all fasting was to be voluntary in character, as the individual felt called by God to observe or do.

Many men of God have fasted when they have been burdened with, some specific problem. Therefore, we can see that fasting is peculiarly fitted to days of mourning, affliction, or when spiritual burdens are heavy upon us. One such instance took place when the Israelites were defeated by the men of the little city of Ai. Realizing that God was displeased with them and that He had allowed the small army to rout the superior force of the Israelites, Joshua rent his clothes; and he, with the elders of Israel, remained prostrate before the Ark of the Lord from morning until evening without eating.

The fact that the heathen sometimes fast proves that the natural heart of man recognizes this means of approach to God. The king of Nineveh, terrified by Jonah's preaching, proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth and sat in ashes. He published throughout the city that neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, should taste anything. He commanded: "Let them not feed, nor

oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

⁷ *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

⁸ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

⁹ Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

¹⁰ And *if* thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noonday:

¹¹ And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Daniel 9:3

³ And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Daniel 10:1-3

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

³ I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Daniel 10:10-12

¹⁰ And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands.

¹¹ And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee *am* I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

¹² Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten

drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:5-9).

The Lord did repent and spared the great city of Nineveh and all its people because the king on his throne and the people of the city fasted and prayed. These people brought forth "fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-12). They prayed sincerely. They did not fast to be seen of men. They wanted to be seen by God and to receive His favor. God heard, them and answered them, for He has "no pleasure in'the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11).

During the ministry of Jesus here on earth, a father brought his son to Jesus' disciples for healing. The son was a lunatic, and the disciples could not heal him even though they prayed earnestly that it might be done. But when the father brought the son to Jesus, the devil was cast out and the boy was delivered. Then the disciples asked Jesus why they could, not cast the devil out of the lad. Jesus said it was because of their unbelief; but He added, for their encouragement and instruction: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." This proves to us the value of fasting, when it is done in the proper way and in an attitude that , is pleasing to God.

Hypocritical Fasting

The Pharisees used fasting as an outward show of piety. They wanted to be seen of men. They thought very little of their lack of a true attitude of contrition. Their everyday life was not consistent with their profession of religion, They paid no attention to their inward condition, spiritually speaking, for they were full of all kinds of sin and unrighteousness. Yet they fasted and made long prayers in public places so those who saw them would think them to be very holy and devout.

Jesus despised the hypocritical fasts and rebuked the ones who fasted in that manner, by saying: "Be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast." Fasting done in this manner is of no spiritual value. Jesus declared that these people already had their reward. They sought the honor and applause of men and did not seek for the honor that cometh from God only (John 5:44). Jesus told His disciples that when they fasted they were to appear as though they were not doing so, but were to do so to God alone. Their reward would then be great in Heaven.

Isaiah voiced the same reproof for the Children of Israel's dependence on only the outward forms of religion. He showed them that they were more zealous for the outward acts than the inward holiness that those acts could have produced in their lives. They fasted and made a semblance of praying but went on in their same sinful ways. And when they received no answer, they said: "Wherefore have we fasted,... and thou seest not?" God defined fasting in His answer, when He said: "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?" (Isaiah 58:5-7). The Lord made plain to Israel, and

thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Joel 1:13-15

¹³ Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

¹⁴ Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

¹⁵ Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Joel 2:1-17

¹ Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

² A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

³ A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

⁴ The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

⁵ Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

⁶ Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

⁷ They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

⁸ Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

⁹ They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

¹⁰ The earth shall quake before them; the

to us, the kind of fast He approved; and He promised that if they, and we, would fast in that manner He would hear and answer.

When to Fast

The devil is ever on the alert for an opportunity to overthrow the faith of honest souls. At times he has induced people to fanatical and long periods of fasting which endanger the health God has given them. That kind of fasting is not the will of God. Some people try to fast when their bodies are already in a weakened condition because of a previous or present illness and when they are unable to stand the strain that the abstinence from food puts upon them physically. This is definitely not pleasing to God. The Bible tells us that whatever we do we should do to the glory and honor of God. Fanaticism never glorifies God. Actions that bring reproach on the cause and name of God do not glorify Him. A disregard for the health God has given one, when this is done as a result of pride or self-esteem, does not glorify God.

Jesus never gave a specific injunction or commandment to His disciples to fast but said, when speaking prophetically, that after He went away they would do so (**Matthew 9:15** ¹⁵ **And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast**). A fast will bring the sought-for results as God sees they are best for us, if done so as not to endanger one's health; if done in the right manner — to the honor and glory, of God; at the right time — as the Holy Spirit leads; with sincerity and deep spiritual desire and prayer (**Romans 8:26-27** ²⁶ **Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.** ²⁷ **And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God**). However, some feel that the Words of Jesus show that He considered a three-day period without food sufficient in length for a faster to undertake (**Matthew 15:32** ³² **Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way**).

Abraham's Intercession

When God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He said He would not hide that which He was going to do from His faithful servant, Abraham. Abraham stood before the Lord, having a confidence that the Lord would do nothing unjustly. Abraham drew near to God by faith, and in the most devout and humble manner made supplication for the righteous in the cities.

Abraham asked God if 50 righteous were found in the city, would He still destroy the city? The Lord said He would spare the city for 50, if they could be found there. For fear there would not be that many, Abraham changed the number to 45, and the Lord said that He would hold back His judgment for the benefit of the 45, The concern Abraham had for his nephew, Lot, caused him still to plead with God. He asked that the number be lowered to 40, then to 30, and finally to ten. The Lord said, in answer to Abraham's last request, that He would spare the cities for ten. Notice that as long as Abraham continued his supplications the Lord continued to answer the prayers of that godly man of faith. The Holy Spirit, through James, said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

¹¹ And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

¹² Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

¹³ And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

¹⁴ Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

¹⁶ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

¹⁷ Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where *is* their God?

Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

¹⁷ But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

¹⁸ That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Luke 18:1-14

¹ And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

² Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

³ And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

⁴ And he would not for a while: but

Daniel's Supplications

Daniel was a godly man — a man of earnest prayer — and while reading a copy of Jeremiah's prophecy that had been placed in his hands he saw that the time of the promised deliverance for the captive Jews was near at hand. Yet he could see nothing that would indicate that the promise was soon to be carried out. There was no visible sign that his people would ever be set free. But Daniel began earnestly to seek God for the speedy deliverance of Israel, "by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). We are told that from the first day that Daniel began to pray, the Lord heard and started the answer on the way to him (**Daniel 10:1-3** ¹ **In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.** ² **In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.** ³ **I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.** Daniel 10:12 ¹² **Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words).**

When dedicating the Temple, Solomon had prayed that if the Children of Israel were ever taken captive into a foreign land, and there would pray and confess their sins and turn from their evil ways and seek the face of the Lord, the Lord would hear their prayer for their restoration to their own land and forgive them for their sins (**1 Kings 8:33-34** ³³ **When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:** ³⁴ **Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.** **2 Chronicles 6:34-39** ³⁴ **If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name;** ³⁵ **Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.** ³⁶ **If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;** ³⁷ **Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly;** ³⁸ **If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name:** ³⁹ **Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.**). Daniel used every means possible to humble himself, by clothing himself in sackcloth, putting ashes on his head, fasting, and praying with all the earnestness of his soul. He prayed sincerely and for the honor of God alone, and God heard and sent the promised deliverance.

The Teachings of Jesus

Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Although *tie* was the Son of God, Jesus felt His need of communion with the Father and spent many whole nights in prayer. He taught importunity in prayer by giving us the parable of the poor widow and the unjust judge. He also gave us an

afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

⁵ Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

⁶ And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

⁷ And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

⁸ I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

⁹ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

example of intercessory prayer when He prayed on that dark night just before He gave His life's blood for the salvation of a lost world. Jesus took His disciples and went to the Garden of Gethsemane; and leaving them for a little while that He might be alone, He went a short distance away and prayed. He was in extreme agony of soul "and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22: 39-46). Three times Jesus went away and prayed and each time He came back to find the disciples sleeping, but He had settled it in His heart that the will of the Father would be done.

There is nothing that the devil hates more than prayer. It is said that "the devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees." Prayer is the Christian's life line. When that life line is severed the soul dies. The Word of God tells us that the prayers of the saints ascend as incense before God.

There is power in prayer. We are taught that by example and precept in the Old Testament and in the New. Jacob wrestled all night in prayer with the angel and would not let him go until he was blessed.

"Would God that more people would pray, For 'tis prayer that moves mountains away; Those mountains of doubt are sure to move out, If unceasingly, brother, you pray."

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why are prayer and fasting classed together?
- 2 What prompts a person to pray or fast?
- 3 Did the disciples of Jesus fast often? How did Jesus tell them they were to appear when they did fast?
- 4 Why did Daniel fast?
- 5 Explain what is meant by intercessory prayer.
- 6 Did Jesus teach that we should pray in an intercessory manner? Tell in your own words what Jesus said about prayer.
- 7 Who prayed to be seen of men? and what was their reward to be?
- 8 When did these men receive their reward? What reward would they have in Heaven?