

Some Thoughts on Intercession
Sunday, July 26, 2020 at The First Congregational Church of
Marshalltown, Iowa

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Introduction

Awhile back I mentioned an insight by Steven Frye, a worship leader and pastor who noted that leadership is valuable, but servanthood is eternal, part of the interaction of the Trinity and thus part of the very nature of God. So I noticed in our main passage this morning that there is another activity that, like servanthood, is eternal and is part of the very nature of God.

intercession

There are different names for different types of prayer. There is praise, which is one of the highest forms of prayer, it is prayer that rehearses before God His own attributes. It is telling God who He is. Confession is telling God who we are, including (but not exclusive to) owning our own rebellion and sins. Thanksgiving is acknowledging what God has done, and supplication is asking. Intercession is supplication for others; family, friends, leaders, the community and our church. It is coming before someone and making a case for the benefit of another person. It is Abraham making a case for mercy for Sodom for the benefit of his nephew Lot and his family. It is Moses lifting his hands in prayer for Israel during battle. It is speaking with God for others, knowing that God can speak things into existence.

The Spirit intercedes for us, and the Son intercedes for us

In our text we find two variations of the same word, and in the text we note that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, and also the Son intercedes for

us. The Spirit, living inside of us, experiencing life and the emotions thereof just as we do, prays on our behalf with "groanings that cannot be uttered"; in other words, the Spirit prays for us with a depth and intelligence that we cannot even grasp, much less replicate. So God intercedes for us in the moments of our lives, right here on earth. Jesus also intercedes for us, seated on the right hand of God the Father. So in the mind of God, beyond any comprehension, each of our names is pondered. The God who controls the minutes actions of the entire universe is at the same time intimately aware and concentrated on your life right now.

Application: Like servanthood, intercession is part of the very nature of God. It is eternal. How important then, that we should earnestly pray for one another. We tend to think of taking a list of our church membership and praying through that list, bringing every name before the throne of God as a nice spiritual discipline. It is, but it is more than that. Thinking of it as a spiritual discipline alone does not go far enough. By praying for others you enter into activity that is at the very heart of God and it is something that is arguably the most important activity you can do. Both the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus make it a major part of their schedule. I notice that people who do not claim to follow Christ still welcome prayer for their trials for the most part. There are exceptions, but they are few.

Conclusion

Servanthood, as said before, is of enormous importance, demonstrated by the fact that it is part of the very nature of the Trinity. So also, is intercession. When we go before the throne of God in prayer on behalf of another we are doing the same thing that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Himself do and they make it a priority. If so, then time praying for others is never a wasted endeavor.