

Outline of the Messages for the Thanksgiving Conference

November 26-29, 2009

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE PRAYER OF THE AGE

Message Six

The Prayer of Intercession

Scripture Reading: Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Acts 12:5; Col. 1:9; 4:2

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Acts 12:5 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him.

Col. 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of *it*, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Col. 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

I. In His heavenly ministry Christ is interceding, and we need to respond to His intercession—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1-2:

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Col. 3:1-2 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.

A. In Romans 8:34 Christ intercedes for us to be glorified (vv. 17, 30), and in Hebrews 7:25 Christ intercedes for us so that we may be saved to the uttermost; being saved to the uttermost is the equivalent of glorification.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rom. 8:17 And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

Rom. 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

B. Christ is our High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek, interceding for us—5:10; 7:24-26:

Heb. 7:24-26 But He, because He abides forever, has His priesthood unalterable. **25** Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them. **26** For such a High Priest was also fitting

to us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and having become higher than the heavens,

1. Christ died for us, He was resurrected, and now He is in the heavens interceding for us and caring for us; God has appointed Him to take care of us, and He is now taking care of us by interceding for us—Rom. 8:34.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

2. As the One who intercedes for us, the Lord is able to save us to the uttermost, that is, completely, entirely, perfectly, for all time and eternity, and to the end—Heb. 7:25.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

3. Christ undertakes our case by interceding for us; He appears before God on our behalf, praying for us that we may be saved and brought fully into God's eternal purpose—1 John 2:1; Heb. 9:24; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

Heb. 9:24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;

Eph. 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

2 Tim. 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages

- C. Christ's intercession requires our response; we need to become on earth the reflection of Christ's intercession in His heavenly ministry, praying the prayers of the interceding Christ—Rom. 8:26-27, 34.

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

II. In order to respond to Christ's heavenly intercession, we need to know the significance of the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10:

Exo. 30:1-10 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. **2** Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of *one piece with it*. **3** And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around *it* and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around *it*. **4** And you shall make for it two rings of gold under its rim; on its two sides, on its opposite sides, you shall make *them*; and they shall be as holders for poles with which to carry it. **5** And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. **6** And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before the expiation cover that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you. **7** And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it. **8** And when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations. **9** You shall not offer any strange incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it. **10** And Aaron shall make expiation on its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of expiation once a year he shall make expiation for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Jehovah.

- A. The incense altar is a type not of Christ's prayer but of His person; it signifies Christ praying, Christ interceding—Heb. 7:25.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

- B. The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people; without such an interceding Christ, the proper relationship between God and us could not exist and could not be maintained—Exo. 30:1-6; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1.

Exo. 30:1-6 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. **2** Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of *one piece with it*. **3** And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around *it* and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around *it*. **4** And you shall make for it two rings of gold under its rim; on its two sides, on its opposite sides, you shall make *them*; and they shall be as holders for poles with which to carry it. **5** And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. **6** And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before the expiation cover that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

- C. Today the intercessor is not merely Christ Himself but Christ with His Body; as members of the Body of Christ, we should participate in Christ's interceding life by praying in Him as the golden incense altar—Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 1:9; 4:3, 12:

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Eph. 6:18-19 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints, **19** And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Col. 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of *it*, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Col. 4:3 Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

1. After His resurrection and ascension, the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ; thus, before God today not only is the individual Christ interceding, but the corporate Christ, the Head with the Body, is interceding as well—1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 12:5, 12.

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

Acts 12:5 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him.

Acts 12:12 And when he became aware of *this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying.

2. Christ the Head is interceding in the heavens, and the church the Body is interceding on earth—Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Acts 12:5, 12.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Acts 12:5 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him.

Acts 12:12 And when he became aware of *this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying.

3. As the members of Christ and parts of the Body-Christ, we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession, carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession—Rom. 8:26-27, 34; Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:1.

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

Rom. 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Heb. 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

1 Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;

III. The interceding Spirit helps us, sympathizes with us, sustains us, comforts us, and supports us by interceding for us—Rom. 8:26-27:

Rom. 8:26-27 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

- A. The Spirit, who indwells us, helps us in our weakness; in particular, the weakness referred to in Romans 8:26 is weakness in prayer:

Rom. 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered.

1. Because we are weak in God's interest and in the divine things and do not know what kind of prayer God desires, the indwelling Spirit works in us to help us in our weakness in praying.
2. The Spirit joins in to help us "in like manner"; in whatever manner we are, He also is—v. 26a.

Rom. 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered.

3. The Spirit helps us in every kind of situation, for He knows our needs, problems, and shortcomings, and He sympathizes with us, supports us, and sustains us.
- B. The Spirit intercedes for us with groanings in our manner—v. 26b:

Rom. 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help *us* in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered.

1. Apparently, this is our groaning, but in our groaning is the groaning of the Spirit.
2. While we are groaning from deep within our spirit, the Spirit, who dwells in our spirit, joins in with our groaning, interceding for us mainly that we would have the transformation in life for growth in life unto maturity.

- C. As the Spirit works in us by helping us in our weakness and by interceding for us, He infuses His according-to-God mind into us in our prayer—v. 27:

Rom. 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

1. Ephesians 4:23 speaks of the spirit of the mind, but Romans 8:27 speaks of the mind of the Spirit; the spirit of the mind is for renewing, and the mind of the Spirit is for interceding.

Eph. 4:23 And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Rom. 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

2. The Spirit's mind is mingled with our mind; our mind is set on the spirit, making our mind one with the mind of the Spirit—vv. 6, 27.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

IV. In Acts 12 we have the intercessory prayer of the church, and in Colossians 1:9-11, the intercessory prayer of the apostle Paul:

Acts 12:1-25 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some from the church in order to mistreat them. **2** And he did away with James, the brother of John, with the sword. **3** And when he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he went on to arrest Peter also (now *those* were the days of Unleavened Bread), **4** Whom also he seized and put in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. **5** So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him. **6** And when Herod was about to bring him forward, that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards before the door were keeping the prison. **7** And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shined in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and roused him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off his hands. **8** And the angel said to him, Gird yourself and tie on your sandals. And he did so. And he said to him, Throw your cloak around *you* and follow me. **9** And he went out and followed *him*; yet he did not know that what was taking place through the angel was real, but thought that he was seeing a vision. **10** And passing the first guard and the second, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened of itself to them. And going out, they went forward one lane; and immediately the angel departed from him. **11** And Peter came to himself and said, Now I know truly that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me out of Herod's hand and from all the expectation of the Jewish people. **12** And when he became aware of *this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying. **13** And when he knocked at the door of the entry, a maiden named Rhoda came to listen. **14** And when she recognized Peter's voice, she did not open the gate for joy, but ran in and reported that Peter was standing before the entry. **15** But they said to her, You are crazy! But she insisted that it was so. And they said, It is his angel. **16** But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened *the gate*, they saw him and were beside themselves. **17** And motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison, and he said, Report these things to James and the brothers. And going out, he went to another place. **18** Now when it became day, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers, *they not knowing* what had become of Peter. **19** And when Herod searched for him and did not find *him*, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led off *to execution*. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time *there*. **20** Now he was furious with the Tyrians and Sidonians. And they came to him with one accord; and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's *country*. **21** And on an appointed day Herod arrayed himself in royal clothing and sat on the judgment seat; and he delivered a public address to them. **22** And the populace cried out, The voice of a god and not of a man! **23** And instantly an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God; and he was eaten by worms and expired. **24** But the word of God grew and multiplied. **25** And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, having completed the dispensing; *and* they took along with them John, who was surnamed Mark.

Col. 1:9-11 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of *it*, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** To walk worthily of the Lord to please *Him* in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God, **11** Being empowered with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy,

- A. When Peter was in prison, "prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him"—Acts 12:5:

Acts 12:5 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him.

1. Behind the scene there was a battle of spiritual forces, a battle between God and His enemy, Satan—vv. 4-6.

Acts 12:4-6 Whom also he seized and put in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. **5** So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him. **6** And when Herod was about to bring him forward, that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards before the door were keeping the prison.

2. By prayer the church fought the battle with God against Satan, the evil one—vv. 5-23.

Acts 12:5-23 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him. **6** And when Herod was about to bring him forward, that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards before the door were keeping the prison. **7** And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shined in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and roused him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off his hands. **8** And the angel said to him, Gird yourself and tie on your sandals. And he did so. And he said to him, Throw your cloak around *you* and follow me. **9** And he went out and followed *him*; yet he did not know that what was taking place through the angel was real, but thought that he was seeing a vision. **10** And passing the first guard and the second, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened of itself to them. And going out, they went forward one lane; and immediately the angel departed from him. **11** And Peter came to himself and said, Now I know truly that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me out of Herod's hand and from all the expectation of the Jewish people. **12** And when he became aware of *this*, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying. **13** And when he knocked at the door of the entry, a maiden named Rhoda came to listen. **14** And when she recognized Peter's voice, she did not open the gate for joy, but ran in and reported that Peter was standing before the entry. **15** But they said to her, You are crazy! But she insisted that it was so. And they said, It is his angel. **16** But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened *the gate*, they saw him and were beside themselves. **17** And motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison, and he said, Report these things to James and the brothers. And going out, he went to another place. **18** Now when it became day, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers, *they not knowing* what had become of Peter. **19** And when Herod searched for him and did not find *him*, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led off *to execution*. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time *there*. **20** Now he was furious with the Tyrians and Sidonians. And they came to him with one accord; and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's *country*. **21** And on an appointed day Herod arrayed himself in royal clothing and sat on the judgment seat; and he delivered a public address to them. **22** And the populace cried out, The voice of a god and not of a man! **23** And instantly an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God; and he was eaten by worms and expired.

- B. Paul prayed that the saints would “be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”—Col. 1:9:

Col. 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of *it*, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

1. Here the will of God concerns the all-inclusive Christ as our portion—v. 12.

Col. 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

2. The will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living the all-inclusive Christ; God's will for us is that we know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, live Christ, and have Christ become our life and our person—Phil. 3:7-10; 1:21a; Col. 3:4; Eph. 3:17a.

Phil. 3:7-10 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. **8** But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ **9** And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and based on faith*, **10** To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Phil. 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

V. We must persevere in prayer and respond to Christ's intercession by seeking the things which are above and by setting our mind on them—Col. 4:2; 3:1-2.

Col. 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

Col. 3:1-2 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.