

Reading: Luke 4:14-21

“Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit...” (Zech 4:6)

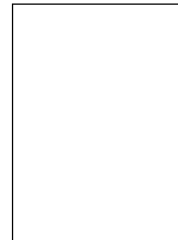
In these days when so much of Christian activity is carried out by mere human strength and skill, we need to have a fresh look at Jesus to learn how He ministered. Luke, a doctor as well as a historian, explains the secret of Christ's ministry: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Jesus emptied Himself of all His own power and strength and received the power of the Spirit, thus giving us a pattern. Today is Nurses Day. Let's pray for those in this noble profession so the hand of the Great Physician may be on each of them as they attend to the needs of the patients.

The Word of the Lord to one of God's servants of old was, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech 4:6). The sooner we learn this truth the better.

Christ's dependence on the Holy Spirit was manifested by the fact that prayer was His top priority. He spent 40 days in fasting and prayer before His 40 months of public ministry. He came out from the wilderness “in the power of the Spirit” (Lk 4:14). Today this wilderness experience is substituted by an academic degree. No wonder we accomplish little. Even when He became popular and great multitudes came to hear and to be healed by Him, Jesus “often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Lk 5:15,16). When the battery runs down, the car becomes a push model. An hour a day alone with God is but a minimum.

Jesus commenced His ministry in prayer. He carried it on by prayer. He consummated it in prayer (In Gethsemane and at Golgotha). He now continues praying (“He ever lives to make intercession”— Heb 7:25). Do we attempt to fulfil our ministry any other way? Prayer is an acknowledgment of our insufficiency. Prayer tells God we need Him and the power of His Spirit.

Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) writes, “The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray! There is no field more unexplored in Christian experience and possibility than this limitless field of prayer. Prayer means pain. Prayers means privacy.”



*Spirit Divine, attend our prayers; make a lost world Thy home;
Descend with all Thy gracious powers, oh, come, Great Spirit, come!
(Dr. Andrew Reed, 1787-1862)*

MAY 12

PRAYER

Subject: Holy Spirit

Reading: Lk 4:14-21

Memorising: Zech 4:6

Father God,

We worship You as the One who delights in the prayers of Your people. We worship You as the One who longs for our fellowship. We thank You for Your promise that we shall receive when we ask, we shall find when we seek, and we shall have the doors of Heaven open when we knock. We join Moses to celebrate Your goodness of Your nearness whenever we come to You and call unto You. You are greater than our earthly parents in that Your resources are inexhaustible.

We thank You, Father, for the Holy Spirit whom You have sent to help us in our weaknesses in prayer. We do confess that many times we do not know what to pray for or how to pray. Truly that is the weakness of our weaknesses. We remember our early days when we rejoiced more in our prayertime than in any other work or activity. We confess, O Lord, it's no more so. Prayer is now just a routine ritual. Renew our days as of old, O Lord. Rekindle our passion in prayer as it was in the days of our first love for You. Help us, O Lord, to restore the exercise of prayer to its proper place. Revive us again and again lest we become dull in prayer closet.

Teach us, O God, to pray according to Your will, and not according to our whims and fancies. Help us, never to lose heart when answer from You is delayed or denied or different. Lead us from childishness to maturity. Thank You, O God, for the fellowship of friends You have given us for collective prayer. Help us not to be overoccupied with our own needs and problems, but seek the interests of others. Let all our times of prayer encourage one another.

Father God, forgive us the tendency of becoming over-dependent on the facilities, equipments and gadgets instead of looking to You for things great or small. We confess that most of our failures are because we rely on our own abilities rather than on Your enablement. We often forget that we are only the branches and we can do nothing acceptable to You without the sap from Jesus the True Vine. Let our homes and Churches become Houses of Prayer. Help us increase prayer when the work increases. Let there be a fragrance of prayer around us as the incense of our prayers ascends to Your throne. We once again worship You as the prayer-answering God.

Through Jesus who advocates before You for us, Amen!

*(Psa 65:2; 145:18; Mt 7:7,8; Dt 4:7; Rom 8:26,27; Rev 2:4; 8:3,4;
1 Jn 5:14,15; Js 5:16; Jn 15:5; Isa 56:7)*