**A Wrong Motive For Prayer**

**Exodus 8:8 KJV** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

1. **INTRODUCTION—MOTIVES**
2. **General**

**Archibald Alexander**—Men are more accountable for their motives than for anything else and primarily morality consists in the motives that are found in the affections.

**F. D. Maurice**—Acts are nothing except as they are fruits of a state, they indicate what a man is.

**H. W. Beecher**—God made man to go by motives, and he will not go without them, any more than a boat without steam, or a car without gas.

-We have to be careful of our motives!

1. **Texas Bible College Days**

I can hardly forget, although there are times I wish I could forget, what Brother Kelsey Griffin told us one day in class when he was speaking of the judgment seat of Christ. He was going through the varying degrees of fire that would try our works and he launched out with the thought that God was more concerned with our motives than with our success. He told us that men far too often look to the outward trappings of success in a man’s life and ministry and come to the conclusion that God must be in their efforts. But what troubled me so much was the next thing that he said, God is not moved by our successes but rather by our motives. There will come a time that He will test our motives to see if they are Spirit-driven or flesh-driven.

**1 Corinthians 3:13 KJV** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

**1 Corinthians 4:5 KJV** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

-Our service to God has to be motivated by a proper motive. You may have poor motives and good service and have the ability to fool those who are around you. Some of the men in the Bible did this:

* Judas seemingly concerned with the poor and disdained the alabaster box being broken.
* Ananias and Sapphira led the early Church to believe they were giving all when they were only giving a portion.
* When the Lord was performing the miracles, He proved that there were some who were merely following because they wanted the bread or the healing but did not want His cross.
* Simon the sorcerer betrayed his motive when he tried to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost.
* Demas ultimately walked away because his motives were not righteous.

-We can have good service in the Kingdom of God and have poor motives directing us. If you try to serve the Lord with the wrong motive, in the long run it will come to nothing.

1. **PHAROAH AND THE FROGS**

-This particular text has been preached from in a dozen different ways. In years past, Brother Alan Oggs was known for his preaching of a sermon, in numerous places, “One More Night with the Frogs.” I heard him preach it one Sunday morning at Brother Wayne McClain’s in Pasadena, Texas, around 1990 or so.

-The gist of Brother Oggs message is that people are willing to live with a lot of sinful and less than ideal situations in their lives. God can provide immediate deliverance for them but for some reason they choose to spend one more night with the frogs.

-I want to go in a bit different direction with this text and particularly concerning prayer and how we pray.

1. **God’s Judgments**

-It is amazing how that God uses various means of judgments throughout the Word of God to get people to return back to Him.

* He uses lions and lice.
* He can use famines and flies.
* He can use the sun or even caterpillars.
* He can use a steady beat of rain to overwhelm the mountains.
* He can take that same rain and use it to bog down the chariots of Sisera.
* He can use angels or dust to accomplish his will.

-So now we come to the place where that God is going to use a bunch of frogs to humble the great and mighty Pharoah.

-There is a lot of irony in God’s judgment of Egypt. One of their deities was a frog. On the graves of the Egyptians were frog-headed goddesses and they were worshiped. So God asks, “You love frogs? Good! I can give you frogs!”

* Frogs in the rivers, the creeks, and the swamps.
* Frogs in the living room, the den, the kitchen, the bedroom, and the bathroom.
* Frogs in the bread-box, the sugar canister, the coffee-container, and the oven.
* Here a frog, there a frog, everywhere a frog. . . frog. . . Old McPharoah had a frog, eeeeiiiieeeiiiiooooo!

-Egypt was sick of frogs!

-God has a sure way of reaching proud hearts and it does not take him very long to get with the program should He so desire to do so.

He can put a rich man by the wayside and make him beg.

He can take a healthy man and strike his body and make him cry.

He can take relationships and turn them against us so that we cry out to Him.

-Not necessarily frogs but He can take the things we worship and use them effectively to stifle our flesh. Don’t curse the frogs, it could be the very thing that saves you.

1. **A Changed Perception about God’s Messengers**

-God took those frogs and changed Pharoah’s heart toward Moses and Aaron. He suddenly begins to value what he had earlier despised. “I had little use for those men a few days ago but my trouble has changed my heart. Bring them in so that I can have a little talk with them.”

-How many times have you been involved in something like that? You may have had a fellow employee who despised your Christian lifestyle but when cancer struck, or their husband left, or their child got in trouble, you suddenly become the person they want to see the most.

-You are not alone in this. You can’t take it personal it was just the wrong spirit that was in them that hated the right Spirit that was in you. Go ahead and hear them out and pray and help them the best way that you can.

-Bethel got defiled by a king named Jeroboam. He set up a few golden calves near the altar of God and begins to cry out against those altars. But it was the grace of God that sent a prophet to Bethel just about the time that he got started.

-Jeroboam was insulted by this and commanded that his men (1 Kings 13) take him captive. The words had hardly gotten out of his mouth when God suddenly smote him and it withered by his side and hung atrophied away, totally useless.

-Amazingly, Jeroboam begins to plead with the prophet, “Intreat the Lord for me!” A persecutor is now groveling at the feet of the one he had been intent on destroying.

-Another example is found when Saul is being tormented by the Philistines. He needs a voice of direction in his life and so he sneaks off down to find a witch. He prevails on the witch of Endor to conjure up the voice of Samuel, a voice that had sternly rebuked him in days gone by.

**Charles Spurgeon**—When ungodly men get into straits, how they wish they could consult with one who has gone home, against whom they pointed many a jest. They never say, “Bring me up the jolly fellow who filled and quaffed the bowl with me.” In their tribulation they think not of such. They never cry, “Bring me up the harlot with whom I sported in sin, that I may enjoy her company.” Nay, in their distress they desire other advisers: they would rather cry, “Bring me up my holy mother! Oh, for the sight of her dear, loving face as I saw it on her dying bed, when she urged me to follow her to heaven. Bring me up that old friend whom I ridiculed when I turned aside from the ways of God! Oh, for an hour with the man of God, whom I once scorned!”

-Such is Pharoah in that position now. Call for those men who told me to let God’s people go!

-Everything is different now.

* Moses and Aaron were slaves but now they are royalty.
* Joseph was a hated brother and sold slave but there came a day his brothers bowed to him.
* Jeremiah thrown into a sewer pit but Zedekiah changed his tune when Babylon surrounded the city.

-Look no further than the gate of Dives. After his death, the rich man is now looking for that poor saint.

1. **A Changed Perception About Prayer**

-Prayer becomes very valuable in a place of trouble. Men pursue God when they get in trouble. They may not pray but they want someone praying for them. Even if they cannot pray for themselves there is a bit of faith that they have when they seek after those who can pray.

-All can be well and during that time there isn’t really a need to pray. . . Is there?

* I have a good job. . . no need to pray. . . Is there?
* I have a good marriage. . . no need to pray. . . Is there?
* I have a healthy body. . . no need to pray. . . Is there?
* I have wonderful, well-behaved, well-adjusted kids. . . no need to pray. . . Is there?
* Everything I touch turns to gold. . . no need to pray. . . Is there?

-But when the job situation changes, when the marriage starts going south, when our health is questioned, when kids get in trouble, when what you touch turns into mud. . .

* Hey! Can’t we have a prayer revival?!
* Hey! Where are those Saturday night pray-ers?!
* Hey! Can’t you start a prayer chain and call some folks?!

-This kind of prayer is an insult to the holiness of God. But those who are in dire straits have a changed perception about prayer. They can’t get enough of it.

-If you ever can get to praying, it will be the beginning of your spiritual life. So much time is wasted on fussing and talking around. . . Get a prayer bench somewhere and get down to the business of heaven-shaking, earth-shattering, Spirit-revealing prayer! It can change so much about where you are!

1. **A WRONG MOTIVE FOR PRAYER**

-Now for the crux of this whole message—we can pray with a wrong motive. How we pray when we get in trouble brings us often into the brother-hood of Pharoah. He just thought he might pray but he did not really pray.

*“Intreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me.”*

-Your life and worship deserves your mind. You have to think hard and stay humble in your walk with God. I am frequently amazed when I hear people sum up their lives in a manner that says, “I have my relationship with God under my thumb. I go from victory to victory.” I am almost ready to see if they can walk on the water. . .

-When I meditate and think on Scripture and watch the lives of those men on the pages of Scripture, I am humbled, discouraged, and yet motivated and encouraged all at the same time. I know that what God had and did for them, He can do the same for any of us! It is just a matter of paying the price and taking what the Lord has for us.

-One of those places that God seeks most of all to help us in that place of prayer. But our praying has to be marked by the right motives. Our motives in our praying will betray us!

-What if God were to give to you everything that you asked for in that place of prayer? Perhaps it might be very detrimental to our soul.

1. **Prayer—A Confession of Sin**

*“Intreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me.”*

-What is missing in that prayer? There is no confession of sin in that prayer! It is a prayer that is proud. . . God, save my sorry hide but just don’t expect anything to change!

-He should have prayed, “Ask God to forgive me of my sin of rebelling against the Lord.” He loves his sin just as much as he did in the beginning. Somewhere our praying has to be marked with a brokenness of spirit.

-There ought to be some tears in our praying!

**Psalms 34:18 KJV** The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

**Psalms 51:17 KJV** The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

-Have you ever been there?

-If we come to God any other way in our praying we come to Him as proud Pharisees, “God I thank thee that I am not as other men are.” That kind of praying will never create a nearness to God.

-But if the heart cry can be “God be merciful to me, a sinner!”

* Help me to show a high priority on being in your house!
* Help me to control my passions and my flesh!
* Help me to have more wisdom and grace than what I have!
* Help me to be willing to sacrifice even more in a land that shuns sacrifice!
* Help me to love the lost without any strings attached!

-Have you ever been in that place of prayer? That kind of praying is soul cleansing. . . It does not ask for relief from the frogs, it asks for God to fill us with holiness, righteousness, and peace.

1. **Prayer—Is Not Physical Relief**

-Prayer that has the wrong motives is one that is marked by just wanting relief from the frogs. Get rid of these frogs!

* Someone who is sick may cry out. . . “Take away this sickness!”
* Someone who is bound by habits may cry out. . . “Get me out of this poverty!”
* Someone who is filled with trouble may cry out. . . “Take away this trouble!”
* Someone who has been disgraced may cry out. . . “Get rid of this disgrace and dishonor that has come on me!”
* Someone who has having a harvest of their past sins may cry out. . . “Save me from this harvest of my behavior.”

-There is nothing inherently wrong about praying for the Lord to deliver you of these calamities but what is the root problem.

-But that is where Pharoah lives. . .

* Take away the frogs. . .when he should have prayed, help me with this hard heart I have.
* Take away the frogs. . .when he should have prayed, change my way of thinking.
* Take away the frogs. . .when he should have prayed, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!
* Take away the frogs. . .when he should have prayed, help me to make restitution for my sins.

-Prayer in its highest form wants to lay to waste the root of the problem of sin.

1. **Prayer—An Opportunity for Spiritual Transformation**

-Prayer is an opportunity for spiritual transformation to take place in our lives. Not necessarily to ask for deliverance from the frogs. But it is an old pattern that starts early in Scripture.

-Cain murdered his brother, Abel. It wasn’t too long before God confronts him and tells him the penalty that will be paid for his sin. He does not express the first point of regret or repentance he only whines out, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.”

-Mercy received from God but he did use the opportunity to want to change his heart, his mind, or his direction.

-Another example is found with Esau. He sold his birthright for a mess of pottage but through that he became marked as a profane person. He never repented for his actions. The Bible indicates that he sought the failed birthright carefully with tears (Hebrews 12:17-18) and he never got it back.

-Another example is found in Acts with Simon the Sorcerer. He wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost and for this Peter rebuked him. He said, “Simon you will have to deal with the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity!” But Simon’s response was that he pray that the Lord not put those things on him when he should have prayed, “Lord, no matter how many frogs I have to endure, save me from this untoward generation!”

-Prayer has to be a moment for us to pray for spiritual transformation to take place.

* It won’t take place at a conference.
* It won’t take place at a campmeeting.
* It won’t take place at a youth camp or youth congress.

-Spiritual transformation only takes place in a closet. . . A closet of secret prayer!

-What do you desire to do for God? You will make large progress when you humble yourself in the place of prayer and ask God to willingly provide you with those things.

1. **CONCLUSION—BROTHER JAMES KILGORE IN THE ATTIC**

I will never forget hearing Brother Kilgore tell many years ago, he was pastoring his first church somewhere in east Texas. He had worked as diligently as he possibly could to bring revival to that church but it was a hard place. Nothing would come easy to that neck of the woods and he spent much time in discouragement trying to get people hungry for something they really did not want.

Late one summer, he told Sister Kilgore that he was going to the church and was going to be there for at least three days to fast and pray for revival. He told about how on the afternoon of the second or third day he went up to the attic of that old clapboard church and crawled up in the attic space and begin to pray. When he was telling the story he admitted it wasn’t probably the smartest thing to do but he was so desperate for revival and harvest to come to that little church that nothing seemed too big to pay for it.

He said it wasn’t long in that prayer meeting that his sweat and tears begin to mingle but there was such desperation in his heart for God to transform him and change that little church into a powerhouse of revival. He said that great wretching cries marked his prayer and it was in that little attic that God did some things personally to him that would mark him for years to come. Anyone who is associated at all with Brother Kilgore would have to verify the fact of that testimony.

-That is the kind of prayers that we need! Forget about the frogs and pray for the condition of your heart and as God takes care of your heart, He will take care of the frogs!