

From the Pastor's Desk – January 15/16
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“The Spirit is Willing, But the Flesh is Weak”

In Matthew 26 Jesus, after falling on his face in prayer, praying words that never cease to amaze us, *“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will”*, found his disciples sleeping.

He said to Peter, *“... the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* (Matthew 26:41b)

In one sense or another, you may find yourself weak these days. And that's ok. Sometimes we get up in the morning finding ourselves just in a bit of a sour mood. We wonder why. It wasn't like the previous evening was eventful in that there was anything to upset us. You might even think to yourself that there isn't one particular issue in your life that is causing you great stress. Or there might be. There might be something causing you to wake up in anxiousness, or as the saying goes, *“on the wrong side of bed”*. Sad to say, but that reality is ok too.

How does our Lord Jesus invite us to respond?

He went and fell on his face in prayer when the most trying moment of his life was just around the corner. And then he showed understanding to his disciples when he found them asleep – even if their *spirit was willing, their flesh was weak*.

And then Jesus went and prayed a common prayer familiar to all of God's people, *“your will be done.”*

The point is this; consider, on the days where you want to pray but find it difficult to pray, to pray the words gifted to us by God and the inspired authors.

Consider praying the common words of God's people.

Consider finding the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 and praying as he teaches us to. Consider opening the book of Psalms to allow the Biblical authors to usher us into seeking God in all circumstances.

You see, in God's loving heart of compassion; He knows His children need Him. He knows that for those children who depend on Him, our hearts are longing to cry out to Him – but sometimes we just don't have the words to muster up. And so, He left us with some.

In particular seasons we will experience tiredness, despair and indifference and we're assured that without exception we're all going to experience seasons where prayer is dry and honestly really challenging.

And so, it's like God has left us with handrails to grip onto so that we might know how to pray and what to pray.

Know this; prayer doesn't have to be full of enthusiasm and passion, but sometimes it will feel like a challenge of enduring stamina.

Keep praying and may you long to pray, still.

Our Lord inclines his ears to us, to hear our every word and cry. And He understands both the joy and longing that fills our hearts.

When the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. When we are falling on our face about to enter into a deep darkness, our Lord Jesus invites us to lean into the words that keep us tuned to Him.

Let us follow Him, let us pray together,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9-13 ESV)

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

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潘啟華傳道

“心靈雖然願意，肉體卻是軟弱”

馬太福音 26 章 39-40 節述說耶穌俯伏在地上禱告後，回頭卻看見祂的門徒睡著了。祂禱告說：“我的父啊，可能的話，求你使這杯離開我；但不要照我的意思，只要照你的旨意”。一個我們驚嘆不已的禱告。

祂對彼得說：“.....你們心靈雖然願意，肉體卻是軟弱。”（馬太福音 26:41b）

從某程度來上說，當下這些日子你可能會發覺自己精神不振。不要緊；偶爾我們早上起床發覺自己心情有點低落，我們都莫明其妙？是否前一天晚上太多事情煩擾，令我們感到不安。甚至可能會問自己，我的生活沒有甚麼特別的問題會給我帶來巨大的壓力。又或者，一覺醒來發覺自己非常焦慮。無論如何，現實就是如此。

我們的主耶穌邀請我們如何回應？

當主耶穌在祂生命中最艱難的時刻即將到來時，祂俯伏在地上祈禱。然後，當祂發現門徒睡著時，祂向他們表示理解 - 你們心靈雖然願意，肉體卻是軟弱。

隨後耶穌再次走開去禱告，一個神子民耳熟能詳的禱告：“願你的旨意成全”。

重點是，當你想祈禱但發覺難以祈禱的時候，嘗試用上帝已經賜予我們和默示給作者的話來祈禱。參考上帝子民常用的話語禱告。參考馬太福音六章中的主禱文，按照主耶穌教導我們的方式祈禱。又或者打開詩篇，讓聖經作者引導我們在任何情況下尋求上帝。

上帝慈憐的愛心，祂知道祂的孩子需要祂。祂知道我們那些信靠祂的孩子，我們的心渴望向祂呼求 - 我們卻不曉得如何開口說話。所以，祂給我們留下了一些話語。

在某些日子裡，我們感到疲乏、絕望和不安；我們會經歷心靈乾涸，缺乏力量去祈禱。因此，上帝給我們留下了幫助，教導我們如何禱告。要知道祈禱不一定是滿腔熱情和激動，反而感覺像是持久耐力的挑戰。不住禱告，願我們仍然渴望禱告。

我們的主耶穌在聆聽我們的每一句說話和呼求。祂明白喜悅和盼望充滿我們的內心。當我們心靈願意，肉體卻是軟弱，當我們落在深邃的黑暗裡，我們的主耶穌邀請我們靠著祂的話語與祂同行。讓我們一起跟隨祂，我們一起禱告。

“我們在天上的父，願你的名被尊為聖，願你的國降臨，願你的旨意成就在地上，如同在天上一樣。我們每天所需的食物，求你今天賜給我們；赦免我們的罪債，好像我們饒恕了得罪我們的人；不要讓我們陷入試探，救我們脫離那惡者。(太 6:9-13 新譯本)。因為國度、權柄、榮耀，全是你的，直到永遠。阿們”