

Sweet Hour of Prayer



#73, Hymns for Worship

Background

- A song reminding us of the blessedness of prayer
- Words attributed to William Walford of England. He was blind but had ability to memorize large amounts of scripture. He spoke the words to Thomas Salmon who had it published in 1845 in the Observer (A weekly British publication).



Background

- The poem was put to music in 1861 by William Bradbury.
He composed tunes to several well-known hymns - “Jesus loves Me”; “He Leadeth Me”; “Just as I Am”, “Savior like a Shepherd Lead Us”, and “The Solid Rock”
- This song is primarily about our private prayers.



Vs. 1, Take time to pray

- Sweet hour of prayer-
- We ought to be praying often - **Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18**
- It ought to be “sweet” - pleasant, anticipated
- **Hour** indicates not only a specified time, but also quantity. **See Luke 18:1, 5:16, 6:12**
- Do we take time to pray regularly?



Vs. 1, Take time to pray

- That calls me from a world of care
- In a busy world, “cares” (**Matthew 13:22**) can challenge our focus on God.
- If our lives are busy, we SHOULD NOT be too busy to pause a pray. Furthermore, we need to find time for contemplative prayer (and study).
- Also, consider the problems of this world. We may not be able to solve them, but God IS in control and cares. I need to care about the world.



Vs. 1, Take time to pray

- And bids me at my Father's throne, make all my wants and wishes known
- We pray to God - **Matthew 6:9, 1 Peter 1:17** - approaching Him "on His throne" (**cf. Rev. 4, 22:3, Heb. 12:2**)
- We can turn to Him with our requests - BUT see **1 John 5:14-15, cf. James 4:3**



Vs. 1, Take time to pray

- In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief...
- **James 5:13** – If suffering, pray! **1 Pet. 5:6-7**
- He may not answer the way we want, but He knows what is best. There is consolation in know that He hears us
Cf. Paul - **2 Cor. 12:7-10**,
Jesus - **Luke 22:41-46**



Vs. 1, Take time to pray

- ... and oft escaped the tempter's snare, by thy return sweet hour of prayer
- **Matthew 6:13** – our prayers include requesting God's strength in overcoming temptations.
Cf. **Luke 22:46** – Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation
- **James 1:2-8** - endure temptation, ask of Him for wisdom...



Vs. 2, Pray with anticipation

- Sweet hour of prayer... The joy I feel, the bliss I share
- Time of prayer ought to be joyous and anticipated. Not a “chore”
- Why? Because we have confidence - **cf. Romans 15:13**
- Bliss is shared - fellowship - with God and one another – **1 John 1:3-4, 7.**
A bond that ties us together - **cf. James 5:16**



Vs. 2, Pray with anticipation

- ... Of those whose anxious spirits burn with strong desire for thy return
- What bonds us together? This world is nor our home - **Philippians 3:20**
- We anticipate His return - **2 Timothy 4:8, 2 Peter 3:13, Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:22**
- **Do we anticipate His return?**



Vs. 2, Pray with anticipation

- With such I hasten to the place, where God my Savior shows His face
- Anticipating that home, do we go to our “closet”? **Matthew 6:5-6**
- Again, we know God is there listening -
1 Peter 3:12, cf. John 9:31
Jesus is there too!



Vs. 2, Pray with anticipation

- And gladly take my station there, and wait for thee sweet hour of prayer
- Again, this is not a chore.
This is a foundation of my faith!
- And I pray with patience (I wait) - **James 5:7**
How long? As long as it takes! **Luke 18:7-8**



Vs. 3, Prayers reaching to heaven

- Sweet hour of prayer... Thy wings shall my petition bear
- Again, I know God is listening and hears!

1 John 5:14-15

James 5:16 – the effective, fervent prayer of the righteous avails much



Vs. 3, Prayers reaching to heaven

- To Him whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless
- God is faithful and true (**Revelation 3:14, 19:11**)
1 Corinthians 10:13, 1:9
- In this I see the Godhead.
We pray to God - **Matthew 6:9**
Through Jesus - **Ephesians 2:18,**
cf. John 14:13-14
And Holy Spirit **cf. Romans 8:26**



Vs. 3, Prayers reaching to heaven

- And since He bids me seek His face, believe His word and trust His grace
- When I pray, do I believe He will answer?
James 1:5-8, 1 Timothy 2:8
- Am I striving to obey Him - **1 John 3:22**
- Do I trust and appreciate His grace?



Vs. 3, Prayers reaching to heaven

- And cast on Him my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!
- We cast our cares on Him because we KNOW He does care - **1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6-7**
- THAT is what makes the “hour of prayer” so sweet!

AND again, we “wait” - anticipating our time we can spend with Him in prayer!



Concluding thoughts

- There is also a 4th verse to this poem/song (in Sacred Selections, #23)

*Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer.
May I thy consolation share. Till from Mount
Pisgah's lofty height, I view my home and take
my flight. This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
to seize the everlasting prize. And shout while
passing through the air, 'Farewell, farewell,
sweet hour of prayer'*



Concluding thoughts

- There is also a 4th verse to this poem/song (in Sacred Selections, #23)

AS long as I am on this earth, I will keep praying (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

AND when I finally reach my heavenly home, earthly prayer will no longer be needed, as I shall see Him as He is - **1 John 3:1-3**



In your spiritual journey,
**do you sweetly pray
as you ought to?**



Sweet Hour of Prayer

Let us pray!