

Spiritual Care Message with Prayer

HELPING OTHERS AND OURSELVES IN OUR BROKEN WORLD

Even in my early walk with Christ, God brought people in my path, connecting us for His purposes. He has given me awesome privileges to serve Him for which I am most grateful. However, all I have said and done has not been without imperfections and mistakes; often by listening to the wrong voices. Some years ago, when it seemed a great number of books were being written in the Christian scene about helping people, I eagerly read them all because of those in my circles who needed God's healing and power and help and my personal feeling of being helpless to help. For a while, I began to add the suggestions of all these writers on how to fix persons, families, marriages, etc. mostly mixing psychology, and Christian concepts. I became open, in my concern and eagerness, to the latest ideas, some written by Christian people, and without realizing it, I added all of this to Jesus Christ. In fact, there were times He was left out entirely or it was Jesus plus some of these concepts and ideas and actions. But over time, I came to realize that much of this was self-help, a focus on self and how if we follow certain criteria, we will find inner healing from reservoirs of help within ourselves. Eventually I came to see that whatever causes us to focus on ourselves only adds to the basic problem of self-centeredness, enemy of our Father and His Son. (Is. 53:6 'to his own way'). God brought me around to see that He holds the power and the principle of life that we long for in our hearts and minds for a healthy life of contentment and peace. We do not. He is not into self-improvement but has the power to make us new in Christ. He is the One who can make the 'old pass away' and 'the new come' and His presence becomes real and fresh and with loving authority.

Unusual medicine our Father gives to heal our brokenness... I became conscious of God's showing me something of eternal value when I discovered Isaiah 58:1-5. While the word fasting is used, we know that fasting is connected to prayer and petition, to deep spiritual connection with God, forsaking sin and self, waiting on God. Notice that Israel said to God, "Why haven't you paid attention and listened to our prayers for ourselves?"

God's response is awesome: Isaiah 58:6-14

When I understood His direction, I moved into this. It works, He works. The diagnosis is His as our Creator, and prognosis and eternal cure are also His. An old adage is passed cheerfully along, 'God helps those who help themselves.' Erase it! It is not true! Our Father knows us. The truth is 'God helps those who know and admit they cannot help themselves. He already knows.' He sees our circumstances and comes to our rescue, working in our minds and hearts. I began to see the spiritual cure He prescribes in this revealing chapter. I learned then and for all these years that God's help does not cause us to focus on ourselves, does not make us more self-engrossed than we already are as sinners, even sinners saved by grace. He has a lost and broken world. He has established that with our hand in His, moving forward in His mercy and kindness He brings about His healing in His children as we move along together. He meets our needs when we, as His servants give ourselves in the needs of others, God works in and through us in our broken world. (le)

Prayer:

Father, we are eager to be helpful to others, understanding their pain because it is sometimes the same as our own...teach us how to humbly share the Lord Jesus...the One who was sent to heal broken people of this world, including me. He sends us as He was sent...equipped and understanding and available. In His name we ask You. Amen.

(1e/Feb 2023)