

## A Day After Epiphany

1 John 3:22-4:6

Psalms 2: 7BC-8, 10-12A

Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25

John notes that **we receive what we ask** when we keep his commandments and do what pleases him by living the *Great Commandment* and believing in his Son. We are not to trust every spirit but first test them to see if they are of the world, ones that do not acknowledge Jesus Christ, and whose teachings are worldly. The world is not attentive to words spoken by those belonging to God whereas the faithful listen as the worldly refuse to hear us.

The psalmist speaks prophetically of the Son begotten by the Father and warns the earth's rulers to serve him with fear and trembling.

Matthew notes the people in darkness have seen a great Light as he points to Jesus preaching repentance and demonstrating that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. In proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, Jesus cures every disease and illness among the people, those in pain and paralyzed, those possessed, even lunatics. He cures them all and a great crowd followed him as they were attracted to his words and his healing touch.

## Healing Prayer: Kinetic and Potential

ENERGY

Oftentimes we may feel our healing prayers, said in faith, are not having the impact we expected or hoped for. We ask

- Are they not being heard? (blocked as in Daniel 10)
- Are they being heard but denied (as we are called to redemptive suffering)
- Are we misinterpreting the responses we receive? (Mark 8:21)
- Is our faith too weak? (Matt 21:22, Mark 11:24)
- Are we impaired by holding grievances? (Mark 11:25)
- Do we give up too easily? (Luke 18:1)
- Do we pray incorrectly? (Matt 6:5-7, Rom 8:26)
- Do we know what we are asking? (Matt 20:22, Mark 10:38)

We can do a fast check on our prayer life by examining 1Cor13:4-8a and replacing the word "love" by the word "prayer" which gives us excellent guidelines to judge our prayer. We have:

- Prayer is patient
- Prayer is kind
- Prayer is never jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish
- Prayer is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger, does not brood over injuries
- Prayer does not rejoice in what is wrong, but rejoices with the truth
- Prayer has no limits on its forbearance, its trust, its power to endure
- Prayer never fails!

Prayer is spiritual energy and energy has the ability to cause change. The scientist studies energy in the physical world and classifies it into the categories of kinetic or potential where the former is exemplified by a mass in motion, its energy measured by the square of the velocity and its effect can be clearly seen should it impact another mass, whereas the latter points to inherent energy to be transformed into kinetic under the right circumstances, such as a bowling ball precariously set on the edge of a table where the slightest perturbation will cause it to drop and change its potential into kinetic.....of course you would not want your toes below it when that happens. In the earth's motion about the sun there is a combination of kinetic (due to its motion) and potential (due to gravitational attraction) energies at any one time and while the sum of them may be constant each has its own allocation at different points on the orbit.

Consider this same idea of the two categories of energy as a metaphor for the spiritual power of prayer; part of it is kinetic and may directly impact our specific intention, the remaining is not lost but set aside by the Lord in potential form so it can be used in the future at the right time and in the right place. In our short-sightedness and stubbornness, we may interfere with this allocation creating enough disturbance to "cause the precarious bowling ball to fall on our toes," making matters worse. Patience is especially needed as answers to our prayers are often delayed for reasons we may not understand at the time. Our prayer requests are not made in a vacuum since we are part of an intricate web of relationships and what happens to us effects those around us and the Lord is aware of the whole scenario, and responds at the optimum time.

We are often advised to be thankful in all situations but when pain and suffering prevail it may be very difficult for us to act this way. There can be various reasons why God allows such difficulties: in this state we are amenable to keeping an intense prayer life in motion, or our infirmity prevents us from doing things or going places that, unknown to us, are somehow dangerous for us at this time. Many saints suffered in this way and used such recuperation time to dramatically intensify their spiritual life.

Another point to consider in being thankful is that many in the healing ministry associate various illnesses and the accompanying pain with the presence of oppressing spirits and it is easy for us to complain or even curse the situation and dark spirits might well welcome such an attitude on our part. But if we offer our pain and suffering, as difficult as it may be, to Jesus in a thankful way as penance for our past sinfulness we create a spiritual environment unbearable to evil spirits in comparison to what we are bearing. So be thankful and in gratitude offer all to our Lord Jesus and the demons will flee!

In many passages scripture indicates that Jesus healed all who came to him in good faith so remember if the kinetic flow of our prayer intentions does not seem complete, the potential part is preserved in the background for Jesus to unleash at the right time and right place. In this way the total effect of our prayer will eventually resonate with that of others and will accomplish the greatest good as only He can. When even minute energies resonate with each other the result can be striking and Jesus can orchestrate them in such a way. So, we need to be patient!

