

Thursday, March 13

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord helps me

There is a charge that is easily leveled against Christians that we use prayer like magic, that we conjure up God to do our personal bidding, that we make God into the great Houdini who can help us escape any difficulty, that we turn God into our private 'do-it-for-me,' that we treat God as our family 'dumb-waiter' who brings whatever we ask.

What an illusion!

The truth is exactly the opposite - God makes the first move; we're just responding to God's initiative:

He wakes me up in the morning,

Wakes me up, opens my ears

to listen as one ready to take orders. *"Scripture taken from The Message. Copyright ? 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."*biblegateway.com/versions/?action=getVersionInfo&vid=6

Prayer sometimes appears to be something I have to do, something I make up, something I put into words, something I create. Sometimes this comes from 'ought': I ought to do this, I should do this, it's expected of me to do this. Sometimes this comes from habit: I always pray before meals, I always pray when I go to bed, I always pray for people in trouble.

What an illusion! The truth is exactly the opposite - God makes the first move; we're just responding to God's initiative:

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to listen as one ready to take orders.

The joy of prayer begins when we catch a picture of it as a river of love that's flowing and we simply step into it, when we taste the light of joy and simply bathe in it, when we hear the sound of hope and let it envelope us. Thank you, God, for starting before we wake up, for moving before we get into our cars, for feeding before we open our mouths, for hugging before we surrender to your arms.

A Way to Pray – A Daily Examination of Grace

- Invite Christ, the Light of the World, to walk with you over the past twenty-four hours, gently sifting through the events of the previous day.
- Give thanks for some gift of the day.
- Celebrate God's empowering love at a time or times when you were loved or were loving.
- Celebrate God's undefeated love at times when you were less than loving, and hear Christ say, "I know that and I love you."
- Ask God for a specific grace for the day ahead.
- Finally, hold before the mind's eye what your life would look like if that grace were granted. Place 'a hidden video' and see yourself as whole, as God through Christ already sees you.

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