

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Devotional from Revelation 6:9–11

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Pray with your soul. Note that it is specifically souls that are praying here in v9. This is a good reminder that it is especially important to pray both with our spirit and with our understanding (cf. 1Cor 14:14–15).

Pray for God's justice and vengeance. Just as we pray eagerly for the salvation of sinners now, we should also be praying eagerly for Christ to come.

This book ends with the Spirit and the Bride praying that Christ would come. Asking "how long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge" is a variation upon that same prayer. It will be gloriously holy and true of Him to do so then, just as it is gloriously holy and true and gracious of Him to save in the meantime.

Don't take this as an excuse to pray for your own vengeance. But, don't let your healthy suspicion of your own vengeful spirit keep you from rightly praying for the coming of the Lord's righteous vengeance.

Be comforted by (and pray for) the gift of holiness. At the time that these saints pray these things, they do not immediately receive what they are specifically asking for. But, we see that they are given something glorious and wonderful: the white robe.

Of course, the saints under the altar would already be holy, but it is at this point that John sees the "fine linen clean and bright" of Rev 19:8 being given to them. God's working holiness in His saints should be a great comfort to them in the middle of trouble.

For them for whom this work has been completed, it is a reminder that His return to earth in glory is indeed coming soon. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1John 3:2–3).

When we are in the midst of suffering, let us take sweet comfort from the fact of sanctification (cf. James 1:2–4, Romans 5:1–5, Romans 8:12–39).

Pray for the salvation of sinners. The number of their fellow servants was not yet completed. The Lord redirects their "how long" question with an "until the number is completed" answer. We should be praying for the salvation of the number of the elect to be completed.

Pray for persecuted believers, and especially those who will be martyred. The second number to be completed here is "their brethren who would be killed as they were." What is pictured here by a location in the vision as "under the altar" implies that those who are killed for the faith are especially honored in glory. This is consistent with Matthew 5:11–12, Luke 6:22–23, Acts 5:41, etc.)

While we do not desire the pain of the brethren, we do desire their faithfulness under it, and the honor that comes both to Christ, and also by grace to them, for that faithfulness. Let us pray for that number to be completed as well: that as many as the Lord has determined to give the honor of being martyred for Him, would receive that honor and conduct themselves faithfully under it.

Pray with your soul.

Pray for God's justice and vengeance.

Be comforted by (and pray for) the gift of holiness.

Pray for the salvation of sinners.

Pray for persecuted believers, and especially those who will be martyred.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

On the Lord's day, we'll be hearing from Revelation 6 verses 9 through 11. This is the fifth seal.

Revelation 6 verses 9 through 11 when he opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth.

The excuse me then a white robe. Was given to each of them and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed as they were. Was completed.

So there are several things that we learn or are reminded of about our praying from this passage in the first is it we are to pray with our souls yes there may be listening with your ear to somebody who's leading you or if you are the one who is leading or you're praying by yourself there is the voice raising your voice to God.

But here we have disembodied souls there are blood was spilled they're asking when that will be avenged their bodies are somewhere in the earth and yet here they are disembodied souls still praying and so we remember here and we are instructed here to be acting upon God with our souls with our inner being as we pray.

And this is a challenge for us who can very easily slip into that fleshly going through the motions or being superficial or just speaking on the surface or if we're being led and family worship or praying with somebody else or in the public worship of the Lord's day, you can very easily tune out.

There's a reminder that we are to pray with our souls. Second thing here is that we are to pray for God's justice and vengeance. They cry out with a loud voice and remember these are the guys who are in gals and assuming who are getting their white robes in this passage, they have been perfected glorified and they're crying out how long, O Lord, holy and true.

Until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth. And so just as we pray eagerly for the salvation of sinners, now we should. Also be praying eagerly for Christ to come and for him to judge. He will not be wrong when he judges. It's part of his glory as righteousness.

Here they call him holy and true. It's part of his holiness and faithfulness when he judges. We shrink from it because judgment is unpalatable to a sinful man, but the more our hearts and minds are conformed to his the more we're made like these glorified souls and the fifth seal the more eagerly we.

Will pray for Christ to come. The book ends with the spirit and the bride praying that Christ would come and asking how long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge is a very action upon that prayer of the spirit and the bride who say come Lord. Jesus come quickly.

So don't take this as an excuse to pray for your own vengeance. I think each of us should have a healthy suspicion of our own vengeful spirit from our flesh, but do not let that healthy suspicion keep you from rightly praying for the coming of the Lord's righteous vengeance something we should desire.

It's part of his perfect plan and action is will be done in glorious display of his perfect character. So pray with your soul pray for God's justice and vengeance also be comforted by and pray for the gift of holiness. At the time that these Saints pray these things, they do not immediately receive what they are specifically asking for.

He doesn't say how long well right now let's let's do it. But they do receive a response, right? That's not that they don't receive any response at all. What do they receive in response? They are given the white robe and then they are given an answer at least to the question.

How long? So in the white robe we are reminded to be comforted by holiness that is a gift from our faithful Lord and in the answer that they received to the how long question we are taught to pray for the salvation of sinners and to pray especially for persecuted believers who will be martyred.

So they're given this white robe and you say oh well, what is the white robe? Well, we know from Revelation 19 verse 8 what the white robe is. It's the fine linen clean and bright which are the righteous acts of the saints not only have they been counted righteous only for the righteous things that Jesus has done, but they've also gotten to be dressed by the production of Jesus' character in them.

Whenever you are helped by the Lord to obey Him from the heart. He is giving you something so good that the those who were killed in heaven receive it as a as a comfort while they wait for the finishing of Christ's work and for the return of the Lord Jesus God's working holiness in his saints should be a great comfort to us in the midst of our trouble.

For these in Revelation 6 for whom the work has been completed it is a reminder that his return to earth and glory is indeed coming soon. You remember first John chapter 3 where? It says what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears we'll be like him.

And if that's our hope what will we be doing purifying ourselves even as he is pure? Well for the saints under the altar in the fifth seal they have been purified. They are like Christ and that is a deposit and earnest a guarantee that the Lord Jesus is going to finish the rest of his work and the rest of his people to not only are they now the children of God, but they also are pure.

Even as he is pure and that's a great comfort in connection with their question how long O Lord until you return. For us who are still in the midst of being sanctified we rejoice to know that our suffering is part of how the Lord does that James chapter 1 Romans chapter 5 Romans chapter 8 Multiple places where he tells us that our trials produce in us that sanctification that he won't let us go without that whatever is good for us to get us to glory.

Whatever is good for us to fit us for glory. Our Lord is giving to us. And so if suffering is good for that he'll give us suffering. And if being martyred is good for that you'll even give us to be martyred. So be comforted by and pray for the gift of holiness.

Also pray for the salvation of sinners, there's actually two numbers that have to be completed here in the answer to the how long question. They were told it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed at.

As they were was completed. So the number of their fellow servants is not yet completed. The Lord directs redirects the how long question to the completion of that number. We should be praying for the salvation of the number of the elect to be completed or that all of his servants would be saved and that number would be full.

So pray for the salvation of sinners, but there's that other number. Their brethren who would be killed as they were would be completed. The fact that these who are crying out that their blood would be avenge they have been according to verse nine slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held and we find their souls in a particular location under the altar George Whitfield, you know famously said when someone who had reasonable theological concerns about John Wesley, do you think you will see him in heaven and Whitfield answered no and the person was shocked and Whitfield proceeded to say, I think he'll be so much closer.

To the throne that I might not be able to get a glimpse of him from where I shall be there is a location thing here a particular honor for having been given the privilege of being martyred for the Lord Jesus who those who love not their lives even unto death and we should pray not only that the number of the elect would be completed but that also this other number that the Lord has his special eye upon in his providence until Jesus returns the brethren who would be killed as they were.

Would be completed so remember those who are in chains like Hebrews 13 tells us and remember especially those who are being given the privilege of dying for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is consistent with Matthew 5 11 to 12 and Luke 6 22 to 23 where he says rejoice and be exceedingly glad when they persecute you and hate you and revile you and so forth at

5:41 when they come out from their trial before the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer.

Shame for the name of Christ this is something that if you have gone somewhere like Planned Parenthood and suffered abuse for the name of Christ you should remember as a privilege but pray especially for those who will be called to die for the name of Christ because that is a number that we learn in this passage heaven has its eye upon so.

Five things especially in our instruction for praying out of this passage pray with your soul pray for God's justice and vengeance be comforted by and pray for the gift of holiness of sanctification pray for the salvation of sinners and pray for persecuted believers and especially those who will be martyred for the faith.