

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Devotional on 1Peter 1:17

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear

This Scripture holds before us many reasons to call upon God in prayer:

First, God is our Father. When a child needs something, and his father is available and able, he calls upon him. We have a Father who is always available and infinitely able. Even when, humanly speaking, something is within our grasp, or there are means to be employed, let us grasp it while calling upon Father or employ the means while calling upon Father.

Second, God is Judge. *“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us”* (Romans 8:33–34). Many earthly fathers are judges, and this is a great encouragement to their children—some, even unto folly, for they presume that they may do much with impunity. But our Heavenly Father is a just and righteous Judge, who has already completely satisfied that justice on our behalf!

What do we see, when we look to the Judge's bench, the throne of heaven? We see the Father, Who has sent His Son out of a love that would have us justified, and He has declared His Son's mediatorial work complete and effective. It is He who justifies! And, we see the risen Christ, the Son Who always lives to intercede for us.

Many a believer balks at the idea of God as Judge. Let them not do so, for He is our Father Whose verdict has already been declared in the resurrection of His beloved Son. Let His unchallengeable authority and exact justice strengthen us unto confidence and joy in prayer, knowing He is the One Who is for us!

Third, God judges according to each one's work. Yes, our justification is by faith alone. We have just rejoiced in God being the One Who justifies. But this justification is not a fiction; it belongs to those who have been predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

And this faith is not a fiction; those whom He justified, He also glorified. There is an harmonious accord between believer's works after conversion and the judgment that God renders in the last day, when it is revealed that the reason for any and all goodness in the believer's works is that they have been “done in God” (John 3:18–21).

As those who are children of the Father through the Son, we seek for our works to reflect the family resemblance of that Father, so that at the last the Son will be the firstborn among many brethren.

But how will we do such works? Surely that for which we most need the Father's help is for being holy as He is holy (cf. 1Pet 1:13–16).

And what better way is there to begin than by calling upon the Father Whom we resemble in those works and the Judge who will approve those works for their being done through His Son and Spirit?

Fourth, our stay in this world is brief. We will spend an eternity doing works in union with Christ that glorify our Father. But, very limited is “the time of our stay” for the doing of those works that will be judged, as declared by this Scripture.

Therefore, we do not take the time of our service lightly, but as something weighty. We are to conduct ourselves throughout the time of our sojourn “in fear”—not the servile terror of someone whose judgment is in question, but the holy reverence of those who are about an important work.

As we have a limited time for this important work, and as we have not the resources by which to do it, the brevity of this stay should continually drive us to prayer!