

A Good Night's Rest

"Into your hands I commit my spirit"

Psalm 31:5 (NIV)

We are told very little about the upbringing of Jesus. The Gospels are very silent except for one incident in Jesus' life when He was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-50). However, there was a custom among the mothers of Jesus' day that we do know about. When a Jewish mother put her young children to bed it was the custom for them to teach their children certain prayers.

In particular one prayer the mothers taught was to have the child recite Psalm 31:5. There is little doubt that Mary taught her remarkable son Jesus to say this prayer. So this is one thing about our Lord's childhood of which we may be reasonably certain. Jesus likely prayed this prayer each night at least during His formative years. Perhaps He prayed it every night as an adult as well, we simply do not know.

However, we most certainly know that in His darkest time, when He hung on the cross to pay for His people's sins, He uttered this prayer. It is the last of the seven things He said while on the cross.

During the first three hours on the cross, Jesus endured the wrath of the people gathered around the cross. Now that the physical alternatives were exhausted, the people turned to verbal abuse from about 9am

to noon. Then for the next three hours from noon to 3 pm, a darkness hung over the land and Jesus was forsaken by the Father in order to save sinners from eternal destruction.

The first three words of Jesus from the cross addressed the needs of others. The last four spoken in quick succession gave expression to His own needs. Jesus always saw to the needs of others before attending to His own concerns.

Having now gone through the trauma of being forsaken by God, He can once again address God as Father just as He taught us to do. And, when He is about to dismiss His spirit and die, He says the last of the seven words from the cross. The last thing Jesus said was, (Luke 23:46 NIV)

"Father into your hands I commit my spirit"

This prayer of Jesus is a remarkable one for us to pray as we endure suffering in our lives.

Jesus, as we have said, had just endured to worst the people could inflict. Now, as He is about sleep the sleep of death He prays this prayer perhaps for the last time.

The lesson for us is that we need to become children of God in order that we may pray this

inspired prayer in our times of trouble. In fact, becoming a child of God is, in one sense, committing ourselves to the Lord for Him to save us.

We pray to God and dare to address Him as "Father". Then we place ourselves into His hands. Putting ourselves into God's hands means that we come under His control. We submit to Him in everything. What we commit to the Lord is our spirit, our eternal being, our essential selves.

My great desire is that everyone who reads this devotional would pray this simple prayer. Fancy words or prayers written by others are not needed. We can simply take this verse of the Bible and use it as the one to bring salvation to ourselves.

If we are suffering and asking God for help in our situation, then this prayer would be a wonderful way to end the time of prayer. Will you submit to what God has for you as long as He will receive your spirit? Will you call out to Him and use the tender word "Father"?

Do so today. He is waiting to hear from you.