

## SEEK THE LORD

### When You Feel at the End of Your Rope

There was once a business executive who retired without the opportunity to give advice or leave instructions for his successor. He did leave four envelopes to be opened in turn whenever a crisis arose. Before long the new executive faced his first crisis. He turned to the first envelope for advice. He opened it and read, "Blame your predecessor." In time the second crisis came. He opened the second envelope, and the message was, "Form a committee." Everyone knows that will not help, so things got worse. Opening a third envelope, the advice was, "Fire some subordinates." That helped a little, but finally the fourth crisis came, the worst of all. Now he was really at the end of his rope. He had one envelope left. He nervously ripped it open, pulled out the instruction which read, "Start making out four envelopes."

A similar thing happened to Jesus' disciples. When Jesus was at his height of fame and popularity for healing so many people, the disciples were also recognized wherever they went. On one occasion the disciples were asked to heal the son of a very prominent man in town. Jesus was gone at the time. The disciples tried everything they knew how to do. They said all the words they could think of, but nothing helped the boy. The father of the boy called the local authorities to step in because the disciples seemed like imposters.

At this point in the story, Jesus returned and found a crisis. After visiting with the father, Jesus cast out an unclean spirit from the boy and he was healed. Later the disciples asked Jesus, "Why couldn't we cast out the spirit?" Jesus answered, "This kind can come out only through prayer." (Mark 9:14-29)

What do we do when we face a crisis? Someone said, “When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.” I like that advice, but I would quickly add to that the advice of Jesus – Pray! Many people would ask, “How should I pray? What should I pray?” I have found the words are not as important as the attitude of the heart, but mostly, just keep at your praying. Do not stop praying. God would rather have us offer angry prayers than no prayer at all. Even when we are all out of sorts, if we keep praying, God can do something with that.

This was the testimony of a professor in a college in Colorado. Periodically he would go on a drinking binge. His family begged him to stop, but he only blamed them for nagging him. One night he stormed out to drink at a bar. When the bar closed, he drank in his car. He happened to park near a cemetery while he drank and perhaps that got him to thinking. After he slept a while, he felt terrible. He cried out to God in prayer, “If you exist, if you are there, come and help me.” In that case, it was all that was needed. He said, “I saw no lights flash and no voice spoke to me. But I did experience a great calm. I know that Jesus was alive, and that he cared for me, and that he was searching for me.” He has been sober since.

Some things can only be helped by prayer.

Prayer: Our Lord, remind us it is ok to pray even if we do not feel like it, and it maybe a long time since we did it last. Amen

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