

Dial Daily Bread: One Thing that the "Almighty" Can't Do

Dear Friends of "Dial Daily Bread,"

During His life on earth, Jesus prayed--continually. And He prayed for people individually. Consider Peter, for example: "Simon, ... I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:31, 32). And it is good that Jesus prayed for him, because Peter came within a millimeter of losing out completely when he denied three times that he even knew Jesus. He was so heartbroken at what he had done that he even wished he could die. Such terrible grief or self-reproach has caused some people to take their own lives. When in his agony Peter remembered that Jesus had said, "I have prayed for you," he had a slender thread of hope left, which in his repentance, he grasped.

But now a question: did Jesus pray the same prayer for Judas Iscariot? When Jesus prayed, the Father heard His prayers; and the angels were ready to do what Jesus asked. But I find nothing in the inspired record that says clearly that Jesus prayed that same prayer for Judas, that "[his] faith should not fail" in the hour of trial. For one thing, at the time Jesus prayed for Peter, Judas had no faith to be prayed for! According to Romans 12:3, God had already given Judas (along with "each one") the "measure of faith."

But like Esau who had "despised" and "sold" the birthright which God had given him, Judas had by this time scorned all genuine faith that he once had. He had resisted every effort of the Holy Spirit to bring him to repentance. He had refused to confess and forsake (and repay) his thieving from the money box which he carried as treasurer for Jesus and the disciples (see John 12:6). He had refused that appeal of the Holy Spirit when Mary had washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and that last one when Jesus washed his feet. He had allowed selfish pride to bind his heart to Satan. Thus there was no "faith" left that Jesus could have prayed for.

Jesus' prayers to His Father were powerful, but there is one thing that the "Almighty" cannot do--He cannot force a single human heart. Jesus' relation with each of us is as close and tender and intimate as His with Judas; let's be very thankful today that He is still praying for us that "[our] faith should not fail" when our final test comes. Grab every slender thread of hope you have.

--Robert J. Wieland

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