

Prayer that Blames the Victim

Prayer is communication with God. It is union with God and believers say it is two way. God unites with you when you pray and you unite with him.

Prayer is not necessarily vocal it can just be an attitude you carry around in your heart. It can just be an intention that you don't put into words.

Petitionary prayer, prayer that asks for something, either influences God or it does not. All prayer is intended to be petitionary for even when you don't ask for a favour but just want to be with God you must necessarily intend that he helps you be really with him.

You will never ever do good without self-respect prompting you to. To help others and yourself is honouring yourself as a gift. Self-esteem without self-respect is not true self-esteem but hormones. If you had the self-esteem to fall in love with yourself so that you could do anything for yourself, that could be dangerous. And it would be hormones for its so unnatural.

It is a big thing in modern spirituality that nobody can hurt you unless you let them. This mentality blames the rape victim, for example, for being upset and devastated about being violated. If God helps and God does miracles, if magic helps and magic does miracles, then this vicious attitude is more justified than it is - if it is justified at all. If there is supernatural or magical power available to help, the victim should have used it for protection. It is then far more the victim's fault for suffering than it is if there is no such power. That is the kind of malevolence that people who say miracles happen are engendering.

Some people when they feel their prayers have not been answered feel they or the person they prayed for might not have deserved an answer. Some argue that the reason the prayer is seemingly unanswered is because God has a bigger plan and answering the prayer would only make matters worse overall. Since human beings are blamed for evil and for the casualties of the divine plan, it follows that prayer can increase anger and vindictiveness. Is it really fair or right in principle to encourage prayer for prayer goes with the notion that God might not answer for you do not deserve an answer? That is a hideous suggestion! We do not have the right to accuse others of being the problem and to make that accusation on faith grounds. You only say things like that if you have really good and proper evidence. Innocent until proven guilty!

Suppose somebody you pray for is not made a better person as a result of your prayers. What if that person is now worse? You have a choice, one or the other, to accuse God of not helping or accusing the person of blocking God's help maliciously, then which one? If God comes first then you blame the person. This is proof of the anti-humanistic slant that is behind prayer.

We do not like being told we are responsible for the terrible things that happen in our lives. We can't then expect God to be pleased that we say he is all-powerful and therefore responsible for all the good and evil he enables his creation to do. Thus it follows that if we love God more than people we will tend to declare them responsible for the bad things that happen in their lives.

Roman Catholicism upholds saints who suffered beyond belief for the faith as examples of how people can have peace and joy no matter what others do to them. The Church says these people turned to God and trusted him so much that nobody was really able to hurt them - they were so happy they might not have even registered the physical pain. So the Church then needs to explain why we should disparage rapists if the victims cause their own suffering. So the Church needs to explain why we should disparage paedophiles and child molesters for the victims have chosen to hurt themselves because of the abuse. It is small wonder with an attitude like that how the Church has so little sympathy for victims of child sex abuse. The Church has to think that the victims damaged themselves in relation to how they responded to the abuse and so the abuse itself did little harm. The Church has to think that the victims are evil for wanting the molesters punished for what the victims did to themselves.

Religion says that we can be like martyrs singing with joy as the lions tear us to bits if we submit enough to God's will. "Thy will be done" then is a plea to Heaven for God to make you abnormal and the kind of maniac that would rejoice in suffering for him. It implies that we should not upset ourselves over the suffering of others for it is self-inflicted. If they loved God enough, it implies, they will not suffer.

God alone matters according to Jesus and the Bible and we must let him matter as much to us. Thus prayer is of supreme importance. It is the ultimate good work, nothing else compares to it. Evil comes in when there is no prayer. This totally

insults atheists and even other believers and makes them feel they do not matter to you. If they matter to you because of God, that is a polite way of saying they will be treated as if they matter but they don't matter in themselves.

This is telling depressed people that they have or may have or may not have brought it on themselves for not loving God properly and serving him in prayer. Even telling them that it could be their fault can hurt them bad. And to do it on religious grounds is worse. It would be like telling them that maybe an evil spirit is tormenting them. It is victimising the vulnerable - all because of religious assumptions. Some may think that as religion involves making a lot of assumptions anyway then why not make such assumptions? They are right if making big assumptions such as that God has the right to let babies suffer are ethical. Such assumptions make you come across as a threat to the depressive person - they can feel it. They will see your lack of compassion in your eyes.

People like to think of a reason for their suffering and that of others. Why? Because if there is a reason there is a way of maybe getting a solution or at least of reducing the suffering. But thinking of a supernatural reason is not helpful. It is about trying to feel you are helping while not helping. The problem is that once you diagnose a supernatural problem, you cannot know or really guess what the problem is. For example, if somebody sometimes goes into a trance that lasts a minute where they reveal things it is impossible for them to know, you cannot show if it is their own psychic ability taking over, if it is a demon, a ghost, an alien or a god. Diagnosing the supernatural is totally unhelpful and is cruel if the correct, that is the mundane explanation, is not accepted.

Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 16:24). So if you pray for somebody to get better and the opposite happens you can blame yourself or be possibly to blame for you did not pray in the name of Jesus. Jesus' doctrine insults people who see prayer as about hoping to become worthy of what you pray for.

People like to say that when terrible things happen that people are not praying enough. This awful and cruel reasoning drives most spirituality. Prayer has too many bad fruits so prayer is bad. It will not do to point to praying people who do not blame the victims they pray for.

If you pray to be safe from a bully, you expect to be let down. If you complain about this you are told, "But others are as badly off as you or worse so why should you complain?" That shows the passive aggressive nature of prayer and its supporters. The praying person always thinks the results of praying for others is that they are left no worse off than somebody else. For example, if you heal Joan with your prayer she is still as much in danger of something else happening as you are. Or worse.

The benefits of prayer do not come from prayer at all which is why we should challenge people's faith in prayer and have no regrets. The benefits are nothing compared to the damage that is done.

The WEB

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12608c.htm>
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