



The Important Night Watch
The Prayer Life of Jesus

—The Nightly Petitioner—
Christ's Need of Prayer

As the human was upon Him, He felt His need of strength from His Father. **He had select places of prayer.** . . . In this exercise His holy, human soul was strengthened for the **duties and trials** of the day. Our Saviour identifies Himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that He became a suppliant, a nightly petitioner, seeking from His Father **fresh supplies of strength**, to come forth invigorated and refreshed, braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. (2T 201.2)

He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin.
His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. . . .
Christ found comfort and joy in communion with His
Father. Here He could **unburden His heart of the sorrows**
that were crushing Him. (2T 201.2)

In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a **heavenly current** that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours. (*DA 363.1*)

Satan was upon his path every moment. **The strength of Christ was in prayer.** . . . He was alone with his Father. . . .
he poured out his supplications, and put forth all the strength of his soul in grasping the hand of the Infinite.

(YI April 1, 1873, par. 2)

With strong crying and tears He sent His petitions to heaven, that His human nature might be **strengthened**, that He might be **braced** to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive workings, and **fortified** to fulfill His mission of uplifting humanity. To His workers He says, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done.”

John 13:15. (*MH 500.4*)

From hours spent with God he came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily he received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened him from his slumbers, and his soul and his lips were anointed with grace, that he might impart to others. His words were given him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that he might speak in season to the weary and oppressed. "The Lord God hath given me," he said, "the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." [Isaiah 50:4] (*RH* August 11, 1910, par. 1)

He has given us evidence that prayer is essential in order to receive strength **to contend with the powers of darkness**, and **to do the work** allotted us. Our own strength is weakness, but that which God gives is mighty and will make everyone who obtains it more than conqueror. (2T 203.1)

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He had taken them with Him that they might be a strength to Him and that the events they should witness that night and the lessons of instruction they should receive might be indelibly printed upon their memories. This was necessary that their faith might not fail but be strengthened for the test just before them. (2T 204.2)

They lost much by thus sleeping. **Our Saviour designed to fortify them for the severe test of their faith to which they would soon be subjected.** If they had spent that mournful period in watching with the dear Saviour, and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to his own feeble strength to deny his Lord in the time of trial. (2T 204.3)

Jesus has left us this warning: “**Watch** ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.” The church of God is required to fulfill her **night watch**, however perilous, whether long or short. **Sorrow is no excuse** for her to be less watchful. **Tribulation** should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by His own example to the Source of their strength in times of need, distress, and peril. The attitude of **watching** is to designate the church as God’s people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. (2T 205.2)

If they had remained watching they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This **important night watch** should have been **signalized by noble mental struggles and prayers**, which would have brought them **strength** to witness the unspeakable agony of the Son of God. (2T 205.3)

It would have **prepared** them, as they should behold His sufferings upon the cross, to **understand** something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which He endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to **recall** the words He had spoken to them in reference to His sufferings, death, and resurrection; and, amid the gloom of that terrible, trying hour, some rays of **hope would have lighted** up the darkness and sustained their faith. (2T 205.3)

~~Christ had told them before that these things would take place, but they did not understand Him. The scene of His sufferings was to be a fiery ordeal to His disciples, hence the **necessity of watchfulness and prayer.** (2T 206.1)

Watchfulness—watching or observing someone or something closely, being alert and vigilant

Mockings and jeerings are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and vulgar jests and insulting derision are passed from lip to lip. Satan was having full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he commences with the chief priests and elders, and imbues them with religious frenzy. (2T 207.2)

Close to the cross are the blind, bigoted, faithless **priests and elders**, taunting, mocking, and jeering: “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, **save Thyself**. (2T 208.1)

Nature sympathized with the suffering of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, proclaimed that it was the Son of God who died. There was a mighty earthquake. (2T 211.1)

Jesus did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and exclaimed with His departing breath: "It is finished." Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered: "It is finished." **The** **~~great plan of redemption**, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had been thus far carried out. And there was joy in heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God
(2T 211.2)

It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the “rulers of the people.” “It is expedient for us,” said the wily Caiaphas, “that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11:50. (GC 615.2)

The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. "Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

Jeremiah 30:5–7. (GC 616.1)

As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. . . . He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God. (GC 618.3)

They afflict their souls before God, pointing to their past repentance of their many sins, and pleading the Saviour's **promise**: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." **Isaiah 27:5**. Their faith does not fail because their prayers are not immediately answered.

Though suffering the keenest **anxiety, terror, and distress**, they do not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God as Jacob laid hold of the Angel; and the language of their souls is: "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." (GC 619.3)

Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had **unconfessed sins** to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have **no concealed wrongs to reveal**. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance. (GC 620.1)

Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. **All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins**, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, **unconfessed and unforgiven**, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a **preparation for the day** of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless. (GC 620.2)