

**JEREMIAH 33:3 "CALL TO ME" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES – LEADER'S STUDY -
LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

LESSON #9 – A CHRISTIAN'S CALL TO INTERCESSION

A CHRISTIAN'S CALL – As I look at the prayers of the Savior, I am impressed by how often He is interceding for someone else. As I look at my own prayer life, I am disappointed at how many times, my requests deal with me and what I want. This lesson, a Christian's Call to Intercede, encourages us to bring others to the Lord.

THE PRAYER – We begin with an intercessory prayer that was written by the 1st century church father, Clement: Dear Lord, "we ask You, Master, be our helper and defender. Rescue those of our number in distress; raise up the fallen; assist the needy; heal the sick; turn back those of Your people who stray; feed the hungry; release our captives; revive the weak; encourage those who lose heart. Let all the nations realize that You are the only God, that Jesus Christ is Your Child, and that we are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture." In Jesus' Name. Amen.

ILLUSTRATION – The College class was going to take their final exam in Logic. Knowing the test was difficult, the Professor told his students they could bring into the test as much information as they could fit on a piece of notebook paper. Some students wrote very small on their 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper. Other students used a photocopier to shrink down entire textbook pages until they could hardly be read. But one student, the only one who got an "A", walked into class, put a piece of notebook paper on the floor, and had an Advanced Logic graduate student stand on that paper. The graduate told the test-taker everything he needed to know to pass. The graduate was acting as an intercessor between the student and his test. As a go-between, his presence that day made the difference between success and failure.

SATAN'S SUMMONS – That is exactly what Jesus does for each of us. He acts as our intercessor, pleading our case before the judgment seat of the Lord. "Interceding" is what the Lord wants us to do for each other; and the kind of thing that Satan would love to stop. The devil would have us selfishly focus on our needs, our desires, our goals, our wants, rather than interceding, in prayer, for our neighbor.

THOUGHT: To be an intercessor for others, does not mean that you end up denying yourself. It means you are encouraging the cause of others. To be an intercessor for others does mean that your prayers stop being about yourself. It means that they will focus on the needs of others. To be an intercessor does not mean that you will go hungry, naked, and live in poverty. It means that you will bring petitions to the Lord for others who are in those straits. To be an intercessor for others means that you place yourself, your causes, your needs, into the hands of the Great, Divine Intercessor, Jesus Christ. The words are easy to say; the thoughts are easy to grasp, the actions are harder to perform.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 – Let's look at these Old Testament passages and see if the people listed said their prayers of intercession for others, or for themselves.

TEXT	WHO DID THE PRAYING	FOR WHOM
Genesis 4: 12-14	Cain	Prayed that he might be spared from vengeance.
Exodus 3: 7	Children of Israel	Cried out for themselves because of their slavery.
Psalms 13: 2	David	Wonders how long his enemy will triumph over him.

These are just a few of the numerous instances where men and women of the Old Testament made intercession for a personal need or problem. They show us the variety of personal interests that were brought to the Lord. But there are other passages. Let's look at some of them and see another aspect of intercession. Please look up and answer the questions:

TEXT	WHO DID THE INTERCEDING	FOR WHOM AND FOR WHAT
Genesis 18: 22-23	Abraham	For Lot and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Genesis 20: 17	Abraham	For Abimelech, that he might have children again.
Exodus 32: 11-14	Moses	Prayed that the Children of Israel might continue on.
1 Samuel 7:5	Samuel	He interceded, that the people might be forgiven.
2 Samuel 24: 17	David	Prayed he might be punished and not the people.
Isaiah 37: 14-20	Hezekiah	Prayed that the people might be delivered from the Assyrians.
Jeremiah 14: 7-9	Jeremiah	Forgive the people's great backsliding.

According to these verses, it would seem that the Old Testament prophets, and heroes, felt their job, at least in part, was to make intercession to the Lord on behalf of others.

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FIRST APPLICATION: Sadly, many people feel that their level of intercession needs to be more mundane and earthbound. Recently a pastor told me about a lunch he had at the request of one of his members. During the course of the meal, these are the intercessions that he heard....

- Some people are saying that they think 12:15 is a little late to get out of church.
- A concerned member says that a pastor really doesn't need three weeks of vacation.
- One of our good members says that a guy his age doesn't need a guy your age telling him how to raise his kids.
- A good member who hasn't been in church in a while says, if it weren't for your crazy mission projects we could have repaved our parking lot by now.

Do you think that this man was doing a good job of intercession? YES / NO
 What might he have done differently? When people gossiped to him, intercede for the pastor.
 Anything else? Take those things to the Lord in prayer.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 2 - CHRIST'S CALL - Taking things to the Lord in prayer is not anything new for the people of the Lord's church. Please look at these New Testament passages and see who interceded for whom, and for what purpose.

TEXT	PERSON	WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE
Matthew 8: 5-6	Centurion	For the life of his servant.
Luke 22: 31-32	Jesus	That Peter might be spared from falling into the trap Satan has prepared.
Acts 7: 59-60	Stephen	For the forgiveness of those who were murdering him.
Philippians 1: 9-10	Paul	That the church's love may abound and be able to discern what is best.
Philemon 1: 6	Paul	That we may be active in sharing our faith.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION - You have to search long and hard to find any follower of Christ who does not spend a great deal of time interceding for someone else. Apostles interceded for churches who were struggling. Churches interceded for their brothers and sisters who were being persecuted. For more than eighty years, Lutheran Hour Ministries has been interceding for those who do not know the Savior. We know you join with us in asking that hearts might be called from darkness into light. And that intercession worked as the Lord blessed those who called on Him.

In the year 1517, there was a great riot in London. Houses and stores were sacked. Eventually, the insurrection was put down. Three hundred people were quickly arrested, tried and hung. Five hundred were cast into prison, and were to be tried before the king, Henry VIII. Henry sat in state upon his throne, the door opened, and the men entered. Each had a rope about his neck. But before a verdict could be passed down, three queens entered. Catharine of Aragon, wife of the king; Margaret of Scotland, sister of the king, and Mary of France approached the throne, knelt at the feet of his majesty and remained there pleading. There they stayed until the king forgave the five hundred trembling men.

Most of us might think, a person would be hard pressed to come up with a better hand than to have three queens. Truth is, we have potentially better intercession than those men. True, Jesus is pleading for us before His heavenly Father. But imagine how different our lives will be if we were constantly interceding for each other.

Will you make up a list of people for whom you should be interceding:

NAME: _____ PRAYER: _____

NAME: _____ PRAYER: _____

NAME: _____ PRAYER: _____

THE WAY OF PRAYER – Dear Lord, be with us as we speak to You about others. In Jesus' Name. Amen.