

**General Topics :: Luther lamenting his addiction to sloth and lack of prayer****Luther lamenting his addiction to sloth and lack of prayer - posted by docs (), on: 2008/12/22 10:54**

A letter from Luther to Melancton, May 24, 1521:

"I do see myself insensible and hardened, a slave to sloth, rarely, alas, praying, unable to utter a prayer for the Church, while my untamed flesh burns with devouring flame."

I hope that Luther's reference to his burning flesh is not inappropriate. I decided to leave it because it's a believer being honest at the time so maybe it's okay. Just read with maturity. But this was during Luther's time in the Wartburg Castle after all the controversy had broken around him. It was a time of being alone and solitude but in his letter he is not complaining and depressed because of the solitude. He is depressed because of what he sees as his slothfulness and lack of prayer during a time when it seems to me he recognizes he could be doing lots of praying and interceding because he was unhindered to a degree and had time and space. I read and thought how similar to what I feel and experience! It seems that the more I set myself to intercede many times that the more I find myself unable and incapable of doing so. I've always said piously that if the church would just intercede things would be different. I've never realized as I have that it is imperative that at this juncture in history that we lay aside earthly and entangling encumbrances and seek the Father's face for the church and the world. And for our families and much more. But how does one finally get past an addiction to sloth and letting valuable time pass? I find myself hesitating a little here, entertaining a little distraction there and this and that and then my time for prayer is gone. And what was I doing? Not much of anything. Sloth. My flesh seems to resist any real exertion toward praying and seriously interceding even though it's the thing I desire most in my inner man. Luther seemed fitfully aware of this condition of the flesh. If you really want to pray with seriousness does God set out to defeat your flesh first so when you do learn to come that you are coming to Him the Spirit? How far does disciplined time of prayer work or can that even be an effort in the flesh? Do you just have to give up and lay before Him in a contrite heap before success will come?

There's so much to pray about. I'm even beginning to be willing to think that the Church may in the not too distant future find itself in the Big Show at the end of an age. And my flesh remains fitfully uncooperative as to efforts in prayer. I've had some success during the past year but it came in only fits and starts and not with the consistency I imagine. I thought it was easier than it is. I've prayed always but these days are different and require more. The true depths of true intercession still evade me. It seems the image I have held of myself loving prayer is only a fancy imagination in many ways. Would that God in the coming year would remain patient with me and teach me as He will. But what I want most now seems to still evade me. Even when I have the time and space to do so.

"And another angel came and stood at the the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."

"And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand."

(Rev 8:3-4)

May the Lord help me.

Re: Luther lamenting his addiction to sloth and lack of prayer - posted by bediligent, on: 2008/12/22 13:08

This is the same situation I'm in, and it seems many that I know are in as well. Just some months ago I was able to intercede for hours, now with all day long I find it difficult to even muster up 10 minutes of solid prayer. I agree with you brother that there is much to pray for.