

THE GOD WHO CHANGES HIS MIND

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Charitable deeds and proclamations of the Word are powerful enough to change the mind of God.

In spite of constant prayers and sacrifices if prayer doesn't bear fruit, we tend to feel disappointed. One may even feel displeasure towards God when prayers are not answered at all. Some may stop praying altogether and lose faith in God. The distorted image one has about God as well as the shallowness of one's God experience are the reasons for this unfortunate situation. In the Bible we see our God as a God who changes His mind on seeing the tearful prayers of the people and blesses them. The best example for this is the life of King Hezekiah. To Hezekiah who became sick and was at the point of death, the prophet Isaiah said, "Thus says the Lord: set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover." (2Kings 20:1). But Hezekiah was not disappointed though the message was from a famous prophet of God. He encountered that agony with intense prayer. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord. "Remember now, O Lord, I implore you, how I have walked before you in faithfulness with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." Then Hezekiah wept bitterly. (2 Kings 20:3). That prayer of Hezekiah really trapped God. 'Remember Lord the good I have done in your sight.' This prayer prompted God to change his mind. Immediately God spoke to Hezekiah through Isaiah, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; indeed I will heal you, I will add fifteen years to your life." (2 Kings 20:5). Besides increasing the number of years of his life God healed him completely and blessed him too. The good deeds that we do in our lives are counted as a deposit of blessings in God's bank.

ON THE PATH OF CHARITY:

This gives us a clear message that good deeds that we do will cause signs and miracles in our lives. Charitable deeds and proclamations of the Word are powerful enough to change the mind of God. On using our health, wealth and influence for the benefit of the poor, God will be willing to change his mind before your prayer. The painful moments that are spent for doing good in the name of God will surely bring forth showers of blessings from heaven. God will save such people and their families. This is

very obvious in Jesus' utterances with regard to the last judgment. "Come you that are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Mat 25:34-36). What is required is taking a decision to purify our lives by doing good to others.

TEARS AND PATIENT WAITING:

God surrenders himself before the tears of his children. The answer God gives to the prayer of Hezekiah is noteworthy. "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears." (2 Kings 20:5). God appears to Hagar who runs away weeping to the desert unable to bear the persecution of Sara, Abraham's wife. 'The Lord has given heed to your affliction.' (Gen 16:11). Bear in mind that the affliction and tears in our lives are mediums for a God experience. The realization that God is touched by the tearful prayers of man will help us share our sorrows with God. After his resurrection, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene who was weeping. He asked, "Woman, why are you crying?" (John : 20). Jesus not only wipes the tears of the one who cries, but he cries with them too. The Gospel records that Jesus wept with the family members who were weeping in distress over the death of Lazar. (Jn 11:34). God is not moved by the tears of despair and guilt ; he is willing to change his mind before prayers of hope as well as tears that are shed in faith. If King Hezekiah cried facing the wall, today we have to cry facing the altar. During each sacrifice at the altar God comes down. 'So you have pain now'. (Jn 16:22). Remember, it takes some time for the tears to reach God. St. Monica who waited tearfully for the conversion of her son St. Augustine, stands as a great example.

IN ORDER TO ATTAIN GOD'S PROMISE :

The Bible clearly records that God fulfilled his promise to heal King Hezekiah and increase his life. God even goes to the extent of changing His own decisions for man. This change of mind depends on the depth of the father-son relationship. In order to receive the promise of God, one needs to establish an intimate relationship with God. Spend time with the Father during the precious moments of prayer. This requires a sort of spiritual growth akin to the new born who is sustained by drinking the milk of the mother as well as experiencing her warmth. The book of Samuel describes a beautiful scene in which the childless Hanna pours out all her afflictions before the Lord. To Eli the priest she said, "I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my anxiety and

vexation all this time." (1 Sam 1:15-16). Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him." God gave her a great gift- an anointed son, Samuel.

Whatever we ask with purity and faithfulness God will surely grant. This is made clear through the parable of the widow and the judge. Jesus said, "If the unjust judge has granted the widow justice just because she troubled him continuously, will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?" (Lk. 18:1-8). Let us lead our lives with prayers and sacrifices in such a way that God will change his mind before our prayers and fulfill his promises.

KEEP IN MIND:

Many are haunted by guilt feelings and memories of their past sins. One is troubled over these things because one does not know the real attitude of God . God hates sin but loves the sinner. God never keeps a record of sins once it is frankly revealed at the confessional. "I will not remember your sins." (Isaiah 43:26). However grave the sin may be, God has a kind heart to save and help such a person. God who decided to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah where people indulged in unchaste and unnatural relationships, later changed His mind when Abraham implored to God to show mercy towards them and spare them. God said that he would show mercy towards them if there were enough good people as promised by Abraham. (Gen 18:16-23). What was the factor that prompted God to change His mind before the request of Abraham? The answer to this is given in the Scriptures itself. "Abraham continued to stand before God." (Gen 18:22). God will change his mind for the people who live in his presence and fulfill his will. He will turn situations and persons in their favour. Another example of this is the story in which Jesus saves a family from humiliation during the wedding at Cana when the wine was over. When Mary asked him to perform a miracle there, the reply he gave was noteworthy, "My time has not yet come." (Jn 2:4). But Jesus changes his mind before the request and purity of Mary in order to save a family from humiliation. He disregards the time factor and performs the miracle. God the Father has a tender and merciful heart. Standing before that loving expression, ask anything that is required without fear and with an open heart. All that God feels is good for us will be granted to us ignoring our sins and weaknesses. If you change your mind for God, God too will change His mind for you.

THIS IS WHAT U CAN DO:

1. Instead of leading a life nurturing the guilt feeling about your past sins, do charitable deeds to the best of your abilities.
2. Evangelize in any way you can.
3. Live in the presence of the Lord.
4. Surrender to God the persons and situations you dislike.
5. Remember, the prayers that you deposit in the bank of the heavenly Father will never go waste. Wait for the day God returns everything with interest. Then all that you considered as curses will turn out to be blessings.
Are you leading a life of holiness that will change God's mind ?