PRAYING FOR YOU

*God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: 1 Sam 12:23 (KJV)*

 I am a product of praying people. My parents prayed for me before I was born. There were people praying for me before and when I was saved. My wife continually prays for me. I doubt if there has been one time that I have entered the pulpit when someone wasn’t praying for me. My health is good today because of people’s prayers. This fact is very humbling when I think that I am the least of the least that someone should pray for.

 In our text Israel was always asking Samuel to pray for them. They were also sinning over and over again so is it not amazing that Samuel says that if he doesn’t pray for Israel, it will be a sin on his part. When we see someone living outside the will of God, it is easy to give up on them. I sure am glad that people didn’t give up on me. I lived for seven or eight years outside the will of God, but people kept praying for me. When I look back, I believe that they prayed me back into fellowship with God. There are many church members who have silently resigned from attending church and in so doing, have stopped communing with God. They need people praying them back into church. Some church members may still be attending but are not actively serving God. They need people praying for them. Lost people need us praying for them on a continual basis. For their salvation we should pray without ceasing.

 This need for prayer is for the sake of the person praying also. Notice that Samuel was concerned that he should sin if he did not pray for them. Is it possible that we might be their only link to God at that particular moment? What happens if I do not pray for you? On my part, I lose the joy that is to be had in praying for someone. In 2012 I began praying for several of my pastor friends, especially on Sunday morning, when I knew that they would be entering the pulpit. By doing so, I had the joy of being part of their ministry. Often times I have made and kept a prayer list. From time to time I will look over the list and observe how God has answered many of those prayers. Today I can look over the congregation and see many of those who have been on my prayer lists. Some I have prayed to be saved and they are. Others I have prayed to see them and their family become a part of our church and they have. People whose healing we have prayed for are sitting in the pews today. Yes there is some joy to be had by praying for others.

 This verse also explains why we may feel so guilty when our prayer life becomes stagnant or even non- existent. Samuel says “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.” I have not only done you a great injustice if I do not pray for you, but I have sinned against God. My relationship with God is in part dependent on how I pray for you. You may say “I do not deserve your prayers.” That doesn’t matter. I am still to pray for you. Even if you have backslidden time after time I should still continue to pray for you. I should not cease to pray for you.

 God help us to continually pray for each other. May God bless you is my prayer.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram