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## JESUS CHRIST

"I your father, I your spouse, I your home, I your nurse, I your root, I your foundation. What ever you want. I will be. You will lack nothing. I will work for you. For I came to serve and not to be served. I will be your friend and your host, your head and your brother, your sister and your mother. I will be everything. Only be intimate with me! I will be poor for you, errant for you, on the cross for you, in the tomb for you. Above I plead the Father for your sake, on earth I became intercessor to the Father for your sake. You are everything for me, brother, co-heir, friend and member. What more do you want? "

St John Chrysostom

## From the writings of Saint Silouan the Athonite.

Of the knowledge of God.

We do not need riches or learning in order to know the Lord:

We must simply be obedient and sober, have a humble spirit and love our fellow-men.

The Lord will love a soul that does this, and of His own accord make Himself manifest to her and instruct her in love and humility, and give her all things necessary for her to find rest in God.

We may study as much as we will but we shall still not come to know the Lord unless we live according to His commandments, for the Lord is not made known through learning but by the Holy Spirit. Many philosophers and scholars have arrived at a belief in the existence of God, but they have not come to know God.

To believe in God is one thing, to know God another.

Just as the love of Jesus Christ is beyond our understanding so we cannot conceive of the depth of His suffering, because our own love for the Lord is so infinitely small. But with greater love comes more understanding even of the Lord's sufferings. There is love in small degree, medium love and perfect love, and the more perfect our love the more perfect our knowledge.

The Lord loves us so dearly that it passes description. Through the Holy Spirit alone can the soul know His love, of which she is inexpressibly aware. The Lord is all goodness and mercy. He is meek and gentle, and we have no words to tell of His goodness; but the soul without words feels this love and would remain wrapped in its quiet tranquillity forever.

Christ said: "I will not leave you comfortless;" and we see in truth, that He did not forsake us but gave us the Holy Spirit.

O ye peoples of the earth, fashioned by God, know your Creator and His love for us! Know the love of Christ, and live in peace and thereby

rejoice the Lord, who in His mercy waits for all men to come unto Him.

Know, all ye peoples, that we are created for the glory of God in the heavens. Cleave not to the earth, for God is our Father and He loves us liked beloved children.

O Lord grant to all nations to know Thee by Thy Holy Spirit. As Thou didst give the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and they knew Thee, so grant to all men to know Thee by Thy Holy Spirit.

From the book : The undistorted image. By Archimandrite Sofrony.

## Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ

"Εγώ πατήρ, εγώ νυμφίος, εγώ οικία, εγώ τροφεύς, εγώ ρίζα, εγώ θεμέλιος. Παν όπερ αν θέλης εγώ. Μηδενός εν χρεία καταστής. Εγώ δουλεύσω. Ήλθον γαρ διακονήσαι, ου διακονηθήναι. Εγώ και φίλος και ξένος και κεφαλή και αδελφός και αδελφή και μήτηρ. Πάντα εγώ. Μόνον οικειώς έχε προς εμέ. Εγώ πένης δια σε και αλήτης δια σε, επί σταυρού δια σε, επί τάφου δια σε, άνω υπέρ σου εντυχάνω τω Πατρί. Κάτω υπέρ σου πρεσβευτής παραγέγονα παρά του Πατρός. Πάντα μοι συ, και αδελφός και συγκληρονόμος και φίλος και μέλος. Τι πλέον θέλεις; "  
Άγιος Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος

## On Prayer. (St. Silouanos the Athonite)

We eat and drink every day, yet on the morrow our bodies need drink and food again. In like manner the recollection of God's bounties never wearies the soul but disposes her still more to think of God. Or again: the more wood you pile on a fire the more heat you get, and thus it is with God-the more you think on him the more are you fired with love and fervour towards Him. He who loves the Lord is always mindful of Him, and remembrance of God begets prayer. If you are forgetful of the Lord you will not pray, and without prayer the soul will not dwell in the love of God, for the grace of the Holy Spirit comes through prayer. Prayer preserves a man from sin, for the prayerful mind is intent on God and in humbleness of spirit stands before the face of the Lord, Who knoweth the soul of him who prays.

## PRAY WITHOUT CEASING (St. Gregory Palamas)

Let no one think, my brother Christians, that it is the duty only of priests and monks to pray without ceasing, and not of laymen. No, no; it is the duty of all of us Christians to remain always in prayer. For look what the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, writes in his life of St. Gregory of Thessalonica. This saint had a beloved friend by the name of Job, a very simple but most virtuous man. Once, while conversing with him, His Eminence said of prayer that every Christian in general should strive to pray always, and to pray without ceasing, as Apostle Paul commands all Christians, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), and as the prophet David says of himself, although he was a king and had to concern himself with his whole kingdom: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face" (Psalms 15:8), that is, in my prayer I always mentally see the Lord before me. Gregory the Theologian also teaches all Christians to say God's name in prayer more often than to breathe. . . . .

So, my Christian brethren, I too implore you, together also with St. Chrysostom, for the sake of saving your souls, do not neglect the practice of this prayer. Imitate those I have mentioned and follow in their footsteps as far as you can. At first it may appear very difficult to you, but be assured, as it were from Almighty God, that this very name of our Lord Jesus Christ, constantly invoked by you, will help you to overcome all difficulties, and in the course of time you will become used to this practice and will taste how sweet is the name of the Lord. Then you will learn by experience that this practice is not impossible and not difficult, but both possible and easy. This is why St. Paul, who knew better than we the great good which such prayer would bring, commanded us to pray without ceasing. He would not have imposed this obligation upon us if it were extremely difficult and impossible, for he knew beforehand that in such case, having no possibility of fulfilling it, we would inevitably prove to be disobedient and would transgress his commandment, thus incurring blame and condemnation. The Apostle could have had no such intention.

Moreover, bear in mind the method of prayer—how it is possible to pray without ceasing, namely by praying in the mind. And this we can always do if we so wish. For when we sit down to work with our hands,

when we walk, when we eat, when we drink we can always pray mentally and practice this mental prayer—the true prayer pleasing to God. Let us work with the body and pray with the soul. Let our outer man perform his bodily tasks, and let the inner man be entirely dedicated to the service of God, never abandoning this spiritual practice of mental prayer, as Jesus, God and Man, commanded us, saying: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matthew 6:6). The closet of the soul is the body; our doors are the five bodily senses. The soul enters its closet when the mind does not wander hither and thither, roaming among things and affairs of the world, but stays within, in our heart. Our senses become closed and remain closed when we do not let them be attached to external sensory things, and in this way our mind remains free from every worldly attachment, and by secret mental prayer unites with God its Father. "And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly," adds the Lord. God who knows all secret things sees mental prayer and rewards it openly with great gifts. For that prayer is true and perfect which fills the soul with Divine grace and spiritual gifts. As chrism perfumes the jar the more strongly the tighter it is closed, so prayer, the more fast it is imprisoned in the heart, abounds the more in Divine grace.

Blessed are those who acquire the habit of this heavenly practice, for by it they overcome every temptation of the evil demons, as David overcame the proud Goliath. It extinguishes the unruly lusts of the flesh, as the three men extinguished the flames of the furnace. This practice of inner prayer tames passions as Daniel tamed the wild beasts. By it the dew of the Holy Spirit is brought down upon the heart, as Elijah brought down rain on Mount Carmel. This mental prayer reaches to the very throne of God and is preserved in golden vials, sending forth their odors before the Lord, as John the Divine saw in the Revelation, "Four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8). This mental prayer is the light which illumines man's soul and inflames his heart with the fire of love of God. It is the chain linking God with man and man with God. Oh the incomparable blessing of mental prayer! It allows a man constantly to converse with God. Oh truly wonderful and more than wonderful—to

be with one's body among men while in one's mind conversing with God.

Angels have no physical voice, but mentally never cease to sing glory to God. This is their sole occupation and all their life is dedicated to this. So, brother, when you enter your closet and close your door, that is, when your mind is not darting hither and thither but enters within your heart, and your senses are confined and barred against things of this world, and when you pray thus always, you too are then like the holy angels, and your Father, Who sees your prayer in secret, which you bring Him in the hidden depths of your heart, will reward you openly by great spiritual gifts.

But what other and greater rewards can you wish from this when, as I said, you are mentally always before the face of God and are constantly conversing with Him—conversing with God, without Whom no man can ever be blessed either here or in another life?

Finally, my brother, whoever you may be, when you take up this book and, having read it, wish to test in practice the profit which mental prayer brings to the soul, I beg you, when you begin to pray thus, pray God with one invocation, "Lord have mercy," for the soul of him who has worked on compiling this book and of him who helped to give it to the public. For they have great need of your prayer to receive God's mercy for their soul, as you for yours. May it be so! May it be so!

From E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, "Early Fathers from the Philokalia," (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), pp. 412 - 415  
<http://www.innerlightproductions.com/archive.htm>

## ΠΕΡΙ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗΣ Αρχιμ. Σωφρονίου

Ἡ προσευχή εἶναι ατελεύτητος δημιουργία, ανωτέρα πάσης τέχνης και ἐπιστήμης. Δια τῆς προσευχῆς εἰσερχόμεθα εἰς κοινωνίαν μετά του Ἀνάρχου ὄντος. Ἡ ἄλλως: Ἡ ζωη του ὄντως ὄντος Θεου εἰσχωρεῖ ἐν ἡμῖν δια του αγωγού τῆς προσευχῆς. Αὕτη εἶναι πράξις ὑψίστης σοφίας, ὑπερέχουσα παντός κάλλους και πάσης αξίας. Ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ ἐγκρύπτεται ἡ ἅγια αγαλλίασις του πνεύματος ἡμῶν. Αἱ ὁδοί ὁμως τῆς δημιουργίας ταύτης εἶναι περίπλοκοι. Μυριάκις θα βιώσωμεν και την φλογεράν ανάτασιν πρὸς τόν Θεόν και τας

έπαναλαμβανομένης έκπτώσεως από του Φωτός Αύτου. Συχνάκις και πολυτρόπως θα αίσθανθώμεν την ανικανότητα του νοός ήμών να ύψωθή προς Αυτόν. ένίοτε θα ιστάμεθα επί των όριων, τρόπον τινά, τής αφροσύνης και έν όδύνη καρδιάς θα όμολογώμεν είς Αυτόν την οίκτραν ήμών κατάστασιν:

«Συ εδωκας την έντολήν Σου να αγαπώ, και αποδέχομαι αύτην μεθ' δλης τής ύπάρξεώς μου. αλλ' ίδού, έν έμοί τω ίδίω δεν εύρίσκω την δύναμιν τής αγάπης ταύτης... Συ εί ή 'Αγάπη. έλθε τοίνυν Συ Αύτός και σκήνωσον έν έμοί και ποιήσον έν έμοί παν ότι Συ έντείλω ήμίν, ότι ή έντολή Σου αμετρήτως ύπερβαίνει έμέ... ' Αποκάμνει ό νοός μου, δεν δύναται να Σε έννοήση. 'Αδυνατεί τό πνευμά μου να διεισδύση είς τα μυστήρια της ζωής Σου... Θέλω εν πασι να ποιώ το θέλημά Σου, άλλ' αί ήμέραι μου παρέρχονται εν άδιεξόδοις άντιφάσεων... Τρέμω μη άπολέσω Σε ένεκα των πονηρών εκείνων λογισμών, οϊτινες εμφωλεύουν εν τη Καρδία μου' και ό φόβος ούτος καθηλοί έμέ επί σταύρού... 'Έλθέ ούν και σώσόν με τον καταποντιζόμενον, ως έσωσας τον Πέτρον, τον τολμήσαντα να πορευθή προς συνάντησίν Σου επι των ύδάτων της θαλάσσης» (βλ. Ματθ. 14,28-31).

.....Κοπιώδης είναι ό αγών δια την προσευχήν. 'Εναλλάσσονται αί καταστάσεις του πνεύματος ήμών: 'Ένίοτε ή προσευχή ρέει εν ήμιν ως ισχυρός ποταμός, άλλοτε δέ ή καρδία αποβαίνει απεξηραμμένη. "Ας είναι όμως πάσα ύφεςις τής εύχητικής δυνάμεως κατά τό δυνατόν βραχεία.

Προσευχή σημαίνει πολλάκις να όμολογώμεν εις τόν Θεόν την αθλίαν ήμων κατάστασιν: αδυναμίαν, ακηδίαν, αμφιβολίας, φόβους, λύπην, απόγνωσιν, εν ένί λόγω, παν ότι συνδέεται μετά των συνθήκων τής ύπάρξεως ήμών.

Να όμολογώμεν μή επιζητούντες καλλιεπείς εκφράσεις ούδέ εισέτι λογικόν είρμόν... Συχνάκις ό τρόπος ούτος στροφής προς τόν Θεόν αποβαίνει ή αρχή τής προσευχής-διαλόγου.

....."Όταν προσευχώμεθα έν ήσύχω και έρήμω τόπω, τότε συχνάκις όλοι οί μάταιοι λογισμοί συγκεντρούνται έπιμόνως περίξ του νοός, αποσπώντες την προσοχήν ήμων από της καρδιάς. 'Η προσευχή φαίνεται άκαρπος, διότι όνους δεν μετέχει εις την επίκλησιν του 'Ονόματος του 'Ιησού, και μόνου

τα χείλη προφέρουν μηχανικώς τους λόγους. "Όταν δέ λαμβάνη πέρας ή προσευχή, τότε συνήθως οί λογισμοί απομακρύνονται και ήμεις έπανευρίσκομεν την γαλήνην ήμων. 'Εν τω ανιαρώ τούτω φαινομένω ύπάρχει έν τούτοις νόημα: Δια της έπικλήσεως του Θείου'Ονόματος θέτομεν εις κίνησιν παν τό κεκρυμμένον έντός ήμών. 'Η προσευχή όμοιάζει πρός δέσμην ακτίνων Φωτός, ητις πίπτει εις τόν σκοτεινόν τόπον της έσωτερικης ήμών ζωής και αποκαλύπτει όποια πάθη και προσκολλησεις έμφωλεύουν έντός ήμών. Εις τοιαύτας περιπτώσεις όφείλομεν έντόνως να προφέρωμεν τό "Αγιον "Όνομα, Όπως τό αίσθημα της μετανοίας αυξηθή έν τη ψυχή.

«Κύριε 'Ιησού Χριστέ, Υίε του Θεού, έλέησόν με τόν άμαρτωλόν».

Απο το βιβλίο Πέρι Προσεύχής. Αρχιμ. Σωφρονίου (Σαχάρωφ)  
Ιεράς Μονής Τιμίου Προδρόμου. Έσσεξ Αγγλίας 1994.

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