



# Pastor's Pennings



## FIRST BAPTIST METUCHEN

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May the grace of our God through His Son Jesus cover you and may His everlasting love remind you of His faithfulness in every moment.

As I sit down to write this letter, I am feeling sad. Everything at home is fantastic, my wife and kids are well. The source of my sadness is a conversation that I was not expecting when I walked into my office this morning.

One of the sisters who attends our church had been battling cancer for five years, and now she has been told that this is it. She has been sent to hospice. This wonderful sister in the Lord was not bitter that her life is being cut short, but she was grieving over the fact that her expected departure from this world will break her children's heart.

Some of her statements challenged me too. For example, she said,

- "I do not want to complain because God has been good to me,"
- "He gave me so much time,"
- "He has given me everything that I have asked for."

She really trusts God but was cautious not to say anything that might sound ungrateful.

I on the other hand was trying to comfort her, "it is alright to be sad, even the Lord was sad over his expected death on the cross."

I think as humans it is alright to be sad and even upset, especially when you are literally told to go home and die.

### **How do we deal with such painful news?**

We pray.

When I woke up this morning, I had a list of things on my agenda, but talking to her put my whole day into perspective.

My daily tasks turned into an intentional time of prayer, meditation, and practical steps to invest in what is eternal and what is important.

*How's your day so far? Have you taken a moment to give Him thanks for the very breath you just took?*

This day will never repeat itself. You can never get another chance to relive this day. So, go ahead, make the most of this day. Love God, love your family, tell your spouse and children

how much you love them and act on it. Ask for forgiveness where it is needed and forgive even if you have not been asked. If you are having difficulty giving or receiving forgiveness, again, the answer is prayer and the Spirit will soften your heart.

Prayer brings us close to God but also prayers are necessary to share our thoughts and pains with God. As His children we are supposed to bring our needs before God. In Matthew 26:38-44, right before Jesus was arrested to be crucified, He prayed to His Father three times

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

His complete obedience to His Father is evident here but what we often miss is Christ's consistent prayer for His Father's reconsideration to go through death, especially death on the cross. Philippians 2:8 puts it this way,

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

In the middle of going back and forth and saying the same prayer in Matthew 26:41, Jesus said,

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

In Greek the idea behind weak is without strength, essentially powerless. Though our spirit is willing, but our flesh is powerless against the troubles of life. Therefore, we need to pray. Sometimes I wonder if Jesus was also reflecting on His own state as fully man, there-

fore He returned to His Father three times in prayer to receive strength. As a man, He relied on prayer a lot.

I am writing while all these thoughts and emotions are raw. I think as believers in Christ, it is good to be vulnerable before each other because this shows that though we are saved by grace and desire to see our Lord and Savior Jesus in the presence of our Heavenly Father, we are not in a rush to die. We have been given this earthly life only once and we ought to enjoy it (within God's defined boundaries).

James 1:7 says,

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights”

We will look into this verse this Sunday, but I do want to emphasize that being alive is a good thing, being able to move, eat, sleep, and all of these little things that we do not pay much attention to are good things from our God. After the free gift of salvation, prayer is the most precious gift from above.

I am committed to praying for this congregation daily. Let me know how I can pray for you. You can send your prayer requests through to our church email or directly to me via my twitter @dralfonsejaved.