

IF GOD SHOULD SPEAK by Clyde Lee Herring

**"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN..."**

Yes?

**DON'T INTERRUPT ME, I'M PRAYING.**

But you called me.

**CALLED YOU? I DIDN'T CALL YOU. I'M PRAYING. "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN..."**

There you did it again.

**DID WHAT?**

Called me. You said, "Our Father which art in heaven."

Here I am. What's on your mind?

**BUT I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT. I WAS, YOU KNOW, JUST SAYING MY PRAYERS FOR THE DAY. I ALWAYS SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER. IT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD, KIND OF LIKE GETTING A DUTY DONE.**

All right, go on.

**"HALLOWED BE THY NAME..."**

Hold it. What do you mean by that?"

**BY WHAT?**

By "Hallowed be thy name".

**IT MEANS ... IT MEANS.... GOOD GRIEF, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS. HOW SHOULD I KNOW? IT'S JUST PART OF THE PRAYER. BY THE WAY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

It means honored, holy, wonderful.

**HEY, THAT MAKES SENSE. I NEVER THOUGHT WHAT "HALLOWED" MEANT BEFORE. "THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."**

Do you really mean that?

**SURE, WHY NOT?**

What are you doing about it?

**DOING? NOTHING, I GUESS. I JUST THINK IT WOULD BE KIND OF NEAT IF YOU GOT CONTROL OF EVERYTHING DOWN HERE LIKE YOU HAVE UP THERE.**

Have I got control of you?

**WELL, I GO TO CHURCH.**

That isn't what I asked you. What about that habit of lust you have? And your bad temper. You've really got a problem there you know. And then there's the way you spend your money ... all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

**STOP PICKING ON ME! I'M JUST AS GOOD AS SOME OF THE REST OF THOSE PHONIES AT THE CHURCH.**

Excuse me, I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.

**OH, ALL RIGHT. I GUESS I DO HAVE SOME HANG-UPS. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I COULD PROBABLY HAVE SOME OTHERS.**

So could I.

**I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT VERY MUCH UNTIL NOW, BUT I REALLY WOULD LIKE TO CUT OUT SOME OF THOSE THINGS. I WOULD LIKE TO, YOU KNOW, BE REALLY FREE.**

Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together, you and I. Some victories can truly be won. I'm proud of you.

**LOOK, LORD I NEED TO FINISH UP HERE. THIS IS TAKING A LOT LONGER THAN IT USUALLY DOES. "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."**

You need to cut out the bread! You're overweight as it is.

**HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT IS THIS, "CRITICIZE ME DAY?"! HERE I WAS DOING MY RELIGIOUS DUTY, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU BREAK IN AND REMIND ME OF ALL MY HANG-UPS.**

Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep on praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer ... (pause) Well, go on.  
**I'M SCARED TO.**

Scared? Of what?

**I KNOW WHAT YOU'LL SAY.**

Try me and see.

**"FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS."**

What about Bill?

**SEE? I KNEW IT! I KNEW YOU WOULD BRING HIM UP! WHY, LORD, HE'S TOLD LIES ABOUT ME, AND CHEATED ME OUT OF SOME MONEY. HE NEVER PAID BACK THAT DEBT HE OWES ME. I'VE SWORN TO GET EVEN WITH HIM.**

But your prayer? What about your prayer?

**I DIDN'T MEAN IT.**

Well, at least you're honest. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?

**NO, BUT I'LL FEEL BETTER AS SOON AS I GET EVEN. BOY, HAVE I GOT SOME PLANS FOR OLD BILL! HE'LL WISH HE NEVER DID ME ANY HARM.**

You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you are already. But I can change all that.

**YOU CAN? HOW?**

Forgive Bill. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Bill's problem and not yours. You may lose your money, but you will have settled your heart.

**BUT LORD, I CAN'T FORGIVE BILL.**

Then I can't forgive you.

**OH, ALL RIGHT. YOU ALWAYS ARE RIGHT. AND MORE THAN I WANT REVENGE ON BILL, I WANT TO BE RIGHT WITH YOU. (PAUSE) (SIGH) ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT, I FORGIVE HIM. HELP HIM TO FIND THE RIGHT ROAD IN LIFE LORD. HE'S BOUND TO BE AWFULLY MISERABLE NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT. ANYBODY WHO GOES AROUND DOING THE THINGS HE DOES TO OTHERS HAS TO BE OUT OF IT. SOME WAY, SOME HOW, SHOW HIM THE RIGHT WAY.**

There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

**HMMM. WELL, NOT BAD, NOT BAD AT ALL, IN FACT, I FEEL PRETTY GREAT! YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK I'LL HAVE TO GO TO BED UPTIGHT TONIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I CAN REMEMBER. MAYBE I WON'T BE SO TIRED FROM NOW ON BECAUSE I'M NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP.**

You're not through with your prayer. Go on.

**OH, ALL RIGHT. "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL."**

Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.  
**WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?**

Quit hanging around the magazine stands ~~where Playgirl (or Playboy) is sold~~. Change some of your friendships. Some of your so-called friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things before long, don't be fooled. They advertise that they're having fun, but for you it would be ruin. Don't use me for an escape hatch.

**I DON'T UNDERSTAND.**

Sure you do. You've done it a lot of times. You get caught in a bad situation. You get into trouble and then you come running to me. "Lord, help me out of this mess and I promise you I'll never do it again". You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?

**YES, AND I'M ASHAMED, LORD, I REALLY AM.**

Which bargain are you remembering?

WELL, WHEN THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR SAW ME BACKING AWAY FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR. I HAD TOLD MY MOTHER I WAS GOING TO THE STORE. I REMEMBER TELLING YOU, "OH GOD, DONT LET HER TELL MY MOTHER WHERE I'VE BEEN. I PROMISE I'LL BE IN CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY."

She didn't tell your mother, but you didn't keep your promise, did you?

**I'M SORRY, LORD, I REALLY AM. UP UNTIL NOW I THOUGHT THAT IF I JUST PRAYED THE LORD'S PRAYER EVERYDAY THEN I COULD DO WHAT I LIKED. I DIDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN LIKE IT DID.**

Go ahead and finish your prayer.

**"FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOREVER. AMEN."**

Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

**NO, BUT I'D LIKE TO KNOW. I WANT NOW TO PLEASE YOU. I CAN SEE WHAT A MESS I'VE MADE OF MY LIFE. AND I CAN SEE HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE TO BE ONE OF YOUR REAL FOLLOWERS.**

You just answered my question.

**I DID?**

Yes, The thing that could bring me glory is to have people like you truly love me. And I see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there's no way of telling what we can do together.

**LORD, "LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN MAKE OF ME, OKAY"?**

Yes, let's see.