The Weight of a Prayer

Psalms 46:1; Psalm 77:14

Louise Redden entered the grocery store with a heavy heart and empty hands. Her clothing was worn, and her face carried the weight of worry and defeat. With a humble spirit, she approached John Longhouse, the grocer, and asked for a favor. Her husband was gravely ill and unable to work, and with seven children to care for, she needed food for her family. She quietly pleaded for him to let her charge a few groceries, promising to repay him as soon as possible.

But John Longhouse was not moved by her story. Harshly, he scoffed at her request and told her to leave his store. He saw her appearance and circumstances as a burden, not an opportunity for compassion. Undeterred, Louise humbly asked once more, explaining her family's dire need. She promised she would repay him, but John remained unmoved. He refused, stating that she did not have a charge account at his store and could not receive credit.

At this point, a man standing nearby, quietly observing the interaction, stepped forward. He had heard the conversation between Louise and the grocer. Without hesitation, the man offered to stand good for whatever Louise needed. He would cover the cost of her groceries so her family could eat.

The grocer, still reluctant and now mildly irritated, decided to challenge this act of kindness. He asked Louise if she had a grocery list. When she confirmed that she did, John told her to place the list on the scales. He would give her an equivalent amount of groceries based on whatever the list weighed. His sarcasm was thinly veiled, making it clear that he was skeptical of her need.

Louise stood still for a moment; her head bowed in quiet contemplation. She hesitated, then reached into her purse and pulled out a small piece of paper. She scribbled something on it, then carefully placed the paper on the scales, with her head still bowed in prayer.

What happened next took both the grocer and the kind customer by surprise. The scales, which John had expected to barely move, immediately tilted downward, staying down

under the weight of the paper. John stared at the scales in disbelief. “I can’t believe it,” he muttered, glancing at the customer, who smiled knowingly.

Reluctantly, the grocer began gathering groceries, placing them on the opposite side of the scale. To his amazement, the scale did not balance, even after he piled on more and more food.

With frustration mounting, John continued adding groceries until the scale could hold no more. Yet, it still refused to balance. In exasperation, he finally grabbed the small piece of paper from the scale to see what Louise had written. His disbelief turned to astonishment when he read the simple message: *“Dear Lord, you know my needs and I am leaving this in your hands.”*

What Louise had placed on the scale wasn’t a grocery list—it was a prayer. A prayer so filled with faith and trust that even broken scales responded to it. Only then did John realize the profound truth before him. The scales had been broken all along, but that didn’t matter. God had weighed Louise’s prayer, and it was more than enough.

In stunned silence, John handed over the groceries. Louise, with gratitude, thanked him and left the store with her bags filled. The customer who had intervened handed John a fifty-dollar bill and simply said, “It was worth every penny of it.”

Later, John would reflect on the scales and the mystery of how much a prayer truly weighs. It’s not something that human standards can measure, for only God knows the weight of a prayer that is offered in faith.

What does this say to us today? Who do we trust in in our times of need? When we are overwhelmed do we understand that we are not alone? While we may not always see immediate results, God is acting on our behalf. This story teaches that God does hear our prayers, and is working for our good. Let us pray the Word of God and allow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to move in our lives. God moves.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool