

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 66

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Topic: The Ministry of Prayer -2

Date: October 30th 2009

We learned from the last study that God's purpose for prayer is for His will to be done locally, here on earth, as it is in Heaven. Prayer changes things so that they become the way that God wants them to be. Prayer follows the purposes of our Heavenly Father!

So it is as we line up our wills with the Father's will that God's miraculous prayer answering power flows through us as it did through Elijah and through the prophets:

James 5:16-18 MKJV *Confess faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much. (17) Elijah was a man of like passion as we are. And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for the time of three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth caused its fruit to sprout.*

This naturally leads to the question of authority and power in prayer. Of how we can get God's will to be done on earth when we are opposed by principalities and powers in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).

If prayer is to achieve everything that God has purposed for it then it has to have some 'clout'. It has to be a lot more than mere words sent up to the ceiling. God gives us a glimpse of the power of prayer in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 8:3-5 MKJV *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer. And many incenses were given to him, so that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints on the golden altar before the throne. (4) And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God from the angel's hand. (5) And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it into the earth. And voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake occurred.*

This is prayer that literally 'shakes the world'! Our prayers will have great power when they are lined up with God's purposes and little or no power if they are self-centered:

James 4:3 MKJV *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it upon your lusts.*

So power in prayer comes, first and foremost, from praying for the purposes of God. The handout that I sent out earlier this week (28 Things That God Wants You To Pray For) gives a list of what God's purposes for prayer are.

Power and authority in prayer are related but different. Authority is always a gift, for example when Pharaoh elevated Joseph from the dungeon to the palace in a single day. Power is what happens as you exercise that authority. God gives you authority, you then use this God-given authority to exercise power in ministry. If you are complacent and do not use your authority, then you have no power.

Your authority (in Christ) is immense (and we will talk about this in a later study) but it is not an independent authority. Your authority comes from the King of Kings. You are an ambassador for Christ and it is only when you do the will of the King and carry out the purposes of the King that your authority is valid.

So the first thing we need to do in the ministry of prayer is to learn what God's will is and then to surrender our will to it. We may want to pray for money but God may want us to pray for souls instead! Or we may want to pray for a new facility when God wants us to pray for justice in our community. We may have to press the "pause" button on our desires and ask for God to tell us His desires!

There are urgent things that God wants done, that no one is praying for. Perhaps the problems we are having with the Muslim world stem, in part, from the fact that very few people have been praying for those nations. We have got to stop deciding what we want to pray for! Ask God to show you new things to pray for, things that He wants to bring to birth in His Kingdom!

For example here are ten things that I believe that God is doing, yet few are praying for:

- 1) The raising up of visionary mission-minded pastors, evangelists and teachers for the End Time Global harvest.
- 2) The conversion of the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist worlds
- 3) More spiritual discernment in the body of Christ to stop false teaching etc.
- 4) The moral purity of the Church and its repentance from worldly values
- 5) The understanding and practice of agape love by all believers everywhere
- 6) Greater cooperation between churches, ministries and Christians in general
- 7) The tearing down of demonic cultural strongholds
- 8) Protection of the leadership of the persecuted church & for its doctrinal purity
- 9) New methods of evangelism e.g. Internet evangelism
- 10) Restraint of the global forces of evil & of wickedness in high places

You can probably generate your own list that is relevant to you and to your community. The point being that we need to pray as God wants us to pray, for those things which are most important to God's Kingdom and God's glory.

God knows what we need, well in advance, and when we take up His cross and His agenda then our needs will be supplied as part of the package. God has no desire to short-change us! He wants to bless us. But we are blessed to be a blessing, and not just for ourselves alone.

Sometimes the area we should be praying most in is very obvious. For instance someone with the gift of healing should pray for the sick, a pastor should pray for his or her church members and a missionary should pray for the people God has sent him to. Yet we also need to ask God to show us 'other things' that He wants us to intercede about. It may be our national leadership, a gross injustice towards Christians, a community situation or a war somewhere in the earth.

As we enter into these situations we will find a new authority and power in prayer because we will be praying 'with' the Holy Spirit. Our prayers will be stirred up within us by God and we will be praying what God wants. And if we are praying what God wants, then God will answer!

Since we will be wrestling against unseen powers and principalities we will need to persist in these prayers. We will need to groan and travail and pray in the Spirit for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in Heaven, and we must not give up:

Romans 8:26 MKJV *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Luke 11:5-10 MKJV *And He said to them, which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves, (6) for a friend of mine has come from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him? (7) And he answering from inside may say, Do not trouble me. The door is now shut and my children are in bed with me. I cannot rise and give to you. (8) I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needs. (9) And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. (10) For everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it shall be opened.*

Persistent prayer that is prioritized around the purposes of God is powerful.

Blessings,

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