

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of September 2, 2007

I urge upon you communion with Christ a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn aside in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in him. I despair that I shall ever win to the far end of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore dig deep, and sweat and labor and take pains for him, and set by as much time in the day for him as you can. We will be won in the labor.—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

The Life of Prayer

Depth

David Williamson

As a boy growing up I enjoyed fishing. I was blessed with great teachers and my family enjoyed fishing so it was easy to get everyone to go many times every summer. My father and grandfathers were great fishermen and they taught me well. We never branched out into other types of fishing or other types of fish, because we enjoyed the fishing we were doing so much. Dropping a fly on a beaver pond and seeing a trout leap out of the water after that fly is a thrill that is hard to beat. The beauty of the Colorado Rockies, the joy of catching trout, and the great family times, made fishing a special part of my life.

There were many places I loved to fish; beaver ponds on the western slope, streams meandering through a mountain valley, and small rivers along the eastern slope of the Front Range. These were the places I went as a boy. One spot was very special. My grandparents had a cabin in the mountains and I would go and stay with them for a few days several times during the summer. My grandfather was a great fisherman and he and I would go out early in the evening and get a fish or two for grandmother for breakfast. Near their cabin there was a spot that was a little different from most of the stream we fished. This spot twisted around a very large rock, this cause a very deep pool of water. This was a spot that could support large fish. Most of what we caught on this stream was 6 to 12 inches long, but there are places on the stream where there were larger fish and this was one of those places.

Some days I would go and work this pool trying to get a large fish. One day my brother and I worked this spot for several hours. We caught a few small fish, but we just could not get that big one. Finally, after fishing for hours Bill, my brother, hooked a big fish. Very quickly we knew this was a much larger fish than we were accustomed to and it would be a great challenge to land this fish. He worked and worked, keeping constant pressure on the line so the hook would not slip out, but not pulling too hard and breaking the line. Little by little he brought this fish in. It was huge compared to the fish we normally caught on this stream. It was very exciting to see how he did it and then to see this great fish.

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Jesus has always had a special fondness for fishermen. A strangely disproportionate number of His first Disciples were fishermen. Throughout history He has been calling for and then blessing men and women who would be like those first Disciples and become fishers of men. Even today He is calling for fishermen. In a very real way His call is to all Christian, He calls all of us to fish with Him. Specifically this call is to work the harvest fields to bring men and women to the Father, to receive salvation in Christ Jesus. No man comes to the Father except the Holy Spirit draws them. However, He, the Holy Spirit, uses men and women, like us, to work the fields with Him. He also works with and through men and women of prayer. Bringing people to Christ begins with prayer. The great evangelistic movements of the last 20 centuries have all been birthed and bathed in prayer. Just as a fisherman always uses bait, natural or artificial, to catch a fish, so the Holy Spirit always uses prayer.

The Holy Spirit's use of prayer depends on the man or woman of prayer. There are two key factors that determine how He can use this person. The first is the depth of faith and the second is the depth of commitment. In that mountain stream where I liked to fish, most of the stream would not support large fish. There was not enough depth of water to provide the habitat needed for a large fish. The stream was good for fish, it met the needs of a trout very well, but most of this stream did not have the depth that was needed for large fish. That is why the spot I described earlier was so special. It was one of the few places where this stream could support larger fish.

Prayer is like that stream. Most people who pray have little depth of faith or commitment in prayer. This lack of depth hinders their usefulness in prayer. Prayer is an exercise and expression of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

***But without faith it is impossible to please Him,
for he who comes to God must believe that He is,
and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

It is on this base, the base of faith; we must build our prayer life. Prayer without faith is just words like a swirl of snow on a cold, cloudy day. The snow flits along here and there, moved by every breath of wind. Prayer with faith moves mountains.

***So Jesus answered and said to them,
"Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt,
you will not only do what was done to the fig tree,
but also if you say to this mountain,
'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done."***

Matthew 21:21 (NKJV)

People who mature in prayer, men and women who have grown in the lessons of the Holy Spirit; have a depth of faith that opens the door for the Holy Spirit to call on them for increasingly tougher assignments in prayer. When Bill hooked that big fish, there were many ways we could lose him. I

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am not the fisherman my brother is, so it is quite likely that I would have reacted poorly to this challenge. I would have jerked the line so hard I would have broken the line and ended the one chance we had to catch this fish. Bill, on the other hand, knew what to do, the depth of knowledge and skill in fishing helped him to work this fish slowly, but consistently out of the depths of the water, out of the pull of the current, drawing him against the fish's will to the shore. Bill had great depth of skill in fishing and was the man for the job. The Holy Spirit is looking for men and women who have learned and developed faith. He is looking for people who will and can pray about difficult situations and exercise their faith to receive an answer. He needs men and women who will and can land the big fish.

There was another key factor in our success in landing that big fish that day. Bill had a depth of commitment. Most of our fishing was measure in seconds not minutes. Most of the fish we caught were caught in seconds. From the moment we presented the bait to the moment we land the fish was just a few seconds, but this time it took a great deal of time. Not only did Bill have to continue on for a long time, but he had to continue the skilled actions throughout this relatively long period.

At times people will get excited about prayer. They will begin to pray and may even pray in faith, but if the answer does not come quickly their commitment wanes and they stop. Once again the Holy Spirit is left holding the bag. He was looking for a prayer warrior and got a prayer wimp. Some people teach that all we need is faith. If we ask believing then this prayer is a done deal. There is a great deal of truth in their claims, but the Bible also teaches about depth of commitment. There are assignments that the Holy Spirit gives out that demands both faith and commitment.

***I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent,***
Isaiah 62:6 (NKJV)

***I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend,
yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.***
Luke 11:8 (NKJV)

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,
Luke 18:1 (NKJV)

Depth of faith and depth of commitment, the man or woman, who is used by the Holy Spirit, will have both. The Holy Spirit is looking for candidates for lessons in prayer. Not that all men and women may prayer, but that He might have arrows in His quiver ready and able to be given any assignment. These arrows would be the man that has depth of faith that he could believe for anything. These arrows are the women who the Holy Spirit knows will make and keep a depth of commitment that no matter what comes, they will continue on with Him. Concerning depth of faith

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and depth of commitment there is a question for us today. What can the Holy Spirit put on your plate? What need, what condition, what situation can He entrust to your prayers?

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, only God’s peace will bring real and lasting peace to this city and region.

Marek Kaminski – Pray for open doors of opportunity for the preaching of the Gospel. Pray for a breaking down of walls and barriers that hinder.

**For a great and effective door has opened to me,
and there are many adversaries.**

1 Cor. 16:9 (NKJV)

Mark Spencer – Pray for effective meetings in Nepal in October. Pray for the preparations for travel and ministry. (“**great and effective door**” 1 Cor. 16:9)

Jacek Gromadzki – Pray for Jack and his church to have opportunities to share the Gospel. Pray that many in Kolobrzeg, Poland will respond to God’s call for salvation. (“**great and effective door**” 1 Cor. 16:9)

Marianne and David Dean – Pray for David and Marianne and for outreach into their community and on the local college campus. (“**great and effective door**” 1 Cor. 16:9)

Pray for the church in Belarus and Lithuania – Pray for opportunities for the church in these countries that it would serve this generation and fulfill all of the call of Christ Jesus. (“**great and effective door**” 1 Cor. 16:9)

DK Limbu Daniel – Pray for Pastor Daniel and for new opportunities to plant churches. Pray for the opportunities and for men and women who will do the work of the ministry for these churches.

Patty Spencer – Pray for completion of a new worship CD. Pray for the details of mastering the final product and the finances to get it produced.

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John Coon – Pray for his health and safety.

William Williamson – Bill is a pastor in Eastern Colorado, and a long time member of this company. Pray for his quick, full, and complete healing.

Pray for the Inntal Prayer Initiative – Pray for opportunities to minister in Germany and throughout Europe. (“*great and effective door*” 1 Cor. 16:9)

Joyce Abrahamson – Pray for protection and provision for the students of the school.

Bernhard and Lisa Prumbach – Pray for continued success in making arrangement for the family and opportunities to minister. (“*great and effective door*” 1 Cor. 16:9)

Pray for your Home Church – Pray for outreaches for your church. Pray that each member will do the work of the ministry as God gives them the means to do so.

**For a great and effective door has opened to me,
and there are many adversaries.**

1 Cor. 16:9 (NKJV)

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To receive *Voice of Thanksgiving* the newsletter weekly by e-mail, send an email with the word JOIN in the subject line to dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com

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