

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of March 23, 2008

In any study of the principles, and procedure of prayer, of its activities and enterprises, first place, must, of necessity, be given to faith. It is the initial quality in the heart of any man who essays to talk to the Unseen. He must, out of sheer helplessness, stretch forth hands of faith. He must believe, where he cannot prove. In the ultimate issue, prayer is simply faith, claiming its natural yet marvellous prerogatives—faith taking possession of its illimitable inheritance. True godliness is just as true, steady, and persevering in the realm of faith as it is in the province of prayer. Moreover: when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live. E. M. Bounds

The Life of Prayer

Believe

David Williamson

As you may have noticed I like the stories of the Bible. When I was a little boy I was blessed to attend good Sunday school classes. The teachers (including my mom and dad) made the stories of the Bible come alive. Week after week there was a story from the Bible. They taught the great truths of the Bible and the guide for proper living. I loved the stories, although I was not perfect in applying the lessons. One of the most widely known of the Bible stories is the Last Supper. At the beginning of this story the stage is set by an unusual event. When asked where they should prepare for the Passover supper, Jesus tells them to look for a man carrying a jar of water. The disciples went into the city and found the man as described and were taken to a prepared room. This part of the story is much more than just window dressing for the supper; it has a lesson for us of its own.

The most important word in the Christian life is faith. We are born again by faith, we must live by faith, and effective prayer is by faith. It is impossible to please God without faith. Faith is the keystone to life and gaining knowledge of and understanding of faith is a lifetime series of lessons. Just as my Sunday school teachers had another lesson for us to learn every week, year-after-year, so the Holy Spirit has many new lessons of faith for us to learn. One of these lessons is found in the beginning of the story about the Last Supper mentioned in the previous paragraph.

One lesson of faith is believing. Jesus said there would be a man in the town. Jesus said he would take them to a place for the supper. It would have been easy to dismiss Jesus on this one. A man carrying a jar was not a normal event. A house all prepared for them, this is unusual, and why would anyone prepare a place and then not use it? Many people would say, Lord we trust you, but you have to be realistic. The disciples may have thought something like this, they were men like us, but no matter what they thought, good or bad, they believed Jesus enough to go and do what He said to do. Faith believes God; His Word is His bond and what He has said, He will do. All progress in the Christian life is by faith. This statement is true for the prayer life as well. Progress in prayer is

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answers to prayer and these come by faith. Any combination of activities or practices that denies, impedes, or bypasses faith is not Christian prayer.

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)

This verse addresses two things we must believe to have faith. First, we must believe that God is God. Second, we must believe that God rewards those diligently seeking God. The key here is, we must believe. This is the same concept of believing that is seen in our salvation, believing leads to entrusting our spiritual well-being to Christ. In this verse from Hebrews we put our trust in two things. First, God is the all powerful being that He claims to be. And second, He recompenses people who diligently seek Him.

The first seems easy enough; all that is necessary is for people to believe that God is God. However, we find that this can be a stumbling block. In the American capitol city, there is a massive building at the end of the main mall. Across the front of this building are huge columns and behind these columns, high above the mall, is a statue of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was the 16th president of the US and he led America through its Civil War. Lincoln is listed by most people as one of the best, if not the best, President of all times. The statue is bigger than life and makes Lincoln into almost a god like figure. To see him can be inspiring, but he does not do anything; he just sits there.

Many people believe in a God who is like this statue of Lincoln. He is most assuredly God, but He just sits in Heaven. However, this view does not meet the reality of God presented in the Bible nor does it meet the requirements of Hebrews 11:6; where we are required to believe God is what He has said He is. We cannot limit Him and believe that He is God. A God who is not involved in the life of people is not the God of the Bible. A God that does not answer prayer is not the God of the Bible. When we limit God's ability to act with us and for us, we stop believing that He is God and we cannot have faith.

The second part of this requires us to believe as well. In this part we must believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 makes it clear that if we diligently seek Him, God will reward us. The word for reward is also translated recompense. Recompense is to give something for a service rendered. God considers diligently seeking Him as a service, so He recompenses those who take the time and make the effort.

The Hebrew words used for the phrase "diligently seek" means to search out, investigate, crave, demand, or worship. There is a lot to diligently seeking God, one part is prayer. True prayer is seeking out God and His answers. Prayer is the investigation of God's nature and word. Prayer is craving His kingdom come here on earth as it is in Heaven. Prayer is demanding the application and fulfillment of His word in our life and in those around us. Prayer is worshiping God for who and

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what He is. In prayer we diligently seek God and His answers to meet our needs. His response is to reward or recompense us.

To have faith we must believe and we must believe correctly. We need to examine ourselves. What do we believe? Do we limit God? Do we fail to ask or ask amiss because we view God through glasses that see Him limited? What do we do? Do we seek Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength? Is our seeking a sometimes event or halfhearted? If we are to be successful in prayer we must believe. We must believe that God is God and able and willing to do what He has said He will do and we must believe that He recompenses those who pray. Every day we face opportunities like the disciples looking for the place for the supper. As these opportunities come we can believe and by faith receive God's provision. It pleases God if we have faith and if we believe, He rewards!

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for Souls from Every Nation – Pray for outreach in the countries of Africa. Pray for labors to answer the call of God to work in this key harvest field.

Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. Psalm 2:8 (NKJV)

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem – Pray for removing of the veil over the eyes of the Jewish people so they can see and meet the Messiah.

Marianne and David Dean – Pray for opportunities for Marianne and David to meet more students. Pray these students will be open to the Gospel.

Pray for the church in Belarus – Pray for the planting of new fellowships in towns with little or no Gospel message.

Marek Kaminski – Pray for outreach to the people of Kaszalin, Poland.

Joyce Abrahamson – Pray for provision for the needs of running the school and for the staff.

Jacek Gromadzki – Pray that Jacek and the people of his church in Kolobrzeg, Poland would prosper even as their souls prosper.

DK Limbu Daniel – Pray for new opportunities for planting churches and the means of doing so. Pray for the reaching of young people in these new areas.

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Pray for the church in Lithuania – Pray for a strengthening of the churches of this nation.

Patty Spencer – Pray for her new worship CD and its soon release. Pray that it will be used by God to reach men and women for the Kingdom.

Mark Spencer – Pray for plans for outreaches and trips this spring and summer. Pray for his ministry with young people.

John Coon – Pray for his health and safety.

Pray for your Home Church – Pray for your church that it would be a church of outreach to the local community and to the young people of the world.

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Host a Prayer Initiative Seminar. You can do something special for your church, fellowship, or community in the area of prayer, offer a Prayer Initiative Seminar. If you would be interested in hosting a Prayer Initiative Seminar contact David Williamson, at dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com

New for *Voice of Thanksgiving*, a monthly issue in Polish.

Głos Dziękczynienia w języku polskim: <http://voiceofthanksgiving.com/VoTPPage.htm>

For *Voice of Thanksgiving* in German read *Stimme der Dankbarkeit*

<http://voiceofthanksgiving.com/SdDPage.htm>

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