

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of May 25, 2008

It is God's standard at which we are to aim, not man's. It is not the opinions of men, not what they say, but what the Scriptures say. Loose notions of religion grow out of low notions of prayer. Prayerlessness begets loose, cloudy and indefinite views of what religion is. Aimless living and prayerlessness go hand in hand. Prayer sets something definite in the mind. Prayer seeks after something specific. The more definite our views as to the nature and need of prayer, the more definite will be our views of Christian experience and right living, and the less vague our views of religion. A low standard of religion lives hard by a low standard of praying. E. M. Bounds

The Life of Prayer

Strengthened

David Williamson

William Wilberforce faced, year-after-year, the defeat of his bills in the House of Commons. His bill to end slavery voted down yet again. The vested interests of shipping and trade squashed his bill and all hope of ever passing the bill. George Washington faced the disintegration of his army and the loss of the war for the freedom of America. His troops, the few who stayed with him at Valley Forge, were ill paid and fed. They had no hope of victory over the strongest army in the world. George Müller faced another night of preparing to feed several houses full of orphans with no food to be had. There was no agency or group to help, no bank account to draw on; just a massive need. Abraham Lincoln in the White House facing another night with the country split and fighting a horrible civil war, one that seemed to go on forever. War is terrible, but civil war is worse, brother killing brother, the slaughter greater than any American war. Added to the darkness was the certain prospect that in the upcoming elections Lincoln would lose the presidency and the new president would give up the fight making all the loss of life and cost of the fighting wasted. These men knew dark nights. They faced some very difficult times, yet all four came through to great victories.

The biographies of great men and women, non-Christians and Christians alike present times of difficulties. Each story of success is preceded by a period of great struggle. The hero or heroine faces a situation and overcomes. It is great to see the victory, but too often as we read these biographies, we pass through the problem too quickly. The record of the problems people faced is a short and a superficial review of the difficult times. We move from problem to the solution far too fast, we do not get the full value of watching the hero cope. They faced up to the problem, there could be no success if there had been no predicament, but it would be helpful to see more of the dark times, and more to the point, how they dealt with the dark times. All of us face difficulties, we face dark times and we must go through them to enter into the brightness of God's provision.

The four men mentioned above all walked through the dark times by walking close to God. It was His strength that brought them through the hard times. For us to be successful in our Christian life,

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if we are going to be successful in prayer, we must learn to stand in the strength of God. All efforts to press through on our merit or strength will yield further problems. Powerful, effective prayers come to men and women who will walk through dark and difficult times by the strengthening hand of God. This is the only way we can succeed.

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21 (NKJV)

Successful Christian men and women are Christian men and women of integrity. They have a close and enduring relationship with God. They know Him as Father. They are strengthened in the inner man. The word used for strengthened in this verse from Ephesians means to empower. These men and women are empowered by the Holy Spirit with the riches of glory. Today people take power drinks for strength and endurance, but there is something far better.

The indwelling of Christ is to be rooted and grounded in love, comprehend the width, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ, and being filled with all the fullness of God. This is the source of strength in hard times. We must have experience from life, true knowledge of the indwelling of Christ. This was not religion, but a daily walking with the risen Lord. We must know Him and the power of His resurrection. We must learn to call on Christ time and again and know from experience He is faithful and true. The power of the resurrection is not a storybook phrase, but a living reality. The power of our prayer comes from the power of Christ's resurrection.

These men were rooted and grounded in the love of God. They did not wonder about God, they knew. God is love. They knew that His nature and actions were always and would always be based in His love. This was not a weak romantic love, but the power of God wrapped in His sacrificial nature, providing for and calling all men too Himself. These men knew they could do the job set before them, not because of their strength, but because they knew Christ. And so must we.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 2 Tim. 4:17 (NKJV)

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that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, Ephesians 3:16 (NKJV)

Those who will serve God will face dark times. Those who will pray, that is pray effective, fervent prayers, will face dark time. The key to success is to walk through these times in the strength of God. If we discount God or the situation, we will fail to achieve what He has available for us. If we discount God, His power is limited. The power is not less effective, but it is not applied to us. It is like having electricity available in a house, but continuing to use hand tools. We must turn on the switch if we are going to enjoy the benefit of the power. If we discount the situation, treating the problems and the dark times as just the way life is, as something just to be gotten through. We miss the opportunity to see God move in His power and love to change the situation. Those who are depending on us for prayer would miss a great blessing.

We should not settle for less than God's best. It cannot be something like; we did well because we submitted the bill to end slavery. The victory was ending slavery. It is not good enough to help a few troops survive the winter; Washington had to come out with the nucleus of a great army. Müller could not just have a few crumbs for the kids, he had to have provision every day and enough to meet all of their daily needs. For Lincoln just continuing was not enough He had to have victory in the election and war. Anything less than this was not enough. We need to come to the same place in our prayers. Just a little, not just getting by, this is not enough. We must be strengthened by God and walk in victory through the dark days and hard times. We must have victory in prayer just as Jesus has victory over the grave, full and complete victory.

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

This week I ask you to pray for special opportunities for ministry. This summer there are coming many special events. These events are great times to share the Gospel. Some are the aftermath of disasters, such as the one we have been praying for with David and Marianne Dean. Other events are conferences and special meetings. We have been praying for the BBB conference and should continue to pray. There are others special conferences and events, like the Democratic National Convention which will be in Denver this summer. There is the Summer Olympics, and other national and regional events. Please pray for a preparation for the Gospel, that hearts of men and women would be ready to hear and receive the Gospel. That there would be opportunities to minister; this is easier said than done in some places. Pray for labors to prepare to be bold and effective ministers of the Gospel. Pray for meeting the costs in time and money so ministry teams can be effective.

Continue to pray for David and Marianne Dean. They minister on college campuses in East Asia. They are safe and secure where they live; however, the focus of the world is on the disasters that have hit Asia so hard these last few weeks. There is so much to pray for in these areas, remember

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the rescue workers, the relief efforts, and provision of supplies for the victims of these disasters; please be lead by the Holy Spirit as to how to pray.

Basic Prayer Focus

Praying for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

Praying for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation

Praying for the government of your country (so the Gospel can be preached)

Praying for your home Church

Continuing Faithful in Prayer

Pray for these ministers and ministries. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your prayers.

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Churches in Belarus – Growing number of churches in Belarus

Churches in Lithuania – Growing number of churches in Lithuania

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal and church planting among Nepalese people

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

Marek Kaminski – Pastor of church in Kaszalin, Poland, leader in Polish churches, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Pastor of church in Longmont, Colorado, worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Pastor of church in Longmont, Colorado and worship leader

William Williamson – Pastor of church in Holly, Colorado

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