

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of December 14, 2008

Instead of such praying being out of the range of New Testament principles and moderation, this very praying of Elijah is pressed as an example to be imitated and as an illustration of what prayer can do when performed by the right men in the right way. Elijah's results could be secured if we had more Elijah men to do the praying. From *Prayer and Praying Men* by E. M. Bounds

The Life of Prayer

Resting in Prayer

David Williamson

Many of you may know that I was in the United States Air Force. This was a long time ago, but many of the memories are still very vivid. I was stationed in Germany; which was the beginning of a love affair with that nation and region. In the Air Force I was trained as a computer operator. The place where I worked was a small base, but it was in a good location and my duty was enjoyable. We worked hard and produced a very good product for various military units around the world. One of the many things we did was to computerize the data from photo interpreters. They would determine information from various sources and then we would compile the information into a usable format and print it. One of the things we did was keep track of tanks of various armies. We informed high level officials in the military where all the tanks of our enemies were at any given time. This was a very handy thing to know if there is a war.

During the time I was doing this job, there was one portion of the Arab-Israeli Wars. The Yom Kippur War was October 6 to October 26, 1973. In this war, a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. The first few days of the war went very badly for Israel; it looked as if the Arab armies would destroy Israel. However, after a few days Israel turned the tide and won a great victory (Israel was only stopped by the threat of military intervention by the USSR and pressure from the United States, who was worried that the war could get larger and involve the US and USSR).

Early in the war military people in the US were looking for ways to help Israel. One idea was for us to compile information on the Egyptian and Syrian tanks. This would be great help to the planning and movement of the Israeli army. We went on full alert and began to prepare for the arrival of data for the computer program. We had to make several changes to the program so it would record accurately the data and the location of the tanks. We worked around the clock getting ready and then we waited. We waited for the rest of the war. Government officials could not decide if they would allow us to process data from this war. By the time they agreed to let us go to work, the war was over. So for nearly three weeks we did everything to get ready and then we waited. In Bible terms we worked hard and then rested.

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Rest in the Bible is a very important term. We tend to think of it as a synonym for lazy. We should think of it as an important part of life; we need rest to rejuvenate our body and mind. One of the leading causes of medical problems is lack of sleep. Most people just do not get enough sleep or what they do get, is often not good sleep. The value of rest is taken a step further in the Bible.

Jesus called for us to enter into His rest. This is a place of abiding in Him. It is place of depending on Him for every aspect of life spiritual and physical. His rest is not a place of napping and sleeping, it is entering into His yoke and learning from Him. A yoke is a tool of work. It has no other purpose. When we take His yoke we are entering into His labor and work. Now many people shy away from this. Adding work to a hectic schedule does not sound good, to most people it sounds like something to avoid. They hear work and think, "I have enough work already".

However, entering in with Jesus is entering a place of rest. Jesus declared that His yoke is easy and His burden light. How can this be? What is a light yoke and a light burden? In the physical world this seems contradictory, yokes and burdens are not light and easy. In the spiritual world that is in the Christian life, yokes and burdens can be light and easy. If we enter in with Jesus we come into a place where we join with Jesus and He carries the load. We know this from salvation.

We join with Jesus and He carries the load. It is not our goodness or abilities or sacrifices that earn us salvation. It is only by the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus that we are saved. It is not by our work, but by the blessed work of Jesus. He hung on the cross, He carried our sins, He took the beating that should be ours, He died the death that should be ours, He was buried, and burial that should be ours, He bore the awful separation from the Father that we deserve, He did it all. All we do is believe in our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and we are saved. It is as though Jesus is saying to us I bore the weight of sin and death, now you join in with me in salvation. Now He is calling us to enter with Him in His yoke and burden. The same relationship is maintained as in salvation. He carries the load, but expects us to enter in with Him.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV)

There are many areas of life where Jesus is calling us to take His yoke and burden. One of the most important is in prayer. In prayer there are four positions people can take. Position one is they do not pray. In position two people pray, but there is little if any faith and little if any expectation of answers to prayer. In position three people work at prayer. They do the things we have talked about for years, the things we are directed by the Bible to do, if we want to have an effective prayer life. They do things like pray in faith, forgive others, seek first the Kingdom of God, pray with their whole heart, and seek God's will above their own. The fourth position is entering into God's rest in prayer.

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Resting in prayer is the place where we enter into the yoke of Jesus and bare with Him praying for the needs of man and nation. We enter into His intercession. Most people either do not know about this, or shy away from it, because they are worried about how hard it is, how much work it is. They do not understand that this yoke and burden is easy because here also Jesus carries the load. We just join with Him. This is a place of great power in prayer, because Jesus carries the load. We join with Him and have great success because we are with the one who always prays the will of the Father. We are with the one who's prayers are always heard and answered. I do not know about you, but that is where I want to be, with Jesus, in His yoke and carrying His burdens in prayer.

So how do we enter into this place? How can we enter into the rest of Jesus in prayer? In Hebrews chapter four we read about the rest of God. There is much for us to learn and it is very important because as this chapter points out there is a way to not enter into His rest and people have gone that way. It speaks of people who do not enter due to disobedience. The good news of the availability of entering into rest was not mixed with faith. There is a rest for us to enter and in Hebrews chapter 4 it explains the key to entering in.

For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. Hebrews 4:3 (NKJV)

The key for entering Jesus' rest is the same no matter what activity we are talking about, ministry, missions, or prayer, we enter by believing. The Jews in the desert did not believe and did not enter. People today do not believe and do not enter. Even men and women of prayer are guilty of not believing and do not enter. They may do the work of prayer as mentioned before, but they do not believe and so they never enter into His rest. There is a huge difference between praying in my own strength and praying in Jesus' strength! In the Amplified Bible we see what is needed to make the transition into believing and entering His rest.

For we who have believed—who have adhered to and trusted and relied on God—do enter into that rest, in accordance with His declaration that those [who did not believe] should not enter when He said, As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into my rest; Hebrews 4:3 the Amplified Bible

There is a key here for us, to enter into His rest, in what ever area of the Christian life we are talking about, we must believe. This is defined for us, to believe we must adhere to, trust in, and rely on God. The work of preparing for prayer, those things I described as part of position three, the things we have talked about for years in *Voice of Thanksgiving* are steps toward adhering, trusting, and relying on God. Daily we do these things not as an end to themselves, but as the practice of adhering to, trusting in, and relying on God. They help us to believe and those who have believed do enter that rest. In prayer we should be seeking to enter God's rest. This is a place of receiving answers to our prayers. This is a place of fervent, effective prayers that avail much. This is a place of a successful prayer life.

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Many years ago I had a job where I had to drive to work and there was a place where it was very difficult to get into the traffic. I would wait and wait for a gap and often force my way into what was not really a safe gap. One day while waiting I thought I should be able to believe God to provide a gap in traffic for me. He promised to provide for all my needs, why not something as practical as a gap in traffic. I began to believe God to be for me “Lord of the Gap”. Do not laugh, this made it very real to me that He could and would give me gaps in traffic when I needed them. I confessed my belief in Him and His abilities and traffic became worse. Everywhere I went there were problems getting into a gap in the traffic. Even on normally quiet roads I could not get a gap. The Devil had a field day with this. He laughed at me and my stupid idea of “Lord of the Gap.” He told me what a failure I was, how silly I was, how dumb I was, and how sinful I was. He brought very convincing arguments as to why I should not believe that God could or would be “Lord of the Gap”.

However, by the grace of God, I continued to believe. Day after day while the traffic was bad I continued to confess and believe that God was for me “Lord of the Gap.” “He provides me with gaps in traffic as I need them”. One day I noticed that when I needed a gap I got one. I do not know if this was the first day I got a gap quickly and it was a great gap, but on this day I praised God for being “Lord of the Gap.” I praised Him all the way to work. The next day there were not gaps and the Devil again made his attacks. This went on for several days, God would provide and then next day the Devil would test. Finally, one day I said that God was my “Lord of the Gap” and that it was true even if I never got another gap in traffic. Slowing this became a part of my confession, belief, and life. I came to know that He was and is for me “Lord of the Gap.”

It has been years since this happened and now every time I need a gap to get into traffic, I have one who provides for me, He is my “Lord of the Gap.” I have entered into the rest of Jesus concerning gaps in traffic. This is a simple thing compared with the heavy duties and responsibilities you face in many areas of life. However, the principle is the same as in my little example; in prayer we must believe and enter into His rest. The point is we need to be believed, adhered to, trusted in, and relied on God, so we can enter into His rest in every area of life and in all our prayers. The great promises of God concerning the efficacy of prayer are all completely answered in His rest.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 4:9-11 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for Israel. The situation is dangerous and may soon be desperate for this land, nation, and people. They face the scorn and condemnation of the world. They stand nearly friendless and

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without reliable help. They also are blind to the true answer to their plight, the Messiah Jesus Christ. We are to be watchmen on the walls praying for Jerusalem, Israel, and for the return of these people to God. Please pray for Israel, remember, if we will be about His business, He will watch over ours.

Basic Prayer Focus

Pray for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

Pray for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation

Pray for the government of your country (so we can live peaceably and the Gospel can be preached)

Pray 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

Lori Farquhar – Children's Ministry Director

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 in Longmont, Colorado, worship leader, and artist with a great new CD

William Williamson – Pastor of church in Cedaredge, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

David Williamson – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

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Voice of Thanksgiving is published in a weekly version in English. *Voice of Thanksgiving* is also published monthly in German and Polish and is available in book form, *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer*.

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