

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of January 11, 2009

To the weary traveler the sight of another milestone is an encouragement. The Spirit of God may show us, as we pray, that we have reached another milestone on the way. At times He may shed light on the situation, so that we get a glimpse of what God is doing. Or He may permit us to see in advance the end of the road, so that we view the situation as it will be when our prayers are fully answered. By such tokens the Spirit strengthens us to persevere.

*Pray in the Spirit* by Arthur Wallis

## *The Life of Prayer*

### **Darkness**

David Williamson

For a couple of years I worked as a computer operator for a computer firm in downtown Denver. The first two weeks I worked day shift and then I was transferred to swing shift, working from 4 pm to midnight. I drove to work in the afternoon before the afternoon rush hour and coming home there was very little traffic. It was wonderful not to have to fight the traffic and it was an easy drive most of the time. Sometimes even at night the trip could be difficult.

One night the drive started well, but when I got to the northern part of Denver it began to get foggy. The fog got thicker and thicker. My drive home was mostly on a good interstate road. It is well marked with two lanes going in my direction, but that night it got difficult to see the road. I kept slowing down so I could continue and try to be safe. Finally the fog got so bad all I could see was the lines between the lanes. This worked for a while, as long as I could see the next line I knew I was in my lane, but the fog got so thick I could not even see the next line.

I had drifted away from my lane toward the edge of the road. It was only when I saw the solid white line that marked the edge of the road did I realize I was driving off the road. I was able to pull back on the road and continue. However, just then I saw a light coming straight at me. "I must be in the wrong lane or clear off the road", I thought. I stood on the breaks stopping the truck I was driving. Just as I came to a complete stop, I saw that the light was just the reflection of my headlights on the end of a coke can. This was a frightening moment; I was stopped in the middle of an Interstate highway, and if there were other cars or trucks they could be up to 55 miles per hour, which was the speed limit at that time. I got going again as quickly as I could. Moments later a truck went past me going very fast, but I was out of his way. A few miles down the road the fog began to lift and I could see to get home. It had been a scary drive, but God had protected me and kept me safe.

The first word in Christian life and in our prayer life is faith. All progress in life is by faith. Without faith we cannot please God, we are unable to live in His fullness, and unable to be effective in prayer. An important and often neglected factor of faith is darkness. In my story about the night of the fog please note there was more than one type of darkness. There was the darkness of night and

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

the darkness from the fog. In the Christian life and in prayer there are different types of darkness and we must learn to deal with them. It is important that we understand darkness, its various manifestations, and workings. An understanding, or lack of understanding, affects the walking out of our Christian life. This is especially important in prayer; effective prayer is by faith and unless we understand the working of darkness our faith will be weak.

One type of darkness is caused by sin. Sin is like a hood placed over our head causing a darkness that can be overwhelming and all but impenetrable. Like the fog in my story the darkness of sin comes in varying degrees. This is not to say that any sin is less sinful than others, but that as we walk in sin it can cover us with a heavier and heavier wrapping of darkness. Even with light fog we cannot see clearly. Things around us are shrouded by this mist. Things are seen, but the details are not clear. This lack of clarity is common when dealing with sin. We assume things that are not and imagine offence when none is given, we speak foolishly and we act in kind, we say and do things we should not. This is the fog of sin and it affects our life, both physical and spiritual. It causes a change in our thoughts, actions, beliefs, and of course of greatest importance, it limits the work of faith in our life. If we dabble in sin, it clouds our sight, we see, but not clearly. If we continue in sin, the fog grows thicker and denser and we fall into greater and deeper darkness.

***Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity*** Isaiah 59:1-3 (NKJV)

***And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.***  
Ephesians 5:11 (NKJV)

The darkness of sin keeps us from effective prayer. It separates us from God and closes the door on answers to our prayers. If we are going to have effective, fervent prayers that avail, much we cannot allow the unfruitful works of darkness to reside in our hearts. We must expose sin and its darkness, by confessing our sin and turning away from it.

***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*** 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

Most people are familiar with the workings of the darkness of sin. They have experienced its evil effects and twisted torment. However, fewer people are aware of the other types and effects of darkness. For instance, are you aware of the darkness of faith? We know that we must have faith for every aspect of the Christian life, especially prayer. Without faith there are no answers to prayer. Unfortunately, too often we think that we have faith; we think we are praying in faith, when what we are doing is resting on the visible and outward signs.

# Voice of Thanksgiving

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The nature of faith is dealing with darkness. If God was to show us everything He was doing and the results of what He was doing we would not need faith. We could and would walk with Him, but it would be by sight, not faith. We see this in familiar areas such as our salvation, which is by faith, not sight. We have believed the promises of God and know, by faith that God has done and will do what He has promised. The just are saved by faith.

***Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*** Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV)

We are wonderfully saved, but this is not something we can see today. We must believe by faith. There is a darkness we must penetrate to be able to see by faith. John Wesley described the penetration of the darkness by faith as his heart was strangely warmed. He was in darkness about salvations and then by the work of the Holy Spirit he was able to see by faith and was saved. He was able to take many people through the darkness to the point of seeing, by faith, their salvation. I hope the Holy Spirit has taken you through this darkness so you can see by faith the salvation of God in your life!

This same type of darkness is found in prayer. At times God will impress upon us a need for prayer. He calls us to pray and believe Him for the needed answer. And then we must deal with the darkness of faith. We must continue to believe God's promises and pray, even when and especially when, we see no progress or nearness of answer. He calls us to persevere in prayer until the answer comes or He calls for us to stop our labor. In faith we pray on, day-by-day, month-by-month and may I even write it, year-by-year.

It is true that God sometimes will give signposts along the way. The night I drove in the fog, it was wonderful to see the sign telling how far it was to Longmont, I knew just where I was. I was so helpful to know I was on the correct road and making progress toward my goal. At times God does this in prayer. Look at Abraham, God visited and reconfirmed the goal of his prayers. God confirmed to Abraham that he would have a son. Sometimes God does confirm and encourage our prayers with signpost along the way, but often He gives us a burden and expects us to continue by faith to the end, anything less than this is weakness of faith.

“If there are encouraging signs to the natural eye our faith seems strong; but when, as with the story of the shipwreck in the book of Acts, neither sun nor stars appear for many days, we tend to abandon hope. It is not so much that a trail like this weakens our faith, it simply uncovers the true state of our hearts and shows us how weak our faith really is; that we are not truly walking by faith at all, but walking by sight”. *Pray in the Spirit* by Arthur Wallis

The darkness of faith demands an answer from you, are you walking by faith or by sight. When you pray do you walk by faith, seeking the answer, no matter the path, its roughness or length? Or must you have signs along the way to keep you from dropping the ball and ending your prayers? This is

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

not easy, with no sign of progress, faith is hard. With no end in sight, faith is difficult to maintain. However, if we are going to pray and be effective for this generation and its needs, we must learn to and continue to pray in faith. If the Holy Spirit brings sign posts so be it, but if not we must not quit until He says we are finished. Just a note here, the Holy Spirit does stop prayer. He stopped Jeremiah and He stopped Paul (Jer7:16 and Acts 16:6-10), so we can have great confidence He can and will stop us if need be. Since we can have confidence He will stop us if He wants, we can have confidence to continue to pray if He has not stopped us.

Dealing with darkness is not easy. The Darkness of sin is a battle we fight throughout life. It is a battle that only ends with graduation home to be with the Lord. However, long though it may be, it is important that we do battle. Iniquity in our heart hinders and even stops the hearing of our prayers. We must resist sin and confess sin when we fail. We must work to be and continue to be right with God, anything less than this, results in failure in prayer.

***If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.*** Psalm 66:18 (NKJV)

Dealing with darkness of faith is a battle as well. We must pray by faith and believe God for the answers. When the answer comes quickly the darkness issue is slight. When the answer is slow in coming or is delayed, darkness is an important issue. Far too often people have surrender to the darkness and ended their prayer. We must not surrender; we must not give up. The Holy Spirit will help us and support us if we will walk with Him. He helps us in our weakness and when the times are darkest that is when we need Him most. The Spirit helps us in our weakness; the times of darkness of faith are times of human weakness, but also times of the great strength and help of the Spirit. He can and will help us to walk through the darkness if we faint not.

***Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. 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.*** Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

***Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*** 1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

*Let us Pray!*

## **A Call for Prayer**

Again I call for prayer for Israel, this is a key time for prayer and we must not drop the ball now. The Holy Spirit has given us a glimpse of the end of our prayers, the glorification of Jerusalem before all the nations. This will come to pass, so we can continue in prayer for Jerusalem and Israel with confidence even though things seem very dark today. Jerusalem will be a praise in all the earth.

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

*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, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:6-7 (NKJV)*

## 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 a church in Cedaredge, Colorado

**Charles and Janice Wilson** – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

**David Williamson** – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

## Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

*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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