

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of February 22, 2009

Being faithful to Jesus Christ is the most difficult thing we try to do today. We will be faithful to our work, to serving others, or to anything else; just don't ask us to be faithful to Jesus Christ. Many Christians become very impatient when we talk about faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Our Lord is dethroned more deliberately by Christian workers than by the world. We treat God as if He were a machine designed only to bless us, and we think of Jesus as just another one of the workers.

The goal of faithfulness is not that we will do work for God, but that He will be free to do His work through us. God calls us to His service and places tremendous responsibilities on us. He expects no complaining on our part and offers no explanation on His part. God wants to use us as He used His own Son.

My Utmost for his Highest (updated edition) by Oswald Chambers

The Life of Prayer

Thanksgiving and Prayer

David Williamson

For many years one of the most famous American painters was Norman Rockwell (1894 – 1978). His famous cover illustrations of everyday life he created for *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine grabbed hold of the imagination of people for several generations. Rockwell was able to capture a moment of real life on his canvas. It was fun to study his paintings and if one looked closely often you would find little surprises that made the painting true to life and brought them close to home. Some of his best paintings were around the theme of Thanksgiving Day. Many of these captured the festive day, joyful family times, and the true theme of the day, thanksgiving. This theme, giving of thanks, is a key to success in prayer. Of course we give thanks first and foremost to the one for whom so much thanks is due, God our Heavenly Father.

There are many keys to success in prayer; faith, faithfulness, forgiveness, a pure heart and motive, and so many others. Paul in his prayers brings attention to the key, the giving of thanksgiving. Look at an example of one of these prayers. In Paul's prayer recorded in Romans chapter 1, he begins by saying, "First".

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Romans 1:8 (NKJV)

The word translated, "first", in this prayer means, firstly in time, place, order, or importance. Paul knew and demonstrated over and over again that prayer needs be first in our spiritual life and wellbeing. The Christian life, well lived, daily, begins with prayer and continues in prayer moment-by-moment. Paul also knew that prayer was of chief importance for success, so it must be given a place of great importance in our daily living. Very simply, the initial key to success in prayer in this

Voice of Thanksgiving

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verse is, first we should pray. The second key is to give prayer its rightful place, the place of primacy over all else, in importance in our life.

Next Paul, by the unction of the Holy Spirit, teaches that prayer should begin with the giving of thanks. Please note that the giving of thanksgiving take precedence over any request. This is a constant theme in all Paul's teachings and prayers. He taught in everything we do, we should offer up thanksgiving. God has done so much for each of us, giving His best, Jesus Christ, for us that we might be saved, so thanksgiving should have a preeminent place in our prayers, as well as in everything else in our life.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; Philippians 4:6 (NKJV)

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, Philippians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 1 Corinthians 1:4 (NKJV)

do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:
Ephesians 1:16 (NKJV)

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
Colossians 1:3 (NKJV)

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,
1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NKJV)

I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, Philemon 1:4 (NKJV)

It is amazing to see how often Paul makes mention of thanksgiving and how often he ties thanksgiving with prayer. Please remember that these verses record Paul's practice in prayer. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote these verses and they give us a glimpse into Paul's prayer closet. If we could, who would not take the opportunity to spend time with Paul learning to pray? It would be wonderful to spend time with him, learning the secrets of effective fervent prayer. With these verses we do get that chance. We see that of great importance and receiving prominent place in his prayers is the giving of thanksgiving.

These examples have been given for our instruction. Will we learn these lessons? Is this not a key to our failure in prayer, that far too often we allow hindrances to keep us from effective prayer? Far too often we fail to apply the God given remedy for these hindrances, thanksgiving. The recognition of God and the wonders of His salvation, which He has freely given, is the platform for all

Voice of Thanksgiving

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thanksgiving. Recognition of what God has and is doing in us, for us, and through us is destructive to doubt, fear, wrath, unbelief, and all those things that would render useless our faith. Our faith is made strong and secure by the giving of thanksgiving. Our success in prayer is dictated by our willingness and practice of giving thanks.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. Psalm 100:4 (NKJV)

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. Psalm 95:2 (NKJV)

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Colossians 3:15 (NKJV)

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 (NKJV)

That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works. Psalm 26:7 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for provision for ministries and outreaches. Pray that God meet their every need. There is much to do and we must trust God to provide. Be bold in prayer and pray for the ministries list here in *Voice of Thanksgiving* and for those you sponsored and those sponsored by your church.

Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me".

Isaiah 45:11 (NKJV)

Basic Prayer Focus

Pray for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

Pray for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation

Voice of Thanksgiving

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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*.

- ✓ For an archive of past articles, copies of the German and Polish editions, short notes and studies on prayer, and other information, or to order copies of *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer* go to www.voiceofthanksgiving.com
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