

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of March 1, 2009

“I have known men,” says Goodwin—it must have been himself—“who came to God for nothing else but just to come to Him, they so loved Him. They scorned to soil Him and themselves with any other errand than just purely to be alone with Him in His presence. Friendship is best kept up, even among men, by frequent visits; and the more free and defecate those frequent visits are, and the less occasioned by business, or necessity, or custom they are, the more friendly and welcome they are.”—Rev. Alexander Whyte

The Life of Prayer

My God

David Williamson

One of the benefits of working at an American high school is spending time with young people. They can be difficult at times and sometimes they do some of the craziest things. At times they can disappoint you with the poor choices they make, but often they are a great delight. An example of this is at sporting events. It is great to see the athletes working to win, but even more fun, is watching students take possession of the team and game.

For students longing to be a part of something bigger and better than their normal life, being a part of the team, even if only as a supporter, is a lot of fun. This year the “new” cheer at basketball games is called The Rollercoaster. Students sit as close together as possible, put their hands and arms out like they are holding on to the hand bar of a rollercoaster ride, and then a student directs their ride. When he leans left everyone leans left just like they would on a real ride. They swerve to the right and then to the left, all with appropriate sounds and squeals, just as you would on a real ride. The students have so much fun with this the parents on the other side of the gym have begun to do the cheer with the students. During a time out in the action of the game the whole gym is rocking and rolling to a wild rollercoaster ride. I am surprised the team can listen to the instructions of the coach, because watching the students and parents have fun, is so much fun.

Having fun at games and events can be very beneficial to a school and to education. With all the fun and excitement, many students have taken possession of the games. Now it is their team. The common expression is, “My team won!” Taking possession of the team as a fan carries over to other aspects of school. When they take possession of the team and school, they apply themselves and do better in their other activities and in their classes.

Taking possession can be a very powerful force. Notice how Paul took possession of the Gospel message. His teaching was, “my Gospel” or “our Gospel”. What he proclaimed was not just some theory or a set of ideas; it was very real and personal to him. It was life changing and he made it his

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own message and life. Paul did not go to the cross, only Jesus could and did do that for him, but Paul had so fully joined with the Gospel, joining body, soul, and spirit, that the Gospel message was fully and completely his. Read a few examples of Paul and his Gospel.

in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.
Romans 2:16 (NKJV)

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began
Romans 16:25 (NKJV)

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 2 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV)

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
1 Thessalonians 1:5 (NKJV)

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 (NKJV)

A part of Paul's success in ministry is from his possessing the Gospel. With his possession of the Gospel, Paul had also come to the point where he was very close to God. His relationship with God grew in good times and bad, but became so close that Paul declared God was his God. Like the students at the basketball game, although they did not take a shot or make a basket, they had taken possession of the team and it was "my team" In like manner, God had for Paul become, my God.

Paul did not know, worship, or serve a god who was far off or unknown. Paul served a personal God, who had made a way for Paul to draw close to Himself. And Paul had done just that, he was close to God. He had experienced the love and power of God in daily living and in times of great trouble. God truly and fully was Paul's God. They were a team, God was and always will be God, and this never changes God's position as Supreme Being, but God chose to join with Paul to carry out His plans. Because Paul was fully given over to God, Paul had the greatest possession possible; he knew and walked with his personal God. For Paul, God truly was, "my God".

When Paul prayed this same feeling of possession comes out. He prayed to, "my God." Paul does not pray to just any being, but only to the God who so wonderfully saved him, forgave him, and delivered him from a life of death and destruction. His prayers have great power because they are directed to "my God", the God of a close personal relationship. God was a living and personal reality in Paul's life and thus was "my God".

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Last week began a study of one of Paul's prayers, from Romans. We saw that Paul placed thanksgiving first in his prayer life. He knew the grace that was given, by God, was beyond all else and that in all Paul did, and especially in prayer, he must always begin with thanksgiving.

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 second part of this prayer is Paul's statement that God was his God. Paul's declaration of "my God" is first an affirmation of covenant relationship. In this declaration Paul unites with those people who have joined with God in His covenant with man. Moses and the Children of Israel sang on the shores of the Red Sea ***"The Lord is my strength and song and he has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him"*** (Exodus 15:2). David exclaimed, ***"O God, You are my God; early will I seek you..."*** (Psalm 63:1). We could add to this list Caleb, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah; all owned God by covenant relationship as "my God".

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Hebrews 8:10 (NKJV)

Paul's declaration of "my God" is also an expression of a personal relationship. God was Paul's God by eternal election. God chose to love Paul with an everlasting love. God was Paul's God by redemption. Paul was purchased by the precious blood of Jesus. God was Paul's God by regeneration. God imparted spiritual life to Paul stamping him with the divine image on his heart, and the Holy Spirit as a pledge of his salvation. God was Paul's God by personal choice. When Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul surrendered all to Him. God was Paul's God by assurance. There was no doubting, hesitancy, or uncertainty, Paul knew God and God knew Paul. God was Paul's God by practical relationship. Paul knew God as the One he served.

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, Romans 1:9 (NKJV)

In the prayer from Romans, Paul presents us with a grand combination, "I thank" and "my God". What a wonderful union. God is worthy of infinite thanks and has made provision so I can know Him personally. This is a subject for constant meditation and praise. My prayers cannot be cold or dull, nor can I keep myself from prayer, if I remember this union, "I thank ...my God". Power in prayer and effectiveness in prayer are too limiting a description of this union, for the force of God, the power of God, the creative ability of God, and the love of God are overwhelmingly mine by possession, in prayer. Praise my God!

Let us Pray!

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A Call for Prayer

Pray for Israel. This is too important a time for Israel, for us to stop praying. Please continue to be faithful in prayer for this people, nation, and region.

But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16 (NKJV)

Pray for the opening of doors of ministry of the word of God. In all our ministries, personal and corporate, we have areas that are closed to the Gospel. Pray for the doors to be opened to the Gospel message and its delivery and acceptance.

Here is a praise report from Kasia Heddergott (Kasia translates a monthly version of *Voice of Thanksgiving* into Polish, the Polish newsletter is called, *Głos Dziękczynienia*)

Last week I could personally experience the power of prayer. It was amazing - words I translated not so long ago became absolutely true in my life (of course not for the first time, but the effects of prayers are always striking). My mom lost her memory. Suddenly, she forgot several years of her life and she kept forgetting everything she was saying or doing. She asked what was going on every 5 seconds and she immediately forgot my answers. During that one day she asked the same questions a hundred times.

Whenever someone from my family is in mega-trouble I do three things - first - I pray myself, second - I call someone from our church and ask for prayer, third - I call 112. When the ambulance took us to the hospital, the doctors said there could be several reasons for her behavior - heart attack, stroke, or brain tumor. They carried out several check-ups and tests. I knew that more and more people were praying - I could see it when I was looking at my mom. I recall one moment - overwhelming peace and amazing sweetness filled my heart and I knew she would be fine. I love her very much.

After some hours my mom began to remember the last 5, then 10, then 30 minutes. In the evening we could go home. The diagnosis was: a temporal loss of short-term memory caused by oxygen deficiency in the brain. Today her memory is back, she does not remember only that one day when it happened - nothing worth remembering.

GOD IS SO WONDERFUL!!! I thank Him for watching over us, I thank Him for my family in Christ who responds immediately and without hesitation whenever one is in need (Galatians 6: 2), for my church where I can feel safe and where the Word is practiced everyday. I could write much more - the thanksgiving is pouring out of my heart. I am so grateful I can be part of *Voice of Thanksgiving*.

THANK YOU
Kasia

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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*.

- ✓ 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
- ✓ If you have questions you may email me at: dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com