

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of March 22, 2009

Prayer means that we get into union with God's view of other people. Our devotion as saints is to identify ourselves with God's interests in other lives. God pays no attention to our personal affinities; He expect us to identify ourselves and His interests in others.

Oswald Chambers from *The Psychology of Redemption*

The Life of Prayer

For You All

David Williamson

When I was growing up I was blessed with a great family. One of the many things that made them so special was going to church. From my earliest days and throughout the time I lived at home, we went to church. I was blessed to hear Bible stories and live in a family trying to live properly, according to Bible principles. One great memory of those years was the Sundays my dad would sing a solo in church. He has a great singing voice and was welcomed wherever we went for church, such as visiting my Grandparents, to sing a solo.

Dad had many songs he could choose from, but the most requested solo was the song, *I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked*. My dad sang it well, he made the pathways and hills, that Jesus knew, come alive. I know I am prejudiced, he is my dad and I wanted him to do well, but he was very good. In this song the author goes to key places in the life of Jesus, where he prayed and where He died and the author felt very close to Jesus. When Dad sang we knew he was close to Jesus and he made Jesus close to us. Many years ago I visited Israel. We went to many places including the Mount of Olives, Jordan River, and Garden of Gethsemane. As I walked about these places, the days of listening to dad sing came alive for me. In those places I, felt close to my dad and close to Jesus.

Being close to Jesus is important and it is from Him we should learn to pray. He is our best example and our best guide to prayer. He alone was and is perfect in prayer. If we want to pray well and effective, we need to learn and why not learn from the best. A cornerstone of His success and one of His chief lessons for us in prayer, is meeting God's requirements. We list faith, believing, and asking in His will, as some of the requirements to effective prayer. However, there is a key that is not often spoken of, the love of people.

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)

For several weeks we have been looking at this verse from Romans; there is a great deal Paul teaches us from this verse, which is one of his prayers. The initial point and one that should be the initial

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point in our activities is prayer. Paul guides us toward a successful Christian life by reminding us that our first step should be prayer. Next we see that thanksgiving should be our impetus driving us to the Father in prayer. With that driving force we come to the key relationship of both life and prayer, the personal relationship of “my God”. All life and power comes from this most precious and wonderful relationship. Then last week we explored the foundation for all life and prayer, “through Jesus Christ”. Jesus brings us to the Father and Him to us, making prayer possible and powerful.

Paul then continues with a simple phrase, one that seems to pale beside the power and majesty of “through Jesus Christ” and the Roman people’s faith. However, simple it sounds and hidden by the powerful phrases that surround it, this is the cornerstone of prayer, for you all. Paul here prays for people he has never met, they are not the fruit of his work, yet he thanks God for these strangers. This is foreign to the thinking of most people and most ministries today. Not knowing and experiencing the power of God, we tend to be like the world wrapped in self. We only strive for us, we, and our. We may paint our selfishness in fine robes and point out all its fine points, but selfishness is still selfishness regardless of the covering or motive. This selfishness is contrary to the nature of God. He is love and there is no turning or showdown that ever changes His nature. He is never self-centered; if He was He would cease to be love.

This simple phrase, for you all, an expression of the love of people, not merely those of Paul’s ministry or even his acquaintance, is the cornerstone of successful prayer; the unconditional love of God. Remember ***that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*** (Romans 5:8), that is true love. His love is the ultimate gift given to a person, the cost of which is beyond all compare. So the question is; what should we think and what should we do about this phrase, for you all?

If we espouse powerful and successful prayers, then the love of God must flow through us and through our prayers. We need to be asking the question; do I have the heart of the Father in my life and prayers? He so loved people that He gave His Son. Do I love but only provisionally, with reservations? Or do I so love that I give my unconditional prayers for the good of all people?

The love of God empowers, directs, and answers my prayers. And to the extent that I stray from the love of God so I weaken and hinder my prayers. Selfishness, hatred, jealousy, anger, unforgiveness, self-centeredness, and anything else that is counter to the love of God, limits my effectiveness. If I am not just as pleased with a move of God at the church down the street as I am with a move of God at our church, then I have slipped away from the love of God. This limits the effectiveness of my prayers. We can only pray well, when we have a love for people.

We must remove all hindrances from our prayers and the love of God. Praying for the saints is our duty and should be our joy. Praying for the lost is also our duty and should also be our joy. The lost are only an answered prayer from being saints. Will you love and pray?

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A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35 (NKJV)

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. John 15:11-17 (NKJV)

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV)

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. 1 John 3:16-23 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for the Lost. Pray for the men and women of your town, region, and country who are lost and without hope. Pray for a change in their life, an opportunity for the hearing and responding to the Gospel. Pray with the same love you feel for your family and friends; pray with a desperate fervor knowing you may be their best and perhaps their last hope for repentance and salvation. Then, in Christian love, pray the same for the people of a country that has traditionally been at odds with your nation.

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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 a 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 a 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*

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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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