Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of January 17, 2010

The Church, by virtue of her faithful use of prayer, wields the balance of power not only in world affairs but also in the salvation of individuals. Without violating the free moral responsibility of any individual, the Church, by means of persistent, believing intersession, may so release the Spirit of God upon a soul that he will find it easier to yield to the Spirit's tender wooing and be saved than to continue his rebellion. From *Destined for the Throne* by Paul E. Billheimer

The Life of Prayer

Believe or Doubt

David Williamson

When I taught history to high school students, it seemed to them that I knew a lot of history. Often they would ask a question and I would know the answer or I could explain things to them. What they did not know was that I understood the power of review. Before we began a new unit, and day-by-day as we worked through various topics, I would take time and review. I would refresh my memory of key events, dates, men, women, battles, legislations, inventions, practices, and problems of that period so that I would have answers when asked.

This is a great technique for preparing in every activity of life. As a teacher I would review with my students, as a coach I would review with my teams. As a business man I would review with my coworkers. As a father I would review with my son. As a … well I think you get the point. It is important that we review and know what we are doing. This is true as well for prayer.

Prayer is so easy; we are tempted to think we know what we are doing. We may think we do not need to review; however, this may lead to serious errors and problems. Without review it is easy to slip into lapses, mistakes, and bad practices. Without review we get sloppy in our habits and begin to lean more and more on our own understanding and strength. It is easy to slide into not leaning on and depending on God, to closing off our hearing and missing what God and the Holy Spirit are saying. With good review we can be effectual in prayer, having amazing success through God.

Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to review. He knows you better than you know yourself and so who is better to turn to for help than Him. To help you with a review, it would good to do a little review together. There is much we can and should review, as simple as prayer is; there is much to the mastery of prayer. Walking in prayer as Jesus walked, or if that is to difficult to contemplate, walking as the great men and women of prayer from the Bible and throughout Christian history, we know that there is a lifetime of learning for the faithful student of prayer. Week-by-week we should be growing and maturing; learning to abide in Christ, obey God's Word, and listen to and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Surely this is a lifetime of learning and gives us much to review.

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Today for our review we are going to return to one of the key basics of prayer, faith. Our review is centered on one set of verses, spoken by Jesus and presented to us in the Gospel of Mark. These verses were written to build our faith and to teach us good practices concerning believe and doubt. The diligent student of the Bible will notice that there are many other teachings within these few lines. Jesus the master teacher often included enough material in His teaching so a student could return to a teaching and receive new light, time after time, for a lifetime. Please feel free to review other parts of this important teaching, but we will focus today on just one small point.

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:22-24 (NKJV)

There are two key words presented here in understanding and using faith. These words fight for and against our faith and they help or hinder our faith. The words are doubt and believe. Doubt is a very strong force. It affects much of what happens around us and to us. It is a key (all be it negative) factor in effective prayer. Believe is a positive force, an even stronger force than doubt, able to overcome Satanic and worldly forces. Our dealing with doubt and believe, will determine our success in faith activities of all kinds, including prayer.

Doubt means several things; take some time and review these several meanings. This will help us to deal with doubt. Doubt means to separate thoroughly. Doubt is very effective in this separating us from God. Coming to God requires faith and doubt putting questions between us and God. It is like water on rocks in the mountains. The water settles in low places and freezes and then thaws. The cycle, when repeated, will cause a separation between parts of the rock, splitting it apart. The questions of doubt slowly separate us from God. This is what happened in the Garden. The Devil introduced questions concerning what God had said. From these seeds of doubt, Adam and Eve were separated from God. When we allow doubt and questions to go unchecked, we will be separated from God.

Doubt means to withdraw. Doubt makes us feel like God is a million miles away. We do not like the way things are going, the way we feel, the thoughts we have, or what is happening in us and to us, so we withdraw. This is doubt having its work in us and continuing to work to take us further from God. Withdrawing, poisons life; for example it often attacks our Bible reading and study. We withdraw from the very thing we most need. The Bible is our life and bread, it is our light and guide, and yet doubt causes us to withdraw from the Word.

Doubt means to oppose. We become like a drowning man refusing the hand of a rescuer. Doubt questions motives and intents, it confuses situations and circumstances, and it tries to bite the hand that feeds it. Doubt is subtle and often hides behind other things, but it says I do not want your

help, support, care, and prosperity, while all the time longing for these things. Doubt brings doubts in every area of life and so it will even opposes God and His salvation.

Doubt means to discriminate; discrimination is a form of deciding. Doubt brings questions to every situation, who and what will you believe. You must discriminate for yourself what you will believe and who you trust. Eve discriminated, (decided) that she would believe what the Devil said over what God said. Men and women have been doing this for centuries. Part of the attraction of the world is its ability to present a believable case for doing what we want to do and make deciding against God easier and popular.

Doubt means to hesitate. Hesitation comes from questioning. We are not sure what to do and who to believe; we have concerns, fears, and worries. In the garden Eve doubted God. She hesitated to agree with God, she questioned if what He said was right and true. We overcome doubt by ending hesitation. This is not a call to be lockstep robots of God. Hesitation ends when we know God. When I know, my God shall supply. When I know, my God wants me to prosper and be in health. When I know God, I do not hesitate; this ends questions about Him and His nature. I know He is for me!

Now contrast that with the word believe, from those same verses (Mark 11:22-24). Doubt is to separate, withdraw, oppose, discriminate, and hesitate. Believe means to have faith in, upon, or with respect to a person or thing. It means to credit. It means to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ. This difference and its application to our life will make all the difference in our prayers.

Believe means to have faith in God. In some ways faith is simple, it is having confidence that God is God and able to do what He says He can and will do. We get in trouble when we doubt, by questioning God, His nature and ability. It is in Him that we have life. It is in him we have answers to prayers.

Believe means to have faith upon God. Faith means I can put myself in His hands and trust Him to take care of me and my family, all we have, need, and want. If I am fully trusting upon Him, then the doubts of life have no place in me. My trust is placing me upon His abilities and nature, knowing this is for my benefit.

Believe also means to have faith with God. We believe by placing God correctly. Doubt places self, fear, world, concerns, questions, wants, and emotions before God. Believe places God first in our life and all we have and do .The fear of the Lord is well described as placing God first in our life. When we place God first in our life, He is in control. His control is a place of power and anointing, the very things we need for life and effective prayers.

Believe means to credit. There is an old expression that says, Give credit where credit is due. Too often people try to take credit for the good things in life and blame others for the bad things in life. If I am successful, I try to take the credit, but I will blame God for all that is bad. Abraham the

"Father of our Faith" did not take this attitude. He knew and proclaimed that it was God who blessed him. Abraham would not even let the other kings bless him, He wanted there to be no question that he was blessed by God. He gave the credit where it was due, he gave it to God. This helped him to believe and be strong in faith. If we give credit to God for all the good he does for us, we can believe and walk in faith.

Believe also means to entrust. Every day we deal with trust issues at many different levels. People with certain phobias have lost trust in an issue; for example, they will not fly in planes, ride in elevators, or go to high places. These are trust issues. More important trust issues reflect on how we believe. Do we trust God to take care of us? Jesus said God would take care of us, more so than even the lilies of the fields, yet it is often a battle to step out in trust of God. We need to be like the men of the book of Daniel. When they faced the fire of the furnace, they trusted God more than they feared the flames. The result was spectacular; the Fourth Man was in the fire with them. The one they had entrusted was there to protect them from the flames. If we entrust our life, family, work, ministry, and prayer to Him, He will protect us and bless us beyond all we can imagine.

So there you have it, our simple little review, doubt verses believe. If we deal with doubt, refusing its influence and guidance, we can keep from separation and withdrawal from God. We can keep from opposing and deciding against God. We can end hesitation from our true source of life and answers to prayers. If we believe placing our faith in, upon, and with God, giving Him credit for blessing and helping us, and entrusting our well being to Him, we can have great power and success in prayer. Believe over doubt is the basis for effective prayers that avail much, a worthy goal for all of us.

Let us pray!

A Call for Prayer

Continue to Pray – I ask you to continue to pray for the ministries listed in ***Continue Faithful in Prayer***. I know that the ministries listed, benefit from your prayers. I also know that these represent other ministries for which you pray. For a pastor listed here, you also pray for other pastors both your own and others you serve by prayer. For a school listed here, you also pray for works serving children in other places. For a church planting ministry listed here, you also pray for the planting of church near you home and in countries God has made your focus. So please continue to pray.

A Special Specific Request – My special specific request for you for this week is that you would pray for souls. Paul Billheimer, in a short note posted at the beginning of this issue, claims we can, by use of prayer, make it easier for a man or woman to yield to the wooing of the Spirit and be saved than to continue in rebellion. Do you doubt or believe that statement? If you believe it, then please make it a special focus of your prayers this week and for the weeks and months to come. Make specific special prayers for people near you, praying that they will yield and get saved.

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Continue Faithful in Prayer

Pray for Nations and the Churches of Nations

Israel and the peace of Jerusalem
Churches in Belarus
Churches in Lithuania

Pray for Pastors of Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal
Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kołobrzeg, Poland
Mark and Patty Spencer – Pastor of a church in Longmont, Colorado
William (Bill) Williamson – Pastor of a church in Cedaredge, Colorado
Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

Pray for Leadership over multiple Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Church planter among Nepalese people
Marek Kaminski – Bishop of Poland and co-founder and leader of the BBB Conference

Pray for Christian Ministries

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of a Christian school in Brazil
John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA
Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia
Lori Farquhar – Children's Ministry Director
Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany
Mark Spencer – Worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference
Patty Spencer – Worship leader, and musician
William (Bill) Williamson – Leader of a mission outreach to India
David Williamson – Writer and editor of ***Voice of Thanksgiving***

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