

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of April 11, 2010

Power of the resurrection is the power behind the promises of God.

David Williamson from *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change*

The Life of Prayer

Facing the Granite Wall

David Williamson

In the 1860s groups of men set out to build a railroad that would run from coast to coast across the American continent. This was a huge undertaking, challenging the abilities, resources, and determination of these men. There was great fame and wealth available to them if they accomplished their goal, but there are great difficulties that they would have to overcome to succeed. The Union Pacific Railroad began in Omaha, Nebraska and built west, the Central Pacific Railroad began on the west coast built east. Between them was the Sierra Nevada Mountains; a range of mountains so steep and difficult to traverse that most people assumed no railroad could be built across this divide.

Lead by Charles Crocker, a force of up to 12,000 workers, push up into the foothills of the mountains for the Central Pacific Railroad. Before them were almost insurmountable difficulties. The mountains were too steep, the rails had to go across bridges over canyons, and through long tunnels. In places the tracks had to be covered by massive snow sheds to stop destruction of massive avalanches of the harsh winters. The roadbed had to be cut through some of the toughest granite rock found anywhere in the world. Finally, in 1869, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads met at Promontory Point in Utah. They had conquered seemingly impossible task of spanning the nation with railroad.

Many of you who read this newsletter are facing difficult tasks. These difficulties rise up before you like the granite of the Sierra Nevada Mountains did before the builders of the Central Pacific Railroad. Many of you have been praying and working to deal with the situation for years. You know what the railroad builders faced when people laughed and ridicule these men. They called them dreamers or crazy. The man who surveyed the route for the railroad, Theodore Judah, was called "Crazy Judah" in the newspapers and by nearly everyone. And even while they were building the railroad there were hindrances that would have been too much for most people; workers quit (that is why they finally had to use Chinese immigrants as workers), the weather was too difficult, the snow was too deep, the grades were too steep, there was not enough money, there were lawsuits, and the list goes on and on.

You face difficulties in accomplishing those things God has given you to accomplish. In work and prayer you face insurmountable situations and obstacles. You also hear from many sources that you

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will not be successful. In many ways it seems you are trying to do and asking for the impossible. The author of Isaiah describes this situation for us.

And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain: ...

Isaiah 49:3-4 (NKJV)

Isaiah was called by God as His servant. You have been called as God's servant. Isaiah faced difficult, seemingly impossible situations. You face the difficult and seemingly impossible. Isaiah knew that he would rest in the glory of God some day. You know that Heavens gate is waiting for you. Then Isaiah pours out the hurt of his heart saying, I have labored in vain, I have worked until I have no strength left and I have nothing to show for all my work. If you have prayed for long, if you have worked hard and prayed hard for things deemed impossible, you have faced difficulties and the seemingly impossible. If you have done this, then you can relate to Isaiah's lament.

There were many times when it seemed the builders of the Central Pacific Railroad were not making any progress at all. In some places the black power used as the main explosive of the day, did nothing except make a black mark on the surface of the granite. In desperation Crocker brought in nitroglycerin, which at that time was a new and powerful explosive, but it was also very unstable and dangerous to use. It was so unstable that there was no safe way to transport it, so they had to mix it near the worksite; a practice that often yielded deadly and destructive explosions.

Even with nitroglycerin the progress was slow. At one stage in the process, his crews spent several months just building tunnels. Crocker had teams of workers working around the clock and they were working from both ends of each tunnel, but for several months not even one section of track was laid. To the world it seemed as though they were making no progress at all. The naysayers had a field day; surely this was proof that this railroad could not be built.

The builders of the railroad could have given up on their battle and they would have failed, but they did not. We can give up on our prayer battles and fail, or press on to completion of the assignment and success. The railroad builders could also have been stubborn and continued to try to cut through the granite with black power. This was the explosive everyone used and the safe thing to do. If they had done this, they would still be cutting tunnels and the railroad company would have failed.

These same two options stand before everyone who prays. We can listen to the naysayers and quit or we can continue to press on, trusting in God's direction, power, and His final assessment of our work. Secondly, we can run the danger of being stubborn in how we pray, not correcting any errors in our ways and never receive the answers we seek and need.

Men and women of prayer face times of difficulty. They are praying and praying and praying, but it seems as though nothing is happening. It can be frustrating. Everyone can see that there is no progress being made. It is easy to lament as Isaiah did, ***'I have labored in vain, I have spent my***

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strength for nothing and in vain. However, read what follows his lament. ***Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, And my work with my God.*** Isaiah 49:3-4 (NKJV).

The word translated as “reward” in the NKJV is “judgment” in the KJV. In the Hebrew it means a verdict. What God is reminding Isaiah, and through him reminding us, the final word on progress, success, and value of our prayer and work, rest with God. He never judges these things with incomplete knowledge. God knows the end result and makes His judgment on true facts. His verdict and reward is based on sound judgment, not half truths or partial information. Our worth is high enough that God sent His Son to die for us. Our reward is in God’s hand and by His judgment. If we judge the worth and progress of our prayers, we run the risk of error, we do not know all the facts. If we allow the world, the media, or others to judge our worth and progress, we can be confident that it is inaccurate. We have been called to prayer for today and for these situations, we are God’s vessel, called for His purpose and plan; we are here to receive His answers.

We may also need to make changes to our prayer practices. One of the most important verses on prayer is found in James chapter four. Here he explains a great danger to the success of prayer, the major reason why people ask and do not receive. The problem is that people ask wrong. This is just like builders of the railroad continuing to use black power instead of nitroglycerin.

There are many ways people ask amiss. One listed here is asking so they can spend it on their lusts. This is a problem, but for people praying for the salvation of others, for the reaching of the Gospel to people and nations, and for changes for the betterment of people’s lives, the amiss of prayer is seldom for our own lust. There are other factors of praying amiss that must be dealt with. For example we must pray with faith in God, we must forgive others before we pray, and we must believe the promises of God.

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. James 4:2-3 (NKJV)

If you are going to pray through the granite wall that is in front of you then you must properly deal with both of these issues. You must not allow premature, erroneous, misinformed, improper, incomplete, judgments, hinder or stop your work of prayer. We must trust God to direct us and help us, and leave the judgment of worth and success to Him. We also must submit to inspection and guidance by the Holy Spirit of our prayers, our character, our work, and our faith. We also must have a willingness to make the changes as He directs, how He directs, and when He directs. As He works in us to mold us and make us, He is taking our prayers from blacking the granite like black powder to clearing the way with nitroglycerin. Proper application of these two areas will please the Father and yield the success we desire in prayer.

Let us pray!

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A Call for Prayer

Pray for Your Self – Pray that you will not listen to nor accept the premature, misinformed judgments of your worth and progress in prayer. Pray that you will listen to and respond properly to the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit as He reveals to you areas where you have been praying amiss. Pray that you will be quick to obey His promptings and swift to make the changes needed.

Continue Faithful in Prayer

Continue to pray for the ministries listed here and use this as a spring board for praying for nations, churches, pastors, ministries, and people close to your heart and according to the Spirit's direction. Your faithful prayers make a difference!

Pray for Pastors of Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal
Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland
Mark and Patty Spencer – Pastors 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 Nations and the Churches of Nations

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

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*

Calling Christians to Effective Fervent Prayer

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