

**MIGHTY
PREVAILING
PRAYER**

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Prevailing Prayer-The Need of the Church

THE GREAT NEED of our world, our nation, and our churches is people who know how to prevail in prayer. Moments of pious wishes blandly expressed to God once or twice a day will bring little change on earth or among the people. Kind thoughts expressed to Him in five or six sentences, after reading a paragraph or two of mildly religious sentiments once a day from some devotional writing, will not bring the kingdom of God to earth or shake the gates of hell and repel the attacks of evil on our culture and our civilization.

Results, not beautiful words, are the test of prevailing prayer. Results, not mere sanctimonious devotional moments, are the hallmark of the true intercessor.

We need great answers to prayer, changed lives and situation-answers that bear upon them the stamp of the divine. We need mighty demonstrations of the reality and concern of God and of His activity and power, which will force the world to recognize that God is truly God, that God is sovereign, and that God is involved in His world today. We need mighty answers to prayer that will bring new life to the church and new strength, faith, and courage to faint believers; that will silence, dumbfound, and convict evil men; and that will thwart, defeat, and drive back the assaults of Satan.

The vast majority of Christians know very little about prevailing prayer, wrestling in prayer, or prayer

warfare. We have seen too few demonstrations of prevailing prayer. We have known too few prayer warriors who had intercessory power with God and with people. We have met too few Elijah-type intercessors who were just like us, yet whose prayer lives were powerful and effective (James 5:16-18).

Intercession is more than an occasional heartwarming, emotional love to God, more than expressions of good will on our knees when we think of the sick and the suffering among our friends. Prayer is more than a cry of earnest desire when suddenly faced with a crisis need.

GOD'S PRIORITY WORK FOR YOU

Prevailing prayer is holy work, fervent labor. Epaphras, who was "always wrestling in prayer" for his congregation (Col. 4:12), prevailed in prayer. The apostles deliberately chose to give their attention to prayer (Acts 6:4). Then three verses later we are told, "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly." Even a large number of the priests, perhaps the most difficult to win, "became obedient to the faith."

Murray wrote, "We have far too little conception of the place that intercession, as distinguished from prayer for ourselves, ought to have in the church and the Christian life. In intercession our king upon the throne finds His highest glory. In it we shall find our highest glory too. Through it He continues His saving work and can do nothing without it. Through it alone we can do our work, and nothing avails without it." He adds, "Where...we work more than we pray, the presence and the power of God are not seen in our work as we

would wish."

"Prayer was never meant to be incidental to the work of God. It is *the* work ... in all work for God, prayer is the working power of all that God would do through His people." Arthur Matthews says, "The spiritual history of a mission or a church is written in its prayer life." What counts with God is not statistics but prayer depth and God's presence and power in lives, church service, and outreach. All our goal setting, effective management techniques, and computerized administration will accomplish little unless empowered by mighty prevailing prayer.

Whatever gets you too busy for prayer time, whatever distracts you from holy prevailing, whatever robs you of hunger for God, for souls, and for time for prayer warfare is a hindrance to God and His kingdom. You cannot afford it.

The great and godly people of the church have always been those who know how to prevail in prayer. There is nothing higher or holier in Christian living and service. In prevailing prayer you rise to your full potential as created in the image of God and as exalted to the heavenlies to share with Christ His intercessory throne (Eph. 1:20-21; 2:6).

Think of it: The very God who raised up Jesus to heaven after His death and resurrection, placing Jesus at His right hand on the throne of the universe, has also "raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms" (Eph.2:6). You sit potentially where Jesus sits on the throne, to share His rule! When? Now! How? By intercession!

You have no greater ministry or no leadership more influential than intercession. There is no higher

role, honor, or authority than this. You have been saved to reign through prayer. You have been Spirit-filled to qualify you to reign by prayer. You reign as you prevail in prayer.

GOD IS SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE TO PREVAIL

The greatest need of God today is for men and women who know how to prevail in prayer-mighty intercessors, tireless prevailers, people who will persevere in prayer battle and prayer conquest until heaven's powers are released and God's will is done in the practical situations on earth.

God's cause creeps forward timidly and slowly when there are more organizers than agonizers, more workers than prevailing prayer warriors. We need prayer warriors who have seen the heart of God, who have experienced the power and glory of the cross, who know the Bible meaning and significance of the day of judgment, heaven and hell. We need prayer warriors who feel the slavery, the absence of any eternal hope, and the doom of the unsaved; who feel the transforming power, joy, and glory from Christ of the saved. We need prayer warriors who pray as though God is God and as though Satan is Satan.

God seeks people to prevail in prayer. It is His ordained means to move the world toward righteousness and the people of the world toward salvation. God seeks people to prevail because He sees earth's millions in their sin and need, loves them infinitely, and longs to save them from sin, Satan, and hell. The price for their atonement is already paid. Calvary's work is finished triumphantly, forever. All things are ready, but man is blinded, fettered, and hardened by sin.

God's only hope for earth's millions is prevailing prayer. For this reason Jesus is prevailing day and night and needs our prevailing cooperation. God has ordained to save the nations through prayer (Ps. 2:8). It is part of His eternal decree. Therefore Jesus prays, and therefore we must pray.

WE ARE FAILING GOD

Millions of feeble, careless Christians are failing God's great heart of love; failing their crucified, resurrected, and enthroned Savior; failing their tender, groaning Intercessor-Spirit. God longs to be gracious (Isa. 30:18), but He is hindered by our failing to fulfill the role for which He created us, saved us, and preserves us alive today.

Churches, missionary organizations, and Christian institutions are highly organized, well staffed, and, on the whole, busy in significant labor. But where are the results? We have not prayed them to pass yet. We have failed to teach our people the role of prevailing prayer. We have failed to model for them powerful lives of prevailing prayer and to lead them in it.

Only a fool fails to pray, but millions of Christians seem almost greater fools. They believe in prayer. They pray rather casually and often ineffectively, but they have never given themselves to the work of spiritual conquest through prevailing prayer. Knowing God's mighty power is always released through prayer, they nevertheless fail to pray until they prevail. "Where are the Christian leaders who can teach the modern saints to pray and put them at it? ...Where are the apostle leaders who can put God's people to praying? Only those who prevail in prayer produce a host of followers who

know how to prevail. Prevailing apostles produce prayer warriors. Comparatively prayerless pulpits will produce prayerless and powerless congregations. Who will call today's generation to prayer and teach them to pray? Where are our prayer giants?

WANTED: GIANTS IN PRAYER

Many years ago, E. M. Bounds wrote:

“We need this prayerful leadership; we must have it, that by the perfection and beauty of its holiness, by the strength and elevation of its faith, by the potency and pressure of its prayers, by the authority and spotlessness of its example, by the fire and contagion of its zeal, by the singularity, sublimity, and unworthiness of its piety, it may influence God and hold and mold the church to its heavenly pattern.

Such leaders, how mighty they are felt! How their flame arouses the church! How they embattle and give victory by the conflicts and triumphs of their own faith! How they fashion it by the impress and importunity of their prayers! How they inoculate by the contagion and fire of their holiness! How they lead the march in great spiritual revolutions! How the church is raised from the dead by the resurrection call of their sermons! Holiness springs up in their wake as flowers at the voice of spring, and where they tread the desert blooms as a garden of the Lord. God's cause demands such leaders.”

God longs to reveal His mighty power and redemptive love more outstandingly and more constantly. What hinders Him? The lack of adequate prevailing prayer. Just as the orchard owner Jesus described came seeking fruit (Luke 13:6-7), so God seeks for prevailing prayer veterans among His people.

Listen to Andrew Murray again:

“He looks if the church is training the great army of aged men and women, whose time of outward work is past, but who can strengthen the army of the "elect, who cry to him day and night." ... He looks to the thousands of young men and young women in training for the work of ministry and mission, and gazes longingly to see if the church is teaching them that intercession, power with God must be their first care, and in seeking to train and help them to it. He looks to see whether ministers and missionaries are understanding their opportunity, and laboring to train the believers of their congregations into those who can "help together" by their prayer, and can "strive with them in their prayers." As Christ seeks the lost sheep until He finds it, God seeks intercessors.”

We need a new intense and radical commitment to prayer, leaders who know and prove the power of prayer, congregations growing ever more mighty in prayer. We need prevailing leadership to mold a new generation of prayer warriors.

GOD HAS ORDAINED OUR PREVAILING

God has ordained a glorious role for His Son and for us in holy, though unworthy, partnership with His Son. Oh, that God would help us sense the wonder of these realities!

God Has Ordained Christ to Be the Great Intercessor

1. *The Son is the revelation of God the Father.* All that you learn of God you learn through the Son. No one has ever seen God the Father (John 1:18), but whoever sees the Son, sees the Father (14:9). Therefore, whenever God has appeared as a visible being, it is God the Son who appeared. God the Son is the Word of God.

Therefore, whenever God has spoken it was through God the Son.

2. ***The Son is God's ordained representative.*** God created us through the Son (John 1:3, 10). All life that we have come from God through the Son (1:4; 6:33; 11:25). The Son was God's Mediator with us, even when He came as the pre-incarnate Jehovah. It was undoubtedly He who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, with Enoch over the years, and with His friend Abraham; He spoke face-to-face with Moses and made Himself visible to Isaiah (John 12:41), Daniel, and the apostle John on Patmos. Over the centuries since Creation, Christ has been coming to us again and again (Mic. 5:2, margin). He came to us in His incarnation; now He comes to us constantly as Immanuel, God with us.

3. ***The Son is ordained to be responsible for humankind.*** He has always taken upon Himself our needs (Isa. 53:4; 63:9). He was responsible for providing atonement for humankind (53:6). From Creation on, He is the Intercessor for humankind, and now having entered the sanctuary of heaven on our behalf, He is and will be our High Priest forever (Heb. 6:19-20). His high-priestly sacrifice of Himself was once for all, but His intercessory role continues forever (7:25). Thus God the Son, our Lord and Savior, is the great, continuing, and perfect prevailing Intercessor.

God Has Ordained Us to Intercede with Christ

God has created us in His image to be godlike in personality and in character. God has created us to have fellowship with the triune Jehovah. God has ordained us from all creation to have a special relationship to God the Son. We are created spiritually to fellowship with the Son (1 Cor. 1:9) and to be the bride of the Son

(Isa. 62:5; John 3:29; Eph. 5:25-26; Rev. 21:9).

We are also created, saved, and called to intercede and thus to prevail until God's answer appears. Since prevailing intercession is Christ's great priority today, it must become ours as His representatives here. He has given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to see people and needs from His perspective. He has ordained that the Holy Spirit enable us in our prayer weakness (Rom. 8:26). He has authorized us to use the authority of His name in prayer (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24).

He has made us to be priests to God, which certainly includes the intercessory role of all priests (Rev. 1:6). We are to be not only holy priests (1 Peter 2:5), however, but royal priests (v. 9), appointed to serve our King. In the light of other Scriptures, this responsibility obviously includes our being given a kingly role in our intercession. We become interceding royalty. We, like Jesus, rule and extend Christ's rule by our prevailing intercession. We are to share Christ's sovereignty by our prevailing prayer. He delegates royal authority to us.

"God has voluntarily made himself dependent also upon our prayer. ... In prayer the church has received power to rule the world." Through our prayers God acts and speaks. While God is ever free and acts in sovereign freedom, yet He seems to have bound Himself, at least to a large degree, to our intercession. Hallesby calls prayer "the conduit through which the power of heaven is brought to earth." He adds that our believing prayer "is unquestionably the means by which God, in the quickest way," will be able to give to our world His saving power through Christ. Calvin also taught that prayer was a means by which the power of Satan can be overthrown and the kingdom of God advanced.

THE GLORY OF PREVAILING PRAYER

The highest glory of Christ upon His sovereign throne today is the glory of His prevailing intercession. It becomes our most glorious ministry also. There is no more Christlike role than to be a co-intercessor with Christ for the priorities upon His heart. In no other way can a Christian be a greater strength and blessing to Christ's church. In no other way can you do more to advance Christ's kingdom and bring glory to the name of Jesus. Prevailing intercession is your supreme service while on earth.

Prevailing prayer is glorious because it unites you with the heartbeat of Christ. It is glorious because in prevailing prayer you share the vision of Christ, the purpose and holy determination of Christ, and often the costly soul agony and burden of Christ. Prevailing intercession is the most Christly of all labor, as well as the most Spirit-controlled. The Spirit shares with you Christ's passion until you are convulsed by the same heart-cry as the Son and the same groanings as the Spirit (Rom. 8:26).

It is glory to weep with Christ, love with Christ, and burn with the passionate longing of Christ. It is glory to share with Christ the intercessory battle and triumph. Sometimes you begin to sense the power and joy of the coming age (Heb. 6:5) as your prevailing breaks through to victory. Glory begins as you feel the Spirit's assurance that your prayer has been heard and answered. The visible results are not always immediately evident, but you know you have prevailed according to the will of God, and you know God's answer is sure.

All prevailing prayer will receive its final and supreme glory when you reach the glory world, with its unveilings of the rewards of answered prayer. What

honor awaits God's prevailing prayer warriors at the judgment seat of Christ when the honors and rewards of eternity are announced and conferred (I Cor. 3:11-15; 4:5; 9:25)!

Then you will be amazed to see how your prevailing was united with the prevailing of others of God's prayer warriors and with the very intercession of Christ, the Son of God. Then you will discover the hidden prevailing saints who over the ages were the secret of God's mighty working. Then you will see that all holy intercession begins in the heart of God, is shared with you by the Holy Spirit, is "amened" and presented to the Father by the Son, and is aided by God's holy angels. Then you will see that no prevailing prayer was ever in vain. You will bow before God in wonder, love, and adoring amazement to think that you, unworthy you, have had such strategic partnership with Christ in His throne ministry and eternal victories!

Lord, teach us the privilege, the responsibility, and the glory of prevailing prayer!