

The Morning Word Digital
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The Power of Prayer

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Luke 18:1-8, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

INTRODUCTION

God hears no more than the heart speaks; and if the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. - Thomas Brooks

Prayer is unique in its embodiment! Whether with grand words from the orator's lips or the hesitant stammers from the inexperienced, prayer is a conversation that mortal man is having with Almighty God. That's pretty unique.

Prayer is unique in its relevancy!

It almost always deals with nobler causes, higher issues and better things.

It is one of the most positive things that a man can do. While we might discuss burdens or plead for needs, the very fact that one is praying is a positive position whereby one believes that Almighty God will lift those burdens and meet those needs. Those praying are always the better for it.

Prayer is unique in its successes!

Who has been able to measure the multitude of times that Almighty God has intervened in some mysterious way, changed directions down which some lonely soul was headed, delivered some hopeless wanderer from their alley of despair, humbled the arrogant, struck down the haughty and the insolent so that they cried like a baby with shame and remorse and in repentance?

Who can measure the lame that are walking, the sick that did not die, the diseased who overcame or the weary and depressed who were lifted up in testimony to prayer's success.

Prayer is unique in its simplicity!

Fathom the Mighty God, Creator of this Universe, Controller of the events both here on earth and yonder in those remote galaxies, who, hears a little child's simple prayer.

Great and godly have been the prayers lifted up to God in the simplicity of believing hearts, having no greater power than knowing that the Mighty God was and is the Rewarder of all them that pray believing, and so they have come.

Prayer is unique in its healing!

Can any gauge the healing that has transcended from glory to touch a yielded heart, minister to a single longing life, to lift a struggling soul, to encourage a broken-hearted mother, to humble an arrogant rebellious child, to lift selfishness from one's eyes, allowing them to see the real beauty of righteousness.

Many other wonderful and noble things could be said about prayer, but with these introductory thoughts to build upon, let us turn our hearts to the Lord's message for this morning.

PRAYER IS A SIN-KILLER

When one prays, sin begins to lose its power of effectiveness in that life. Our difficulty is found in that our praying too often comes after the fact, after sin has scarred and marred our life. Prayer was never intended to be an antidote to take after sin's sickness and ravages had set in. It was never intended to be there just for taking after one had gotten sick in sin. To be effective against sin, prayer must be first, be one's way of life, be our priority. The whole thought with which I am dealing is that of an attitude of prayer, a lifestyle whereby one prays, this is where the practice of sin is killed.

The prayer that kills sin comes from a burdened heart, fearful of sin's guilt and which is determined to seek and find God's liberty, freedom and deliverance from that which seeks their ruin. Sin always destroys something. You cannot look at any act of sin and fail to see the death of something far better and precious. Sin kills peace, purity, happiness, healthiness, marital harmony etc. Those that think they can handle sinning are not moved to do much praying beforehand. It is not until sin begins to rule, dominate, control and bring personal ruin that the burden to gain God's deliverance becomes important.

Look at the Mad Man of Gaderea in Mark Chapter 5. Evidently for a long time he had felt that his condition was not too bad, maybe even thinking that he could handle it. Then, through some divine means of which we are not privy, he began to see himself as God saw him, helpless and hopeless bound in his bondage and damned. It was then that his hope turned upon Jesus and how he could set him free.

PRAYER IS A POWER BRINGER

Life's most futile thing is living in one's own power! Such emptiness has been illustrated by taking a bucket, filling it with water, sticking one's arm to the bottom, swirling the water vigorously and quickly withdrawing the arm. The hole that remains is a picture of one's own power, strength and greatness. The Source of our power is not us, but comes from a proper union with our God and Creator. Prayer taps that Source and brings his divine Omnipotence to bear upon our human events. We must have that flow of divine power caressing our daily lives so that we can stand against sin's winning ways; unveil its seeming insignificance; resist its momentary pleasures; reveal its continuing corruption.

Note prayer's power when Elijah prayed (26 words) about the prophets of Baal:

"Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. - 1 Ki 18:37-38

Or Elisha prayers:

- For the widow's debt.

"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." - 2 Ki 4:1

For the barren wife.

"And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread." - 2 Ki 4:8

For the widow's son taken in death.

"He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD." - 2 Ki 4:33

Paul's prayer for the sleeper in Church.

"And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." - Acts 20:10

PRAYER IS A PROBLEM SOLVER

Prayer may not always change the problem but it will surely change our perspective of the problem. Problems seem wrong, contrary, against us and very harmful. Perspective reveals them to be corrective, strengthening and personally beneficial. Prayer always changes things, but it also changes people. Those that are being prayed for seem to change. Those that are doing the praying are equally being changed. Prayer which solves problems enlist divine intervention and Almighty God moves in mysterious ways and problems are solved. Almighty God convicts the lost, showing them his deliverance from sin's condemnation. Almighty God stirs the heart of the cold and backslidden, warming them again to his marvelous grace. Almighty God lifts the discouraged, revealing that hope does abound. Almighty God heals the broken, placing their lives back together in unique ways.

PRAYER IS AN ANXIETY HEALER

In moments of deepest stress and personal crisis it is natural and imperative to pray to seek divine intervention and to seek personal stabilization.

CONCLUSION

The power of prayer, for those who pray, is found in the results:

- The power to kill sin.
- The power of comfort.
- The power to solve problems.
- The power to heal anxiety.
- The power of healing.



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