

25.07.2020 PRAYER POWER: INTERCEDING FOR OTHERS

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” James 5:16

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. 1 John 5:14-16

A Cosmic Struggle

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:7-9

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds 2 Corinthians 10:4

For a cosmic struggle, finite man needs supernatural help. We have no power in ourselves to stand against the Devil and his angels, who will do their utmost to keep us from the kingdom of God. But clothed in Christ our armour, every Christian is able to defend himself and hold the ground Christ has won for mankind at Calvary.

Even more than our own safety, we should intercede for the salvation of those who do not yet have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We are promised that God will send forth His Spirit to convict them and His angels to minister salvation to them.

Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:14

Jesus: the Mighty Intercessor

He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness, it sustained Him. Isaiah 59:16

In Jesus we find the perfect example of a life of prayer. The gospel writers tell us that Jesus was in constant communication with His Father, not just for the activities and ministry of His daily life, but also for particularly important times in His life – at His baptism and the beginning of His public ministry (Luke 3:21), before choosing and ordaining His disciples (Luke 6:12, 13), before His transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36), at Gethsemane, knowing that He was to tread the winepress alone and none would be with Him (Luke 22:39-46) and on the cross, giving up His original, un-borrowed Divine life into the hands of the Father (Luke 23:46).

He also prayed for His disciples (John 17:9-19). He prayed for us, who would believe in Him in the future (John 17:20-26). John 17 is described as the High Priestly prayer of Christ. He is still praying for us that our faith fail not (Luke 22:32) and He ever lives to make intercession for us and is able to save us to the utmost (Hebrews 7:25).

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that

they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. John 17:20-23

But He (Jesus), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:24, 25

He personally affirmed to Peter that He was praying for him that his faith would not fail in a crisis. We can be assured that Christ is praying for us today as well, that our faith will not fail in the crises that lie ahead..

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." Luke 22:31-34

Paul's Intercessory Prayers

Paul's prayer life is also an inspiration to us. He frequently declares how he is praying for his brothers and sisters in the faith. There are at least 6 great intercessory prayers of Paul:

1. In Ephesians 1:15-19 he prays that believers may be spiritually enlightened to understand their blessings in Christ.
Making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.
2. In Ephesians 3:14-19 he prays that the believers may be 'strengthened with might in the inner man' so that they would know and experience the entirety of God's love.
For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
3. In Philippians 1:9-11, he prays for spiritual knowledge and a fruitful life for God's glory.
And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
4. In Colossians 1:9-11 he prays for spiritual strength and an understanding of God's will.
We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.
5. In 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13 he prays for love to increase that they may establish their hearts in holiness.
And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
6. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 he prays for their entire sanctification.
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Unseen Powers at Work

After Daniel's great intercessory prayer for his people (found in Daniel 9), the angel Gabriel is sent to him. *Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.*

Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." Daniel 10:10-14

This story gives us a glimpse into the cosmic struggle that was going on unseen while Daniel was praying. Today, we can rejoice that at Calvary, Christ destroyed the power and work of the devil. Satan is a beaten foe. All power and authority has been given to Christ and is available to us today. His promise is that He will be with us unto the end of the age.

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book." Daniel 12:1

Prayer Focus

There are times when it is appropriate for prayer to be spontaneous, particularly prayers of praise and thanksgiving, But we should also pray prayers that are specific and focussed – prayers of repentance, prayers acknowledging our sins and asking forgiveness. We must also be specific in praying for the physical, mental and spiritual needs of others.

For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:22-24

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26

Conclusion: Prayer is the Tremendous Responsibility of the Church

'I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.' Matthew 18:19, 20
See also Matthew 16:16-18

In these 2 verses, Jesus reminds us of our tremendous responsibility. This is a conditional promise: *'if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask...'*

If we are gathered together in His Name and for His glory, God is there in the midst of us and will do for us anything we ask. For those who come in His Name and for His glory, seek only that His will is done on earth. What we bind on earth (the Satanic powers) will be bound in heaven and what we ask to be loosed on earth (the power of the Spirit) will be loosed in heaven.
