

The Power of Prayer

I'm convinced that our greatest need today is powerful, persistent, passionate, **prevailing prayer**. The need is far greater than most of us realise. Last Sunday we examined the incredible story in **Exodus 17:8-16** which demonstrates the principle of prevailing (powerful) prayer. We discovered that Moses lowered his hands for the very same reason many of us stop praying. In the natural we see things improving, the battle turning our way (a positive change in circumstances, etc.), and so we think it is ok to lower our prayer commitment. What we fail to realise is that contained in our prayers (like the staff in Moses' hands), is God's awesome power. The divine power that secures victory and enforces the devil's defeat.

Like Moses, we need to learn to **prevail** – in prayer. That is, to pray until God gives us total victory. Yes, we all need to see the need for prevailing prayer! Otherwise we will only see partial breakthroughs. The victory appears to be there, so we stop praying! For a while it seems like battle is won, then suddenly, the enemy gains the upper hand again. Such an existence is not the life Jesus went to the cross to secure for us. In fact, we are “more than conquerors!”

This “prayer principle” really spoke to my heart. Like Moses, I found it hard to keep the staff of the Lord up all day (that is, “*praying without ceasing*”). However, by **praying in the Spirit**, I realised that it was far easier to keep my prayers going! The way I do it is to start by holding up the promises of God (the staff of the Lord), then I begin to pray in the Spirit. This way I am able to pray without ceasing, and consequently, the enemy has no way of gaining the upper hand again. I have learnt to establish TOTAL VICTORY! This is incredibly powerful! But prayer is powerful!

HOW POWERFUL IS IT?

The power of prayer should not be underestimated. **James 5:16-18** declares, “...*The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*” God most definitely listens to prayers, answers prayers, and moves in response to prayers. Jesus taught, “...*I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you*” (**Matthew 17:20**). **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** tells us, “*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*” The Bible urges us, “*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests*” (**Ephesians 6:18**).

HOW DO WE TAP INTO IT?

The power of prayer is not the result of the person praying. Rather, the power resides in the God who is being prayed to. **1 John 5:14-15** tells us, “*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: 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 what we asked of Him.*”

No matter what person praying, the passion behind the prayer, or the purpose of the prayer - God answers prayers that are in agreement with His will. His answers are not always yes, but they are always in our best interest. When our desires line up with His will, in time, we will come to understand this. When we pray passionately and purposefully, according to God's will, God responds powerfully! We cannot access powerful prayer by using "magic formulas." Our prayers being answered is not based on the eloquence of our prayers. We don't have to use certain words or phrases to get God to answer our prayers. In fact, Jesus rebukes those who pray using repetitions, *"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him"* (**Matthew 6:7-8**). Prayer is communicating with God. All you have to do is ask God for His help. **Psalm 107:28-30** reminds us, *"Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven."* There's power in prayer!

If you go around looking for advice on relationships, you are probably going to be told about good communication. What you have with God is also a relationship. You praying, is your way of communicating with God. And the power of prayer surpasses that of any normal means of communication. That is because a prayer is you having **faith** in Him. This means then that when you pray, it is not all about saying some memorised clichés. You got to make it as personal as possible. If you have to pray using the formulas, then internalize the words you are saying. Place your whole heart and soul into it - and believe!

WHAT KIND OF THINGS SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

God's help, through the power of prayer, is available for all kinds of requests and issues. **Philippians 4:6-7** tells us, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* If you need an example of a prayer, read **Matthew 6:9-13**. These wonderful verses are known as the Lord's prayer. The Lord's prayer is not a prayer we are supposed to memorise and simply recite to God. It is only an example of how to pray and the things that should go into a prayer - worship, trust in God, requests, confession, protection, etc. Pray for these kinds of things, but speak to God using your own words. Have sincere dialogue!

The power of prayer reaches out and includes everybody. When you pray, do not always ask for things that can benefit you alone. Include in your prayers your loved ones. Pray for guidance so that you may deal with others in your life more properly. Pray for your enemies and pray that anger and resentment be banished. When you pray, make sure you put in belief. Only then can your prayers show results. Take note though that your way may not always be God's way. Your prayer might have been answered already, but in a way you did not expect. So do not lose your faith! If He has heard, then He has answered!

Praying is not only about asking for things to happen (future). For you to experience the power of prayer fully, you should learn to pray with gratitude. Even when you do not ask anything, God makes sure to provide for you. In fact, you may not even realise that you are so blessed! Therefore, start being aware of your

blessings and give thanks for every one of them.

Praying is also about asking reconciliation with God. If you feel you have strayed from His plan and purpose, praying can help you lighten your burdens. Praying can help you rekindle your relationship with God.

These days, too many people find less and less time for prayer. But you should know that the power of prayer is undeniable. You should allow yourself to experience it more and more. The hand of God is evident wherever you look. The beauty and mystery of nature, the feelings of good will and love for someone close to you, the kindness you unexpectedly receive (and much more), are all evidences of God's presence in this world. You must have **faith** and trust that God will provide. Exercise your faith and do not forget to communicate with God. Go ahead reach out in prayer. God is there waiting to provide!

God wants to share His power with us. As a loving Father, He promises to meet all our needs. He promises to give us "good things," and He promises to give us the desires of our heart. But we must be willing to seek Him, trust Him and obey Him. Read your Bible and follow the instructions of Jesus when praying to your Father in Heaven! You will find a way to forgiveness, mercy, understanding, and indescribable blessings and victories. Remember the promise of **Ephesians 3:20** that God *"is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think."* Claim God's promises. Establish that lifeline of persistent and powerful prayer! It will mean a new and victory-filled life for you.

Yes, you can claim every one of those promises! Let us look at a couple of them. *"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (**Philippians 4:19**). What do you have need of? Do you have need of food or clothing? Do you have need of a job? Do you have need for healing? Then ask in prayer! God promises to provide your every need. But you must do your part!

What did Jesus say? *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you"* (**Matthew 7:7**). As long as you are asking for God's will to be done, not your own, He will provide your every need (as He has promised)! We have other needs that we sometimes do not really recognise, such as being put back on the right spiritual track when we have gone astray. Sometimes we need correction. We can be comforted to realise that our Lord will give us the guidance we need to get back on the right track. Sometimes this can be painful, but it is always for our benefit.

If we are to experience the power of prayer, seeking God's will, we must have our priorities straight. What are your priorities in life? Do you know what your goal in life should be? In the sixth chapter of the book of Matthew, Jesus emphasised that God will provide our needs, but that we also have a role to play: *"Seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (**Matthew 6:33**). To what "things" was Jesus referring? He was speaking of all the physical things (human needs) we often worry about because we do not trust Him enough! Jesus sighted fearful people for their anxieties: *"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"* (**Matthew 6:30**)

Always remember, the power of prayer resides in God's will. No matter how you compose your prayers, or how you get passionate about it, as long as what you are praying for is God's will, it shall be provided. However, if

you don't believe in the first place you'll never experience the rewards of praying. Well, you may be experiencing the 'greatness' of the will of God, but you'll probably be unable to recognise it. Failure of recognition will make you unable to appreciate God's intentions. So believe, pray and receive whatever is the will of God for you! The will of God is the **word of God**, and His word is full of accounts describing the power of prayer in various situations. How powerful is prayer? The power of prayer has overcome enemies (**Psalm 6:9-10**), conquered death (**2 Kings 4:3-36**), brought healing (**James 5:14-15**), and defeated demons (**Mark 9:29**). God, through prayer - opens eyes, changes hearts, heals wounds, and grants wisdom (**James 1:5**). The **power of prayer** should never be underestimated because it draws on the glory and infinite power of the Almighty God of the universe! The supreme Ruler! The King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Daniel 4:35 proclaims, *"All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?'"*

The one thing we can be sure of is this... The "powers of heaven" are accessible to us through prayer. God has done this already, and it was fully accomplished when He sent His Son Jesus to the cross for all of us!