

Prayer - Life's Greatest Ministry

by Colin Peckham

True intercession requires a cross at the heart, a burden, passion, and agony, but results in prevailing power and receiving answers to prayer.

Scripture: Exodus 32:32, 1 Samuel 1:13, Psalm 126:6, Isaiah 66:8, Luke 11:5-18, Romans 8:26, Romans 9:3, Hebrews 5:7, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:6

Topics: "Intercessory Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Colin Peckham emphasizes the importance of fervent and sacrificial intercessory prayer, highlighting the deep agony, passion, and burden that true intercession requires, as seen in the examples of Hannah, Moses, Paul, and Jesus. He stresses that true intercession involves sacrifice and bleeding hearts, and that when we cease to bleed, we cease to bless. Despite the intense burden of intercessory prayer, there is immense blessedness and prevailing power in it, as demonstrated by the examples of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus in their prayers. Peckham encourages believers to persevere in prayer, allowing the Spirit to teach and guide them in Spirit-taught, persevering, and believing prayers.

Transcript

Many of us pray just enough to ease the conscience but not enough to win any decided victory. We are playing at praying. we have put very little into it and therefore have received very little from it. Prayer has not been a mighty force but merely a harmless conventionality.

Intercession costs. There is a cross at the heart of true intercessory prayer, a burden, a passion, an agony. Ezekiel tells of the city given over to defilement but speaks of Those upon whose forehead God had set a mark. They are favoured and spared in the divine judgement for they 'sigh and cry for all the abominations' that take place (Ezek. 9). Hannah, one of the most profound intercessors, had not language. 'Her lips moved but her voice was not heard' (1 Sam. 1:13). Her heart was so full of grief that she could only groan. Rachel in an agony of distress cries, 'Give me children, or else I die' (Gen. 30:1). It was this cry which John Knox was to take up and apply to Scotland in his famous prayer, 'Give me Scotland or I die!'

Moses knew intense agony as he lamented, 'Oh this people have sinned a great sin - yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book' (Ex. 32:32). In the same vein, Paul with 'great heaviness and continual sorrow' of heart said, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren' (Rom. 9:3). This attitude is again revealed in his prayer for the Galatians: 'My little

children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you' (Gal. 4:19). The Lord Jesus 'offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears' (Heb. 5:7). Paul longs to know 'know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings' (Phil. 3:10). The Spirit of God 'maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:26).

The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of bleeding hearts. True intercession is sacrifice. When we cease to bleed we cease to bless.

F.W.H. Meyers in his poem on St. Paul says:

'Desperate tides of the whole world's anguish

Forced through the channels of a single heart'.

Because of the demands and price of intercessory prayer many do not enter its portals and consequently do not gain its benefits. when last did you feel the pain-filled fellowship of the pierced hand?

Whilst intercession has it's intense burden it has it's immense blessedness.

Not only is there the passionate plea but also the prevailing power of intercessory prayer. There is the grief and the groaning but also the glory; the agony and sorrow, but also the bliss and ecstasy. 'As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth children' (Is. 66:8). 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him' (Ps 126:6). Abraham pled for Sodom (Gen. 18), Moses stood in the breach for the nation of Israel (Ex. 17), Elijah prayed on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18) and they prevailed! Jesus tells the parable of the importunate friend who asked for bread at midnight and whose request was granted because he persevered (Luke 11:5-10). He also tells the parable of the unjust judge who responded to the widow's persistent plea for help (Luke 18:1-8). what power there is in prevailing prayer! Pray on! Pray on!

As we pray God teaches us to pray. No book on the subject, no sermons, no advice can substitute for the Spirit as a teacher in prayer. It is in prayer that the Spirit cries out with us for souls to be won. We may sometimes have to pray through a period of unbelief before we get to faith. Don't lose heart in the battle. encourage yourself in the Lord and continue trusting in God. Sometimes God will give you a promise upon which to stand as you determinedly pray through to victory.

Our prayers should be Spirit-taught and definite (Rom. 8:26); they should be persevering (Luke 11:9,10; 18:1); they should be believing (Heb 11:6), James 1:6,7).

Let us use this great weapon of prayer which God has given to us! By spending time in prayer we do not decrease our activity but we increase our productivity and accomplish vastly more.

Wesley said, 'God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.' Jonathan Edwards said, 'There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God and advance the Kingdom of Christ as by prayer.' Then let us pray!

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