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Office:

Petroleum Building

200 W. 1st Street • Suite 531

Roswell, New Mexico 88203-4676

(505) 623-6925

Fax: (505) 623-6925

E-mail: mwpbs@yahoo.com

*“Intercessors are like eagles,
they don't flock, you find
them one at a time.”*

Mailing Address

P. O. Box 686

Roswell, New Mexico 88202-0686

U.S.A.

From The Heart Of An Intercessor

Prosperity Gospel

The degradation of our carnal thinking begins in the mind first. Wrong ideas about spiritual wealth corrupt one's mind. The carnal person reduces God in the size of his earthly accomplishments, a common error perpetuated by many in our society. He cannot conceive a God Who is bigger than the size of his bank account. In my view, the preaching of the prosperity gospel is being used as a diversionary tactic to side-track us in the realm of earthly success, and many are going to be satisfied with something less than what the Lord is willing to give us.

A Christian becomes fruitful when he becomes sacrificial. We want comfort without any inconvenience to our customary way of life. We would love to receive all the blessings as long as they don't cost us anything. Today's believer knows very little about the "cup of suffering." When we suffer with Christ, we come to know Him intimately. When Christianity becomes a financial corporation, we play with Wall Street jargons; when life becomes a profitable enterprise we grope for a "green religion."

We are surrounded by defectors and spiritual dropouts — people who quit at the slightest provocation. The more carnal we become, the more irreverent we become and the less we attempt to please our Lord. God is our eternal reward. Isn't it true that many of us quit when we reach the bitter cup? Jesus said, "*Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink of?*" "*From that day*" — Calvary in sight — "*many of His disciples turned back, and walked no more with Him.*" He who does not seek the "way of Golgotha" does not seek the glory of God. God's precious people always look for "wild roses behind a barricade of nettles." The apostle Paul purposed in his heart that he may know Him, and the "fellowship of His sufferings."

The world is quite indifferent to the suffering of Christ. So often we draw back; we do not trust Him completely. Spiritual strength is forged in the crucible of crises. Character is formed in the furnace, the furnace of affliction and trials. Things don't always go right as they should — but when they do — we have a God Who whispers in our ears the voice of comfort and assurance. Most Christians are not wealthy, but they serve

a God Whose power, grace, mercy, strength, wisdom and providence are unsurpassed and unequalled. Doesn't that make us rich beyond comprehension?

Some preachers and Christians are always reminding us that Jesus talked more about money than anything else. Well, that is what they want us to believe because it lends credence to their prosperity theology of green and greed. Man is not measured by his capacity to accumulate wealth and fame; he is measured by his capacity to love and obey God. Mr. Henry Fielding was so profound when he said, *"Make money your God, and it will plague you like the devil."* The rich young ruler went away sorrowful because he was not prepared for the sacrifice he was asked to make. The way of the cross is self-denial. It is no longer what we want, but what God wants for our lives. Jesus did the will of the Father (John 4:34). The disciples left all to follow Jesus (Matthew 19:27). The apostle Paul suffered the loss of all things (Philippians 3:8). Self-denial is a word that is not very popular among some Christians today. It has dealt with a deadly blow. Today's prosperity preaching has a cult mentality. Friends, walking with Jesus is not about "enlarging one's coast," it is all about taking the high ground in consecration and heart purity. Today's comfort-oriented church needs **"meat for men,"** not *"chicken soup for the soul."*

Christians should not be squeamish about sacrificial service for Him Who became our ultimate sacrifice. If a man lives in faith and decency when evil comes it will not conquer him. A life lived in obedience to God is the most fruitful life. One should never approach Christianity on the basis of earthly wealth, easy emotionalism, fuzzy feeling or cheap sentimentality. The early Christians discarded comfort in favor of faith and they didn't weasel their way out of sacrifice and self-denial. Always remember, when we live by God's standard, we become unpopular and often judged as narrow-minded and old-fashioned. But do we care what the world thinks of us? Of course not!

Jewish Scholar Martin Buber once said, *"Success is not one of God's names."* Jesus said, *"You must deny yourself and take up my cross and follow me."* The requirement is always the same. Dr. Charles Malik, another scholar was profound when he said, *"Success is neither fame, wealth nor power; rather it is seeking, knowing, loving and obeying God. If you seek, you will know; if you know, you will love; if you love, you will obey."* Every Christian ought to pursue relentlessly after simplicity, faith purity and consecration. Our lives should reflect the hidden beauty of Christ. Do not long for the praise and the applause of men. They are short-lived. Always remember that we follow a despised Christ, *"though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."*

- Matthew Skariah

*Believers, please remain steadfast and stand true to God and to the highest and best!
"Riches are not forever: and doth the crown endure to every generation."*

(Proverbs 27:24).

Just the Gospel, Please

Please, no more condescending, aristocratic, namby-pamby, humpty-dumpty, willy-nilly, politically correct, show-and-tell, feel-good, psychosomatic, health-and-wealth, touch-everything and cover-nothing New Age lectures! Give us that powerful, pungent, poignant, pulsating, life-changing, ego-slashing, heart wrenching and soul-invigorating “Gospel” of power and purity.

I am deeply concerned by the fact that many people who have been in the church for years and years have seemingly never been taught much about truly growing in God’s grace and holiness. It’s as though we have been taught that God is merciful, and since we’re under grace and not under the law, we don’t need to be so concerned about “biblical integrity and heart purity.” I believe this is the result of lowering the moral imperative in the church and lack of preaching on the efficacious sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. In today’s evangelical circle, there seems to be a strenuous effort on the part of some to attract crowds without developing disciples. *The Lord’s call to discipleship is clear, uncompromising and unrelenting.*

Living a “pure” life is a matter of choice, not an obligation. It is not an option to a believer but a way of life. The life of godliness is a life of power and purity no matter how we slice it. True godly living is not prompted by razzle-dazzle or fiddle-faddle. Cheap religious imitations and shallow entertainments are not its fountain source. Purity is the true essence of godliness. By the way, I am not talking about works or self-righteousness, but wholesome and responsible Christian lifestyle.

Without heart purity, all our religious efforts will be futile – something like the shaky fingers of a paralytic craftsman on the finishing board.

Pure Giving

When we practice loving obedience in the matter of pure Biblical giving, the blessings will be untold. God’s purpose will be carried out whether we comply with His instruction or not. No one is big or powerful enough to thwart, sabotage or stifle the plan of our sovereign God.

I will never plead with men for finance to help the work of my King, but will continue to plead with men to seek His face and do His will. Our giving is a part of ourselves and it has to come from humble and obedient people who love to enthrall Him first and foremost in their lives. The work of the Lord is not a human endeavor; it is empowered and administered by the Holy Spirit of the Living God Who knows the very intent of our heart and soul.

Merciful father, God of all creation, we ascribe majesty and glory to Your matchless name! Thank You for the privilege and honor of serving You!

– Matthew Skariah