



Prayergram

Challenging Christians to Pray

March 2013



Fire in the Sanctuary

Renewal never falls upon a prayerless Christian or lukewarm church like a bolt of lightning and thunder. It comes when His people want spiritual resuscitation more than any-



Matthew Skariah

thing else and are willing to pay the price to have it. But paying the price, ah, that is where the rub comes in! One has written, "The church would like to have a renewal if she could do so and save face at the same time."

But if true renewal comes, face is the first thing the church most lose.

The brilliant presentation of a message which is not bathed in prayer has no lasting effect. Absence of a truly prayer-saturated message cannot be atoned for clever ideas, and fluent words. Almost every Christian leader today lament a lack of personal prayer life, but very few are willing to do anything about it. Busy preachers and Christians are under terrible temptation to allow prayer to be crowded out every day, until omission becomes a habit, if not a way of life. As a result, they find their love for God dormant and their faith wavering. The best way to overcome this spiritual lassitude is to be engaged in an ongoing union with God. The early Christians longed for unction and not entertainment because they knew unction creates soul-passion.

Dear brother, you may be a great orator in the pulpit, you may be a great mover of men, you may be a great fund raiser, but you'll never

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raise the spiritual temperature of your people until you pray with brokenness and passion. Every preacher should ask: Do I preach with passion and unction? Do I elevate the people up to the very throne of God? Do I ever go through birth pangs for the deliverance of the unsaved? Am I willing to place my all on the altar? Can I let people die without hope? Are there sounds from heaven today? Are men and women arrested and apprehended by a power that transcends all religious embellishments? As the famous preacher Dr. Joseph Parker once said, "If we do not get back to visions, peeps into heaven, conscious of the higher glory, we shall lose our religion; our altar will become a bare stone, unblessed by visit from heaven." Can we continue in the ministry without visitations from on high? What's prayer passion? It means a compelling desire, a strong craving for spiritual food. I don't know what it means to you, but for me "passion" means an uncontrollable desire for something that I am willing to sacrifice my personal comforts and conveniences. "Prayer passion," therefore, is a heart-wrenching, soul cleansing, invigorating desire to forge an intimate union with the living God whose power and glory are unsurpassed. It's no exaggeration to say that "prayer passion" has died in the heart of many professing Christians. Passion

endures. It has a timeless appeal and a universal value. Where is the soul-passion of by-gone days, the broken heart, the sleep-

less nights, the anguish and agony, the sobs and tears?

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Would to God we might experience and see it in this generation! When we say we will do anything for Jesus, but not willing to spend an hour with Him then we are not passionate about the things of God. How do we go about getting this thing called "prayer passion?" Is there an 800 number to call or get on some fancy religious website? Or better yet, just send someone a special offering, and they'll rush you some passion, priority mail, overnight delivery. Passion comes from God by seeking His face on our knees.

Prayer is about spiritual craving and passion for God. As praying people, we don't just create a spiritually conducive environment; we're given the opportunity to make history. When I speak about soul-travail, I speak one language, transcending race, age, gender and denomination. If we're concerned about true revival in America, we should call a moratorium on sin and unleash the power of prayer like the early Christians did. Did you know that we haven't had a revival in America for over one hundred years, and that's too long! Eva Stewart Watt was profound when she said, "One ounce of obedience will do more to loosen the bolts of the windows of heaven than tons of fundamental theorizing." Deeds live—words perish. When man failed to commune with his God simply, honestly and naturally, he took refuge in words. The end result was Babel! A. W. Tozer was wise when he said, "There is more wordage in religion than in politics because we meet often." Always remember

that speech is of the senses. So make speech your servant, never your master.

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Toward the close of John Welch's life he confessed "that he counted that day ill spent that he did not spend seven or eight hours in secret prayer." Today, there is a great deal of talk about having power in our preaching, yet when it comes to secret prayer in the prayer-furnace, many back-off and have no interest none whatsoever. The modern church has everything, yet she lacks the "fire and power" of the early church. Can we obtain grape juice without crushing the grapes? Can we receive elevation without humiliation? Can we receive the crown without the cross?

As a servant of God, I'm deeply resolved and committed to speak for the interest of my God. I do not speak or write with ulterior motive or hidden agenda and I have no ax to grind. For me, loving my Jesus is not merely an abstract theory or nebulous religious exercise but an ego-slashing process. Throughout my life and ministry, I've consistently stressed the importance of loving

God has very little to do with a fireless, tearless, passionless Christian who does not soak his pillow at night with tears of intercession on behalf of a sin-stricken world. David Livingstone cried, "Lord, when will the wounds of this world's sin be healed?" Our religious niceties cannot help us unless we are grief-stricken over the sin of our day. Hear the heart-cry of scholarly Andrew Bonar as he wept over the people of Scotland, "Oh, they perish, they perish!" In this sin-stricken world of ours, we need prayer-hungry preachers who seek to save the lost. "God meets fire with fire."

Jesus passionately in ways that defy human logic. When you speak about “*prayer passion*” as much as I do, I tend to offend or upset a lot of preachers and Christians who want the exhilaration and the power of Pentecost without the agony of Gethsemane. I will not be an apple-polisher who sugar-coats the message of Calvary for material vantage.

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Beloved, I fear no man — but I fear my Lord. My focus is not about losing worldly friendship, but to maintain a spiritual conscience that, borrow Martin Luther’s phrase, is “*to go against one’s*

conscience is neither safe nor right.” When you attempt to walk with God in faith, you’ll feel like a fish swimming upstream with the strong current of popular opinion trying to pull you downstream. But if faith is to have real meaning, it must be practiced on a daily basis without doubt or fear. To me, faith is a subjective fact, not a theory or supposition. I know my Lord by personal experience, not by hearsay. Let our faith be less of a theory and more of a practical walk.

A Christian who is afraid of divine fire is afraid of melting and continues to enjoy his frozen spiritual state. “*I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of O-phir*” (Isaiah 13:12). God’s praying people are inextinguishable. It takes heavenly fire to raise the spiritual temperature of many lukewarm Christians and churches. Someone has said that at Pentecost God set the Church at Jerusalem on fire, and the whole city came out to see it burn. It is “*fire*” we want, the most effective campaign any church can initiate is “*fire in the pulpit and a blaze in the pew.*” We’re praying for “*renewal,*” but are we prepared for the fire? Lord, send us the fire and grant us the tenacity and wisdom to love you more passionately! Let’s light up the “*prayer furnace*” in our sanctuary! The church must continue to keep the altar fire burning.

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SPEAKING
CANDIDLY

Matthew
Skariah

Preacher and his Prayer Life

Preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is not to be confused with political/social lectures, positive thinking, and global warming, health and wealth diatribe. Preaching that’s surgical under the unction of the Holy Spirit carries within its own merit and power.

When we bow before God in prayer, we actually allow Him to pour Himself into us immeasurably. Prayer takes holy resolve. Yes, it takes a great deal of heart consecration and discipline, but its worth a million times than what it costs. “*No man is greater than his prayer life.*” Let no one belittle the precious life and ministry of prayer! Dear brothers, please don’t lose God in your sermons, but rather lose your sermons in God! All God’s true preachers have been distinguished by one great feature: they were all men of prayer. God, “*give us men who can weep like a baby and preach like a giant!*”

E. M. Bounds was profound when he said, “*Whenever there is little praying in the pulpit or in the pew, spiritual bankruptcy is imminent and inevitable.*” Is it any wonder many of our churches have filed for spiritual bankruptcy? It’s very hard for the world to defeat a ‘praying preacher’ because where there is prayer there is power.

“*Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing, necessary to a minister. Pray then, my dear brother; pray, pray, pray.*”

— Edward Payson

The Delight of Depending on God

by Matthew Skariah

About 35 years ago, I made a prayerful commitment in the area of “asking and receiving funds” for the work of the Lord. Everything must come from God as a result of seeking His face in earnest prayer. It is my solemn commitment to God not to ask for funds in any way that will detract the glory from the Great provider, our heavenly Father. The living God shall always be the Patron of this ministry as long as I am allowed to serve my King. I thank God for all those who exercise great wisdom in the matter of pure biblical giving.

Isn't God good to send adversity in order that we might learn to walk with Him more humbly? In times of prosperity we get our eyes fixed on the physical, the temporal, and the natural. However when the going gets rough we begin to focus our eyes on the spiritual and the eternal, on the blessed God who provides. Let's remember, it is only as grace fills our hearts we shall be able

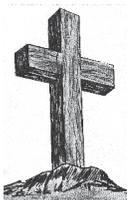
to prove our obedience to God in the matter of Christian stewardship. God's grace stimulates our generosity. Our giving is a part of ourselves and it is a symbol of our obedience to His Word. Let us all pray that God will give us the wisdom to be wise stewards, and at the same time, great believers in His power to supply all our needs. When we do something from the heart, the Lord is pleased and His name is being glorified. I am glad that our heavenly Father is not stingy with us. Yes, it's indeed a delight to depend on Jehovah God who is always on time with manna from on high!

The Christian is always restful when he is content with God's provision, and he is always content when his desires are pure and fixated on God. As Matthew Henry said, “*With God, saying and doing are not two things as they are with men. God will do as he has said.*”

Voice from The Past

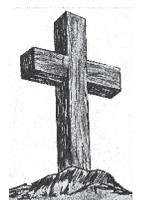
We can be bewitched and beguiled by what we enjoy; we can become too dependent on it. And that is absolutely unchristian; that is idolatry; that is worshipping the creature more than the Creator. It was not only the ancient Hebrews who constantly relapsed into idolatry; this seems to be an incurable trait in original human nature. Thus the sense of abundance could kill our faith; we may be tempted into feeling that we do not need faith; and then we cease to live by faith. And that is not just, for the just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38).

*Dr. Charles Malik
Scholar, Professor,
Former President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,
A humble Lebanese Christian*



The WPB Ministries

PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE — 2 Chronicles 7:14



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