

VICTORY THROUGH PRAYER

By E. L. Bynum

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

Many of our failures may be traced to our lack of prayer. “The devil trembles when he sees, the weakest Christian on his knees.” Can we not say, “The devil laughs when he sees Christians with unbended knees”? The early church rode to victory on the strength of prayer. Churches today are facing defeat because of a lack of prayer.

Our nation is facing defeat because we have neglected to earnestly pray, and repent of our sins and transgressions. (2nd Chronicles 7:14)

Our homes are being destroyed for lack of prayer, and particularly because there is no devout family prayer.

Our children are being defeated because we have failed to pray for them, and with them.

I. The Purpose of Prayer

1. When there is the expectation of great blessings that God has promised. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14)

2. In making decisions to know God’s Will. “And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.” (Acts 1:24)

3. In Thanksgiving for great blessings. Pentecost: 3000 saved and baptized. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

4. As an act of obedience and worship. “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.” (Acts 3:1)

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.” (Revelation 5:8)

5. When the devil is trying to stop the gospel. “And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” (Acts 4:1-2) “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

6. When the Churches leaders are under attack. “And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and

the number of the men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? (Acts 4:3-7)

- 1) The devil will always attack the leader, the pastor.
- 2) He will do it with outward opposition, as in Acts 4.
- 3) He will do it with inward hypocrisy in the Church. Acts 5:1
- 4) He will do it with division in the Church. Acts 6:1
- 5) Peter was kept in prison. The Church prayed. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5) "And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." (Acts 12:12)

7. When the workers are called and chosen. "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." (Acts 6:6)

8. In times of great trials. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59-60)

9. When the Church is under persecution. "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." (Acts 8:1)

10. It gives evidence of our salvation. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth." (Acts 9:11)

11. In times of sickness and death. "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up." (Acts 9:40)

12. When we need direction and guidance. Peter prayed and God him to the lost man Cornelius. "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour." (Acts 10:9)

13. When we send out missionaries. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:3)

14. When selecting officers for the church. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23)

15. When we are seeking lost souls. "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." (Acts 16:13)

16. When faced with demonic opposition. “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.” (Acts 16:16)

17. When everything goes wrong. “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” (Acts 16:25)

18. Pray for the saints. “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.” (Romans 1:9)

19. Pray for the preacher. “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” (Romans 15:30)

20. Praying for all the saints. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

21. Pray about everything. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” (Philippians 4:6)

22. Pray that the word of the Lord might have free course. “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.” (2nd Thessalonians 3:1)

23. Pray for the sick. “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” (James 5:13-15)

II. The People of Prayer

1. The Church prayed. “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14) “And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.” (Acts 1:24)

2. The Church prayed. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

3. The Church prayed. “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

4. The Church prayed. “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” (Acts 12:5) “And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.” (Acts 12:12)

III. The Power of Prayer

1. We see this power, in the progress of the Church in Acts.

2. When God's people prayed there was a shaking. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

- 1) Prayer shakes places. Acts 4:31 & Acts 16:26, the prison at Philippi.
- 2) Prayer shakes people. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." (Acts 16:25)

3. Prayer produces boldness in witnessing. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31) Prayer was heard and God opened Lydia's heart. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (Acts 16:14)

5. Prayer was heard and God opened the prison at Phillipi. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." (Acts 16:25-26)

6. Prayer was heard and God opened the heart of the jailer. "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts 16:29-34)

7. Prayer was made, and God opened the prison so that Peter could return to the Church and his work. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5) "And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." (Acts 12:12)

In Conclusion:

When we see the great things accomplished through prayer, no wonder the Scriptures gives us these truths.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7)

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1)

"Pray without ceasing." (1st Thessalonians 5:17)

"The great tragedy of life in not unanswered prayer, but it is unoffered prayer." –F. B. Meyer