

Challenging Christians to Pray

PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE -- 2 CHRONICLES 7:14



Prayergram

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Nehemiah, a Courageous Leader 'Good Leaders Lead By Example'

As you know, our nation is in a "moral and spiritual" quandary, and the spiritual walls of our homes and nation are broken down and in shambles. Who will be the next Nehemiah to step up and begin the spiritual construction of our nation's moral and spiritual wall? Today, we are ruled by "faithless and vacillating" leaders who flip-flop at every turn and can't even tell the difference between right and wrong. It's the blind leading the blind, so to speak. William Penn, the Quaker statesman, once said, "Right is right even if everyone is against it and wrong is wrong even if everyone is in favor of it." America reminds me of the Hebrew nation, the Israelites when at a time of great "moral and spiritual" laxity, God raised up prophets who thundered His voice and called the nation back to God. Likewise, today, more than ever, our nation needs godly leaders who can lead us to a firm, unwavering re-commitment to faith in God.

Why do we need a Nehemiah now? Today, Christianity is under siege; Christians are being ostracized and hounded from place to place, and the name of our God is being blasphemed by arrogant men/woman who speak with their mincing words; they appear on television, night after night, with their twisted language and hateful rhetoric, trying to establish a standard for the rest of us as though we are unable to figure out things for ourselves. These egotistical and boastful people, with their pseudo-learning, try to pass judgment on God with their narrow-minded opinions. Yes, we want the scoffers of God to be silenced, but more than that, we want men and women to have their eyes opened from the shackles of unbelief, rebellion and contempt for God's creation.

Now, let's focus our attention on a real leader, a patriot who loved God and his nation, Nehemiah, whose very delight was doing God's will. Nehemiah, the servant of the most high, personally took upon the task of rebuilding the wall of Zion. As he returned from Babylonian captivity, he was shocked and astonished by the prevailing conditions of Jerusalem. "...Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach" (Neh.2:17).

Not only he did undertake the Herculean task of rebuilding the wall, but also courageously demanded the cleansing of Jerusalem from the evils. It was not without risk, though. Living in the light of God's way can be controversial; if we live by God's standards, we, too, may be insulted and judged as narrow-minded and old-fashioned; but do we care what the world thinks of us, of course not? Nehemiah had a passionate love for the law of the Lord and a strong determination to make Jerusalem praise among the nations. As he saw the condition of the city of Jerusalem, he was roused within himself. He was a remarkable and a capable leader with a strong sense of divine destiny for the nation of Israel. Consequently, he sacrificed a prominent place in the court of Persia, in order to be with the returning exiles from Babylonian captivity.

He had fully identified with the people of God, though it placed him in the minority. In spite of many difficulties and unprecedented trials, Nehemiah exhorted the people to rise out of complacency and apathy to reconstruct the wall. In the process of this venture, he was faced with many obstacles—mockery and even military attack—to prevent the work of God from being executed. Tobiah, the Ammonite who said, “...if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall” (Neh.4:3). However, Nehemiah and his companions were not about to be deterred or suffer defeat at the hands of their detractors. The enemy is still free to throw a tantrum, but every battle means a fresh defeat to the enemy. Remember, when you are acting in faith and obedience to God’s Word, you are devoid of human fear. The fearing Christian can never be a trusting Christian. Beloved, Satan, the enemy of our soul never takes a vacation from the business of ruining and deluding God’s children if by any means.



Just remember, when you’re down in the trenches, remind yourself that God is ever present and holding you lovingly in His everlasting arms. “And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon” (Neh.2:12). Nehemiah rallied the people to a common purpose and his extraordinary leadership gave them the moral certitude and undaunted courage to go forward in the execution of their divine task. Here, we see a man who was burdened, aroused and challenged by a sense of moral and spiritual responsibility. In the pursuit of his goal, he was scorned by his enemies and detractors, and they said, “...What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?” (Neh.2:19). God’s courageous people do not swim in the waters of public opinion, doubt and fear; they breeze through the turbulent waters of a raging sea. God’s courageous soldiers never give up! They always see hope when others see nothing but hopelessness.



Though Nehemiah was confronted with ridicule and mockery, he was neither frightened nor upset with their sarcasm and scare tactics. He went on with his duties by reaffirming once again his faith in the blessed God of Israel. Nehemiah said, “... The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” (Neh.2:20). What’s the lesson here for us? It is keeping our focus on God, not on people or fluctuating circumstances in life but keeping our “faith and hope” alive. As in the words of Dr. William Barclay, the British theologian, “Don’t look to the bigness of your need, but look to the bigness of your God.” As God’s people, let’s affirm our faith that we do not crumble at the presence of evil. Evil does not have the final word; it belongs to our sovereign God. What’s there to be ashamed of our Christian hope? Hope never disappoints us. (Romans 5:5) Isn’t it time that we let the world know that we have an impregnable position in Christ?



In 1779, American Naval Captain John Paul Jones, when asked to surrender his badly damaged ship, famously declared: “Surrender? I have not yet begun to fight!” He took the British ship. Where will we find the next John Paul Jones? In the words of Winston Churchill, British prime minister whose resolve saved the Western world, “Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue.” Beloved, remember the martyrs of the faith, who triumphantly marched into the Coliseums of Rome, defiantly facing their tormentors by declaring their allegiance to Christ, the King. Brothers and sisters, Christian history is on our side and it is written in blood, as Tertullian, a Roman who was converted to Christianity, once said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” But today, it is quite the contrary, as someone has said, “There are two sides to every thing; if you want to be popular, take both sides.”



Now back to Nehemiah, the patriot, man who loved God and his nation, a leader for the time, declared, “Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses” (Neh.4:14). This is an extraordinary statement and provocative challenge from a leader who knew the history of the Hebrew people and saw how the hopes of Israel were crushed—their little armies beaten, their beloved Temple ruined, their prophets martyred, and their faith scorned by the brutal and cynical powers that surrounded them. Yet, Nehemiah was able to reach into the very presence of the God of his ancestors, seeking comfort, courage and victory. He was committed to build the wall and was not about to abandon his divine purpose because of adversity. Today, tragically, many Christians and non-Christians have lost their sense of divine direction, the seriousness of the heavenly call, the reverence, and their God-given mission. They ask, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?” (Psalms 78:19). “Can He (Jehovah God) meet our needs, fight our battles, and subdue our enemies?” Of course, He can and will! Beloved, surrender is not in our Christian lexicon.



Nehemiah had fully grasped that it was God’s voice he was listening to, God’s plan he was implementing, and God’s glory he was seeking. Nothing is too hard for the man who has the Lord on his side. We may face many trials, but we need to keep on living, loving, praying, and trusting in God’s own time. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). Beloved, in the Lord’s matchless care, in His infinite wisdom, and in the scope of his great power—all is utterly safe. Nehemiah’s call for action reverberates through the annals of biblical history, “... Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”



Conclusion/Challenge

As I have said it before, America, our beloved land is in moral peril. Nothing but the prayers of God's remnant can stem the tide. Today, our nation and the world seem to be in a sea of confusion and drifting without any spiritual leadership, and it's time for us to call on God for divine help, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). There are certain things in life worth fighting for... our homes, our families, our nation and our very existence. Will you join with me as we join with God's servant Nehemiah, in the re-building of the broken down wall of our homes and nation? Remember, we have not torn any fabric that cannot be mended! No wrong is eternal and no failure is permanent. God's praying people are the watchmen on the wall. Oh, watchman, what of the night? Yes, we are in the midst of a spiritual war and it must be fought on our knees with the mighty weapon of the power of prayer. Let the rebuilding of the "spiritual walls" of our "homes and nation" begin NOW!

Will there be another Polycarp, Tertullian, St. Ignatius, John Wycliff, William Tyndale, John Huss, Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and a host of others who blazed the trail with a tenacious spirit? Speaking of courage, these servants of the Lord who were the epitome of 'indomitable courage' at a time when Christianity was on the chopping block. Let's join with Nehemiah and the host of heaven in declaring our "steadfast love and unflinching loyalty" to Christ, our victorious Lord and King! Remember, the God of truth and mercy who guided Moses, Abraham, Joseph, David, Daniel, Nehemiah, the prophets, the apostles and saints of all ages, will not forsake us NOW. He is a "bulwark" never fails!

A life that's devoted to Christ is undeniably courageous, incalculably unafraid, and absolutely devoid of fear. Christian courage is to go bravely where no man has ever gone before. It is the unrelenting desire to place our "faith" above our fears, and pursue God's glory above self glory! God is on the lookout for modern-day Nehemiah's and Christian patriots such a time as this!

Christian courage must be born in the heart!



Speaking Prayerfully

By Matthew Skariah

Abel Clary, an unknown Intercessor

Undoubtedly, Charles G. Finney was one of the greatest revivalists in American history. Wherever he went God's power fell upon the masses, and greater numbers of people were being brought to Christ through a powerful national awakening. There was much talk about Mr. Finney, and the blessings of God upon his anointed preaching. But let it be known, behind Mr. Finney's preaching there was a humble servant of God Mr. Abel Clary, a little-known minister/intercessor who gave himself to "fasting and prayer," specifically for the revival services of Mr. Finney. He (Clary) never appeared in public with Mr. Finney; because he was in failing health, but laying on his bed he wept for souls, and the result was a mighty move of God commonly known as America's finest revival (Finney's revival).

After Mr. Clary's death, Mr. Finney obtained his diary and discovered that Mr. Clary was in earnest intercession for Finney's revival services city after city. Yes, he was unknown, but known to God. Beloved, the world may overlook you, and your intercession may be hidden from the sight of men, but sustained by the Holy Ghost and embraced by your heavenly Father. Splendidly refreshing, isn't it!? The day will come when the Lord gives out the rewards, and some may wonder how you came to receive such a reward, as you were never a part of their religious club. Yes, we remember the well-known servants of God, but forget the unknown intercessors like Abel Clary.

Intercessors are not the stars, they are the extras. They are ignored by the masses, but applauded by the angels of God. Friend, yours may be a ministry of the unnoticed, obscured and unseen, but approved of God. Thank God for the privilege of "standing in the gap!"

"Let others miss me! Never miss me, God."

Speaking Candidly

By Matthew Skariah

“We talk Cream; but Live Skim Milk”

Often we allow human logic and societal proliferation creep into our faith. We talk about faith, but fail in its daily application. Since things are changing in life, we assume that God changes with the time, not realizing that He is the unchangeable One. We depend too much on man rather than God. We call Him Lord, but treat Him like a servant. We respect His name, but do not obey His Word. We give Him an ‘**honorary title,**’ but treat Him like an assembly worker. We see our Father as a Friday paycheck, rather than sons and daughters loving Him for what He really is. At times man’s ideas seem to be more palatable than God’s Word; man’s word seems to be more intellectual than the Word of the living God.

In this chaotic world of ours, we should be men and women, in whom God lives and in whom God is forming. Remember, He is our Father and let’s love Him, honor Him, and worship Him! True spirituality is not a corporate thing or a religious dogma, but a private, personal hunger which is expressed or manifested daily in the life of the believer. A Christian is always thankful to God for His goodness, mercy and loving kindness; and he remains faithful to Jesus Christ in good times as well as trying times.

The circumstances of our lives should never determine the degree of thankfulness in our hearts. In my humble view, many today have lost the sight of the fundamental importance of a thankful heart. That is, due in part, of the fact that we’ve forgotten once again where the blessings come from. Can America go on living prosperously without a thankful heart?

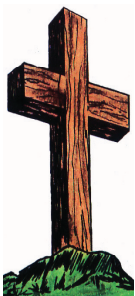
A thankful heart is a great preservative against ingratitude.



Revival with Matthew Skariah

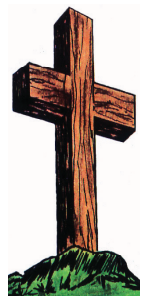
September 25-30

Grace Baptist Church, Durant, Oklahoma Pastor Anthony Williams



The WPB Ministries

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