

Prayer Meeting – July 14, 2019

Here are some scriptures and insights that Pastor Richard had in today's prayer meeting. We start out by reading a parable that Jesus gave of the Pharisee and the tax collector in **Luke 18:9-14** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); "9 *He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves and were confident that they were righteous [that they were upright and in right standing with God] and scorned and made nothing of all the rest of men: 10 Two men went up into the temple [[a]enclosure] to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee [b]took his stand ostentatiously and began to pray thus before and with himself: God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men—extortioners (robbers), swindlers [unrighteous in heart and life], adulterers—or even like this tax collector here. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I gain. 13 But the tax collector, [merely] standing at a distance, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying, O God, be favorable (be gracious, be merciful) to me, the [c]especially wicked sinner that I am! 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified (forgiven and made upright and in right standing with God), rather than the other man; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

The contrast that Jesus gives between these two men ought to put spiritual sobriety into our hearts as Christians. [Matthew Henry's Commentary](#) comments on this text here; "*The scope of this parable likewise is prefixed to it, and we are told (Luke 18:9) who they were whom it was levelled at, and for whom it was calculated. He designed it for the conviction of some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. They were such as had, 1. A great conceit of themselves, and of their own goodness; they thought themselves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their neighbours, and such as might serve for examples to them all. But that was not all; 2. They had a confidence in themselves before God, and not only had a high opinion of their own righteousness, but depended upon the merit of it, whenever they addressed God, as their plea: They trusted in themselves as being righteous; they thought they had made God their debtor, and might demand any thing from him; and, 3. They despised others, and looked upon them with contempt, as not worthy to be compared with them. Now Christ by this parable would show such their folly, and that thereby they shut themselves out from acceptance with God. This is called a parable, though there be nothing of similitude in it; but it is rather a description of the different temper and language of those that proudly justify themselves, and those that humbly condemn themselves; and their different standing before God."*

Where do you stand today when you pray? What is your spiritual posture before God? Do you pray like the pharisee or like the sinner? You know that when you're were born again you've changed from sinner to saint; the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away and all things have become new. But does that mean that you change your spiritual posture in prayer as a result of that? You come into the throne room of God boldly, but do you change your posture because of it? Do you do it proudly now or remain humble? Do you snub your neighbours and walk around in self righteousness? Do you walk humbly before God and man? There's a pretty good chance that God will hear your prayer when you pray humbly like the sinner, even though you're saved; more so than if you're walking in pride, behaving like a scribe, pharisee and self-loving, self-righteous person. A lover of self is like the church of me, myself and I.

A pharisaical person wants those around them to hear their long prayers, so they can hear themselves, so they can worship themselves, they walk in overweening spiritual pride. Probably wherever you're reading this at, you can identify that there are the self-righteous religious people in your community who despise anyone that is not like them.

Self-righteous praying will not win though in spiritual warfare. Yes, there is warfare with the devil. But you're defeated in prayer right from the start by having a pharisaical attitude, because you're no threat to the kingdom of darkness. You're only a threat to the kingdom of the devil when you humble yourself before almighty God by stepping out in the authority that He's given you in Jesus' name.

The Apostle Paul says this in **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); “3 *For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, 5 [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One), 6 Being in readiness to punish every [insubordinate for his] disobedience, when your own submission and obedience [as a church] are fully secured and complete.”*

When there is order in the church, there is spiritual authority over the kingdom of darkness. Insubordinates in the church need to be brought in line with the word of God. Read the beginning of that chapter and you’ll see that there were insubordinate, defiant and rebellious people in that congregation, but Paul wasn’t fighting against them physically because he knew the demonic force that was working in and through them. It was a spiritual warfare being fought.

In the Old Testament we read this powerful story of Daniel who also knew what spiritual warfare was. It’s in **Daniel 10:11-13** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); “11 *And [the angel] said to me, O Daniel, you greatly beloved man, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for to you I am now sent. And while he was saying this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind and heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come as a consequence of [and in response to] your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief [of the celestial] princes, came to help me, for I remained there with the kings of Persia.”*

Very sobering to see that the demonic fought with this angel for 21 days, not allowing him to get to Daniel with the answer to his prayers! Daniel was an Old Testament saint, he wasn’t born again or a spirit filled as a New Testament saint.

As a New Testament saint then, look at what the Apostle Paul says about spiritual warfare, because if there was no spiritual warfare, he would not have said this; **Ephesians 6:11-13** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); “11 *Put on God’s whole armor [the armor of a heavy-armed soldier which God supplies], that you may be able successfully to stand up against [all] the strategies and the deceits of the devil. 12 For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere. 13 Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place].” 14 Stand therefore [hold your ground], having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God, 15 And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the [a]firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness [b]produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace. 16 Lift up over all the [covering] shield of [c]saving faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked [one]. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that the Spirit [d]wields, which is the Word of God. 18 Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God’s consecrated people).”*

Pray in the Spirit, in the Holy Ghost, in tongues all the time! Pray with all prayers and entreaties, all the time! Have a disposition of prayer. When you pray in tongues you’re not going to understand, but it’s obvious you don’t need to because the Spirit and the Father knows and understands what is being prayed about. It’s the most amazing thing ever!

The Apostle Peter also says this in **1 Peter 5:6-10** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); “6 *Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you, 7 Casting the [a]whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, [b]once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you [c]watchfully. 8 Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [[d]in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour. 9 Withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset—rooted, established, strong, immovable, and determined], knowing that the same ([e]identical) sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood (the whole body of Christians) throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favor], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you.”*

This posture that Peter is talking about sounds like that of the sinner tax collector that we read about at the beginning doesn't it? Our spiritual posture in prayer has to be in humility. Peter also knew the reality of spiritual warfare with the devil. You don't run from the devil, you use the sword of the Spirit the word of God and speak it out in Jesus authority and you'll see him flee. We need to reiterate that Daniel did not have what you and I have as Christians today. He had the Spirit of God on him but not in him, he wasn't born again. It was the same spiritual warfare as you and I face today, but we now have the authority in Jesus name to bind the demonic and see it cast out.

Jesus says these empowering words in **Matthew 18:18-20** Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC); “18 *Truly I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be [a]what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be [b]what is already permitted in heaven. 19 Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, make a symphony together) about whatever [anything and [c]everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For wherever two or three are gathered (drawn together as My followers) in (into) My name, there I Am in the midst of them.”*

In essence whatever your forbidding in the spirit on earth, must already be forbidden in heaven because it must line up with what the Word of God says. The same with permitting. It has to line up with the Word of God, His truth and His law. This is the authority of the born again Christian. Wherever two or three are gathered in His name, if they're walking and praying humbly before Him, they have the assurance that He will hear them.