

PRAYING TO A GOD WE KNOW

“One young man said, ‘I know one of Jesse’s sons, he is a brave man. / The *Lord is with him*.’” [1 Sam. 16:14-18 / 17:32-47]

1 Samuel 30 When David and his men found their town burned down and all their families taken captive, in their grief, his soldiers were talking about stoning him to death. We read, **“David encouraged himself in the Lord, *his God*.”** He looked back to the God who had helped him since his boyhood days. He turned to an old Friend. Payer, in this crisis hour, to David, was the continuation of a lifelong habit. When he was a young boy keeping his father’s sheep, he killed lions and bears that attacked the sheep. And he must have given God all the credit because his neighbors said, **“The Lord is with him”.**

David faced another crisis when he was probably in his late teens. The Philistine giant Goliath, had every soldier in Israel trembling as he laughed, shouted insults at them and made fun of their God. This was more than David could take so he offered to fight him. King Saul tried to talk him out of it because he was so young, but David said:

“O King, I take care of my father’s sheep and if one of them is dragged off by a lion or a bear / I grab it by the throat and kill it. / The *Lord* has rescued me from the claws of lions and bears and he will keep me safe from the hands of this Philistine.

[He said to Goliath]

“You come against me with a sword, a javelin and a spear. I come against you in the name of the Lord God Almighty. / The God of the armies of Israel Whom you have defied will conquer you and I will kill you and cut off your head. / The battle is the Lord’s”

Do you know if there is any air in your spare tire? Probably not. I don’t. We don’t think much about that. But if we have a flat tire in a dangerous part

of town, out of cell phone range, that tire will get all of our attention.

Does God walk beside you every day or is He one you think about and look to, primarily, when you need help. When Pastor John Claypool’s young daughter got leukemia, he and his wife walked through the living hell of it with her for several years until God called her home. In his book, *“Tracks of a Fellow Struggler”*, he said that during the ordeal he could not pray or read his Bible as he thought he should. And then he added, **“The faith I had when the crisis came was the faith that saw me through it.”**

“After the storm comes and the horses run away, it is too late to close the bam door.”

THE LIFE OF PRAYER

“Pray without stopping” (1 Thessl. 4)

God wants us to have a *life of prayer* where we are aware of His presence beside us through all the ups and downs of life. This begins in the morning when we *make contact* with God before we leave home. It helps to have some short, easy to remember, *“life” verses* to lean on and live by.

One of my favorites is, **“This is the day the Lord has made and I will rejoice and be glad in it.”** (XX) You can also have some powerful *life sayings* to live by and there is none better than the prayer of St Francis.

“Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the ability to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Goliath had done anything to David but he was insulting the David’s God, so David said, **“The battle is the Lords!”**. As a Pastor, this is what I would say to myself when arguments or challenges arose that threatened the church. I combined that with 1 Peter 5:7: **“Cast (throw) all your cares on him because he chairs for you.”** And then I would throw it all up to God saying, **“Father, I am**