Challenging Christians to Pray

Prayergram®

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HOW SECURE ARE WE!

"The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).

Nothing in life is permanent except our love for God and faith in Him. When things are going well, we feel invincible. In the exuberance of our well–being, financial stability, and the comforts and conveniences of an industrial society, almost everything seems beyond interruption and discomfort. This feeling of invincibility carries over into the religious life as well, giving us a sense of self-reliance. And then something comes along to disrupt our lifestyle that makes us realize that there is no real security outside of Christ, our Rock.

No matter how secure we are financially, no matter how efficiently we plan, events outside our control can devastate us. For example—a disastrous natural occurrence, a crippling life-threatening illness, a dramatic shift in national economy, or advanced technology that eliminates the need for our product and services. The list is endless. Even with careful planning and execution, uncontrollable events can undermine a lifetime of effort. God's ways are always perfect! Trials and difficulties have a way of maturing us and bring us to the realization that we are not invincible as it seems. How do we make people understand that we came into this world with nothing, and we leave this world likewise! **Job said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither…" (Job 1:21).** This statement is not meant to diminish God's blessings or belittle anyone. It's our heavenly Father's desire to give us the very best of things; He is not quarreling with us about the use of it, but its abuse!

Are we trying to rehabilitate society without Divine help; many have tried it in the past and utterly failed! Jesus transforms society by restoring individual hearts, leading people to become new creation in Christ. As St. Augustine once said, **"Give your heart to God and you'll never be sorry."** The human heart is highly complex and requires ongoing attention from its Creator, as noted by the prophet Jeremiah, **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10).**

In a world of various complexities and changes, it's wise to realize how fragile life really is. Acknowledging our reliance on God makes us resilient and joyful in facing difficulties. Faith is not some doctrine to be promoted but it should be a way of life to the believer. It is accepting God as our Secure care! **The prophet Habakkuk says, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:**

yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18). Let's not trouble our mind with puzzles that we cannot solve. God's wisdom is unparalleled, and His power infinite. Faith is not a gullible optimism but a sublime reality upon which we build our lives. "And now abides faith, hope, love"—faith in the sovereign God, hope in His eternal purpose, love that suffers long and is kind. Faith is a gift that we need to ask for it! The person of faith does not linger in doubt; it is by his personal faith that he is led to walk with God. We come to experience when we believe, not before. As Christians, we should learn to look beyond worldly values and evaluate things according to heavenly principles. Do not long for the praise and applause of men. They are short–lived. Always remember we follow a despised and rejected Christ. In our hour of trials, when earthly help fails, keep our heart close to the Man of sorrows.

Faith requires simplicity, and simplicity is what the world is looking for. The Christian faith has lasted through the ages and continues to be a spiritual cornerstone for many. Despite doubts and negativity, believers place their trust in Jesus Christ, who is loved and worshipped as Savior and Lord. God's kingdom cannot be shaken no matter what comes our way. When trials come, let's keep our spirit calm and unruffled. Let us go forward in His name and trust in His wonderful provision! Friends, if you are walking by faith and obedience to God, you will not have any reason to fear the uncertain future. **Someone has said, "If you love the stars too fondly, you will not be fearful of the night."** Why should we place our confidence in things that will pass away! People soon disappear but Christ lives forever and stands by our side firmly to the end. That is unshakable faith for shaken time.

Beloved, if you're gainfully employed, then thank God each moment for your employment. If you are out of work, then pray and believe God for His supernatural provision! Remember, there will always be fluctuation in a world such as ours so let us be circumspect, and trust in God's mercy and walk humbly before Him each moment! Simple faith and abiding trust will remove doubts, mountains of unbelief and difficulties. One should maintain confidence in divine protection and provision, proceeding with gratitude without hesitation. It is important to remember that faith assures us of divine help and inspires us to pursue God's purpose, knowing that God is by our side, spurring us on to victory.

What **happens to people and nations that forget God!** All blessings come from God, and it is His pleasure to give us all things, but the problem is enjoying God's blessings while blaspheming His holy name, like the children of Israel who complained while manna was in their mouth. Are we not doing the same! How long shall we go on kicking God to the curb without recognizing His grace and mercy. For example, King Belshazzar of Babylon held a grand banquet for a thousand of his officials and drank wine in their presence. He praised the gods made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Pride and arrogance were at the height of their celebration. Out of nowhere, came forth the fingers of a man's hand, which wrote on the wall, **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN,** the interpretation reads, **"God has numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:25-28).** In essence, God had Belshazzar's number, and nothing escapes the penetrating eyes of the Almighty! Daniel 5: 30 says, **"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."** It is well worth to remember that there will be an ultimate justice, a final verdict, a tribunal greater than our own, greater than any man-made courts in the world–the God of the universe, the Just and Merciful God who supersedes all things and judges the world with impeccable justice and zero mistake.

Always remember, in today's robust economy, before we know it our **'nest egg'** can become **'scrambled egg.'** God is the divine facilitator and enabler. There is none beside Him. The only reliable safety is under the wings of the Almighty and He is our unshakable Rock. God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, may we cling to an unchanging God in a changing time such as ours!

Let us set aside our concerns and confront our fears by placing our trust in the One who holds infinity in His hands. We achieve our God–given purpose not by accident but by divine design. He is the underlining and motivating force of life. We read in Acts chapter 27, when the apostle Paul endured a shipwreck, his faith grew stronger. He said to the captain and crew, **"Do not be afraid, I believe God, and I trust that everything will happen just as I was told."** This is the faith that propels us in the 21st century and beyond.

Empires rise and fall, economies flourish and collapse, but he who trusts in God abides forever. Living faith is timeless; it defies logic and human rationale! What a comforting thought for a generation that has lost faith in God and is troubled at every turn and not quite sure about the uncertain future! **May I conclude with Martin Luther's profound words: "I have held many things in my hand and lost them all; but what I have placed in God's hand, I still possess."**

--- Matthew Skariah

TRIALS OF LIFE

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all" (Psalms 34:19).

Believe it or not, there will always be trials to overcome in the Christian life. That is what makes the Christian life meaningful and rewarding. Christians grow in trials. It was in the breakdown of Rome that Christianity flourished. God may interrupt our lives so that we might learn to rely on Him more. It is in trials we are drawn closer to our heavenly Father. Most Christians like the exhilaration of Pentecost but forget the agony of Gethsemane. It is in suffering, we come to experience the exquisite delight of His tenderness. The trusting heart will know the joy of doing His will. The will of God is not for negotiation: it is to be accepted or rejected. Our will is subjected to the will of Almighty God. Some folks go at any length to promote their will over God's will, and consequently, they live a life of constant struggle and strain.

Many are struggling with the question as to "How do I know the will of God?" We know His will by seeking and following His guidance and by reading His Word. The question is that do I accept the will of God over my will! Am I willing to pound my pride in the dust! It's worth remembering the words of **Jim Elliot, the martyred Christian, "God gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him."** Are we ready to trust God's choices above our own!

When we are at our wit's end, tested and tried, we learn to depend on God. It is no exaggeration to say that many are brought to Christ through the forces of circumstances, ordinarily wouldn't even give a moment of their time to God. Christians are like seed scattered throughout the world growing under severe trials and persecution and yet remain steadfast in their love and devotion to Christ. There's no need to pity churches facing persecution in China, North Korea, or elsewhere, as they are thriving and bearing fruit. **Let us heed the timeless words of Tertullian, the Roman who converted to early Christianity: "The more you persecute us, the more numerous we grow; the blood of Christians is like a seed."** The spirit of the early Church lives on and challenges us to a deeper commitment and loyalty to Christ, our Lord.

If you are a believer, trials may come your way, but they will never conquer you. Remember, Jesus is with us in all our trials. An early Christian said it very well, **"When the mind is in heaven, you do not feel the chain."** Persecution drives Christians to their knees with the overwhelming conviction that they have nowhere else to go but to God and Him alone. The Church is God's creation, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it! She will continue to grow and flourish with a tenacious and vibrant spirit with or without persecution. Our faith may be tested in the

furnace of affliction which serves to deepen our spiritual maturity and strengthen our walk with God. There are some in today's religious circle believe that sickness is a form of punishment or sin. They are afflictions, not sin or punishment. Jesus settled this issue in John 9:1-3.

--- Matthew Skariah

AN AUTHENTIC DISCIPLE

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." (2 Cori.3:2)

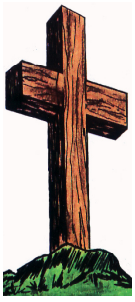
Our character develops over time, and Christians must cultivate a godly character in a world that's not so godly. As Christians, we exhibit the character of our Lord wherever we go and whatever we do, and this will help carry the good news of the gospel to a world that is hostile to Christ and His message. We venerate the image of God whether we're aware of it or not! The most effective argument for Christianity is an authentic believer whose life becomes a constant reminder of the Christ–life. A Christian is a redeemed being who has had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian may forget the doctrine or the dogmas of the faith, but he carries in his heart the fragrance of Christ and the blessed fruit of the Spirit.

The wife of Andrew Bonar was led to the Lord by **Robert Murray McCheyene,** the anointed preacher of Dundee, Scotland whose life has been an inspiration to multitudes. Mrs. Bonar always said, **"It was not his matter or his manner that impressed me, but it was the living epistle of Christ, a picture so lovely that I would have given the world to be such as he is."**

A minister in the north of Scotland met McCheyene and was in his presence for a little while. He said he never met a more Christ–like man in his life, and he went into his room to weep and pray and give himself to God. McCheyene had the capacity to draw near to the heart of God through his majestic prayer life. Whenever he approached the pulpit, his congregation would go into a weeping streak because they felt the presence of the living God. What a testimony to know such men existed through the annals of the glorious history of the Christian faith that we are commissioned to preserve! Today, men are judged more by their charisma, popularity, and fame than by their godly influence. The following prayer was attributed to **McCheyene** who died at the age of 29: **"Lord, make me as holy as a redeemed sinner can be."** May God help us capture the blessedness of the Christ–influence in our life, is my prayer! What a splendid experience with the Divine!

Oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer!

--- Matthew Skariah



The WPB Ministries

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