

# Prayer Power Tower

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## Preparation

For more than a hundred ten years now, runners nearing the home stretch of the storied Boston Marathon each Patriot's Day (the third Monday of April) have had to tough their way up the infamous Heartbreak Hill. It got its name way back in 1936. During the race that year, it was on what would come to be known as Heartbreak Hill that 1935 winner John A. Kelley caught up to Ellison 'Tarzan' Brown, at that moment in first place. Kelley passed Brown, giving him a friendly (?) pat on the shoulder as he did so. But that little gesture was all it took to give Tarzan Brown his second wind. He gritted his teeth, overtook Kelley and went on to win the race – in the process “breaking Kelley’s heart,” according to *Boston Globe* reporter Jerry Nason. Guided by the Holy Spirit, David writes of an even more famous hill: “*The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to Him. For He laid the earth’s foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths. Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. They will receive the LORD’s blessing and have a right relationship with God their Savior. Such people may seek You and worship in Your presence, O God of Jacob*” (Psalm 24:1-6 NLT). In a very real sense, you are preparing now to ascend your own Mount Zion. So who can stand in the holy place of Almighty God, to commune with Him in prayer? David gives us the answer! It is only those with clean hands and pure hearts – a sobering truth for all who are honest! But take heart. We stand before our holy God, now as always, clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ our Savior. Give thanks for His redeeming grace. Cling to His life-giving cross, and prepare in Him to have your heart and mind renewed in the presence of your eternal Creator.

## Scripture

Especially if you love to travel, you may well have one or more places on earth you’d like to see someday. Whether for you it’s London or Paris or San Francisco, you entertain fond thoughts of at last visiting there in person. For Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, Rome was such a place. Ask God now to guide your thoughts and even to transform your life through reading this week’s text (Romans 1:8-15), trusting the Holy Spirit to do just that.

- As he typically does in his letters, Paul here (1:8) follows his words of greeting with an expressing of thanks for those to whom he writes. Note that Paul knows of the Roman Christians primarily (even exclusively?) through reputation: he’s never met them! When we thank God for people, we generally think of those known to us personally. For whom *beyond* your circle of acquaintance should you give Him thanks?
- The apostle goes to great lengths, even invoking the name of God, to assure the Romans of his ongoing prayers for them (1:9). That suggests to us, does it not, the crucial importance he attaches to the ministry of prayer? Keep that in mind in *all* your prayers, but especially as you lift up to God those who partner with you in our Prayer Initiative.
- Paul writes of his hope to visit the Romans so that he might bless them, but quickly adds that he expects to be blessed by them as well (1:11-12). Take a moment now to both thank God for the many friends in Christ through whom He has blessed you, and to seek ways in which you can bless others in return.

## Adoration

The challenges, the pain, the sheer *busyness* of life – all can derail our best efforts to praise God. But remember: we never do so alone! Always we worship Him in the company of that great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), whose faithful lives encourage us to keep the fires burning. Praise the Lord (Hebrew: *Hallelujah*) indeed!

### For All the Saints

William W. Howe, 1823–1897

*For all the saints, who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;  
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,  
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,  
And win with them the victor’s crown of gold. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
O blest communion, fellowship divine!  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,  
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

## Confession

Good intentions. We know all about them, don't we? In fact, we speak often of the road to you-know-where's being paved with them. Perhaps it's comforting to us, on some level, to read the frustration even the great apostle Paul expresses over his own as-yet unrealized good intentions (Romans 1:13) – in particular, his long-standing desire to visit Rome. In his case, we can be sure that Paul had a good 'excuse': his faithful labors elsewhere in God's kingdom kept him from the imperial city! For us, the picture is not so rosy. Our good intentions go unfulfilled for far less noble reasons. What bad habits continue to dog your footsteps, even after months, perhaps *years* of your best efforts to defeat them? What good things have you somehow not yet gotten around to doing? The garage door that's needed to be painted forever is one thing. More to the point is that long to-do list of *virtues* hanging over most of our heads. Worship God now through a time of confession, asking the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and your prayers. Bear in mind that the God to whom we pray is both more awesomely holy, and more breathtakingly merciful than we can even *begin* to fathom!

When you have finished your prayers of confession, draw great comfort and strength from this promise in God's eternal word:

*The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.* (Psalm 145:8-9 NKJV).

Rejoice in the Good News: in Jesus Christ you are forgiven!

## Thanksgiving

Paul speaks of the obligation he feels ("*I am a debtor*" – NKJV) to people of all sorts: his burden to share Christ with them. Of course the diversity we know goes far deeper than the Jew-Gentile or Greek-barbarian divides that were so much a part of Paul's world. But in that diversity is great blessing! In your prayers of gratitude today, think especially of the richness of variety.

- Thank God for the wealth of different personalities He's given to all the people you know.
- Thank Him for unity in Christ within our diversity in the church.
- Thank God for richly varied talents and abilities.
- Think of the welcome change of the seasons we enjoy in these parts, and thank God for that variety.
- Thank Him for a world with great richness of topography and terrain: for mountains and oceans, deserts and rain forests...
- "*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*" (Colossians 3:17 ESV).

## Supplication

The Bible assures us that "*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results*" (James 5:16b NLT). Intimidated by the "righteous" part? Be encouraged by the truth that God gives to all believers the very righteousness of Christ, and pray confidently, even boldly – especially for those who stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this great ministry of prayer.

Daniel Adams, Kristen Agnew, Audrey and Bill Allen, Corinne Baker, Jon Baker, Cyndy Beech, Joyce Bett, Ed and Goldie Black, Betty Bowser, Barbara and David 'Skip' Byers, Jan Carr, Lisa Cook, Ray and Jane Cornelius, Jennifer and John Culp, Ed Daggitt, Gina Brenda Dolan, Jane Dunmire, Ruth Dykstra Entwistle, Mickey Edmiston, Becky Elliott, Janice Good, Dorothy Gooden, Kathleen Graham, Dorothy Henderson, John and Marilyn Hicks, Joy Holland, Suzanne Howat, Gail Jablonovsky, Alberta Keener, Louise Keough, Joann Kettler, Dana Krepps, Michelle Kurtz, Donna Lewis, Jean Longnecker, Linda Longwell, Nancy MacRae, Rich Madsen, Don McAninch, Myrna Jane McCamey, Greg McElroy, Colleen McGaffic, Bob and Joanne Miller, Sandy Minor, Shirley Minshull, Jane and John Moser, Alan and Terry Northcott, Sean O'Brien, Edna Orange, Phyllis Osborne, Hazel Palmer, Joan Pashley, Jeannette Patterson, Nancy Rankin, Joanne Raymer, Andrea and Tod Reiser, Rachael Renick, Megan (Illsley) Sateia, Erin Scott, John Snow, Mary Jane Surrena, Charles Timmons, Beth Utsch, Betty Walters, Toni Walters, Alice Winger, Tami Witzke and Chris Yeakle.

- Please pray for our Ministry of Care, and ask God to raise up a new leader for that great work of sharing the love of Christ in practical ways.
- Please pray for prayer partner John Snow as he serves in the care of our church building and grounds.
- Please pray that in worship we will each draw closer to God as we respond to the Gospel by offering not only our money, but our whole selves to Him.
- Please pray for Adam and Esther Soliz and those who serve with them in the Pecos Valley of New Mexico.
- Please ask Christ to guide our session and trustees, and all of us as His church, as we weigh specific plans for a proposed elevator and new building entryway.
- Please pray that we will always be growing more and more to be *People helping people to know Jesus Christ*.
- Please lift to God the enclosed prayer concerns shared by the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship. You might mention one or two of the needs each day this week. (If you receive Prayer Power Tower by e-mail, please see the separate attachment.)