

Prayer Power Tower

Volume 8, No. 26

June 27, 2010

Preparation

Like Christmas, it came just once a year. But very much *unlike* Christmas, its annual advent was not associated with joy and levity. Far from it. Israel's *Yom Kippur*, its Day of Atonement, was almost, as it were, a celebration of mourning, a national rite of grieving for sins individual and collective. Little wonder then that God, through Moses, gave detailed instructions for the elaborate preparations Aaron (and all high priests who would come after him) had to follow: "*Warn your brother, Aaron, not to enter the Most Holy Place behind the inner curtain whenever he chooses; if he does, he will die. For the Ark's cover – the place of atonement – is there, and I Myself am present in the cloud above the atonement cover. When Aaron enters the sanctuary area, he must follow these instructions fully. He must bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He must put on his linen tunic and the linen undergarments worn next to his body. He must tie the linen sash around his waist and put the linen turban on his head. These are sacred garments, so he must bathe himself in water before he puts them on. Aaron must take from the community of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering...*" (Leviticus 16:2-5 NLT). Israel knew, as do we, that God inhabits every square inch (cubit!) of the universe He created and governs. But the Lord was present in a special way – a *dangerous* way! – there in the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies. Aaron was not to go lightly into that most sacred of all spaces. You are about to enter in a particular way into the presence of that same God. You know that He remains as holy – and as dangerous – as ever He was. We come not with the blood of bulls and goats, but covered by the blood of the very Lamb of God. Still, like Aaron, we dare not come lightly! Take the time now to ask God to help you properly prepare for your meeting with Him – an event as holy as the Day of Atonement, and potentially as joy-filled as any Christmas!

Scripture

Have you ever been caught in a trap (perhaps the variety laid by a law enforcement officer armed with a radar gun)? Having laid the groundwork and carefully placed the bait, Saint Paul is about to spring the trap he has placed. Coming to today's text (Romans 2:1-5), ask God to open both your eyes and your heart, that He might teach and transform you as you hear His eternal word.

- Paul had begun the body of his letter with a scathing indictment of human sin, all of it growing out of the fundamental transgression of idolatry (1:18-32). Throughout that discussion, however, he writes in the third person, of the despicable things 'they' have done. All the while, Paul was no doubt imagining his readers' shaking their heads and clucking their tongues at how wicked 'they' are. But here (2:1) he springs the trap, shifting to second person and saying, in effect, in immortal words coming from Walt Kelly's *Pogo* cartoon strip, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Paul confronts his readers with the truth that they cannot keep at arm's length the shocking catalogue of wickedness he has described. They are not 'their' sins, he says. They are '*yours*'! Ask God to deliver you from the dangerous delusion that you are a Christian because you're somehow 'better' than other people.
- It's not that Paul's readers merely overlook their/our own sins. He warns here (2:15) that we have a very real tendency to sit in judgment of others, an error against which Jesus also cautions (Matthew 7:1-5). Pray that you will recognize and repent of any ungodly judging of which you may have been guilty.

Adoration

God is our great Deliverer, rescuing us from even our fiercest foes, including ourselves. Worship and adore Him now as you cry out, in the words of this hymn of faith, for His perfect protection.

God the Omnipotent

Henry F. Chorley (1808–1872) and John Ellerton (1826–1893)

*God the Omnipotent! King, who ordainest
Thunder Thy clarion, the lightning Thy sword:
Show forth Thy pity on high where Thou reignest;
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.*

*God the All-merciful! earth hath forsaken
Meekness and mercy, and slighted Thy Word;
Let not Thy wrath in its terrors awaken;
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.*

*God the all-righteous One! man hath defiled Thee;
Yet to eternity standeth Thy Word;
Falsehood and wrong shall not tarry beside Thee;
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.*

*So shall Thy people, with thankful devotion,
Praise Him who saved them from peril and sword,
Singing in chorus from ocean to ocean,
Peace to the nations, and praise to the Lord.*

Confession

“God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance,” Paul declares (Romans 2:4 ESV). Repentance is of course one of the fundamental themes of Scripture. John came forth “*proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*” (Mark 1:4), and repentance was central to the Gospel – the *Good News* – that Jesus proclaimed as well (1:14-15). The fact that any of us is alive today proves that God has shown us one more day of His precious mercy. But as Paul insists, we are never to take that mercy for granted! Our Lord intends for it to lead us to ongoing repentance, in which confession plays a foundational role. Reflect for a moment on the place confession and repentance have in your own life these days. In your prayers, do you spend significant time (*any* time?) in confession on a regular basis? Or are your prayers of confession largely confined to those offered up corporately in worship, along with this weekly time of confession? Seek the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit now, asking Him to protect you from confessing things of which you’re not really guilty, from vague and meaningless contrition, and from blindness to real sin in your life. Come now to confession, knowing that God stands ready, willing and *eager* to forgive you in Christ Jesus.

When you’ve finished your prayers of confession, let this promise from God’s holy Word give you great comfort and peace:

*He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

(Proverbs 28:13 NKJV)

Know that in Jesus Christ you are forgiven, and be at peace!

Thanksgiving

Even in passages such as the one we read this week (2:1-5), where God’s judgment is in clear view, Paul’s letter to the Romans is all about divine patience and mercy. In your prayers of gratitude today, think especially of ways you’ve received such grace.

- Thank God for the patience those who know you best have shown with your faults and shortcomings.
- Thank Him for deadlines that have been extended.
- Give thanks for times when God has protected you from the worst consequences of mistakes you’ve made.
- Thank Him for people (even strangers) who have given you the benefit of the doubt.
- Thank God for sparing you in close calls over the years.
- Give worshipful thanks with the psalmist: “*You brought me up from the grave, O LORD. You kept me from falling into the pit of death*” (Psalm 30:3 NLT).

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 all who serve with Tower’s Evangelism Team, and ask God to lead them to help us all to be Christ’s ambassadors.
- Please pray for Pastor Janice Good and her whole family as she ministers here at Tower Church.
- Please pray that Jesus will let each of us know His presence in a powerful way as we come to His table in worship on July 4 (*Independence Day* indeed!).
- Please pray for Nancy McGaughey as she serves in mission to South Sudan.
- Please ask God to help us to wrestle on a regular basis with what it means to really be “*People helping people to know Jesus Christ.*”
- 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 ask God to be preparing the hearts and minds of all the children and adults who will be part of our Vacation Bible School, starting on July 12.
- Please ask the Spirit to revive each of us, each day.