

# Prayer Power Tower

Volume 8, No. 35

August 29, 2010

## Preparation

Well over 300 million of us there are these days. And of course we're all different from one another: Different sizes and shapes; a wealth of likes and dislikes; varied virtues and failings. But there's one attribute that seems to be embedded into our very DNA as Americans. We don't like to wait. If we could wait to buy stuff, so many of us wouldn't get into trouble with credit cards. If we could wait to have sex, there would be no scourge of teenage pregnancy. If we could just manage to bring our cars to a complete stop at every one of the red octagonal signs ordering us to do so, traffic officers from sea to shining sea would have a lot less work to do. All of that is too bad, because the Bible commends to us the virtue of waiting – at least when it's waiting on the Lord: *“Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD! O Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities”* (Psalm 130 ESV). Preparing for a very deliberate time of communion with God in prayer is of course the perfect setting in which to practice that biblical virtue of waiting on the Lord. Waiting on the Lord is just what the Doctor ordered (think Great Physician) as the prescription for the malady of monologue that infects too many of our prayers. So take time today to be still and silent before Him, seeking genuine dialogue, listening intently for His voice in Scripture; in your prayers of thanksgiving and confession; even as you lift before Him your own concerns. Wait on Him even at this moment, asking Him to slow you down, that you might ready yourself for times of silence – silence that He *will* fill with His challenging, convicting, educating, comforting, pardoning, loving, life-transforming voice.

## Scripture

Is there one who is something of a legend in your family's past, perhaps a grandfather or great-grandmother whose words and escapades continue to provide laughter and inspiration down to the present, even if that one has gone on to eternal reward? Continuing

to build his case for justification by faith alone, Paul looks back to two such figures in Israel's past (Romans 4:1-8). Ask God to speak to you now in His inspired word – and be sure to take time to listen!

- The apostle first (4:1-5) considers Abraham. It was the Jews in Paul's audience who objected most strenuously to his dismissal of the law as a means of access to God. He knew that supporting his argument on the basis of Father Abraham would likely be convincing for even his Jewish opponents. To what authority figures do you look? Are they ones who help point you to Christ? In whose life are you a significant influence? Do you use that influence in godly ways?
- Key to Paul's reasoning here is his citation from Genesis: *“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”* (4:3; Genesis 15:6). Take time now to reflect on the wonder of the life-giving faith in Christ with which God has blessed *you* – and praise Him for that great gift.
- A psalm of David (Romans 4:7-8; Psalm 32:1-2) makes the same point. Note that the psalm speaks only of blessedness – not of the righteous hard work of the one who is forgiven. Never forget that it is so with us as well!

## Adoration

The legacy God has given us – as children of Abraham; as descendants of our nation's Founding Fathers – blesses us richly. Add your praises now to those of saints before, adoring the One who creates all and gives all.

### O God, Beneath Thy Guiding Hand

Leonard Bacon, 1802–1881

*O God, beneath Thy guiding hand  
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;  
And when they trod the wintry strand,  
With prayer and psalm they worshiped Thee.  
Thou heard'st, well pleased, the song, the prayer;  
Thy blessing came, and still its power  
Shall onward through all ages bear  
The memory of that holy hour.  
Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God  
Came with those exiles o'er the waves,  
And where their pilgrim feet have trod,  
The God they trusted guards their graves.  
And here Thy name, O God of love,  
Their children's children shall adore,  
Till these eternal hills remove,  
And spring adorns the earth no more.*

## Confession

People are people. It may well be that it is nearly as difficult for us as ever it was for the Jews of Paul's day to accept the notion of salvation by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We read Paul's arguments (Romans 4:1-8), and on some level even accept them. But down deep inside, we still tend to try to base our relationship with God on our own goodness. We would never say so out loud, of course. But ask yourself this: In what do you take more comfort – the totally unmerited love of God for you? Or the list of good works you can compile? Ask God for the additional grace now to enable you to identify any tendency you might have to bargain with Him; to trust in that check you wrote, that kind word you spoke, all those hours of faithful service. Such virtues should be the cause for celebration, of course – and especially for praise of the One who bestows them! But any time we begin to see them as the basis on which we come before God, we need to repent. Listen to your all-knowing, loving heavenly Father now, asking Him to speak clearly in the Spirit's voice to you. Worship Him now in confession of any sins He brings to mind, and rejoice in His forgiving love in Christ Jesus.

When you have finished your prayers of confession, rejoice in this promise to us in God's eternal word:

*"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.*

*I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."*

*Then He adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."*

(Hebrews 10:16-17 NIV)

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

## Thanksgiving

Paul shares with David a deep awareness of how richly both have been blessed to know God's forgiving mercy (Romans 4:7-8; cf. 7:24-25). How about you? In your prayers of gratitude today, begin with thanks for specific acts of forgiveness you have known.

- Try to recall a time when as a child you felt the weight of divine conviction for a wrong you had done, and thank God for forgiving you then.
- Thank Him for a sin of which He's forgiven you in the very recent past.
- Give thanks for at least one time when someone close to you has pardoned a wrong of yours.
- Thank God for the grace He gives *you* to forgive others.
- Echo the sentiments of a grateful psalmist: *"Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever"* (Psalm 106:1 NKJV).

## 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 Daggit, 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 Ketter, Dana Krepps, Michelle Kurtz, Donna Lewis, Jean Longnecker, Linda Longwell, 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, DJ Wagner, Betty Walters, Toni Walters, Alice Winger, Tami Witzke and Chris Yeakle.

- Jesus calls us to be His *Daring Disciples*. Ask Him for the wisdom to identify risks He would have you take this week for Him – and for the strength to boldly *take* them!
- Please pray for the members of our Budget and Finance Team, and our whole session, as they begin work on the important matter of our 2011 budget.
- Please pray for our secretary Linda Auld and her family (especially her mother Ruth Hawley), as she serves Christ with us each day.
- 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 September 5.
- Please pray for Barry Almy and Betsy McCormick, former missionaries to Sudan, as they continue to serve God in vital ministries here in the United States.
- Please lift to God the enclosed prayer concerns shared by the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship (perhaps one or two each day this week). If you receive Prayer Power Tower by e-mail, please see the separate attachment.
- Please continue to pray for our new entrance/elevator.