

January, 18th 2009

WARFARE: THE RESULT OF PRAYER

Introduction

As I am sure all of us know, we are in the midst of a time of prayer and fasting. The last few weeks we have been talking about living a fasted lifestyle, and offering spiritual sacrifices. In the midst of time dedicated to prayer and fasting we become targets to the enemy.

Like in a war, the machine gunner is the most dangerous infantry soldier, and is therefore the number one target. So, to the man and women who prays and intercedes is dangerous to the enemy and therefore a target. I am not going to tell you anything you do not already know, nothing profound, but simply a message, a reminder, that is applicable to all who have decided to join the prayer battle for revival.

What Happens when we don't SEE our Prayers Working?

Turn with me to the well known passage in Mark 11:23-24.

23. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

24. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

So, what do we do with this? How do we understand? How do we balance the promises that we have with the results that we see?

Two weeks into our time of fasting and prayer there are many testimonies of wins, of battles overcome, but many dreams, many prayers have seemingly not come to pass.

One answer is perhaps it is not God's will. God in His sovereignty decides what will happen, even if we do not understand it. He's the boss, and we are to find and align ourselves with his will.

Well, lets assume that we are in God's will. Saved lives, revival, and passion for the Lord, these all seem to be things that God wants. Right? So, what then...

James 1:6-7

6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

So we see, lack of faith, hinders our prayers to the extent that we ought not to expect anything from God. So we see if we are not in God's will we will receive nothing, if we have unrepented sin we will not receive, and also if we lack faith we shall not receive...

Perhaps that struck a chord with some of you, but it is not what I believe is going on for most of us.

A closer look at **Mark 11:24** reveals that the when you pray, believe you have received them, literally reads, **"believe you have already received them, and you shall have them."**

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Believing while you pray, assuming what you are praying is in the will and plan of the Father, gives you that thing at the moment your knees touch the ground.

So, what's with the delay, what's with the "I've been praying for _____ for weeks, or months, and I don't see the answer?"

The actual physical manifestation of that prayer comes at the appropriate time. What I am saying is that you may have prayed for something, it was in the will of God, the answer having been yes, and you still sit without seeing it.

There is much going on that we do not see. Much that is invisible, hidden, .spiritual. Yes I am talking about angels, demons, and the supernatural. No one likes to think much about Satan and demons, about strongholds and principalities. But that is what Paul tells us our battle is against in [Ephesians 6 starting at verse 10](#).

He reminds us that we are not fighting against people or institutions; we are not fighting the symptoms of anger, murder, pornography, abortion, theft,

We are not fighting the unbelieving co-worker, or the guy that mocks our faith....we are fighting the root cause, that illness is sin, sinful man Paul tells us is controlled by Satan. It is Satan and his demons that battle and lie and deceive the people, and the fact that they are doing a good job in evidenced in the plethora of symptoms that we see.

Behind the Scenes

Let's use the example found in Daniel chapter 10 to put a face to this often quoted scriptural truth, but less frequently understood.

Read: Daniel 10:2-4

Daniel prayed and fasted for understanding. For three weeks he prayed, mourned and fasted.

How long did Daniel, a prophet approved by God, wait to receive his answer? It doesn't say exactly, but it does say that he completed his fast and was standing on a river bank with a bunch of people. Evidently some time had passed, he had returned to work, etc...

We must be patient and diligent. I know we are the now generation, but we must learn discipline, we must learn patience. God is not McDonalds, you may place your order and never get it.....tough, you may place your order, pay for it with faith, prayer and fasting, and have to sit in the car at window two for a month.

Read: V7: Daniel Saw the Vision, no one else did. WHY? Because Daniel was a man of prayer, and they were not, if we are going to hear from God, to be empowered then we must fight we must pray. Does God have revelations waiting for us, revival on tap, and we are failing to receive simply because we have not humbled ourselves and pursued God?

Read V11. Highly esteemed. When we are in the battle we don't feel highly esteemed, we feel weak, or hungry, or sinful...but God sees us differently. God loves us, values us, and brags on us.

Read V12 God heard before he spoke, and sent a response immediately. But I thought we said that he didn't receive his answer the whole time he fasted. I thought we were talking about what happens when we pray and we don't see an answer. WE are. Daniel prayed. God answered. And then Satan attempted to derail.

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Read V13: Prince of Persia came. A demon over the entire Persian Empire. This is a huge land mass. Huge. A billion people under the sway of a demon. They battled for weeks or months; we think nothing is happening. We think God is on vacation, he doesn't love me, or he doesn't care. These are LIES! When really he is fighting for us, there is a battle going on...even now. Do you think Satan wants you to know he exists, that he is trying to get you?

Perhaps even now you are becoming antsy or bored, or I know guy I know there is a devil.

We need to recognize our position, our job, we are soldiers of Christ.

Do not be afraid, man highly esteemed. Peace, be strong, be strong.

V20. Do you know why I have come? Soon I will go fight against the prince of Persia, and the Prince of Greece will come. To giant empires, with two mighty demons battling Michael and this unnamed angel that is probably Gabriel. Crazy Huh?

This old frail man of God got on his knees and prayed in mourning and humbleness and some of the mightiest angels and demons battled. Why?

Because he prayed.

But to clear something up. We do not pray to angels, we are not to even pray for angels, our focus is not on the unseen battle, our focus is on Jesus Christ. And we pray to Him, for Him to come, and change and save. We pray knowing the battle rages, but our focus is not on the angelic, our focus is Christ alone.

Let me show another result found in **John 11**.

Remember the story of Lazarus. He was a man that Jesus loved. He was surrounded by people that cared about Jesus. They were people who had great faith, surely larger than a mustard seed. For Mary and Martha said if you had been here he would not have died. Even the townspeople said "he could have kept him from dying." No doubt these people prayed, no doubt they believed, and their prayers were answered.

Yes Lazarus died. Yes they didn't understand. But yes, he was raised from the dead, the answer was manifested.

We need to understand that we are involved in a battle, but it is not our battle. It is the Lords. Victory comes when Jesus Christ is glorified. When our lives and actions, our prayers and fasting are valuable only when they glorify Jesus Christ. So if you are going through something like this, through the valley of the shadow of death. If it seems like all hope is gone, and the God has abandoned you, remember who God is.

Remember that he is warring for you in the heavens, and that his goal and our goal is His Glory. We might not understand the answer, we might die before we see it, or the answer might be no. But in the end we must be soldiers of Christ who are willing to wear the full armor of God advancing his kingdom through spiritual means, trusting the God of our salvation whether we see the results or not.

Judges 16

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Sampson had a similar story. Only after he was bound, imprisoned, enslaved, and had his eyes gouged did he have his greatest victory. He killed more philistines in one sacrificial move that led to his death than in his whole life...the outcome...the philistines feared the LORD.

Stand in the Gap...

People that Ezekiel was praying for were already in exile. They had already been defeated by the Babylonians and taken from their homes into slavery in Babylon. But the people had hope for Jerusalem; they saw it as a symbol of God's love, God's preference of them over the gentiles. They looked to Jerusalem as their Hope.

Look at Ezekiel 22. I will paraphrase for the sake of time.

The people have put their hope in symbolism, in heritage, in history. Surely we are safe, we are God's people. But God's response is judgment. God's response is you are devious, there are murderers in the city, rape, you abandon the poor, and take advantage of people, you no longer honor or respect the Sabbath or that which is holy, your leaders are like wolves, your people make up things and claim they are from the LORD, even the commoner has no compassion for the poor, needy or foreigner.

This sounds like our land. This sounds like our people. This sounds like the valley that we are praying for. Our land stinks with sin and we pray for revival to come...what is God's reply? What does God say to people who cry out for a land on the verge of physical and spiritual destruction?

Look now to verse 30-31

"I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one."

If we are to escape judgment, much less see revival we will have to stand in the gap. Understanding that we might pray and fast for three weeks and receive no answer...understanding that even when we see no answer, we must believe. Believe that God has heard, and he has granted our petitions. The physical manifestations will follow, but in the mean time.

We will have to raise the war cry, fall to our knees, humble ourselves and intercede for our nation, our community, and our kids. God is looking for someone who is willing to stand in the Gap, looking for someone to offer pleasing sacrifices.

Pastor Kim talked last week about us being priests. And priests offer sacrifices. If we are to see revival we must stand in the gap. IF we are to stand in the gap we must live priestly lives, lives that reflect Jesus as our Lord.

So as Tom and the worship team comes up, take time to reflect on you. Are you willing to stand in the Gap, to fight on the side of Christ, to advance His kingdom? And if you are, are you willing to do what it takes, to repent of sins, forgive others, lay down your pride, and offer Jesus that which is pleasing, our worship, our prayers, our fasted lives? The alters are open, if we are not willing to come to the alters or fall to our knees, are we truly willing to stand in the gap against the demonic?

The message is challenging, but thanks be to God, He gives us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are told that we are more than conquerors, that we can pull down the strongholds. We can overcome! -Believe we have received, strength to stand, overcome.