



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, help me stay focused on my calling and remain determined to do what You've told me to do, even if I am assaulted by outside forces that seem to be beyond my control. I know the devil hopes to slow me down or even to stop me by orchestrating outside pressures to come against me. But I also know that Your Spirit works mightily in me, giving me all the power I need to resist every assault the devil tries to bring against me. Help me to be completely determined and committed to keep pushing ahead and to never let go until I've accomplished my God-given mission. Thank You for Your grace, enabling me to do what You have called me to do, even when at times I don't think I can do it, when You call a person You enable them through Your grace for You do not call a person without provision to be able to do it. Where You guide, You provide. Lead me and guide me always in Your ways, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1 WHEN JABIN king of Hazor heard of this, he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the kings of Shimron and Achshaph, 2 And to the kings who were in the north in the hill country and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and in the heights of Dor on the west; 3 To the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below [Mount] Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4 And they went out with all their hosts, much people, like the sand on the seashore in number, with very many horses and chariots. 5 And all these kings met and came and encamped together at the Waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. 6 But the Lord said to Joshua, Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow by this time I will give them up all slain to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire. 7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the Waters of Merom and fell upon them. 8 And the Lord gave them into the hand of Israel, who smote them and chased them [toward] populous Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward as far as the Valley of Mizpah; they smote them until none remained. 9 And Joshua did to them as the Lord had commanded him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire. 10 And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor and smote its king with the sword; for Hazor previously was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 They smote all the people in it with the sword, utterly destroying them; none were left alive, and he burned Hazor with fire. 12 And Joshua took all the cities of those kings and all the kings and smote them with the sword, utterly destroying them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. 13 But Israel burned none of the cities that stood [fortified] on their mounds—except Hazor only, which Joshua burned. 14 And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock the Israelites took for their booty; but every man they smote with the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none who breathed. 15 As the Lord had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. 16 So Joshua took all that land: the hill country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah [plain], the hill country of Israel and its lowland, 17 From Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and slew them. 18 Joshua had waged war a long time [at least five years] with all those kings. 19 Not a city made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites, the people of Gibeon; all the others they took in battle. 20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, that [Israel] might destroy them utterly, and that without favor and mercy, as the Lord commanded Moses. 21 Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim [large in stature] from the hill country: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah and the hill country of Israel. Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the Israelites; only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod [of Philistia] did some remain. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their allotments by tribes. And the land had rest from war.

Chapter 11

So in chapter eleven, the other kings when they had heard what happened to these kings that had come out against them, they also went out with their host. These are now the kings that are in the area of the Galilee, and upper Galilee region in the first three verses, clear up to Mount Hermon.

And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, many people, even as the sand is on the sea shore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. And these kings met together and they came to the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And the Lord said to Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow at about this time I will deliver them all slain before Israel: and thou shalt hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. So again Joshua came with all of his men suddenly upon these people. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them even unto Zidon... [Clear on over to the upper part, or the lower part of Lebanon there, the upper part of Israel.] And Joshua took Hazor, [Which of course is up in the upper Galilee and one of the major cities at that time in that area.] and he smote all of those with the edge of the sword: [and utterly wiped out the cattle, and the horses and the chariots, burned the chariots, and did all that the Lord had commanded Moses to do when they took the land. So verse twenty-three,] Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war (Jos 11:4-11, 23).

Now he took the whole land, and yet there were pockets of resistance that they did not take. There was a failure on their part to inhabit the whole territory that God had given to them. Now God has said, "Every place you put your foot, I have given it to you." One of the tragedies was the complete conquest of the land. For instance, the Jebusite city of Jerusalem was not taken by Joshua. In fact, it was not taken until the time of David. David took the city of Jerusalem, and hence it was called after that "The city of David." But we will read of other areas Gaza and Ashdod, so forth, that they did not take at that time. Yet they conquered not all the land. (Through The Bible C-2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible Commentaries; 1979-1986)

Joshua 11. The Kings of the North Defeated

In the battle of Beth Horon, where the sun stood still, Joshua had broken the power of the kings of the South. Now his victory over the kings of the North, at Merom, gave him control of the whole land. Joshua's strategy was to separate the north from the south of Canaan by capturing the center first, after which he could more easily subdue both parts. The Israelites fought hard, yet it was God who gave them the land by means of three stupendous miracles: the crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, and the standing still of the sun.

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Also: an Amarna Tablet, written to Pharaoh, 1380 b.c. , by the Egyptian envoy in north Palestine, says, "Let my lord the king recall what Hazor and its king have already had to endure." The only ruler in Canaan who is called a "king" in the nearly 400 Amarna Tablets, is the ruler of Hazor. Note also that in the Bible Hazor was called "the head of all these kingdoms" (Joshua 11:10).

Thus, Joshua's conquest of Palestine is attested by great layers of ashes, bearing marks of Joshua's time, in Jericho, Debir, and Hazor, exactly confirming biblical statements.
(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 196)


I. PRAYING SAINTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENTS

"The Holy Spirit will give to the praying saint the brightness of an immortal hope, the music of a deathless song, in His baptism and communion with the heart, He will give sweeter and more enlarged visions of heaven until the taste for other things will pall, and other visions will grow dim and distant. He will put notes of other worlds in human hearts until all earth's music is discord and songless."—
Rev. E. M. Bounds

Old Testament history is filled with accounts of praying saints. The leaders of Israel in those early days were noted for their praying habits. Prayer is the one thing which stands out prominently in their lives.

To begin with, note the incident in Joshua 10, where the very heavenly bodies were made subject to prayer. A prolonged battle was on between the Israelites and their enemies, and when night was rapidly coming on, and it was discovered that a few more hours of daylight were needful to ensure victory for the Lord's hosts, Joshua, that sturdy man of God, stepped into the breach, with prayer. The sun was too rapidly declining in the west for God's people to reap the full fruits of a noted victory, and Joshua, seeing how much depended upon the occasion, cried out in the sight and in the hearing of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon, and thou moon in the Valley of Ajalon." And the sun actually stood still and the moon stopped on her course at the command of this praying man of God, till the Lord's people had avenged themselves upon the Lord's enemies.

Jacob was not a strict pattern of righteousness, prior to his all-night praying. Yet he was a man of prayer and believed in the God of prayer. So we find him swift to call upon God in prayer when he was in trouble. He was fleeing from home fearing Esau, on his way to the home of Laban, a kinsman. As night came on, he lighted on a certain place to refresh himself with sleep, and as he slept he had a wonderful dream in which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder which stretched from earth to heaven. It was no wonder when he awoke he was constrained to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

Then it was he entered into a very definite covenant with Almighty God, and in prayer vowed a vow unto the Lord, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; and shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give one-tenth unto thee."

With a deep sense of his utter dependence upon God, and desiring above all the help of God, Jacob conditioned his prayer for protection, blessing and guidance by a solemn vow. Thus Jacob supported his prayer to God by a vow.

Twenty years had passed while Jacob tarried at the house of Laban, and he had married two of his daughters and God had given him children. He had increased largely in wealth, and he resolved to leave that place and return home to where he had been reared. Nearing home it occurred to him that he must meet his brother Esau, whose anger had not abated notwithstanding the passage of many years. God, however, had said to him, "Return to thy father's house and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." In this dire emergency doubtless God's promise and his vow made long ago came to his mind, and he took himself to an all-night season of prayer. Here comes to our notice that strange, inexplicable incident of the angel struggling with Jacob all night long, till Jacob at last obtained the victory. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And then and there, in answer to his earnest, pressing and importunate praying, he was richly blessed personally and his name was changed. But even more than that, God went ahead of Jacob's desire, and strangely moved upon the angry nature of Esau, and lo and behold, when Jacob met him next day, Esau's anger had entirely abated, and he vied with Jacob in showing kindness to his brother who had wronged him. No explanation of this remarkable change in the heart of Esau is satisfactory which leaves out prayer.

Samuel, the mighty intercessor in Israel and a man of God, was the product of his mother's prayer. Hannah is a memorable example of the nature and benefits of importunate praying. No son had been born to her and she yearned for a man child. Her whole soul was in her desire. So she went to the house of worship, where Eli, the priest of God, was, and staggering under the weight of which bore down on her heart she was beside herself and seemed to be really intoxicated. Her desires were too intense for articulation. "She poured out her soul in prayer before the Lord." Insurmountable natural difficulties were in the way, but she "multiplied her praying," as the passage means, till her God-lightened heart and her bright face recorded the answer to her prayers, and Samuel was hers by a conscious faith and a nation was restored by faith.

Samuel was born in answer to the vowful prayer of Hannah, for the solemn covenant which she made with God if He would grant her request must not be left out of the account in investigating this incident of a praying woman and the answer she received. It is suggestive in James 5:15 that "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," the word translated means a vow. So that prayer in its highest form of faith is that prayer which carries the whole man as a sacrificial offering. Thus devoting the whole man himself, and his all, to God in a definite, intelligent vow, never to be broken, in a quenchless and impassioned desire for heaven—such an attitude of self-devotement to God mightily helps praying. Samson is somewhat of a paradox when we examine his religious character. But amid all his faults, which were grave in the extreme, he knew the God who hears prayer and he knew how to talk to God.

No farness to which Israel had gone, no depth to which Israel had fallen, no chains however iron with which Israel was bound but that their cry to God easily spanned the distance, fathomed the depths, and broke the chains. It was the lesson they were ever learning and always forgetting, that prayer always brought God to their deliverance, and that there was nothing too hard for God to do for His people. We find all of God's saints in straits at different times in some way or another. Their straits are, however, often the heralds of their great triumphs. But for whatever cause their straits come, or of what kind soever, there is no strait of any degree of direness or from any source whatsoever of any nature whatsoever, from which prayer could not extricate them. The great strength of Samson does not relieve him nor extricate him out of his straits. Read what the Scriptures say:

"And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

"And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

"And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

"And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-Lehi.

"And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

"But God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again and he revived."

We have another incident in the case of this strange Old Testament character, showing how, when in great straits, their minds involuntarily turned to God in prayer. However irregular in life they were, however far from God they departed, however sinful they might be when trouble came upon these men, they invariably called upon God for deliverance, and, as a rule, when they repented God heard their cries and granted their requests. This incident comes at the close of Samson's life, and shows us how his life ended.

Read the record as found in Judges 16. Samson had formed an alliance with Delilah, a heathen woman, and she, in connivance with the Philistines, sought to discover the source of his immense strength. Three successive times she failed, and at last by her persistence and womanly arts persuaded Samson to divulge to her the wonderful secret. So in an unsuspecting hour he disclosed to her the fact that the source of his strength was in his hair which had never been cut; and she deprived him of his great physical power by cutting off his hair. She called for the Philistines, and they came and put out his eyes and otherwise mistreated him.

On an occasion when the Philistines were gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their idol god, they called for Samson to make sport for them. And the following is the account as he stood there presumably the laughing-stock of these enemies of his and of God.

"And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

"Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

"And Samson called unto the Lord and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, my God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand and of the other with his left.

"And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were there within. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

II. PRAYING SAINTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENTS (Continued)

"Bishop Lambeth and Wainwright had a great M. E. Mission in Osaka, Japan. One day the order came from high up that no more meetings would be allowed in the city by Protestants. Lambeth and Wainwright did all they could but the high officials were obstinate and unrelenting. They then retired to the room of prayer. Supper time came and the Japanese girl came to summon them to their meal, but she fell under the power of prayer. Mrs. Lambeth came to find what the matter was and fell under the same power. They then rose and went to the mission hall and opened it: and at once commenced meeting. God fell upon the assembly and two of the sons of the city officials came to the altar and were saved. Next morning one of the officials in authority came to the mission and said, "Go on with your meetings, you will not be interrupted." The Osaka daily paper came out with box car letters saying, "THE CHRISTIAN'S GOD CAME TO TOWN LAST NIGHT."—Rev. H. C. Morrison.

Jonah, the man who prayed in the fish's belly, brings to view another remarkable instance of these Old Testament worthies who were given to prayer. This man Jonah, a prophet of the Lord, was a fugitive from God and from the place of duty. He had been sent on a mission of warning to wicked Nineveh, and had been commanded to cry out against them, "for their wickedness is come up before me," said God. But Jonah, through fear or otherwise, declined to obey God, and took passage on a ship for Tarshish, fleeing from God. He seems to have overlooked the plain fact that the same God who had sent him on that alarming mission had His eye upon him as he hid himself on board that vessel. A storm arose as the vessel was on its way to Tarshish, and it was decided to throw Jonah overboard in order to appease God and to avert the destruction of the boat and of all on board. But God was there as He had been with Jonah from the beginning. He had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, in order to arrest him, to defeat him in his flight from the post of duty, and to save Jonah that he might help to carry out the purposes of God.

It was Jonah who was in the fish's belly, in that great strait, and passing through a strange experience, who called upon God, who heard him and caused the fish to vomit him out on dry land. What possible force could rescue him from this fearful place? He seemed hopelessly lost, in "the belly of hell," as good as dead and damned. But he prays—what else can he do? And this is just what he had been accustomed to do when in trouble before.

"I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Like others he joined prayer to a vow he had made, for he says in his prayer, "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Prayer was the mighty force which brought Jonah from "the belly of hell." Prayer, mighty prayer, has secured the end. Prayer brought God to the rescue of unfaithful Jonah, despite his sin of fleeing from duty, and God could not deny his prayer. Nothing is too hard for prayer because nothing is too hard for God.

That answered prayer of Jonah in the fish's belly in its mighty results became an Old Testament type of the miraculous power displayed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our Lord puts His seal of truth upon the fact of Jonah's prayer and resurrection.

Nothing can be simpler than these cases of God's mighty deliverance. Nothing is plainer than that prayer has to do with God directly and simply. Nothing is clearer than that prayer has its only worth and significance in the great fact that God hears and answers prayer. This the Old Testament saints strongly believed. It is the one fact that stands out continuously and prominently in their lives. They were essentially men of prayer.

How greatly we need a school to teach the art of praying! This simplest of all arts and mightiest of all forces is ever in danger of being forgotten or depraved. The further we get away from our mother's knees, the further do we get away from the true art of praying. All our after-schooling and our after-teachers unteach us the lessons of prayer. Men prayed well in Old Testament times because they were simple men and lived in simple times. They were childlike, lived in childlike times and had childlike faith.

In citing the Old Testament saints noted for their praying habits, by no means must David be overlooked, a man who preeminently was a man of prayer. With him prayer was a habit, for we hear him say, "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud." Prayer with the Sweet Psalmist of Israel was no strange occupation. He knew the way to God and was often found in that way. It is no wonder we hear his call so dear and impressive, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." He knew God as the one being who could answer prayer: "O thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come."

When God smote the child born of Bathsheba, because David had by his grievous sins given occasion of the enemies of God to blaspheme, it is no surprise that we find him engaged in a week's prayer, asking God for the life of the child. The habit of his life asserted itself in this great emergency in his home, and we find him fasting and praying for the child to recover. The fact that God denied his request does not at all affect the question of David's habit of praying. Even though he did not receive what he asked for, his faith in God was not in the least affected. The fact is that while God did not give him the life of that baby boy, He afterward gave him another son, even Solomon. So that possibly the latter son was a far great blessing to him than would have been the child for whom he prayed. In close connection with this season of prayer, we must not overlook David's penitential praying when Nathan, by command of God, uncovered David's two great sins of adultery and murder. At once David acknowledged his wickedness, saying unto Nathan, "I have sinned." And as showing his deep grief over his sin, his heart-broken spirit, and his genuine repentance, it is only necessary to read Psalm 51 where confession of sin, deep humiliation and prayer are the chief ingredients of the Psalm.

David knew where to find a sin-pardoning God, and was received back again and had the joys of salvation restored to him by earnest, sincere, penitential praying. Thus are all sinners brought into the divine favor, thus do they find pardon, and thus do they find a new heart.

The entire Book of Psalms brings prayer to the front, and prayer fairly bristles before our eyes as we read this devotional book of the Scriptures.

Nor must even Solomon be overlooked in the famous catalogue of men who prayed in Old Testament times. Whatever their faults, they did not forget the God who hears prayer nor did they cease to seek the God of prayer. While this wise man in his later life departed from God, and his sun set under a cloud, we find him praying at the commencement of his reign.

Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifice, which always meant that prayer went in close companionship with sacrifice, and while there, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a vision by night, saying unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." The sequel shows the material out of which Solomon's character was formed. What was his request?

"O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or to come in.

"And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

We do not wonder that it is recorded as a result of such praying:

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

"And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thy enemies, but has asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; "Behold I have done according to thy word; Lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

"Also I have given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days."

What praying was this! What self-deprecation and simplicity! "I am but a little child." How he specified the one thing needful! And see how much more he received than that for which he asked!

Take the remarkable prayer at the dedication of the temple. Possibly this is the longest recorded prayer in God's Word. How comprehensive, pointed, intensive, it is! Solomon could not afford to lay the foundations of God's house in anything else but in prayer. And God heard this prayer as he heard him before, "And when Solomon had made an end of his praying, the fire came down from heaven, and the glory of the Lord filled the house," thus God attested the acceptance of this house of worship and of Solomon, the praying king.

The list of these Old Testament saints given to prayer grows as we proceed, and is too long to notice at length all of them. But the name of Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet, and that of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, must not be left out of the account. Still others might be mentioned. These are sufficient, and with their names we may close the list. Let careful readers of the Old Scriptures keep the prayer question in mind, and they will see how great a place prayer occupied in the minds and lives of the men of those early days.

(Prayer And Praying Man; EM Bounds; Chapter 1-2; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer.)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 340-341)

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