

## Experiencing the Power of Intercessory Prayer

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What our ministry needs more now than anything else are intercessory prayer warriors. As the New Testament points out, there is a spiritual battle under way which requires each of us to put on the full armor of God. (See Eph.6:10-18, 2 Tim. 2:1-5, 1 Tim 6:12) Clothed in the full armor of God and equipped with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, we are then able to intercede in prayer, assured of victory. This victorious intercession is possible because of the victory Jesus Christ has provided through His death and resurrection. In fact our only right to come to God is because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. It is for that reason we pray in His name for He has told us in John 14:12-14 the following: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it."

Please engage in intercessory prayer at this time for New Life Evangelistic Center, the hurting and homeless and the sick and despairing. Please intercede for our cities, our nation, and those in need around the world. Let your prayers be birthed from compassion. As E.M. Bounds wrote, "Compassion is moved at the sight of sin, sorrow and suffering. It stands at the other extreme to indifference of spirit to the wants and woes of others, and is far removed from insensibility and hardness of heart, in the midst of want and trouble and wretchedness." In Matt.9:36-38 we read, "When He saw the crowds, He (Jesus) had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'"

Compassion flowing from the heart of Jesus drives us to our knees as we hear of school shootings, rape, murder, war, environment destruction and broken lives. When I am moved with the compassion of Jesus, I am moved into the middle of my wife's breast cancer that has reappeared in the form of four tumors on her brain the size of quarters. My prayers are then able to move her to the very throne of God with a love for her, as Christ loved the Church. (Ephesians 5)

Prayer birthed in the compassion of Jesus moves us among those in need, enabling us to experience that need in the depths of our souls. It causes us to obey our Lord's command when He says "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send

workers into His harvest field.” Please pray for additional NLEC workers to come forth at this time. As we see the magnitude of need around us, let us cry out with the prophet, *“My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within, my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city.”* (Lam.2:11) Compassion causes me to ask what would happen if I became desperate enough to wrestle with God like Jacob, if necessary, until my heart was broken over the pain of this generation of children and youth whom Satan has ravaged? As I hear story after story about the terrible things people are doing to each other, I find myself asking what would happen if I were prepared to engage in the spiritual warfare necessary to see people set free from satanic chains that hold them in bondage?

I can’t help but recall how forty years ago people began to intercede for a generation of youth who had fallen into the pits of drugs, sex and despair. As they interceded in earnest prayer, the Jesus movement came forth and tens of thousands of young people turned to Jesus Christ. The same thing can happen today once we begin to intercede with the compassion that flows from the heart of Jesus.

Intercessory prayer means we are willing to move forth in the victory that Jesus has already provided through His death and resurrection. The reality of this enables us to be delivered from the pits of despair and hopelessness to the extent that we are free to praise God. “As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the (enemy), and they were defeated.” (2 Chronicles 20:22) Thank God that He has given us the wonderful privilege of entering into the ministry of Jesus for “He always lives to intercede for them.” (Heb.7:25)

As we engage in this dynamic ministry of intercession, we must ask the Lord to cleanse us of all sin. Psalm 139:23, 24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

We must accept the fact that we can’t really pray effectively without the Holy Spirit’s help for, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for.” (Romans 8:26) As we begin to pray in the power of the Spirit, we must aggressively come against Satan in the powerful name of Jesus and with the sword which is the word of God. In James 4:7 we are told, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”(James 4:7)

When you are praying don’t be surprised if your mind starts going in every direction with one anxious thought after another. As this happens don’t panic or

stop praying. Instead, remember Is.26:3 which says, “You (Oh Lord) will keep him (and her) in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon You because (he or she) trusts in you.” With our minds at peace, trusting in the Lord, we are then able to praise with power as we intercede in the name of Jesus who, “Having disarmed the powers and authorities, made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Col.2:15) We can pray with the authority of Jesus knowing that through His work of redemption the powers and authorities have been disarmed. He has truly triumphed over them by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

As intercessory prayer warriors experiencing the victorious work that Christ has done, we are told “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”(Phil.4:6,7)

The question is, are your knees dirty? Are you spending time in prayer? Prayer is communion with God. It acknowledges the ever-present reality of the Living God. Prayer is a privilege that, as we engage in it, our relationship with God grows. Prayer is not an option for we are commanded in the Scriptures to pray. In 1Thess.5:17 we are told to “Pray without ceasing.” In Col.4:2 we are told to, “Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” 1 Chronicles 16:11, 12 declares. “Look to the Lord and His strength: seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles, and the judgments He pronounced.”

When we pray as Scripture has commanded, God promises, “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”(Is.65:24) We are further promised by the Lord that when we pray and work for justice, “Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help and He will say; here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always, He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.” (Is.58:8-11)

Jesus makes it clear that earnest intercessory prayer performs a vital role in destroying the citadels of injustice as He asks, “Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when

the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”(Luke 18:6-8) Prayer is not an alibi for indifference to the plight of the poor. (Is 58:2, James 2:14-26) As we care for those God cares for, He will take care of our cares as we put our faith in Him. Faith is an essential element in prayer. Jesus, knowing the love of many will grow cold in the last days, asks, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” Many today claim to believe God is everywhere while they live like He is nowhere. No wonder their prayer life is so powerless for, “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”(Heb.11:6)

How we need more men and women like Epaphras who interceded “Always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”(Col. 4:12) To wrestle in prayer means to engage in prayer in an agonizing way with an intense desire. New Testament believers not only devoted themselves to but also agonized in prayer with intense desires. The needs we are facing today are no less significant. As you pray earnestly, know that as you wrestle in prayer, Christ’s power is working powerfully in you.

Please continue to pray earnestly for Penny’s healing, New Life Evangelistic Center’s financial needs, the NLEC staff and for the needs of the multitudes who come to us daily. Let us believe God for a mighty outpouring of His Spirit!

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice