

Are You Sailing or Sinking?

Dear Friends,

If your soul was a boat where would you be right now? Would you be sailing along under the power of the Holy Spirit to the extent you found the time you spent in prayer and Bible reading a delight from abiding in the Lord?

Perhaps you feel more like your in a row boat where Bible reading and prayer is a burden. You find yourself hard at work when it comes to spiritual matters with very little joy in the Lord.

Maybe you have just given up and your soul is a boat that is adrift. You go where your desires take you, as you pursue anything and everything rather than the things of God. Then, when the storms hit, you find you are sinking as your boat is swallowed up in the turbulent waters of life.

It is when we come face to face with Jesus that we are able to sail. Paul says its when the eyes of our heart, our inner being are enlightened, that we are able to sail through life with the hope Christ provides. In Ephesians 1:17-18 we see Paul praying, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe."

As this miracle happens in our lives our soul will begin to sail as we experience the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Experiencing this power is more than mental assent. It is a personal religious experience where we see the goodness, glory, love and power of God in the very depths of our being. Paul refers to that as having the eyes of our heart enlightened.

Paul goes on to explain that this immeasurable greatness of the power of God is the same power "that worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places far above all rule, and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:20, 21).

It is this power of God which provides the wind for the sails of our souls that allows us to be more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us.

Satan, the god of this age doesn't want people to sail, he wants them to sink. II Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." How we need to pray at this time for those who are drifting or sinking in order that they can sail as they experience the hope and light of the glory of Jesus Christ.

I Timothy 2:1, 3, 4, 5 makes it clear that praying for those who are sinking should be a priority in our lives. "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men (and women) to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

How many of your family, friends, and relatives need your prayers as they are sinking and cannot see the light of the gospel? As a result of this blindness they keep making destructive decisions that are destroying their lives both now and for all eternity.

Those who have been blinded by the god of this world (Satan) urgently need our prayers now. They are like the wolves that the Eskimos would hunt by taking a knife and driving the handle into the snow or ice. The blade would then be coated by multiple layers of blood. The blood would then freeze. As time passed a wolf would find this knife and start to lick it. The more he tasted the blood coated to it the harder the wolf would lick. Before long the blade of the knife would cut the wolf's tongue and the blood he would taste would be his own. It would not be long until the wolf died.

That is the effect of sin upon the lives of those who are sinking daily into darkness. Effective and powerful prayers are needed at this time because when God looks at our world, He weeps. He weeps because He loves this world. God weeps because so many of the people He loves are drifting and sinking when they could be sailing. As a result, instead of gratitude there is resentment, instead of praise there is criticism, instead of forgiveness there is revenge, instead of healing there is wounding, instead of compassion there is competition, instead of cooperation there is violence and instead of love there is fear.

God weeps when he sees the destruction that the lust for power has brought. His heart is broken as He sees those He loves sinking into a Christ-less eternity because they refuse to accept the redemption that Jesus provides. God's love causes Him to weep among the homeless, the hungry and the hurting who are refused help by many who claim to be Christians.

Where are the people of God? Why are so many content to be drifting or at best, rowing when it comes to praying? Micah 6:8 declares, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

It's time we wake up, pray and seek the face of God until we start sailing under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

If we are tired of rowing, when we could be sailing, when it comes to moving through the ocean of life we must take the limits off God that we have placed on Him in our minds. This will happen as we come to the end of ourselves and as we surrender all to God we realize that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Everything human has his or her limits, but God has no limits. There is no limit to His plan, purpose and promise for our lives. Intercessory prayer under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit enables us to sail into this limitless dimension. Through the power of intercessory prayer, provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can be healed of the blindness which causes us to drift and eventually sink.

Sailing through life under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is possible because of the victory Jesus Christ has provided through His death and resurrection. Because of this victory we can sail instead of sink into the ocean of despair and hopelessness.

It is for that reason that we pray in Jesus 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."

It is this power of the resurrection and the compassion flowing from the heart of Jesus that 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 sail into the middle of the needs of others. My prayers are then able to lift those who are sinking to the very throne of God.

One of the most powerful ways to pray is to give God strong reasons why our prayers should be answered. Isaiah 41:21 says, "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons."

The strongest reason we can pray with authority is because of the victory that Jesus has already provided through His death and resurrection. The reality of this enables us to be delivered from sinking into the pits of despair and hopelessness and instead sail into the victorious presence of God as we praise the Lord. "As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the (enemy), and they were defeated." (2 Chronicles 20:22)

We must accept the fact that we can't really sail through life and 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 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)

As we sail over the oceans of life 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)

Instead of always having to row so hard in order to keep from drifting or sinking, we need to learn prayer is communion with our Heavenly Father. Through prayer and the reading of scripture we are awakened to ever-present reality of the Living God. We must never forget that prayer is a privilege, that as we engage in it, our relationship with God grows and we start to sail under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is not an option for we are commanded in the Scriptures to pray. In 1 Thess. 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." First 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."

In 1 Sam. 12:23 we see that prayerlessness is sin. There Samuel declares, "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." C.H. Spurgeon explains this verse by stating, "To pray for others must become to you a habit from which you would not cease even if they provoked you to the utmost degree; for you would only cry out, God forbid that I would cease to pray for you, for it would be a great sin in the sight of the Most High."

Many pretend to believe that God is everywhere while they drift as if He is present nowhere. If we are to sail as a result of being powerful prayer warriors we must be a people of faith. Faith is an essential element in prayer: Hebrews 11:6; Matt.9:28, 29; Matt.18:18-20 (agreeing in faith).

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 sail through the power of God we will 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)

To sail means to live a life of faith. Prayer enables the power of the Holy Spirit to fill our sails and move us forward. To pray means to breathe in the life of the Spirit of God by exhaling fear and unbelief and inhaling God’s grace and goodness.

The prayer warrior who is sailing not only speaks, hears, tastes, and smells God’s goodness in prayer, but, like the woman who was bleeding in Luke 8:43-48, touches the very hem of Jesus’ garment. This touch involves grasping the impossible, knowing that with God all things are possible. Touching the hem of His garment means refusing to drift or sink by believing the lies and accusations of Satan. Instead the believer will sail by receiving the promises of Scripture and making them their own.

As prayer warriors who are sailing let us pray for the victory of God over disease, greed, oppression, injustice and death in the St. Louis area. Let us fix our prayers on the divine possibility available to our lives, community and ministry. In the battles we encounter daily, let us never forget to put on the full armor of God as we take up the sword of the Word and the weapon of Prayer (Eph. 6:10-20). As Walter Wink writes, “When we pray, we are not sending a letter to a celestial White House where it is sorted among piles of others. We are engaging in an act of co-creation, in which one little sector of the universe rises up and becomes translucent, incandescent—a vibratory center of power that radiates the power of the universe.”

There is tremendous power in prayer. James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous man (and woman) is powerful and effective.” It is these prayers that will allow our souls to sail rather than trying to always row through our own efforts until we drift or sink. Life doesn’t have to be simply awful. It can be awfully simple as we trust Jesus daily to enable us to sail through life under His power and direction.

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice
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