

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Scripture has a lot to say about prayer:

Psalm 17:6 – I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words.

Ps. 34:6 – This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble.

Ps. 118:5 – Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.

Ps. 138:3 – On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

Rom 12:12 – Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

I Thessalonians 5:17 – pray without ceasing

In 1727, the Moravian Community of Herrnhut in Saxony covenanted to pray for revival. And by May 12 of that year, revival had come to Herrnhut.

A spirit of prayer was immediately evident in the fellowship and continued throughout that “golden summer of 1727,” as they came to designate the period. On August 27 of that year, 24 men and 24 women covenanted to spend one hour each day in scheduled prayer – a 24/7 prayer vigil. Soon others joined what they called the “hourly intercession.” At the end of a week, the prayer team came back to church. When asked how it went, they said they thought they needed another week. At the end of that week, they came back and said they thought they needed *another* week. That prayer vigil lasted for 100 years and led to missionary work to such distant places as the West Indies, Greenland, Turkey and Lapland. Twenty-six Moravians stepped up to the challenge of going wherever the Lord led them. What followed is one of the great stories of Christian history. Nothing held them back - not prison, shipwreck, persecution, ridicule, plague, abject poverty, threat of death.

Through their missionary work, thousands of souls were brought to Christ. And one of the places their mission took them was England. They started a little meeting house on Aldersgate Street in London, where a meeting was attended by a young Anglican priest who wrote in his journal “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ,

Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

That young priest was John Wesley. A short time later his brother Charles had his own “Aldersgate experience.” The renewal of the Wesley brothers’ faith re-energized their spirits and soon the Methodist Movement began to take shape.

The power of prayer brought all this about. The prayer of that little Moravian congregation ignited a spark that still burns today, all across the world, and even in our little sanctuaries here in the Shawnee Valley District.

Spiritual renewal is not something you can get by purchasing a new sound system, or video screens, or hiring a Christian rock band. You can’t get it by putting in stained glass windows, or replacing your pews with chairs. You can’t get it by building a big fellowship hall with a basketball court and a fancy kitchen. But spiritual renewal IS something you can get by praying. Praying as an individual, praying in small groups, praying as a church. Praying for our world, praying for our country, praying for our community, praying for our church, and praying for each other. Praying for a miracle. We can’t pull off a miracle, Church, but God can. He’s in the miracle business.

I think one of the problems we have today is that we don’t recognize a miracle when we see one. If it’s not the parting of the Red Sea or feeding 5 thousand with a few loaves and fishes, we tend to not think of it as a miracle. But when you see someone freed – through prayer – from the grip of addiction, or when you see a childless couple blessed with a baby after years of praying for the impossible, when you see a lost soul brought into relationship with the Risen Christ, you’re seeing a miracle.

And here’s what happens when you start praying for miracles – and recognizing them when they occur: you begin to see miracles every day. Small ones. Big ones. You start to see God in all the places he shows up, and you start to be really aware of the power that your prayers have.

And that’s what I’m challenging us to do today, brothers and sisters: start praying for miracles. Start praying for God to break through in our churches and renew our spirits.

Let's really tap into that wellspring of prayer, using it to fill our hearts, re-energize our faith and bring about miracles in our lives, our churches and our communities. We can't do it alone, brothers and sisters, but we CAN do it with God. And He's just a prayer away!

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