

POWER OF PRAYER HANDBOOK

Peter Hammond

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Published by Frontline Fellowship Publishing at Smashwords

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Typesetting: Colin Newman



Dedication

This book is dedicated to my daughter **DANIELA CHRISTINE HAMMOND**. May you continually deepen in your dedication to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May you, like Daniel you are named after, be brave and bold, faithful to God's Word and faithful to God's Work.

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"Give me Scotland - or I die" John Knox's passionate prayer was answered in his lifetime.

FOREWORD

by Erlo Stegen

Revivals are born in the atmosphere of true prayer. Desperate prayer. No Christian will ever grow spiritually if this part of his life is neglected.

One needs to remember that prayer is not a monologue, it's a two-way conversation. We speak to God and we need Him to speak to us. The example of the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple was used as an example of false and true prayer.

The Pharisee prayed with himself (Luke 18:11), God didn't even come into the picture. Since his own life was not right with God it revolved around himself and brought no response from Heaven

The publican or tax collector on the other hand prayed from the heart in such a way that the power of God would be revealed.

Rev. Erlo Stegen
KwaSizabantu Mission



In the busy marketplace Martin Luther lifts high the open Bible - challenging everyone to apply the Word of God to all areas of life.

~~~ Chapter 1 ~~~

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE PRAYER MEETING?

*“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.” Acts 4:31*

For centuries the prayer meeting was a central part of church life, an indispensable part of the weekly programme. Yet today few Western churches have a prayer meeting.

What was once a major emphasis of church activities has either been relegated to the sidelines and ignored by most members, or it has been dispensed with altogether. Furthermore many prayer meetings today involve little prayer. Even in meetings set aside for prayer, other activities typically crowd in and leave little time for adoration, confession, intercession and thanksgiving to the Lord. We need to ask ourselves: **Why is that?**

When I was converted, 28 years ago, my local church had a dynamic men's meeting, prayer meeting and outreach evening each week. However, television had been introduced into South Africa the previous year and was beginning to encroach upon the church's activities. The men's meeting was "*temporarily suspended*" because it clashed with "*Rich Man, Poor Man*", a popular weekly TV programme. (Actually the men's meeting never reconvened).

The weekly door-to-door outreach was also suspended, because it clashed with many people's TV viewing. The prayer meeting became a special gathering for a few dedicated members rather than the weekly activity of most members. It appeared that in the daily demands and time pressures, prayer and evangelism were expendable.

One would have thought that the church had few greater priorities than our relationship to God in prayer and reaching out in evangelism to our neighbour. But then I remember, in one of the first church member meetings I attended, that while improving the church's acoustics at the cost of R4,000 was approved, it was agreed that the monthly support of the church's missionaries could not be increased and would stay at R100. Evidently missions weren't as high a priority as music.

On one of my first mission trips behind the Iron Curtain to Eastern Europe, one of our persecuted brothers, Dr Paul Negrut, explained how they were able to recognise true believers, and identify informers planted by the Communist government: "*A real Christian loves God, a real Christian loves to read the Bible. A real Christian loves to pray. And a real Christian hates sin.*" Then this pastor added: "*We don't count our members by how many attend the Sunday service, but by who attends the Bible study and prayer meeting.*"

By that standard: **how many real Christians and true members do we have?**

A hunger for God's Word and a desire to pray are some of the first evidences of the new birth. I remember as a new Christian spending hours each day in Bible study and prayer. In the army and in the early years of this mission we spent whole nights in prayer. It was completely natural and thoroughly enjoyable as we poured out our hearts to God in prayer. And evangelism naturally flowed out of our times of intercession. The more of God's Word we studied the more we wanted to pray. The more we prayed the greater our compulsion to share the Gospel with the unsaved around us.

This is what the early church experienced. As they laboured in intensive, heartfelt prayer, they were fitted with the Holy Spirit. Then they went out and proclaimed God's Word boldly (Acts 4:31).

The Church is called to be "*a House of prayer for all nations*". Intercession, evangelism and missions should be an indispensable part of every congregation.

The prophet Samuel described prayerlessness as a sin (1 Samuel 12:23). The Reformer John Knox prayed: "*Give me Scotland or I die!*" No wonder Mary Queen of Scots declared that she was more afraid of the prayers of John Knox than of an army of ten thousand.

The Bible places great emphasis on prayer:

***"Pray continually"*** 1 Thessalonians 5:19

***“Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always.”*** 1 Chronicles 16:11

***“You will seek Me and you will find Me, where you search for Me with all your heart.”***

Jeremiah 29:13

***“Search me O God and know my thoughts I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; cleanse me from every sin and set me free.”*** Jeremiah 17:10

***“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the Hesh is weak.”*** Matthew 26:41

***“Then Jesus told His disciples...that they should always pray and not give up.”*** Luke 18:1

***“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”*** Matthew 7:7

***“Yet you have not called upon Me...you have not wearied yourselves for Me...”*** Isaiah 43:22

***“No one calls upon Your Name or strives to lay hold of You.”*** Isaiah 64:7

***“...all their kings fall, and none of them calls on Me.”*** Hosea 7:7

***“Will the evildoers never learn...who do not call on God?”*** Psalm 53:4

***“The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the Lord; so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered.”*** Jeremiah 10:21

***“Those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of Him.”*** Zephaniah 1:6

***“All this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favour of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to Your truth.”*** Daniel 9:13

**Prayerlessness is a root sin.** To reverse this disastrous trend we need to give attention to the Word of God, study the Scriptures, pray the Psalms, turn from our sins, and seek the Lord.

***“If My people, who are called according to My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven, I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land.”*** 2 Chronicles 7:14

***“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests... be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*** Ephesians 6:18

If you're too busy to pray then you're busier than God wants you to be. There's nothing beyond the reach of prayer except that which is outside the will of God.

***“If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you then you will ask whatever you want of Me and it shall be given to you.”*** John 15:7



John Calvin, the Reformer of Geneva, had as his personal motto: *"My heart, promptly and sincerely in the service of my God."*

~~~ Chapter 2 ~~~

THE POWER OF PRAYER

"If you remain in Me, and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you will, and it will be given you." John 15:7

Praying is to the spiritual life what breathing is to the physical life. Prayer is communication with God. God speaks to us through His Word, The Bible. We must respond to God in worship, adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.

We are commanded to pray:

"Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!" 1 Chronicles 16:11

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." Luke 18:1

"Continue earnestly in prayer, be vigilant in it, with thanksgiving." Colossians 4:2

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

We are commanded to be watchful and to be faithful in prayer. God acts in answer to prayer. The only foundation for spiritual work is earnest believing prayer. All spiritual failure, dryness and defeat can be traced back to a lack of prayerful contact with, and dependence upon, the Lord. Prayer is the source of spiritual growth. Prayer is the price of spiritual success.

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

It is an enormous privilege to be able to communicate with our Creator:

“Call unto Me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Jeremiah 33:3

Our ability to withstand temptation is directly related to our prayer life. ***“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*** Matthew 26:41.

It is after the disciples had failed to stay awake and watch and pray with the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, that their courage failed them and they fled.

Prayer is serious, spiritual warfare. Part of putting on the whole Armour of God is:

“Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18

Hindrances to Prayer

The Scripture warns us about threats that can undermine our prayer life.

1. When we refuse to forgive another, it hinders our prayers:

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in Heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26

2. Heartless, selfishness also undermines our prayers:

“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.”
Proverbs 21:13

3. Sinful motives will hinder our prayers:

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:3-4

4. Unrepented of sin hinders prayer:

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.” Isaiah 59:1-3

5. Marital problems will also hinder our prayers:

“Husbands, likewise dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the Grace of Life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1 Peter 3:7

6. Unbelief will undermine our prayers:

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” James 1:6-8

7. Vain repetition will hinder our prayers:

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetition as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” Matthew 6:7

How then are we to pray?

1. We have to pray according to God’s Word and Will:

“Now, this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His Will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15

2. We must pray in Jesus Name:

“And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My Name, I will do it.” John 14:13-14.

Of course, this is not a magic formula. Merely adding the words “In Jesus Name” does not make it a Biblical prayer. To pray in Jesus Name, means to pray according to His Will, as revealed in His Word.

“If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you may ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so will you be My disciples.” John 15:7-8

When we diligently study God’s Word and respond to it in faith and obedience, then our minds are renewed and our hearts are transformed by His Spirit. It is then that we truly pray in Jesus Name and according to His Will. As the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit is seen in our lives and through our prayers, the Father is glorified.

3. We need to be earnest and persistent in prayer. Our Lord Jesus told a parable of a persistent friend seeking help from his neighbour to provide adequate hospitality for a visitor.

“I say to you, that he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:8-13

4. The Bible speaks of a variety of postures for prayer. We read of some lifting up their hands in prayer (Jeremiah 8:6), standing (Mark 11:25), kneeling (Acts 20:36), bowing down (Jeremiah 8:6), lying down (Matthew 26:39), and praying with ones eyes open (John 17:1). While it can be very helpful to fold our hands, close our eyes and bow our heads when we pray, to avoid being distracted, the primary issue isn’t the position of our body, but the

condition of our heart. Frequently the practice of kneeling in prayer helps humble our hearts before God. Most importantly, our prayer must come from a pure heart.

“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18

A sinning man will stop praying. A praying man will stop sinning. Men would live better if they prayed more. Men would pray more if they lived better. A prayerful life is always a powerful life. A prayerless life is always a powerless life.

If you are too busy to pray, then you are busier than God wants you to be. No Christian is greater than his prayer life.

“For I know the thoughts that I have towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3



Scripture alone is our authority
The Reformation monument in Worms, Germany

THE BEST START

“My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.” Psalm 5: 3

The best start to any and every day is to start the day with God. The quiet practice of devotionally reading God’s Word and responding with heartfelt prayer, committing the day, and its work, into the Lord’s Hands is an essential part of Christian discipleship.

Andrew Murray wrote: *“The neglect of quiet communion with Jesus every morning is generally the prime cause of failure.”*

Beginning each day with prayer was our Lord’s practice on earth:

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, we went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Mark 1:35

It was *“very early in the morning”* that the women disciples went to the tomb and saw that Jesus was risen from the dead (Mark 16: 2 – 9).

The people came *“early in the morning”* to hear the Lord Jesus teaching in the temple (Luke 21:38).

“He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to hear as the learned” Isaiah 50: 4

“With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early...” Isaiah 26:9

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High; to declare Your loving kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness every night.” Psalm 92:1 – 2

“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” Isaiah 63:1

The manna that God provided to sustain the Israelites in the wilderness had to be collected early in the morning, otherwise it decayed as the sun rose. (Exodus 16:12 – 21).

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3: 22 – 23

If you desire to revive your prayer life, then get up earlier tomorrow morning and begin the day with the devotional reading of God’s Word, and earnest prayer.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5 – 6



German Reformer Martin Luther taught his congregation to pray the Psalms

~~~ Chapter 4 ~~~

## **REVIVE YOUR PRAYER LIFE**

The German Reformer, Martin Luther, taught that prayer should be living, powerful, strong, mighty, earnest, serious, troubled, passionate, vehement, fervent and ardent.

Luther described prayer as: *“The hardest work of all – a labour above all labours, since he who prays must wage almighty warfare against the doubt and murmuring excited by the faint-heartedness and unworthiness we feel within us...that unutterable and powerful groaning with which the godly rouse themselves against despair, the struggle in which they call mightily upon their faith.”*

*“Audacious prayer, which perseveres unflinchingly and ceases not through fear, is well pleasing unto God,”* wrote Luther. *“As a shoe maker makes a shoe, or a tailor makes a coat, so ought a Christian to pray. Prayer is the daily business of a Christian.”*

### **Reforming Prayer**

In 1535, Luther wrote and published: *“A Simple Way To Pray,”* dedicated to his barber, Peter Beskendorf. His barber had asked him for some guidelines on how he might improve his prayer life. In response, Luther wrote this 35-page book, which became so popular that 4 editions were printed that first year alone.

Martin Luther has been described as one of the most dedicated men of prayer in all of history. The historical records show that Luther prayed for 3 to 4 hours each day. In the 16th Century, the Church of Rome had buried Biblical prayer under layers of institutional, mystical and

theological error. Prayer for most in the 16th Century was a mechanical, religious rite, a legalistic work, requiring little thought. Luther worked hard to reform prayer. He spent long, solitary nights in fervent prayer and fasting.

### **Guidelines For Prayer**

In “*A Simple Way To Pray*” Luther wrote: “*First, when I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer, because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my Psalter, hurry to my room...and as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word for word **The Lord’s Prayer, The Ten Commandments, The Apostles Creed** and ... some **Psalms**...*”

**“It is a good thing to let prayer be your first business in the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas that tell you, ‘wait a little while. I will pray in an hour, first I must attend to this or that’ ...Those who work faithfully, pray twice...Christ commands continual prayer: ask and it will be given to you, seek and you shall find; knock and it will be opened to you...pray without ceasing... we must unceasingly guard against sin and wrong doing, something one cannot do unless one fears God and keeps His Commandments...we become relaxed and lazy, cool and listless towards prayer. The devil who besets us is not lazy or careless, and our flesh is too ready and eager to sin and is disinclined to the spirit of prayer.**

*“When your heart has been warmed by such recitation to yourself (of The Ten Commandments, the Words of Christ, etc)...Kneel or stand with your hands folded and your eyes towards Heaven and speak or think as briefly as you can.*

**“O Heavenly Father, dear God, I am a poor, unworthy sinner. I do not deserve to raise my eyes or hands toward You or to pray. But, because You have commanded us all to pray and have promised to hear us and through Your dear Son, Jesus Christ has taught us both how, and what, to pray, I come to You in obedience to Your Word, trusting in Your gracious promises.”**

Luther recommended that our prayers be numerous but short in duration. Luther taught that we should pray: “*Brief prayers...pregnant with the Spirit, strongly fortified by faith...the fewer the words, the better the prayer. The more the words, the worse the prayer. Few words and much meaning is Christian. Many words and little meaning is pagan.*”

The Lord’s Prayer and the Psalms were tools which Luther considered most important for any Christian’s prayer life. “*A Christian has prayed abundantly who has rightly prayed the Lord’s Prayer.*” The Lord’s Prayer is the model prayer of Christianity and it is not essentially a prayer of one individual, but a common prayer that binds all Christians together, uniting us with all believers, past, present and future, whether in Heaven, or on earth, in a Biblical Kingdom focused prayer.

### **Praying The Psalms**

Luther taught that **praying the Psalms brings us: “into joyful harmony” with God’s Word and God’s Will.** “*Whoever begins to pray the Psalms earnestly and regularly will soon take leave of those other light and personal little devotional prayers and say, ‘Ah, there is not the*

*juice, the strength, the passion, the fire which you find in the Psalms. Anything else tastes too cold and too hard.”*

## **Structured Prayer**

Luther also recommended that we structure our prayers according to The Apostle’s Creed and the Catechism, to **connect doctrine and devotion**. He also recommended praying according to The Ten Commandments, meditating on each item as **instruction, thanksgiving, confession and petition**. By meditating on the instruction, giving thanks for the blessings that flow from these principles, confessing where we have personally failed in obeying and applying these commands, and as petition to being able to honour and obey God’s Word in our daily lives, would revive our prayer lives.

## **Spiritual Warfare**

Luther lived daily exposed to what he called the “*Anfechtung*,” the unbridled, vicious assault of Satan. At times, it seemed as if the whole world was against him, as well as the flesh and the devil. In the midst of this spiritual warfare, Luther’s enriching approach to prayer strengthened him. The Apostle’s Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, The Ten Commandments, The Catechism and the Psalms deepened and focused his prayer life.

In his preface to the “*Larger Catechism*,” Luther wrote: “*We know that our defence lies in prayer. We are too weak to resist the devil and his vassels. Let us hold fast to the weapons of the Christian; they enable us to combat the devil... our enemies may mock at us. But we shall oppose both men and the devil if we maintain ourselves in prayer and if we persist in it.*”

## **Our First Priority**

Luther recommended a set time for personal devotions, early morning or at night, and warned against postponing them for any “*more urgent business.*”

## **Flint for the Flames**

He thought that one should see The Ten Commandments as a school textbook, a songbook, a penitential book, and as a prayer book. He advised that that one take The Ten Commandments as one’s structure for prayer on one day, a Psalm or a chapter of the Holy Scripture for another day, and use them “*as flint and steel to kindle a flame in the heart.*”

## **Praying The Lord’s Prayer**

“*A Simple Way To Pray*” gives some examples of the intercessions Luther was inspired to pray on the basis of The Lord’s Prayer:

**“Hallowed be Thy Name.** *Yes, Lord God, dear Father, Hallowed be Your Name, both in us and throughout the whole world. Destroy and root out the abominations, idolatry and heresy of all false teachers and fanatics who wrongly use Your Name and in scandalous ways take it in vain and horribly blaspheme it...Dear Lord God, convert and restrain them... restrain those who are unwilling to be converted so that they may be forced to cease from misusing, defiling and dishonoring Your Holy Name and for misleading the poor people. Amen.*

***“Thy Kingdom Come.*** O dear Lord, God and Father, convert them and defend us... so that they with us and we with them may serve You and Your Kingdom in true faith and unfeigned love and that from Your Kingdom which has begun, we may enter into Your eternal Kingdom. Defend us against those who will not turn away their might and power for the destruction of Your Kingdom so that when they are cast down from their thrones and humbled, they will have to cease from their efforts. Amen.

***“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*** O dear Lord, God and Father, You know that the world, if it cannot destroy Your Name or root out Your Kingdom, is busy day and night with wicked tricks and schemes, strange conspiracies and intrigues, huddled together in secret counsel, giving mutual encouragement and support, raging and threatening and going about with every evil intention to destroy Your Name, Word, Kingdom and children... for Your sake gladly, patiently and joyously enable us to bear every evil, cross and adversity, and thereby acknowledge, test and experience Your benign, gracious and perfect Will...

***“Give us this day our daily bread.*** Protect us against war and disorder. Grant to all rulers’ good counsel and a will to preserve their subjects in tranquility and justice. O God, grant that all people be diligent and display charity and loyalty towards each other. Give us favourable weather and good harvests...

***“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*** O dear Lord, God and Father, enter not into judgment against us because no person living is justified before You. Do not counter it against us as a sin that we are so unthankful for Your ineffable goodness, spiritual and physical, with that we stray so many times each day. Do not look upon how good or how wicked we have been but only upon the infinite compassion, which You have bestowed upon us in Christ, Your dear Son. Amen. Also, grant forgiveness to those who have harmed or wronged us, as we forgive them from our hearts...we would much rather that they be saved with us. Amen

***“Lead us not into temptation.*** Keep us fit and alert, eager and diligent in Your Word and service, so that we do not become complacent, lazy and slothful as though we had already achieved everything. In that way the fearful devil cannot fall upon us, surprise us and deprive us from of Your precious Word or store up strife and factions among us and lead us into other sin and disgrace...

***“And deliver us from evil.*** This wretched life is so full of misery and calamity, of danger and uncertainty, so full of malice and faithlessness... but You, dear Father, know our frailty. Therefore help us to pass safely through so much wickedness and villainy...”

### **Warm Wholehearted Worship**

Luther warned: “I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts, which ought to be comprehended, in The Lord’s Prayer. These thoughts may be expressed, if your heart is rightly warmed and inclined toward prayer, in many different ways than with more words or fewer... listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit Himself preaches here, and one Word of His sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learnt more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation.”

He warned against: “*A cold and inattentive heart*”, teaching that prayer required “*the full attention of all one’s senses and members... concentration and singleness of heart...*”

### **Spiritual Discipline**

Luther taught that in praying through The Ten Commandments “*I think of each Command as first, **instruction**, which is really what it is intended to be and consider what the Lord demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a **thanksgiving**; third a **confession**; and fourth a **prayer**.*”

He taught the importance of Spiritual disciplines, including solitude, silence, listening, meditation, journaling, praying and obeying.

### **Deeper Devotion**

May God be gracious to use the example and teachings of Martin Luther to revive our prayer lives, to discipline, sharpen and focus our prayers in a Biblical and Kingdom focused way. As we work through The Lord’s Prayer, The Ten Commandments, The Apostle’s Creed, The Psalms and The Catechisms, may the Lord be merciful to revive our prayer lives, deepen our devotional lives, and use us more effectively for the extension of His Kingdom and for His eternal glory.

**“Lord, teach us to pray...”** Luke 11:1





Martin Luther taught us to pray the Scriptures wholeheartedly and in a structured way.



Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli transformed Zürich with Biblical exposition and fervent prayer.

## REVIVING THE CHURCH PRAYER MEETING

*“We shall never see much change for the better in our churches in general until the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.”* wrote Charles Spurgeon in *“Only A Prayer Meeting.”*

The regular meeting of members of a congregation for the express purpose of uniting in earnest prayer is becoming rare in the average church. Many churches no longer even schedule prayer meetings, and in those churches that do, typically less than 10% of the members would participate.

In all too many churches, prayer meetings have become dull, cold and lifeless, lacking in Biblical focus and missionary purpose.

### **The Barometer of Our Spiritual Life**

Erroll Hulse in *“The Vital Place of the Prayer Meeting”* writes: *“You can tell with a fair degree of accuracy what the church is like by the demeanor or substance of the weekly prayer meeting. Is there genuine evangelistic concern? If so, it will be expressed in the prayers. Is there a heartfelt longing for the conversion of unconverted family members? If so, that is sure to surface. Is there a world vision and a fervent desire for Revival and the Glory of our Redeemer among the nations of the world? Such a burden cannot be suppressed...Intercession in the prayer meeting will soon reveal a loving church that cares for those who are oppressed and weighed down with trials and burdens. Those bearing trials too painful or personal to be described in public will nevertheless find comfort in the prayer meeting, for there the Holy Spirit is especially at work.”*

Matthew Henry wrote: ***“When God designs mercy, He stirs up prayer.”***

Peter Masters in *“The Power of the Prayer Meeting”* writes: *“In the prayer gathering preoccupation with ourselves as individual believers slips away, and we become a group of people longing for the blessing of others, and for the prospering of the cause. In the prayer gathering we are refined and honed... It cements unions and promotes respect... the church that prays together, stays together.”*

Jonathan Edwards in: *“A Call to United, Extraordinary Prayer”* writes: *“Prayerfulness is the natural response of a heart that is fully caught up in all Christ is to us and for us, over us and within us, through us and before us and upon us. Christ defines our agenda in prayer. Christ opens up the door to Heaven to present our prayers...Christ is the ultimate answer to all our prayers.”*

Jonathan Edwards also encouraged children’s prayer meetings: *“God, in His Word, has shown a remarkable regard to little children. Never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood...He has been pleased, and in a wonderful manner, to perfect praise out the mouths of babes and sucklings; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom that*

*please Him, and rendered their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world....”*

The Lord Jesus promised: ***“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”*** Matthew 18:19 – 20

Before the Day of Pentecost, the disciples ***“all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”*** Acts 1:14.

After Pentecost, the disciples continued steadfastly

***“in the Apostle’s Doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*** Acts 2:42

When the church was afflicted by fierce persecution,

***“they raised their voice to God with one accord...”*** Acts 4:24

The first church in Europe was born in a women’s prayer meeting (Acts 16:13 – 15). When Paul and Silas were arrested, they held a midnight prayer meeting in jail (Acts 16:22 – 26).

During the time of the Reformation, churches often held daily services for preaching and prayer, every morning and every evening. During the severe persecution in Sudan, many churches held daily prayer meetings each morning and evening. Some of the fastest church growth in recent years has taken place in South Korea where most church members consistently participate in early morning prayer meetings - daily.

*“If it is true that the kind of piety in a church rises no higher than it manifests itself in a prayer meeting, so that here, has one a barometer. All changes in spiritual life are faithfully recorded, then certainly too much attention cannot be given, by both the pastor and people, to the conducting of the prayer meeting.”* (Lewis Thompson *“The Prayer Meeting and Its Improvement”* 1878).

Those who conscientiously and habitually participate in prayer meetings *“experience more sweet and pure delight in the very exercise...grow more rapidly and steadily in grace... become the most devotional, active and useful Christians... and become the life and soul, as it were, of the church.”* (Edwin Hatfield *“The Social Prayer Meeting”* 1844).

Dr. Joel Beeke in *“Attending Prayer Meetings”* challenges: *“If every God fearing family, in every God honouring church around the world took the congregational prayer meeting seriously, what impact would that have around the globe? I believe that Scripture and Church history teaches us that the future of our children, our family, our church, and our nations depends on God’s people storming the mercy seat together. Prayer is the normal means that God uses to shower His Heavenly blessings upon the earth.... We customarily record our appointments on our calendar. Will you not mark your church prayer meetings on your calendar as engagements try to bring a friend or two with you? Let us treasure prayer meetings. Let us engage in it with all our heart, remembering that **Revivals usually begin with prayer meetings.**”*

**Prayerlessness is a root sin.** God acts in answered prayer. Prayer is the price of spiritual success. Prayer is to the body what breathing is to the soul. If you are too busy to pray then you

are busier than God wants you to be. There is nothing beyond the reach of prayer – except that which is outside of the Will of God.

***“For this reason I bow on my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to His power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”*** Ephesians 3:14 – 21



John Calvin, with his students in the Geneva Academy, taught the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life. He described the church as *"the fellowship of the flaming heart"* and adopted as his emblem a heart aflame in the hand of God.

~~~ Chapter 6 ~~~

PRAYER AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests . . . Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18

"God gives us the Spirit as our teacher in prayer, to tell us what is right and to temper our emotions. We should seek such aid of the Spirit." John Calvin

"Prayer is an art which only the Holy Spirit can teach us. He is the giver of all prayer." C.H. Spurgeon

"There is no man, nor church in the world, that can come to God in prayer, but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit." John Bunyan

"It must be acknowledged by the spiritual mind that all true prayer is of the leading of the Spirit; that He is the author of all real approach of the soul to God. All true prayer is put into words by the Spirit. He is the Author of prayer in the soul." Octavius Winslow

"Pray for prayer - pray till you can pray, pray to be helped to pray and give not up praying because you cannot pray, for it is when you think you cannot pray that you are most praying." C.H. Spurgeon

"Pray in the Holy Spirit." Jude 20

"If the grace of God be in him, it will be as natural for him to groan out his condition as it is for a sucking child to cry for the breast. Prayer is one of the first things that discovers a man to be a Christian." John Bunyan

"He who does not habitually pray to God, cannot be a Christian." Timothy Dwight

"A prayerless man is, of necessity and thoroughly, irreligious: There can be no life without activity. As the body is dead when it ceases to act, so the soul that goes not forth in its actions toward God, that lives as though there were no God, is spiritually dead." Charles Hodge

"You then are not a Christian if you are not a praying person. The promise is that everyone that is righteous will pray. You, then, are a wicked wretch if you do not pray." John Bunyan

Are you living a life of prayer?

Do you find yourself constantly at prayer throughout the day?

Is prayer something natural for you or is it something forced?

Why do you pray?

Do you pray because you are supposed to?

Is it merely a habit with you?

Do you pray because you cannot do otherwise?

Do you love to pray?

Does the love of Christ constrain you to pray?

"Prayer is a pouring out of the heart to God, through Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised. Prayer must be within the compass of God's Word; it is blasphemy or at best babbling, when the petition is beside the Book. David therefore in his prayers kept his eye on the Word of God: 'My soul cleaves to the dust; quicken me according to Your Word.'

"Remember Your Word to Your servant, on which you have caused me to hope.' Indeed the Holy Spirit does not immediately quicken and stir up the heart of the Christian without, but by, in and

through the Word. The Spirit, by the Word, directs the manner as well as the matter of praying."
John Bunyan

"What is it to pray according to God's will? When we pray for things which are agreeable to God's will, i.e. His revealed will; we should ask for nothing but what He commands us . . . for those things we have warrant to pray." John Cotton

1. Since the Christian is to do whatever the Bible commands him, he must pray because **he is commanded to pray** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Since God commands us to pray, it is obviously of great profit and effective in procuring the blessings of God.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16

2. All prayer is to be exercised in an **attitude of submissiveness** to God, in which you really desire God's will as to what is best and good: *"Your will be done"* (Matthew 6:10). We want His will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

3. **Prayer plays a part of the outworking of God's decrees.** God has decreed that we have not if we ask not. He has predetermined to hear our prayers and answer them. He has decreed that His eternal plan of salvation be worked out through the effectual, fervent prayers of righteous men, women and children.

4. **The doctrines of grace should strengthen and provoke believing prayer because they point us to the absolutely sovereign God who can answer prayer.** The God addressed in prayer is mighty to save, mighty to deliver and mighty to sanctify. Pray for God to save sinners and to revive saints. It is actually the Arminian who should give up prayer, for his god is too small, too weak and too soft to answer prayer. If God is not sovereign and man has a *"free will"* which even God cannot tamper with, why pray for the lost or for protection from enemies, either human or demonic? What comfort can be derived from a Deity who is biting his fingernails over whether or not men will *"let"* him do something?

5. Historically, the **doctrines of grace have always produced men of prayer.**

6. If your theology has led you to abandon prayer and to sneer at the concept that prayer is vital and necessary, then your theology is not Biblical.

7. A close examination of the prayers recorded in Scripture reveals that the saints of old filled their mouths with arguments when presenting their petitions to God. They buttressed their requests with Biblical arguments. They pleaded with God in terms of His Word, His glorious Names, His covenants of promise, and His plan of redemption. They presented their prayer requests like a lawyer who skilfully presents his arguments to judge and jury.

Pleading with God in prayer and presenting reasons to God why He should grant our requests is a lost art today. George Mueller, as his biographer pointed out: *"At this time of need . . . this man who had determined to risk everything upon God's Word of promise, turned from doubtful devices and questionable methods of relief to pleading with God ...*

"He used arguments in prayer and at this time he piles up eleven reasons why God should and would send help . . . He was one of the elect few to whom it had been given to revive and restore this lost art of pleading with God."

In his sermon on Job 23:3-4. C.H. Spurgeon commented: *"The ancient saints were given, with Job, to ordering their cause before God. Not filling the mouth with words nor good phrases, nor pretty expressions, but filling the mouth with arguments . . . When we come to the gate of mercy, forcible arguments are the knocks of the rapper by which the gate is opened . . . When a man searches for arguments for a thing, it is because he attaches importance to that which he is seeking."*

Mueller's biographer goes on to point out: *"Of course, God does not need to be convinced; no argument can make any plainer to Him the claims of trusting souls to His intervention, claims based upon His own Word, confirmed by His oath. And yet He will be inquired of and argued with. That is His way of blessing . . . We are to argue our case with God, not indeed to convince Him, but to convince ourselves."*

To this Ezekiel Hopkins adds: *"Now, although it be true that all the arguments that we can urge and all the reasons we can allege, cannot alter the purposes and determinations of God, as to any event that He has ordained, yet there is this twofold use and necessity of pleading them.*

"First, because by considering the reasons we have to pray for such mercies, our desires will be the more earnest and fervent in the obtaining of them.

"Secondly, because reasons in prayer do mightily conduce to the strengthening of our faith and give us great encouragement to believe that we shall certainly obtain what we have so much reason to ask."

Or again, as C.H. Spurgeon put it: *"Why are arguments to be used at all? The reply is, certainly not because God is slow to give, not because we can change the Divine purpose, not because God needs to be informed of any circumstance with regard to ourselves . . .*

"The arguments to be used are for our own benefit, not for His. Our use of arguments teaches us the ground upon which we obtain the blessing . . . Besides, the use of arguments is intended to stir up our fervency . . ."

From what shall we construct our arguments? Where can we find weighty reasons to lay before God? Where can we derive arguments from which we can present weighty reasons along with our petitions?

1. God's attributes. Spurgeon put it like this: *"You and I may hold anytime upon the justice, the mercy, the faithfulness, the wisdom, the long-suffering, the tenderness of God and we shall find every attribute of the Most High to be, as it were, a great battering-ram with which we may open the gates of Heaven."* For example, we can argue from 1 John 1:9 that God's faithfulness and justice are grounds for forgiveness (cf. Psalm 51:1-3).

2. The promises of God. Spurgeon observes: *"If you have a Divine promise, you need not plead that with an "if" in it; you may plead with a certainty."* (cf. 1 Kings 8:56; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

3. **The Names of God.** When in need of strength, should we not cry out to Elohim, the God of power and strength? When seeking a blessing from the New Covenant, should we not argue from the name "*Yahweh*," which is God's covenantal name? When appealing to God's sovereignty, "*Adonai*" should be upon our lips. When confronting satanic forces, the Lord of Hosts should be our shield and high tower.

4. **The sorrows of God's people.** The present condition of the church is a weighty argument for our need of revival (cf. Psalm 80:4-7; Psalm 12:1). We should also plead our own unworthiness, weakness and poverty of spirit (cf. Psalm 25:16; Luke 15:18-19). The history of redemption, God's mighty acts in past history provides a foundation for our trust in God (cf. Psalm 30:11; 143:1-6).

5. **The atoning life, death and intercession of Christ.** Spurgeon observes: "*When you plead that which shakes the gates of hell and which the hosts of Heaven obey and God feels the sacred power of that Divine plea. You would do better if you sometimes thought more in your prayers of Christ's griefs...*"

The end result of using argument in prayer shall be a strengthened and energised prayer life. Faith will be emboldened to go to God's throne and secure the petitions inquired of God. Thus, we will rejoice in seeing our prayers avail much. Spurgeon says:

"If the Holy Spirit shall teach us how to order our cause and how to fill our mouth with arguments, the result shall be that we shall have our mouth filled with praises. The man who has his mouth full of arguments in prayer shall soon have his mouth full of benedictions in answer to prayer."

6. **A study of the prayers in the Bible** reveals that the saints of old - and even our Lord - set apart whole days or nights dedicated to prayer and fasting. When something great was requested from God or whenever the situation was desperate and important decisions were soon to be made, the saints of old would give themselves to fasting and prayer.

"Pray Continually" 1 Thessalonians 5:17



French Reformer William Farel won whole cities to Christ through "prayer and the Word."

~~~ Chapter 7 ~~~

## **THE FIRE OF GOD**

John the Baptist was "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.*" Matthew 3:3

John said: "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I'm not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*" Matthew 3:11-12

**"For our God is a consuming fire."** Hebrews 12:29

When the Lord made His Covenant with Abraham He revealed Himself as **a burning torch** (Genesis 15:17-18).

God revealed Himself to Moses through the **Burning Bush** (Exodus 3:2-14).

The children of Israel were led through the wilderness by the presence of God manifested by a pillar of cloud by day and a **pillar of fire** by night.

When King David built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices, calling on the Lord, God answered him from Heaven by sending **fire on the altar** (I Chronicles 21:26).

*“When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from Heaven and consumed the burnt offering on the sacrifices: and the Glory of the Lord filled the temple.” 2 Chronicles 7:1*

The Prophet Elijah challenged the false prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel. They would each build an altar and lay on it wood and a sacrifice, **“And the god who answers by fire, He is God.”** I Kings 18:24

The hundreds of false prophets called on Baal, dancing, crying aloud, cutting themselves with knives until the blood gushed out of them, for hours. *“But there was no voice: no one answered, not one paid attention.”* I Kings 18:29

*“And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the Prophet came near and said: ‘Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your Word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God and that you have turned their hearts back to you again.’ **Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.** Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said: ‘The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!’”* I Kings 18:36-39

When Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord enthroned in Heaven *“High and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple....Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory! And the posts of the door were shaken by the Voice of Him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: ‘Woe is me for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Behold this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.’ Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: ‘**Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’** And I said, ‘Here am I! Send me’.”* Isaiah 6:1-8

Do you have a vision of the holiness of God? Do you have an understanding of the depravity of man? Do you repent of your own sinfulness? Have you experience the fire of God purging your sin? Have you heard the call of the Lord: *“Whom shall I send and who will go for us?”* Have you answered: *“Here am I! Send me.”*?

When the Lord Jesus commanded His followers: *“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations...”* He promised power from on high. Luke 24:47-49

When the Lord commissioned His followers: *“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”* He breathed on them and said: *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* John 20:21

At the Ascension, when the Lord commanded His followers to be His witnesses *“to the ends of the earth”* He promised: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you”* Acts 1:8

The Church was born in the fires of Pentecost. *“When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a **rushing mighty wind** and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared*

*to them divided tongues as of fire and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:1-3*

When the Sanhedrin threatened the disciples severely: *“that from now on they speak to no man in this Name.”* Peter and John answered: *“whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:17-20*

The disciples united in prayer: *“‘Now, look on their threats, and grant Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word...’ and when they had prayed the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:29-31*

Saul, the persecutor of the church, encountered the Lord Jesus in a blinding flash of light which shone around him from heaven, he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him: *“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” Acts 9:3-5*

Saul the persecutor became Paul the Apostle and missionary of Christ. Later, the Apostle Paul would warn: ***“Do not put out the Holy Spirit’s fire”*** (I Thessalonians 5:19).

The Apostle John, had a vision of the Lord Jesus while in exile on the Mediterranean island of Patmos. *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet, saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last...’” Revelation 1:10-11*

John had a vision of the Lord Jesus standing in the midst of the seven lamp stands, ***“His eyes were a flame of fire: His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace and His voice as the sound of many waters. He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me “do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death.”*** Revelation 1:13-18

Have you experienced the baptism of fire? Have you seen a vision of the Holiness of God? Do you know what it is to be led by the Lord? Have you experienced His anointing? Have you been purged and purified by the fire of God?

Oswald Chambers in My Utmost For His Highest wrote: *“The Holy Spirit must anoint for the work, fire me...nothing but the fire of the most Holy Spirit of God can make the offering Holy and unblameable and acceptable.”*

The South African Dutch Reformed minister Andrew Murray taught: *“The one thing needful for the church, and the one thing, which above all others, men ought everywhere to seek for with one accord and with their whole heart is to be filled with the Spirit of God.”*

Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote: *“Oh God, send us the Holy Spirit! Give us both the breath of spiritual life and the fire of unconquerable zeal. You are our God. Answer us by fire, we pray to You! Answer us both by wind and fire, and then they will see You to be God indeed. The Kingdom comes not, and the work is flagging. Oh, that You would send the wind and the*

*fire! And You will do this when we are all of one accord, all believing, all expecting, all prepared by prayer.”*

The Reformer John Calvin described the church as *“the fellowship of the flaming heart.”* His personal emblem was a heart aflame in the hand of God.

Are you on fire for Christ? In the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus revealed to the Apostle John His words of rebuke for the church of Laodicea: *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. I will vomit you out of My mouth.”* Revelation 3:15-16

Lukewarm Christians make the Lord sick. We need to repent of half-hearted, worldly, superficial, materialistic, lethargic, self-centered, apathetic, cowardly, yellow-bellied, spineless, cheap grace and easy believism. We must repent of being evanjellyfish. We need doctrinal steel in our backbones and Holy Spirit fire in our bellies.

***“Is not My Word like a fire?” Says the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’”*** Jeremiah 23:29

Ezekiel saw the fire of God. Daniel described God’s eyes like fire. Hosea described God’s coming inferno. Joel wrote of God’s fiery presence. Obadiah saw the fire of God in the middle of His people. Micah saw the mountains melt like wax before the fire of God. Nahum foresaw the Day of God’s fiery Judgment. Zephaniah saw the fire of God’s Holy jealousy. Zechariah saw God’s burning presence like a blazing wall, with His Glory revealed within. Malachi spoke of God’s refining fire to purge, purify and strengthen His people.

After they met with the Lord, the disciples on the road to Emmaus declared: *“Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us.”* Luke 24:32

Have you heard the Word of God? Has your heart burned within you?

The Lord God required that in the Tabernacle: *“a fire shall always be burning on the altar: it shall never go out.”* Leviticus 6:13. This perpetual flame was to communicate God’s purifying, penetrating, powerful presence with His people.

Jesus taught His followers: *“you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and that gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine** before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”* Matthew 5:14-16

Jesus said: ***“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’*** But this He spoke concerning the Spirit which those believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37-39

Three of the greatest natural forces in the world are fire, wind and water. And these three forces reveal something of the power of the Creator. On the Day of Pentecost, the fire of God, the wind

of the Holy Spirit, and the living waters of Jesus Christ moved in great power and the Church was born.

As the missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, wrote: *“The power given is not a gift from the Holy Spirit, He, himself, is the power. Today He is as truly available and as mighty in power as He was on the Day of Pentecost.”*

Do you know what it is have the fire of God’s Word burn within you? Do you what it is to have the wind of the Holy Spirit lead and guide you? Do the living waters of Christ flow from your heart?

*“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge; that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”* Ephesians 3:17-21

*“**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.**”* Matthew 5:6

**Our God is a consuming fire.**



English Bible translator William Tyndale's dying prayer *“Lord, open the king of England's eye”* was wonderfully answered. Within less than two years King Henry VIII had authorised Bibles, in English, in every parish in England.



*"We will this day light a candle which by God's grace shall never be put out!"* Bishops Ridley and Latimer were burnt at the stake in 1555 under the Catholic reign of "Bloody Mary".

~~~ Chapter 8 ~~~

PRAYING FOR JUSTICE

To those of us involved in ministering to Christians suffering persecution the imprecatory Psalms are a tremendous source of comfort. And those of us who are fighting for the right to life of the preborn, or battling social evils such as pornography or crime, are beginning to appreciate what an important weapon God has entrusted to us in the imprecatory Psalms.

The Imprecatory Psalms

Early in my Christian walk I encounter the prayers for judgement in the Psalms and was quite at loss to know how to respond to them. Prayers such as:

"Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness..." Psalm 10:15 did not seem consistent with the gospel of love, which I had accepted. Yet Psalm 10:15

was clearly motivated by love for God ("*The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations will perish from His land*" 10:16, and "*Why does the wicked man revile God?*" 10:13), and by love for the innocent who suffer ("*You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.*" 10:17-18.)

Nevertheless, I grew increasingly uncomfortable reading such graphic prayers for God to judge the wicked as:

"Pour out your wrath on them; let Your fierce anger overtake them" 69:24; *"O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, O Judge of the earth, pay back to the proud what they deserve."* 95:1-2; *"Break the teeth in their mouths, O God;...let them vanish like water...let their arrows be blunted...The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then men will say, 'Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.'"* 58:6-11

Certainly I wanted God to be honoured and yes I was deeply distressed by the prevalence of evil - but could I actually pray for God to "pour out His wrath" on the wicked?

The Scriptures make it clear that these prayers are not to be prayed for our own selfish motives, nor against our personal enemies. Rather they are to be prayed in Christ, for His glory and against His enemies.

The psalmist describes the targets of these imprecations as: those who devise injustice in their heart and whose hands mete out violence (58:2); those who *"boast of evil" and "are a disgrace in the eyes of God. Your tongue plots destruction, it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth."* 52:1-3; *"They crush your people...They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless."* 94:5-6; *"With cunning they conspire against Your people; they plot against those You cherish."* 83:3; *"You hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors."* 5:5-6.

To those unrepentant enemies of God the psalmist declares: *"Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin"* 52:5; *"Surely God will crush the heads of His enemies...of those who go on in their sins"* 68:21.

And the purpose of these prayers for justice is declared: *"Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules..."* 59:13; *"to proclaim the power of God"* 68:34; *"All kings will bow down to Him and all nations will serve Him"* 72:11; *"Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due You."* 90:11

Yet despite the fact that 90 of the 150 Psalms include imprecations (prayers invoking God's righteous judgement upon the wicked) such prayers are rare in the average Western church. However, amongst the persecuted churches these prayers are much more common.

Praying Against the Persecutors

Amidst the burnt out churches and devastation of marxist **Angola** I found the survivors of communist persecution - including the crippled and maimed, and widows and orphans praying

for God to strike down the wicked and remove the persecutors of the Church. I was shocked - yet it was Biblical (Even the martyrs in heaven pray "***How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?***" Revelation 6:10).

The initiator of the communist persecution in Angola was Agestino Neto. Described as a "*drunken, psychotic, Marxist poet*", Neto had been installed by Cuban troops as the first dictator of Angola. He boasted that: "*Within 20 years there won't be a Bible or a church left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity.*" Yet despite the vicious wave of church burning and massacres it is not Christianity that was eradicated in

Angola but Agestino Neto. Neto died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow.

In **Romania** I learnt of a series of remarkable incidents recorded of God judging the persecutors of the Church in answer to prayer:

A communist official ordered a certain pastor to be arrested. The next day the official died of a heart attack.

Another communist party official ordered that all the Bibles in his district were to be collected and pulped, to be turned into toilet paper. This blasphemous project was in fact carried out. But the next day when the official was medically examined, he was informed that he had terminal cancer. He died shortly afterwards.

On another occasion, a communist official who had ordered a Baptist church to be demolished by bulldozer died in a car crash the very next day.

When an order was given to dismantle a place of worship on the mountainside in a forest, the workmen flatly refused to carry out the order. At gunpoint a group of conscripted gypsies also refused to touch the church. In desperation, the communist police forced prisoners at bayonet-point to dismantle the structure. Yet the officer in charge pleaded with the local Christians to pray for him, that God would not judge him. He emphasised that he had nothing against

Christians and was only obeying strict orders. The building was in fact reconstructed later, and again used for worship.

"They were all seized and the Name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour...in this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." Acts 19:17,20

Nicolae Ceaucescu the dictator who ordered much of the persecution in Romania was overthrown by his own army and executed on Christmas day, 1989, to joyous shouts of "the anti-Christ is dead" in the streets. Many testified that this was in answer to the fervent prayers on the long-suffering people of Romania.

Another persecutor of the Church who challenged God was Samora Machel, the first dictator of Marxist **Mozambique**. Samora Machel was a cannibal who ate human flesh in witchcraft ceremonies in the 1960's. He pledged his soul to Satan and vowed that he would destroy the Church and turn Mozambique "*into the first truly Marxist-Leninist state in Africa.*" Thousands of churches in Mozambique were closed, confiscated, "*nationalised*", claimed and padlocked, burnt

down or boarded up. Missionaries were expelled, some being imprisoned first. Evangelism was forbidden. Bibles were ceremonially burnt and tens of thousands of Christians, including many pastors and elders, were shipped off to concentration camps - most were never seen again.

A month before his sudden death Samora Machel cursed God publicly and challenged Him to prove His existence by striking him (Machel) dead. On 19 October 1986, while several churches were specifically praying for God to stop persecution in Mozambique, Machel's Soviet Tupelo aircraft crashed in a violent thunderstorm. The plane crashed 200 metres within South Africa's boundary with Mozambique. Amidst the wreckage the marxist plans for overthrowing the government of Malawi were discovered and published. Not only had God judged a blasphemer and a persecutor, but He had also saved a country from persecution.

In the months leading up to the first multi-party elections in **Zambia** many churches fasted and prayed for God to remove the 27 year socialist dictatorship of Kenneth Kaunda. This was done on 31st October 1991 when Fredrick Chiluba (a man converted to Christ whilst imprisoned for opposing Kaunda) was elected president of Zambia and covenanted to make Zambia a Christian country.

It is recorded in history that the wicked Mary, Queen of Scots, declared trembling and in tears: *"I am more afraid of John Knox's prayers than of an army of ten thousand."*

On 3 April 1993 the Secretary General of the South African Communist Party Chris Hani was shot dead. From the unprecedented international wave of condolences and adulation reported one could be forgiven for assuming that this man was a saint and a martyr. Certainly it was not the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus which dominated the thoughts and headlines of **South Africa** that Easter, but the assassination of Chris Hani.

The stunning hypocrisy of the situation in that 20,135 people were murdered in South Africa in 1992, yet more collective concern and anguish were reported over the death of the head of the SA Communist Party than for all the thousands of other victims. Indeed the SA government, the international community and the mass media have apparently had greater sorrow reported over this one death than for all the 50,000 South Africans murdered since 2nd February 1990 when the ANC, SACP and PAC were unbanned!

Yet as a member of the ANC Revolutionary Council since 1973, Deputy Commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) - the ANC's *"military wing"* - from 1982, and Chief of Staff of MK from 1987, Chris Hani had approved and ordered bombings and assassinations of many unarmed civilians. As Jesus warned: *"all who live by the sword will die by the sword"* Matthew 26:52

After personally confronting Hani about his terrorist activities at a press conference in Washington DC (where he publicly declared his support for Fidel Castro, Col. Gaddafi, Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein and defended the placing of car bombs and limpet mines in public places during *"the struggle"*) I told him that I was a Christian and, while I don't hate him, I did hate communism and I was praying for him - that God would either bring him to repentance and salvation in Christ, or that God would remove him. He responded by swearing and declaring that he was an atheist.

Several other people also prayed that God would either bring Hani to repentance or remove him. Similarly several churches in America have begun to pray the imprecatory Psalms against

unrepentant abortionists. In one town 8 abortionists were struck down, with attacks, strokes, car accidents and cancer, within months of these public prayers for God to stop these killers of pre-born babies.

Some praised God for His righteous acts of judgement and quoted: "***When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous and terror to evildoers***" Proverbs 21:15.

Others were shocked that any Christian could express satisfaction at the misfortune of any - even of the blatantly wicked. Yet the Apostles prayed imprecatory prayers (Acts 13:8-12; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Timothy 4:14-15) and so did our Lord (Matthew 11:20-24).

What then should our attitude towards the imprecatory Psalms be? Should we be praying the Psalms? To tackle these thorny issues I would like to present a short summary of an excellent book, "*War Psalms of the Prince of Peace - Lessons From the Imprecatory Psalms*" by James E. Adams, (published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company):

Our Lord Jesus Christ & His apostles used the Psalms constantly in teaching men to know God. The New Testament (NT) quotes the Old Testament (OT) over 283 times 41% of all OT quotes in the NT are from the Psalms. Christ Himself alluded to the Psalms over 50 times. The Psalms are the Prayer Book of the Bible.

1. Are the Imprecatory Psalms the Oracles of God?

Some Christian commentators & theologians reject these Psalms as "*devilish*", "*diabolical*", "*unsuited to the church*", and "*Not God's pronouncements of His wrath on the wicked; but the prayers of a man for vengeance on his enemies, just the opposite of Jesus' teaching that we should love our enemies.*"

Yet 2 Tim 3:16-17 declares: "***All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***" (see also 2 Peter 3:15-16).

The fact that something in the Word of God is beyond our comprehension is not grounds for denying or even questioning its inspiration. To make ourselves the judge of what is good or evil is to impudently take the place of God.

Do we imagine ourselves to be holier than God? Wrong ideas of God have led many to become "*evangelical plastic surgeons*" who have made it their job to "*clean up*" God's Word according to their own ideas of what is proper. They have forgotten that it is God alone who must determine what Christianity is and what is suitable for His Church. The essence of what many have done is to question the authority of God's Word (like Eve's original sin of listening to Satan's question "*Yea, hath God said...?*").

The Psalms are part of God's revelation of Himself and His attributes, and they are reaffirmed by the NT as the authoritative Word of God. Those imprecatory Psalms which evangelical plastic surgeons reject as "*unsuited*" and "*unworthy*" for the Church are the very Psalms Christ used to testify about Himself (eg: Mark 12:36; Matt 22:43-44) and which the apostles used as authoritative Scripture (eg: Acts 1:16-20; Acts 4:25; Heb 4:7). See also 2 Samuel 23:1-2.

CH Spurgeon said concerning the imprecatory Psalms, (especially Psalm 109): ***"Truly this is one of the hard places of Scripture, a passage which the soul trembles to read, yet it is not ours to sit in Judgement upon it, but to bow our ear to what the Lord would speak to us therein."***

The rejection of any part of God's Word is a rejection of the giver of that Word, God Himself.

2. Who is Praying these Psalms?

Christ quoted the Psalms not merely as prophesy; He actually spoke the Psalms as His own words. The Psalms occupied an enormous place in the life of our Lord. He used it as His prayer book and song book - from the Synagogue to the festivals and at the Last Supper.

On the cross Christ quoted from the Psalms - not as some ancient authority that He adapted for His own use, but as His very own words - the words of the Lord's Anointed, which as David's Son He truly was.

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22:1

"Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit" Psalm 31:5

In His ministry Christ foretells what He will say as the Judge on the day of judgement, and He quotes the Psalms in doing so! Matthew 7:23 ***"Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers'."*** Psalm 6:8

In Heb 10:5 the apostle attributes Ps 40:6-8 directly to Christ although nowhere in the Gospels is Christ recorded as having said these words. Similarly Hebrews 2:11-12 attributes Ps 22:22 directly to Christ despite there being no record of His having spoken these words while on earth. Clearly the apostles believed Christ is speaking in the Psalms.

Christ came to establish His kingdom and to extend His mercy in all the earth. But let us never forget that Jesus will come again to execute Judgement on the wicked.

David as the anointed king of the chosen people of God was a prototype of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:30: ***"being therefore a prophet,...he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Christ."***

David was a witness to Christ in his office, in his life, and in his words. The same words which David spoke, the future Messiah spoke through him. The prayers of David were prayed also by Christ. Or better Christ Himself prayed these Psalms through His forerunner David.

The imprecatory Psalms are expressions of the infinite justice of God, of His indignation against wrong doing, and His compassion for the wronged.

3. But what about the Psalms of Repentance?

Christ is also the Lamb of God, the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. Christ in the day of His crucifixion was charged with the sin of His people. He appropriated to Himself those debts for which He had made Himself responsible. Our Lord was the substitution for the sinner. He took the sinners place (Isaiah 53).

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21

In history the Psalms, especially the imprecatory Psalms have been understood to have been the prayers of Christ by: St Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Tertullian, Luther and many others. All the Psalms are the voice of Christ. Christ is praying these prayers of vengeance. It is only right for the righteous King of Peace to ask God to destroy His enemies.

These prayers signal an alarm to all who are still enemies of King Jesus. His prayers will be answered! God's Word is revealed upon all who oppose Christ. Anyone who rejects God's way of forgiveness in the cross of Christ will bear the dreadful curses of God.

He who prays Psalm 69:23-28 will one day make this prayer a reality when he declares to those on His left:

"Depart from Me you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41

All the enemies of the Lord need to hear these Psalms. God's Kingdom is at War. The powers of evil will fall and God alone will reign forever!

"With justice He judges and makes war...out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre; He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty...King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Revelations 19:11-15

4. Are Jesus' Prayers Contradictory?

What about Jesus' command to love our enemies and to bless those who curse us (Matthew 5:44)?

Christ is of course the loving and merciful Saviour who forgives sin; but He is also the awesome Judge who is coming in Judgement on those who disobey His Gospel.

"God is just. He will pay back trouble to those who troubles you and give relief to you who are troubled... This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. He will punish those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power on the day He comes to be glorified in His holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed." 2 Thessalonians. 1:6-10

Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins, and He has power on earth to execute judgement upon His enemies. In the Psalms we see both the vengeance and the love of God. Even in the N.T. & in the Gospels we see imprecations.

"Woe to you,... hypocrites... blind guides... blind fools.. full of greed and self indulgence...whitewashed tombs...you snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to Hell?" Matthew 23

In Matt 26:23-24 Christ quotes from Ps 69 and 109 to refer to His betrayal by Judas.

We also need to acknowledge that Christ's prayers of blessing are not for all. In John 17:6-9 it is clear that Christ is only praying for the elect of God - those who have: ***"obeyed your Word"...***

"accepted" God's Word...and have **"believed"**. (see Luke 10:8-16 - Those who reject the message of God's kingdom will be judged.)

5. May we Pray the Imprecatory Psalms?

Martin Luther pointed out that when one prays: **"Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done"** then *"he must put all the opposition to this in one pile and say: Curses, maledictions and disgrace upon every other name and every other kingdom. May they be ruined and torn apart and may all their schemes and wisdom and plans run aground'."*

To pray for the extension of God's kingdom is to solicit the destruction of all other kingdoms, eg: Daniel 2:44: **"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed...It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."**

Advance and victory for the Church means defeat and retreat for the kingdom of darkness.

There is a life & death struggle between two kingdoms. The Church cannot exclude hatred for satan's kingdom from its love for God's kingdom. God's kingdom cannot come without satan's kingdom being destroyed. God's Will cannot be done on earth without the destruction of evil. The glory of God demands the destruction of evil. Instead of being influenced by a sickly sentimentalism which insists upon the assumed, but really non-existent, rights of man - we should focus instead upon the rights of God.

Note Psalm 83 where the Psalmist prays against those who *"plot together"* against God and His people.

"Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your Name O Lord...Do to them as You did to Median, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground."

The story of Sisera in the book of Judges (Chapter 4 and 5) provides a vivid example of God's judgement on the wicked. Sisera *"cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years"* and they *"cried to the Lord for help"* Judges 4:3. In response to those prayers: *"The Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot...All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left."* Judges 4:15-16

The account then goes on to describe how Sisera escaped to the tent of Jael she lulled him into a false sense of safety and then drove a tent peg through his temple with a hammer. The song of victory by Deborah and Barak celebrated the crushing of the head of Sisera in graphic detail (Judges 5:25-27). And it is this that Psalm 83 implores God to again do to His enemies... *"As you did to Sisera..."*

6. The Blessings of Obedience and the Curse of Disobedience

The imprecatory Psalms are fully consistent with the law of God: **"If you do not carefully follow all the words of this Law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome Name - the Lord your God - the Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your decedents. He will bring upon you all the deceases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded**

in this Book of the Law until you are destroyed...because you did not obey the Lord your God...so it will please Him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess. Deuteronomy 28:58-63

The covenant God made with His people included curses for disobedience as well as blessings for obedience.

Deuteronomy 27 records the formal giving and receiving of the covenant terms in an awesome account:

"The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

"Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol - a thing detestable to the Lord, the word of the craftsman's hands - and sets it up in secret.

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

"Cursed is the man who dishonours his father or his mother...

"Cursed is the man who moves his neighbour's boundary stone...

"Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the roads...

"Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow...

"Cursed is the man who kills his neighbour secretly...

"Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.

"Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out.

Then all the people shall say, "Amen" " Deuteronomy 27:14-26

The New Testament confirms that the inevitable consequences of rejecting Christ is the curse.

"If anyone does not love the Lord - a curse be on him." 1 Corinthians 16:22

(See also: Romans 12:19-21; Hebrews 1:1-3; 3:7-12; 3:15-19; 10:26-31; 12:14-29.)

7. How Can we Preach these Prayers?

The Church of Jesus Christ is an army under orders.

Scripture constitutes the official dispatch from the Commander-in-Chief. But we have a problem: those who are called to pass on those orders are refusing to do so. How then can we expect to be a united, effective army? Is it any wonder that the troops have lost sight of their commission to demolish the strongholds of the kingdom of darkness? If the Church does not hear the battle cries of her Captain, how will she follow Him onto the battlefield?

Pastors are commissioned to pass on the orders of the Church's Commander, never withholding or changing His words. One whose job is to carry dispatches to troops in wartime would face certain and severe punishment if he dared to amend the general's orders. The pastor's charge is of

greater importance than that of a courier in any earthly army. There's no place for the dispatcher to decide he doesn't agree with his Commander's strategy.

When Jesus Christ sent seventy-two disciples on a preaching mission, He told them to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom (Luke 10:9) - that is, to announce that people must submit to God's rule in their lives. Jesus instructed them to pray for peace on any house they approach, assuring them that if anyone rejected it, the peace would return on the disciples (verse 5). But we must consider what He said they should do if their message were rejected - that is, if the hearers persisted in rebellion against God's rule - "***But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, `Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near`***" Luke 10:11.

What would be the result of that denunciation? I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom [on which God sent fire from heaven in judgement for its wickedness] than for that town (verse 12). Immediately Jesus added curses on Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their rejection of His message (verse 13:15). He then explained to the disciples the great authority He had given them: "***He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects him who sent Me***" (verse 16). This is the fundamental basis for calling down God's curses on anyone: his persistent rebellion against God's authority expressed in His Law and the ministry of His servants.

We need to clearly and forcefully proclaim the war cries of the Prince of Peace. Only then will the Church awake from its lethargy and once again enter the battle. If we fail to pass on the battle cry then a lack of urgency and confusion in the ranks will be inevitable.

Like Psalm 1 our preaching needs to clearly show the blessings of obedience and the curse of disobedience. The eternal truth is that God cannot be mocked. Whatever a man sows - that shall he reap (Galatians 6:7). The curses pronounced on disobedience in Deuteronomy 28:47-53 were fulfilled in detail in Samaria (2 Kings 6:28-29) and in Judea (AD 70). The wrath of God upon covenant breakers is real.

The "I" of the Psalms is Jesus Christ. The "we" of the Psalms includes those of us in the Lord Jesus. The enemies are not our own, individually, but those of the Lord and of His Church. The Psalms are of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. They record Christ's march in victory against the kingdom of darkness. As Christ is the author of the Psalms, so, too, is He the final fulfilment of the covenant on which they are based. God will answer the psalmist's prayers completely in Jesus Christ on the final day of judgement. While on earth Jesus foretold the day when He will say: "***But those enemies of Mine who did not want Me to be King over them - bring them here and kill them in front of Me***" Luke 19:27.

A fatal end awaits everyone who refuses to acknowledge and to obey Jesus as King and Lord. Hearing expositions of these war psalms of the Prince of Peace will remind His people that God's Kingdom is at war!

The Kingdom of darkness is being overcome by the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, a war in which each local congregation of believers plays a vital part. You must rally your battalion to put on the whole armour of God, including "***the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God***" Ephesians

6:17. That battle-readiness also involves ***"pray(ing) in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests"*** Ephesians 6:18.

Christ teaches His army to pray for the utter destruction of the enemies of God as the psalmist did:

"Pour our Your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge You, on the kingdoms that do not call on Your Name." Psalm 79:6

To deal with the very real hurts and injustices in this world it is necessary for us to pray for God's justice. Those who are persecuted need the comfort of these prayers.

"Let the saints rejoice in His honour and sing for joy...May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands. to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentences written against them. This is the glory of all His saints. Praise the Lord." Psalm 149:5-9

Prayer is, in fact, spiritual warfare. One weapon is prayer for conversion of spiritual enemies; another is prayer for judgement on those who finally refuse to be converted. We handicap the army of God when we refuse to use both of these great weapons that He has given us. It is at all times a part of the task of the people of God to destroy evil.

If you have been guilty of dulling your sword, by neglecting or undermining these psalms, repent of that sin, sharpen your sword anew, and go forth to do battle in the Name and for the Glory of Jesus - until ***"the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the water cover the sea"***
Habakkuk 2:14



Scottish Reformer Andrew Melville confronted the kings' privy council with the Law of God.

~~~ Chapter 9 ~~~

## **PRAYING FOR THE PERSECUTED**

***“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also.”*** Hebrews 13:3

Every year an average of 160,000 Christians worldwide die as martyrs for Christ.

This year Christian brothers and sisters have been persecuted for their faith in Christ: in Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Burma, Red China, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Philippians, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

***“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*** 2 Timothy 3:12

Perhaps we will never suffer the vicious and violent persecution which Christians in Zimbabwe and Northern Nigeria are suffering at this time, but if we remain faithful to the Lord, then there will be times when we will be misunderstood, slandered, discriminated against, threatened and abused.

Jesus said: ***“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet, because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you.”*** John 15:18 – 19

When the Lord warned his disciples of coming persecution (Matthew 16:21 – 16; 26:31 – 35), they responded with disbelief. Because they did not believe Christ’s warning, they did not ***“watch and pray.”*** As a result, they denied the Lord and ran away (Matthew 26:40 – 46; 56; 60 – 75).

The Apostle Paul strengthened the disciples and encouraged them to remain true to the Faith by teaching that: ***“We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.”*** Acts 14:22

Jesus taught that many believers would forsake Him (Matthew 24:9 – 10) when trouble or persecution comes – because of their superficial commitment. Those with no roots in God’s Word would quickly fall away (Matthew 13:21).

In response to the clear warnings of these Scriptures, and in the light of the increasing hostility towards Christianity in so many circles, it would be wise for every Christian to study what God’s Word has to say about persecution.

***“And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”*** Revelation 12:11

Christians can overcome satan by the Blood of Christ’s Atonement, and by the Word of God, not only the Word known and memorised in their heart and mind, but their living testimony of applying the Word of God to every area of life. Jesus taught that we should not be afraid of those who can only kill the body and after that can do no more. But the Lord Jesus told us Whom we should fear. We must fear God, who after the killing of the body has power to throw both body and soul into hell forever (Luke 12:4 – 5).

***“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to Salvation for everyone who believes.”*** Romans 1:16

**Is your church planning to observe Sunday 12 November as a Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church?**

If so, please do visit [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org) and [www.frontline.org.za](http://www.frontline.org.za) websites for resources, information and prayer requests for the persecuted.

**What Can We Do?**

**Be informed.** ***“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”*** Hosea 4:6

**Be interceding.** ***“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them...”*** Hebrews 13:3

**Be involved.** ***“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”*** Matthew 25:40

**Read books on the persecuted;** such as: Foxes’s Book of Martyrs; Tortured for Christ; Going Through – Even If the Door is Closed; Faith Under Fire in Sudan; In the Killing Fields of Mozambique; Holocaust in Rwanda; Slavery, Terrorism and Islam.

**View, or screen, films on the persecuted;** such as: The End of the Spear; Sudan: The Hidden Holocaust; Terrorism and Persecution – Understanding Islamic Jihad; Behind the Sun; etc.

**Mobilise** your family, friends and congregation to pray for the persecuted.

Write letters to the editor to the local newspapers or magazines. Write to your elected representative, urging pressure on the persecutors and assistance to the persecuted.

**“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”** Proverbs 31:8

Your partnership could make the difference.

### **You Can Change the World Through Prayer and Action**

In the daily battles of life, one can be tempted to given in to depression or fatigue as we see sin and compromise increasing. Yet, there is hope. God is sovereign. Nothing is inevitable except what God has decreed. And there is great power in prayer. Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer – except that which is outside of the Will of God.

Christians are not doomed to defeat, but called to victory. If God can actually change us, then He can use us to change some part of this world. Christians can change the course of human history by prayer and obedience to God. The Bible is full of example of believers **“who through faith conquered kingdoms...”** Hebrews 11:33

And recent history confirms the power of prayer.

Shortly after I was converted to Christ early in 1977, I remember a missionary from Overseas Missionary Fellowship urging us to pray for God to open the doors to **Red China**. Even as we prayed my heart was filled with unbelief – how could a Communist country like China ever be open to the Gospel again? Yet, we have seen how Mao Tse Tung died, his little *“Red Book”* became discredited and how the doors to China have gradually opened since. Not that China is at all free – the brutal massacres of thousands of unarmed citizens in Peking’s Tiananmen Square have shown that Communism is still in control in China.

Brutal slave labour camps, and ongoing harassments and persecution of the House Church movement make it clear that the battle for the soul of China is still raging. But whereas in the past people questioned if the church had even survived the *“Cultural Revolution”* and vicious persecution in China, now we know that there are over 100 million Christians in China.

When I first started praying for **Mozambique** in 1981, it was firmly closed to the Gospel. And many of my friends thought I was foolish to try to enter Marxist Mozambique on my motorbike, loaded with one thousand Gospels and New Testaments in Portuguese and the Jesus film. Yet, God opened the doors time and again and we managed to deliver many tons of Bibles and relief aid and show Christian films throughout that war torn Marxist country, which is now open to the Gospel.

As the persecution of Christians in **Angola** intensified under the Marxist dictator, Agestino Neto, we prayed for God to intervene. Shortly after Neto declared that: *“Within 20 years there will not be a Christian or a Bible left in Angola! I have destroyed the Bible!”*, he died in mysterious circumstances on an operating table in Moscow. Today the church is flourishing and thriving in Angola.

When I first saw **the Berlin Wall** in March 1988, and the many crosses in memory of those who had been shot in the back, whilst fleeing socialism, I wept. I prayed, as had so many others, that God would break down that evil system even as he had demolished the walls of Jericho. Yet, how amazed I was when our prayers were answered in 1989, and millions poured across the border for the first look at the other half of their city and country.

When my wife, Lenora, and I visited **Romania** for Easter services in 1989, we experienced the oppression of Communism and witnessed the tyranny of Ceaucescu. Along with millions of others – we prayed. And before the year had ended, we saw the dictator Ceaucescu executed, Communist symbols smashed and God’s Word openly proclaimed in the public squares of Romania.

**Albania** had declared itself to be the first fully atheistic state in the world in 1966. Yet, in answer to prayer, the Communist government of Albania was forced to re-open many churches in 1990. Oppression continued but tens of thousands packed the few open churches each week until the Communist regime was overthrown. When my father-in-law, Rev. Bill Bathman, and I drove into Albania, in 1993, we were inundated with ministry opportunities and people hungry to hear about the God Whom they had been forbidden to even whispered about for all those decades of Communism.

In **Nigeria**, where the 12 Northern states have declared Islamic Sharia Law, Muslims have burned down many hundreds of Christian churches and have killed thousands of believers in recent years. Yet, tens of thousands of Muslims are coming to Christ in Nigeria and the churches are dynamic.

In **Sudan**, I have had the privilege of ministering in many churches which have endured repeated aerial bombardments by the National Islamic Front government. We have flown far behind enemy lines to the Nuba Mountains – an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. The Nuba church in Kauda was bombed 18 times in a 12 month period. We went there to encourage them, actually they encouraged us. We not only found the church building still standing, but the church was packed to overflowing for Sunday worship services. They were not going to allow 18 brutal air raids to keep them from their highest priority: to worship our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Episcopal Church of Sudan in Kotobi was attacked by helicopter gunships and burnt to the ground, 23 August 1996. Five civilians died in the hail of bullets and shrapnel from these gunships. We have had the privilege of conducting worship services in the charred remains of the building, and, after the church was rebuilt, conducting many seminars and services in this building which is a testimony to the fact that *“Jesus Christ is building His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!”*

The birthplace of Christianity in Moruland, in Southern Sudan, is Lui Cathedral. In 1965 the cathedral was burned down by Muslim government forces who also destroyed the hospitals and school buildings. Yet all these buildings were later rebuilt by the local Christians. Then again in the 1980's the Arab army swept over Lui and occupied the mission station putting an end to all education, medical and spiritual work for the second time. When I first saw Lui, in May 1997, it had just been liberated from the Muslim government forces by the SPLA Resistance movement. The signs of the Arab occupation were everywhere – trenches, gun emplacements, pill boxes, mine fields, the debris of war, a newly painted mosque and many vandalized graves. There were a shocking number of broken crosses in the graveyard by the Lui church. Rev. Jeffery Kayanga pointed out the huge tree Laro: *“The first Christian missionary, Dr. Kenneth Fraser, chose that tree to start the first Moru church under because it was the same tree under which the Arab slave traders had bought and sold our people as slaves.”*

Around the slave tree were the graves of the early missionaries and Christians and beyond the graves the remains of the church that they had established. The cathedral in Lui was restored, and soon packed to overflowing with thousands of enthusiastic Christians. The hospital was renovated and the school restored. Then the government of Sudan Air Force bombed this community on 10 separate occasions, severely damaging the church for a third time. Yet, Fraser Cathedral in Lui has been restored yet again. It is the church that will not die. A dynamic testimony to the vibrant faith and resilience of the persecuted Christians in Sudan. We have had many seminars and services in this church that has been bombed 10 times and rebuilt time and again.

Pray for the courageous Karen Christians suffering under Buddhist military dictatorship in **Burma**. Pray for Christians suffering under the brutal Communist dictatorship in **North Korea**. Pray for the over 1,000 Christians imprisoned for their faith in **Eritrea**.

Pray for the millions of Coptic Christians suffering under militant Islamic persecution in **Egypt**. Pray for the many Christians in **India** suffering under vicious militant Hindu Nationalists. Pray for the Christians suffering violent Islamic Jihad in **Indonesia**. Pray for the Christians in **Laos**, who have been tortured, beaten and attacked by the Communist authorities. Pray for the courageous Christians in **Vietnam**, for healing, courage and grace as they suffer violence at the hands of the Communist authorities. Pray for Christians in **Turkey, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**, for strength to endure persistent discrimination and persecution. Pray for the Christians in **Zimbabwe** who have had hundreds of churches bulldozed down and burned down by the Communist government.

**Pray** that the persecutors of the church may be exposed and opposed. Pray that the persecutors may be brought to repentance, or that they may be removed. Pray that the persecutors may fall into the traps that they have dug for others, that their declarations may come back to haunt them, and that their actions against God's people be exposed, confounded and confused.

*“When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous, but terror to evil doers.”* Proverbs 21:15

*“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them.”* Hebrews 13: 3



*"If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." John 15:7*

~~~ Chapter 10 ~~~

POWERFUL PRAYERS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve:
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to ask for rest,
to labour and not to ask for any reward
save that of knowing that we do Your Will.

A General Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep, we have left undone what we ought to have done, and we have done what we ought not to have done. We have followed our own ways and our own desires and we have neglected and broken Your holy Laws.

Have mercy on us Lord. Restore us who repent and confess our sins according to Your promises declared in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, merciful Father, for His sake, that hereafter we may live righteous and obedient lives to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in Heaven,
hallowed by Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
in earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for our land

Almighty, everlasting God, bless our land, its rulers and people. Grant that all of us may live in obedience to Your Word and follow after truth, righteousness and justice. Lord, give peace in our time – peace with justice, and with lasting freedom – to the glory of Your Holy Name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for all in need

Almighty, merciful Father, You have told us not to think of ourselves only, but to remember the needs of others. We pray for all in want or need, for the sick in body or mind, for the poor and lonely, for those in distress and despair and for all who have strayed from Your way. Merciful Lord, deliver them, strengthen and restore their faith, bless and help them through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Time of Disaster

Heavenly Father; we thank you for the reminder that power belongs to God and not to man. Look in mercy on Your people, forgive our sins and give relief to all those suffering from the disaster of... Grant also healing and restoration to Your wonderful creation to the praise of Your great Name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A General Intercession

God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly implore You for all people everywhere, that You would be pleased to make Your ways known to them, Your saving power to all nations. Especially we prayer for Christ's Holy Church, that it may be so guided and

governed by Your spirit, that all who call themselves Christians may be led by the Word of God and hold to the Faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

Finally, we commend to Your Fatherly goodness all those who are in any way afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body or circumstances, especially those known to us, or for whom our prayers are asked, that it may please You to comfort and deliver them, according to their different needs, giving them patience in their sufferings, and a blessed end to all their troubles. All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we Your unworthy servants give You most humble and hearty thanks, for all Your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men. We bless You for our Creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. But above all for Your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Give us, we pray, such a deep sense of all your mercies, that we may be truly thankful and praise You not only with our lips, but with our lives, by giving ourselves to Your service, and by walking before You in holiness and righteousness all our days. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom, with You and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

For the Church

Almighty God, the great Shepherd of Your people, bless those who are called to the ministry of Your Word and the congregations to whom they minister. Fill them with the love of Your truth and clothe them with holiness. Give grace to our bishops, pastors and chaplains, and all other ministers, that their lives and teaching will witness to Your true and living Word through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Extension of Christ's Kingdom

God of all the nations of the earth, we pray to You to remember the multitude of men and women who, though created in Your image are ignorant of Your love and salvation. Grant that by the witness of those missionaries and evangelists who serve our Lord Jesus Christ, that wherever they minister Your Word, perishing souls may be saved, the church revived, and the Name of our Saviour magnified. In Christ's Name we ask it. Amen

For Protection

Almighty God we look for protection. Protect us from bombs, landmines, artillery and other weapons of the enemy. Keep us alert. Guide our footsteps. Keep us sensitive to Your still small

voice. May You cause the enemy's weapons to misfire and their bombs to miss their targets or fail to explode. May their pilots fall sick, may their Antonovs and Migs develop engine failure. May they get lost. May every weapon formed against us fail to have effect. Protect us we pray. In Jesus Mighty Name. Amen

For Victory in Battle

Lord God, Almighty, You are the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Grant us steadfast hearts to love, trust and obey You. Strengthen us that we may serve Your cause and people with courage and resilience. Be merciful to us. Forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Make us quick and accurate. Guide our hands and feet. Make us alert to danger and swift to respond. Help us to work effectively together – for we pray all this in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Help

Lighten our darkness Lord we pray, and in Your great mercy defend us from all perils and danger of this night, for the love of Your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Those in Authority

Almighty God, who rules over the nations of the world, we commend to Your merciful care the people of this land, that being guided by Your providence we may dwell secure in Your peace. Grant to our leaders and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to understand Your Word and to do Your will. Fill them with the love of truth, justice and righteousness, that they may serve Your people faithfully – to Your honour and glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer for Clergy and People

Almighty and everlasting God send down your gracious Holy Spirit on our bishop, pastors, chaplains and other ministers and all congregations of our church. that they may truly please You, refresh, protect and bless them continually, to the honour of our Advocate and Mediator Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who has given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications to You; and has promised that when two or three are gathered in Your Name you will grant their requests; fulfill now Lord the desires and petitions of Your servants, as may be

most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Your truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting. Amen

For Ourselves

Go before us Lord, in all our doings with Your most gracious favour, and grant us Your constant help, that in all our works, begun, continued and ended in You we may glorify Your Holy Name, and by Your mercy receive everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The General Supplication or Litany

For Mercy

God the Father, Creator of all, have mercy on our sinners.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on our sinners.

God the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son have mercy on our sinners.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God have mercy on our sinners. Amen.

For Deliverance

Lord, remember not our offences, nor the offenses of our forefathers; punish us not for our sins, spare Your people whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood and be not angry with us for ever,

spare us good Lord.

From all evil and harm, from sin, from the cunning attacks of the devil; from Your wrath and from everlasting condemnation,

good Lord deliver us.

From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vanity and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness,

good Lord deliver us.

From sexual and all other deadly sin; and from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,

good Lord deliver us.

From fire and storm, drought and flood, from epidemic and famine, from strife and violence, from bombs and landmines, from rebellion and war and from dying suddenly and unready,

good Lord deliver us.

From all false doctrine, heresy and schism; from hardness of heart and contempt of Your Word and commandments,

good Lord deliver us.

In all times of misery, in all times of plenty, in the hours of death and on the Day of Judgment,

good Lord deliver us.

By the mystery of Your Holy Incarnation; by Your Holy birth, by Your circumcision and

obedience to the Law; by Your baptism, fasting and temptation,
good Lord deliver us.

By Your agony and anguish, by Your cross and suffering, by Your precious death and burial, by Your glorious resurrection and ascension and by the Coming of the Holy Spirit,
good Lord deliver us. Amen.

For Help

Lord God we sinners ask you to hear us and to rule and direct Your holy Church in the right way.
Hear us good Lord.

Enlighten all bishops and other ministers, which true knowledge and understanding of Your Word and let their preaching and life clearly show it. **Hear us good Lord.**

Grant wisdom and strength to our leaders and all in authority, and that they may first seek Your honour and glory. **Hear us good Lord.**

Give grace to the judges and magistrates to discern and truth and give right judgment. **Hear us good Lord.**

Help us to love and revere You, to hear and receive Your Word, to live by it, and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. **Hear us good Lord.**

Bring to the truth all who have gone wrong, or been deceived, strengthen those who stand firm in the Faith, encourage the faint hearted, lift the fallen, and finally beat down Satan under our feet.
Hear us good Lord.

Help and undertake for all in danger, or any kind of suffering or persecution, need, or trouble, the poor, the hungry and the homeless, protect all who travel by land, water or air and have pity on all prisoners. **Hear us good Lord.**

Bless the widows and fatherless children, all women in childbirth, all who are sick, all young children and the aged, the lonely and all who fear and despair. **Hear us good Lord.**

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers and turn their hearts. **Hear us good Lord.**

Grant us true repentance; forgive our sins, indifference and ignorance, and fill us with Your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to Your Holy Word. Hear us good Lord. Protect the earth, grant us plentiful harvests and make us truly thankful for all You provide. **Hear us good Lord. Amen.**

Closing Prayers

Son of God we ask you to hear us.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world grant us your peace.

Lord have mercy on us

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord deal not with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our wickedness.

Lord we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us of the great works that You did in their days and in the old times before them.

Lord arise, help and deliver us for Your honour.

Glory to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as in the beginning so now and forever. Amen.

Confession of Sin

Almighty God, Heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned against you, in our thoughts, words, and deeds and in what we have left undone. Lord have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and help us that we may serve You better and please You more through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening Prayer

Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of Thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace, this night and evermore. Amen.

A Child's Affirmation

Lord Jesus, I believe Thee,
Lord Jesus, I trust Thee,
Lord Jesus, I love Thee.

A Missionary Prayer

O Lord, who lovest all mankind; may Thy Kingdom come within my heart and home, through all our land, in all the world.

A Child's Prayer

O God, give me clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts.
Help me to stand for the hard right against the easy wrong.
Save me from habits that harm.
Teach me to work as hard and play as fair in Thy sight alone, as if all the world saw.
Forgive me when I am unkind, and help me to forgive those who are unkind to me.
Keep me ready to help others at some cost to myself;
send me chances to do some good every day,
and so grow more like Christ. Amen

A Twelfth Century Prayer

Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits Thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may I know Thee more clearly,
may I love Thee more dearly,
may I follow Thee more nearly. Amen.

Purity of Heart

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid;
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

O Lord, our Christ, may we have Thy mind and Thy spirit;
make us instruments of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; and
where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that we may no so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen. –

Students of God's Word

O Almighty God, who hast taught us that Thy Word is a lantern unto our feet and a light unto our path; grant that we, with all who devoutly read the Holy Scriptures, may realize our fellowship one with another in Thee; and may learn thereby to know Thee more fully, to love Thee more truly, and to follow more faithfully in the steps of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God blessed for evermore. Amen. –

Understanding the Scriptures

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of The Holy Word, we may embrace, and ever holdfast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

At End of Day

Be present, merciful God and protect us through the hours of this night, that we, who are wearied by the changed and chances of this fleeting world, may rest on Your eternal changelessness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen



General George Washington praying in the snow.



Boniface, the Saxon missionary, who in the eighth century, won much of Germany to Christ, by prayer and the Word.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **A GUIDE FOREXTENDED PRAYER FOCUS**

**"Pray continually"** 1 Thessalonians 5:17

If we're too busy to pray then we're busier than God wants us to be.

No man is greater than his prayer life.

Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer - except that which is beyond the will of God.

A prayerful life is a powerful life.

A prayerless life is a powerless life.

Prayer is the foundation for ministry.

*"Ask and it will be given to you"* Matthew 7:7

### **Pray the Psalms**

*"If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you."* John 15:7

### **ACTS:**

**A - ADORATION** - for Who God is - Holy, loving, all mighty, all knowing, all loving, everywhere present, merciful, gracious, majestic - Eternal judge, Creator, King of kings and Lord of lords.

*"You will seek Me and you will find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."* Jeremiah 29:13

*"Worship the Lord in the splendour of His Holiness"* 1 Chronicles 16:29

*"Come, let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker."* Psalm 95:6

**C - CONFESSION** - for how we have failed God - Ten Commandments ~ personal, family, church, community and nation.

*"Your iniquities have separated you from your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."* Isaiah 59:2

*"If anyone turns a deaf ear to the Law, even his prayers are detestable."* Proverbs 28:9

*"But I tell you ... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."* Matthew 5:44

*"... Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you."* Luke 6:27

*"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in Heaven may forgive you your sins."* Mark 11:25

*"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you."* Matthew 6:14

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* 1 John 1:9

*"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."* Matthew 26:41

*"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."* Psalm 139:24

*"And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."* Romans 8:27



**T - THANKSGIVING** - for what God has done.

*"Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1  
Thessalonians 5:18*

*"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise  
His Name." Psalm 100:4*

**S - SUPPLICATION** - Requests & Petitions

Remember the persecuted believers in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Burma, Cuba, Northern  
Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

*"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners." Hebrews 13:3*

*"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests ... be alert and  
always keep on praying for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18*

*"Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be  
honoured, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil  
men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect  
you from the evil one." 2 Thessalonians 3: 1-2*

Pray for Revival: *"If My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray  
and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will  
forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14*

*"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalm 95:6*



Statue of King Alfred the Great of England - Who, in the 9th century, laid the foundations of Western Civilisation in the Common Law of England and began the conversion of the Vikings to Christ.

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APPENDIX 2

A PRAYER OF NATIONAL REPENTANCE

Almighty God, we bow before You our Creator, You are the One who has given us life and health, talents, gifts and opportunities for service. Every breath we breathe is a gift of Your grace. We acknowledge that You are also the Eternal Judge before Whom each one of us must stand and give an account of our lives.

Have mercy upon us. Lord. Do not treat us as we deserve. We plead for Your mercy - for Your grace. Your undeserved favour. For we confess that we are a sinful people and we are part of a nation in rebellion against You.

We have broken Your holy laws.

Our leaders are too proud to bow before you in prayer at the beginning of Parliament.

At state events our leaders have committed idolatry, worshipping other gods who are not God at all.

Your Name is routinely taken in vain on national television and at cinemas and this blasphemy is constitutionally protected and regarded as "entertainment."

The Lord's Day is desecrated every week. What You ordained as a Day of rest and a Day of worship is being commercialised and abused for the worship of pleasure.

Respect for our parents and elders is being undermined everywhere by the laws, the entertainment industry and by the explosion of violent crimes against the elderly.

Every year over 20 000 people are murdered in South Africa and our Justice system is failing to protect the citizens of this land. Most of the murderers who terrorise our people escape being brought to justice. In fact our laws seem to favour the rights of the criminals and all too often criminalise the victims. **Have mercy on us Lord.**

Selfishness, greed, covetousness and deception are pervasive and we have become a nation infested with corruption and theft. Our Constitution entrenches the rights of pomographers to exploit people made in the image of God for profit - to take what You have made to be holy and perverted it, to take what You designed to be special and made it sordid, to distort what you intended to be private and developed it into a multi million rand exploitative industry. **Have mercy on us Lord.**

And we must admit that we have the hypocrisy to claim to be a "human rights society" while denying the right to life to pre-born babies. **Forgive us Lord for interpreting the Right to Life to protect guilty murderers from execution but not protecting innocent babies from receiving the death penalty through abortion.**

We are ashamed that our society could have become so calloused, careless and cruel as to allow little babies to be poisoned, burned, dismembered, smothered or strangled - through abortion.

We recognise that *all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing*. And we must confess that most of us, even in the Church, have shamefully done nothing to protest and work against the legalised slaughter of pre-born babies in South Africa.

You have declared that *"Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me."* (Matthew 25:45). We recognise that to know the good we ought to do and to fail to do it is sin (James 4:17).

We have sinned. We have not loved You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, nor have we loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not done unto others as we would have others do unto us. We have been thoughtless and careless. We have been self-centred and preoccupied with less important things. Forgive us for thinking so much of ourselves and so little of You and of our neighbours. Especially on this day - we confess that we have not loved our unseen, pre-born neighbours as we ought. Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

On behalf of our congregations, communities and nation we repent of the national sin of abortion. May You be merciful and gracious O Lord to forgive us our many sins and to bless us with a revival of repentance.

May You raise up many more Christians to fight for the right to life of pre-born babies.

May you grant to mothers going through crisis pregnancies _ grace, comfort, strength and the support of family, friends and congregations _ to choose life that the children may be born and brought up in the love and admonition of the Lord.

Lord, raise up more pastors, elders, deacons and church members to see the needs and to educate and mobilise their congregations to respect the sanctity of life, and lovingly support both mothers and children - especially in crisis situations.

Strengthen the doctors and nurses to resist all pressures to pervert their healing profession from saving lives to taking lives. May the medical profession stand together in resisting the overwhelming pressures to turn them into paid assassins instead of those who are true to their Hippocratic oath.

And we also pray that You may grant that those politicians who worked and voted to legalise abortion in South Africa would come to repentance. And should those guilty of unleashing this abortion holocaust steadfastly refuse to repent, then we pray that You, O Lord, may remove them.

May you raise up new leaders who will respect the right to life of even the most helpless members of our society and ensure that babies are effectively protected from the violence of abortion - by law.

Guide each one of us, O Lord, as to what we can do to save lives and love our neighbours, for we ask all this in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - Amen.



Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli declared: *"They may kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul."*

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### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **SCRIPTURAL IMPRECATORY PRAYER**

*"This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer, Who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord , Who has made all things." Isaiah 44:24*

*"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" Romans 3:10-18*

*"All who hate Me, love death." Proverbs 8:36*

*"They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed . . . and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.*

*Therefore the Lord was angry with His people and abhorred His inheritance. He handed them over . . . and their foes ruled over them. Their enemies oppressed them and subjected them to their power." Psalm 106:37-42*

**"You shall not murder."** Exodus 20:13

*"There are six things **the Lord hates**, seven things that are detestable to Him; haughty eyes, a lying tongue, **hands that shed innocent blood** . . ." Proverbs 6:16-17*

*"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." Genesis 9:6*

**". . . This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."** Deuteronomy 30:15-19

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute . . . defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8-9*

**"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you . . ."** Jeremiah 1:5

*". . . it pleased God, **Who separated me from my mother's womb** and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . ." Galatians 1:15-16*

*"Listen to me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. **The Lord called me from the womb; from the body of my mother He named me . . . the Lord, Who formed me from the womb to be His servant.**" Isaiah 49:1-5*

*"Whoever welcomes a little child like this in My Name welcomes Me." Matthew 18:5*

*"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven." Matthew 18:10*

**"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than that he should offend one of these little ones, So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him."** Luke 17:1-3

*"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." Proverbs 14:34*

**"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."** Psalm 9:17

*"Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this', does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will not He repay each one according to what he has done?" Proverbs 24:11-12*

**"If My People who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."** 2 Chronicles 7:14

*"Repent then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."* Acts 3:19

*"Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord . . ."* Acts 8:22

*"Unless you repent, you too will all perish."* Luke 13:3

*"Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts . . . let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"* Amos 5:15, 24



Trembling and in tears, Mary, Queen of Scots exclaimed: *"I am more afraid of the prayers of John Knox than of an army of ten thousand."*

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## About the Author

Dr. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off road motorbike, Peter has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned. On some mission trips he has flown far behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in Central Sudan with tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. He has then walked throughout the war devastated Nuba Mountains showing the Jesus film in Arabic, proclaiming the Gospel, training pastors and evading enemy patrols.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship, the Chairman of Africa Christian Action and the Chairman of The Reformation Society. He is the author of Faith Under Fire in Sudan, Holocaust in Rwanda, the Great Commission Manual, Putting Feet to Your Faith, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, The Greatest Century of Missions, Biblical Principles for Africa, The Discipleship Handbook, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam and The Greatest Century of Reformation. He has co-authored or contributed to: Fight for Life, Make a Difference, The Pink Agenda, Character Assassins and South Africa – Renaissance or Reformation? He is the editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and the Christian Action magazine, as well as a contributing editor of JOY! Magazine.

Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war torn Rhodesia – now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked for Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. He earned a Doctorate in Missiology and has been awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity. Peter is married to Lenora (whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman, have pioneered missionary work into Eastern Europe for over 50 years). Peter and Lenora have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin whom they home schooled.