

**Prayer and Evangelism**

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Scripture:  ***Acts 2:40-42***

 ***In this little booklet I want to speak to you about prayer and evangelism. We must never take lightly the role of prayer when it comes to taking the gospel to a lost and dying world.***

**Charles H. Spurgeon** put prayer's role in evangelism in proper perspective: "Remember that prayer is effectual with God . . . Are we not getting weary of living in this world among so many who are going to hell? Is it not terrible to think that after all the church is doing, thousands are being lost every day? We ought to bestir ourselves for men's souls, and we cannot do better for them than by praying for them. Let us, therefore, bestir ourselves in prayer."

**George Barna** said, "A Church that strives to evangelize its community without saturating its efforts in prayer is like a race car driver that jumps into a car at the starting line and discovers that the tank has not been filled with gas."

 Barna's analogy is accurate. The reason many of our evangelistic efforts seem to bear so little fruit is that we have failed to pray effectively for the lost.

**LET US NOTE THE ROLE OF PRAYER IN EVANGELISM**

**IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE CHURCH**

 In Matthew 28:16-20 we have Jesus Christ **in Galilee** giving his church the great commission.

*16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.*

*18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

When we come to Acts we find the church back in Jerusalem, nothing of note is recorded for us between Christ appearance in Galilee and his appearing for the last time here in Acts, even though he has given them the great commission. The promised *(dunamis)* power (Acts 1:8) has not yet been given to the church. What we find is the church assembled and praying Acts 1:14 *14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren*.

 **They have no power, then are not effectively carrying out the Great Commission.**  Therefore they are **P-R-A-Y-I-N-G**, would it not make sense in our day when as a church we seemed to have no power, when as a church we are not reaching the lost that we also ought to PRAY?

 This church continued in prayer from Christ ascension into heaven until the Day of Pentecost **10 days**. They are empowered to fulfill the great commission on the 10th day Pentecost ***Acts 2:1-4.*** The fruit of the preached gospel and that 10 day prayer meeting is recorded for us in *Acts 2:41ff*

 *41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 ¶ And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

Later on in Acts we again see the great example of prayer in evangelism in ***Acts 4:21-31***

*21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.*

*22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

*23 ¶ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

*31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

The church is being threatened, they are fearful, they have locked themselves in behind closed doors. But when they opened their hearts up and laid out their plea before the Lord, the Lord wonderfully answered giving them the boldness to witness as they had requested.

 **IT IS BIBLICAL TO PRAY FOR THE LOST**

 **A. 1Tim.2:1-4**

*1 ¶ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications,* ***prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*** *2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4* ***Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth****.*

You will note that this prayer was not just about God’s people living a quiet and peaceable life, but it also states that God’s will is that all men would be saved and for all men to have knowledge of the truth even if they are not saved. If there is anything we ought to be praying about as his children it is that **His will** would be done on earth. *Matthew 6:9 ¶ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.10 Thy kingdom come.* ***Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.***

 We note again in **2 Peter 3:9** God’s will for the lost. *9 ¶ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us–ward****, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance****.*

 We can boldly and confidently pray for specific lost people to be saved and know that our prayers are in the will of God.

 **B.** This is exactly how Paul prayed for his kinsmen **Romans 10:1**  *1 ¶ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

The Lost Need Our Prayers Because of

the Terrible Condition they are In.

**They are BLIND**

*"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath* ***blinded the minds of them which believe not,*** *lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (II Corinthians 4:3-4,)*

*"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." (Romans 3:11,)*

*"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Corinthians 2:14)*

 **The Gospel is hidden from them, they are without understanding, they do not comprehend spiritual things. They need for us to give them the Gospel light, and they need our prayers.**

**They Are Bound**

*"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,* ***who are taken captive by him at his will."*** *(II Timothy 2:25-26)*

*"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2)*

Those that are lost are held in bondage by Satan. He seeks with all his might to keep them in his grasp, that they might live and die in disobedience to God. In essence, the lost are incarcerated by Satan in his domain of darkness (Col. 1:13).

**They are Condemned**

*"He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18)*

*"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:3)*

**They Are HELPLESS**

*"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44,).*

*"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1)*

The lost are helpless to change the course of their eternal destiny. Without the work of God's Spirit and the witness of His Word they will remain lost. Believers need to join God's redemptive work through prayer and evangelistic witness for this to be different. As God’s people pray for the lost, His Spirit draws them to understand their need for repentance and faith.

**They are HOPELESS**

*"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,* ***having no hope****, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12)*

**They are HELL BOUND**

*"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;* ***but the wrath of God abideth on him****."(John 3:36)*

*"Enter ye into the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that* ***leadeth to destruction****, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matthew 7:13)*

*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life* ***was cast into the lake of fire.(Revelation 20:15)***

 **The lost world needs our prayers!!!!**

**EVANGELISTIC PRAYER ALSO**

**INVOLVES PRAYING FOR THE LABORERS**

 The scripture gives some specific prayers to pray for laborers:

**Ask the Lord to send laborers into the harvest**.

 *"Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few;* ***pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."*** *(Luke 10:2)*

**Ask the Lord for opportunities to witness.**

 *"Withal praying also for us, that God would* ***open unto us a door of utterance****, to speak the mystery of Christ., for which I am also in bonds." (Colossians 4:3)*

**Ask The Lord For Clarity In the Laborers Presentation**

 *"That I may make it manifest,* ***as I ought to speak****." (Colossians 4:4)*

**Ask The Lord To Give Boldness To Witness**

 *"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me,* ***that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel;*** *For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Ephesians 6:19-20)*

 *"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." (Acts 4:29*)

**Ask The Lord For Receptive Hearts**

 In the parable of the sower (Luke 8:5, 12), the seed that fell beside the road and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air ate it up. When Jesus explained it He said the seed is the word of God and the seed that fell beside the road represents those who heard the Word. The devil then takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. We need to pray that God would prepare the heart so that the seed would take root.

 Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for the word of God to have free course.

 *2Th 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

**Pray That The Laborers Heart Might Be Pure To Witness**

 *Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.* *13* ***Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.***

**Pray That God Would Raise Up**

**Churches To Send Out Missionaries**

 *1 ¶ Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

**Charles Spurgeon** believed that one of the reasons so many were saved under his preaching was prayer. He had prayer meetings before the preaching services and every Monday night and on other occasions. Sometimes when the auditorium of the Metropolitan Tabernacle was full, a group would remain in the downstairs prayer hall and pray during the preaching Prayer was a very central focus of Spurgeon’s ministry, and the fruit of it continues to abide a century later.

**James Hudson Taylor** New the value of prayer in evangelism:

 I myself, for instance, am not especially gifted, and am shy by nature, but my gracious and merciful God and Father inclined Himself to me, and when I was weak in faith He strengthened me while I was still young. He taught me in my helplessness to rest on Him, and to pray even about little things in which another might have felt able to help himself.”

 Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success.”

 **R. A. Torrey** “The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came...Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory.”