

Who's Afraid of Your Prayers?
Ephesians 6:10-20, I Kings 18:36-39
November 19, 2017

1. Prayer is our most _____ battle plan.
Ephesians 6:18 ***And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.***
James 5:16 ***Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***
2. Prayer doesn't make life _____.
II Timothy 3:12. ***In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.***
3. Powerful prayer is rooted in a _____ with God.
James 5:16b ... ***The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***
Psalm 66:18-19 ***If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; 19 but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.***
I Peter 3:7 ***Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.***
4. Prayer is _____ business.
Isaiah 38:2-3 ***Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 3 "Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. (= II Kings 20:2-3)***
5. Prayer often needs to be _____.
Luke 18:1 ***Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.***

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- **John Knox was a warrior.**
- **Body guard to George Wishart. (Powerfully preached the insights of Calvin and Luther.)**
- **Wishart was executed by Cardinal David Beaton**
 - At least 7 illegitimate children. Mistresses.
 - **Had mother drowned for praying to Jesus instead of Mary during childbirth.**
- **Wishart's followers killed Beaton, took refuge in the castle in St. Andrews.**
- **Knox joined them and became their chaplain.**
- **French Galley slave. Chained.**
 - **Broke his body but not his spirit.**
 - *"I know it well. For I see the steeple of that place where God first in public opened my mouth for His glory, and I am fully persuaded, how weak that ever I now appear, that I shall not depart this life till that my tongue shall glorify His goodly name in that same place."*
- **Released. Preached in England.**
Chaplain to Edward VI (Whom he compared to young king Josiah.)
- **Refused prestigious pulpit and even office of bishop.**
- **"Bloody" Mary Tudor became queen. Escaped to Continent.**
 - Pastor in Frankfurt
 - Geneva with Calvin.
- **Back to Scotland. Led Reformation. (Wikipedia pretty good)**
- **Mary, Queen of Scots. Wanted to return Scotland to Roman Catholic control. (Bishops under the monarch.)**
 - "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."
- **Knox prayed daily, "Give me Scotland or I die."**
- **And what were the results?**

With relative peace at home, many strides forward were made. Education was stressed: the universities of Scotland came to be among the finest in the world; her scholars dominated many fields. Authors, poets. Mathematicians, and scientists abounded in the land. Religiously Scotland came to the forefront: her preachers became world renowned for their ability. Missionary zeal flowered: in later years the name of David Livingstone became a household word throughout the Christian world. Scottish theologians were recognized as second to none. Scottish piety became famous. (Clyde Fant 20 Centuries of Great Preaching vol. 2 p. 188)

- So I have to ask, how can you and I have a powerful prayer life, like John Knox?
- Is anyone afraid of your prayers, or mine?
- Let's remember 5 dynamic things about prayer.

1. Prayer is our most powerful battle plan.

Ephesians 6:18 ***And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.***

- After putting on the armor, we're instructed to pray in the Spirit.
- Mary did not say she feared the writings of John Knox or the preaching of John Knox, but his prayers.

James 5:16 ***Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.***

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

■ Knox was often compared to Elijah. – and Mary to Jezebel.

→ So who's afraid of *your* prayers?

- "I won't pray for you to be safe, I'll pray for you to be dangerous." Erwin McMannus

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2. Prayer doesn't make life easy.

II Timothy 3:12 *10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

■ Galley slave, physical pain, exile.

3. Powerful prayer is rooted in a relationship with God.

James 5:16b ... *The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

■ How are we made righteous? How are we in a right relationship with God? Faith!

■ Gospel presentation.

■ But the way we live in intimacy with and obedience to God affects our prayer life.

Psalm 66:18-19 *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; 19 but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.*

I Peter 3:7 *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

4. Prayer is serious business.

Isaiah 38:2-3 *Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 3 “Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. (= II Kings 20:2-3)*

II Kings 18:14-19 *14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. 15 And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: “Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God. 17 “It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. 18 They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 19 Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God.”*

- After shootings, “We’ve had enough prayer.” NO!
- Anne Graham Lotz “God isn’t allowed in school.”
- We say calm little milquetoast prayers and when nothing happens, we say, “I tried prayer but it doesn’t work.”
- We have NOT prayed enough. We have not prayed nearly enough.
- Wasting an incredible resource.

- I need to pray more about:
 - The violence in our society
 - The divisiveness in our society
 - Re-emerging racism.
 - Spread of Cults in our community
 - The out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on our community.
 - On our church.
 - Friends and family members who are cold toward Christ.
 - My neighborhood.
 - My immediate family.
 - My preaching.
 - Myself.
- I don't pray nearly enough! But I want to.
How about you?

5. Prayer often needs to be persistent or stubborn.

Luke 18:1 ***Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.***

- What would happen if we were to pray, really pray,
God, give me America or I die?
This community?
Woodbury?
My family?
- What do you think would happen to the forces of evil,
 - The spiritual forces
 - The sociological forces
 - The psychological
 - The forces that tempt you
 - The forces that plague your family
 - The forces that plague our nation
- What do you think would happen to those forces if we took full advantage of the incredible resource that God has given us?

- What do you think would happen to those forces if we, living in a close relationship with God, seriously, fervently, persistently prayed?
- They would tremble and quiver like jello.
- They would snivel and whine like wounded puppies.
- They would scream in terror and flee like cockroaches in the light.
- They would know their destruction was about to fall on them.
- **Who's afraid of your prayers?**

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

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