

## Touching Heaven – Touching Earth

### Tuesday morning bible study on prayer with Cindy Smith

May 6, 2008 Session 9

Reading from James 5:13-19. Today we will examine the sentence from Verse 16:

“The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective.” In the Amplified Bible we read:

“The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available-dynamic in its working.” In the Inductive Study Bible it says:” The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much”. At first glance you may think that this verse indicates that our prayers are powerful, but I assure you from years of praying, intercession, supplication, and petition-the power is not in the prayers being prayed but in the One we are standing before. It is His power and His power alone that makes our prayers effective. We are privileged to join our prayers with that of the Chief Intercessor, Jesus Christ. His work of redemption is complete, but His work of intercession is ongoing. He is the One alone who is perfect and righteous before our Father. And our Father faithfully hears the prayers of His Son. Jesus’ intercession hits the target every time.

In Hebrews 7:23-8:28 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office, but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need-one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

In Rom 8:34 “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” In Rom 8:26-27 it says; “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express, 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.” That just underlines- the fact that the Spirit and Jesus are one with the Father so their prayers always hit the mark!! The Spirit of God is with us all the time if we belong to Jesus-we can talk with the Holy Spirit as if He were our friend and constant companion. The Holy Spirit was with Jesus and together they knew the mind of the Father in every situation. Jesus said He always spoke what He heard the Father speaking and did what He saw His Father doing. There was this constant communion-and constant unity-so there was constant commanded blessing.

Now the Father is in heaven and Jesus is at His right hand, but the Holy Spirit has been sent to us so we also can have that constant connection to the will of the Father. Look at John 16:13-15: “But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” In Eph 1:17, Paul prays for the Ephesians: “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.” In Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17:20: “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”

So the first thing we need to know is that our prayers must come from our hearts, hearts that are filled His word, from lives that are postured in close communion with God, who are in communion with the Holy Spirit. We can dialogue with the Holy Spirit throughout our day, actually talk to Him, ask Him questions and give Him the burdens of our heart. The second we are aware of the peace of God leaving us, we must recognize that He has not left us, but we have left Him.

Because God is so intimately acquainted with all of our ways, we can hide nothing from Him. Our lives must be transparent before Him. We must know that He is watching for us to give that one glance toward Him, that acknowledgment of the activity of the Spirit in whatever situation we are lifting up to Him. I once had a picture of what it means to be in Christ. Perhaps you have seen a small, frightened child that runs into the skirts of their mother. The child is so totally enveloped by the material so that you can barely make out a child is there.

## Touching Heaven Touching Earth - Session 9 - Page 2

It is like that when we press into to know Christ, we become one with Him, enveloped and surrounded by His presence, so that any situation that touches us touches Christ. Just as a child could no more represent a case before a judge, so neither can we represent our situation before the Father, but in Christ, who is our advocate. Job learned this in Job 16:19 "Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend."

So as we know that it is not by our own righteous that we can stand with Christ, but we simply come covered by His righteousness, we can stand before our Father in Christ. It is our position and the posture of our hearts that makes all the difference. What words can we use that will sway the will of our Father, that will move His heart. I like to pray Biblically-based prayers because I know that the Word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The verses we pray are from God-you might say it is a very recognizable language to the Father. We can refer to the Apostolic prayers-that is those prayed by the apostles. If it worked for them, I think we might learn something from them. An example of an apostolic prayer would be Eph 3:16-21 or Eph 1:17-19. You can pray as Jesus did in John 17 or as He instructed His disciples in The Lord's Prayer. Pray the psalms as David, a man after God's own heart, did with a transparency and a passion that was genuine. I pray Psalm 91 over our leaders and our missionaries, 2 Thes 11-12. Those facing spiritual warfare, combining prayer with fasting, I pray Eph 6:10-18.

I pray God-centered prayers-it is not about us, it is about His will being accomplished on earth. You will find that God trusts those with authority that He knows-those who have been intimate with Him are trustworthy. They know His heart, His mind and His will.

Just as Esther approached the king who then extended his scepter to her-his response came from their intimate relationship that surpassed any other protocol. In the process, Esther had been prepared with three days of fasting and intercession before God, to do what no other could have done. And a people, God's people the Jews were saved from death and totally vindicated before their enemies. Their enemies were destroyed. This story gives a whole new meaning to "He sets a table before me in the presence of my enemies!"

I want to reiterate that we pray God-centered prayers- not people-centered prayers. We please the will of the Father, not the will of the people. We never need to justify ourselves in our praying-or make a case for ourselves as we pray with others. There is nothing we have done that justifies our request nor what anyone else has done. Our prayers are justified by Christ's work on the cross and the ensuing righteousness that was imputed to us, makes us worthy to approach a holy God. Our own righteousness is only filthy rags. Picture that a moment. Imagine a homeless person, un-bathed, with filthy garments standing before the King of Kings. That's what we look like in our own righteousness. I would much rather stand covered in the Lamb's spotless garments before my King! I have prayed with a lot of people. We never need to create a case for God to move. It says He shows mercy on whom He will show mercy. We are worthy because He says we are worthy.

I would like us to apply what we have learned in prayer with one another and the Chief Intercessor. Because the work of intercession is just that, a work, a labor of love, I like to have worship in the background or interwoven with prayer that goes on for a while. That way the people who are praying are refreshed as they pray. That is the principle behind Harp & Bowl prayer. Continual prayer, which we are admonished to do, is made possible for extended periods if we pray as David prayed. We call the movement that births 24/7 prayer the restoration of the tabernacle of David as prophesied in Amos 9:11. It is something that God is bringing all over the earth as He is preparing to return for His Bride, a bride that knows their God and is trusted with authority and power to do the "greater works" (John 14:12) that Jesus predicted of His disciples.

I have some prayer requests that I would like us to pray knowing now the principles of effective prayer. I would encourage you to pray the Word of God over these requests-we call them authority scriptures, verses that give our prayer authority. Where does the power come from-the Holy Spirit. So let's invite Him to pray through us.