



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

March 8, 2015

What God Wants—You

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. —Revelation 3:19-22

Behold, I stand at the door and knock ... These words were always applied to unbelievers, inviting them receive Christ into their lives. Yet Jesus addressed them to a church—to those who claimed to know Him. There is a very real possibility that some who think they know Christ have shut Him out and need to let Him in.

That is why God in His mercy disciplines His people. One reason God allows trials into our lives and sends periods of difficulty on our land is that He wants to turn our hearts back to Him. To show us how much we need Him. When I was a child, my father's love was in his hand as he applied it to my backside. God's love also is in the suffering He allows us to go through. He's trying to teach us to trust Him and follow His ways.

The weeks before Good Friday and Easter emphasize something that should be a regular habit for the believer. Preparing to meet a holy God means dealing with sin. God's Spirit and the forgiveness we have in Christ free us up to take an honest look inside ourselves and let God identify the sin that besets us. Clinging to sin means not trusting God to care for specific parts of our lives. We guard our most sensitive areas of need and try to meet them ourselves. We hold God back, and as a result, He can't care for those needs.

But confessing those very sins sets us free to reconnect to the God who made us and sent His Son to redeem us. True freedom, true joy, true riches flow from Him and we are restored. When we confess our sins, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us, turns our lives around and makes us new—really new.

The Bible's most famous Psalm contains, I believe, a Hebrew pun. Think of yourself as a sheep. Not a very complimentary comparison, but instructive. Wandering through the wilderness, makes the woolly critters vulnerable and dependent. Sheep can't locate water or scope out a nice meadow. Without the shepherd, they'd die. All a sheep knows how to do is eat, stink, chase their woolly-headed dreams, and say, "Baah."

Sheep have no idea of where they are or how to get from point A to point B, even if they think they do. But they certainly have their own ideas and tend to wander off the path in dangerous directions. It takes a shepherd to turn them back from the dark and dangerous paths they follow.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Psalm 23:3). The word *restores* is a common word with several meanings. The root idea is to return, and it's in a causative form of the verb. Literally it means to turn someone back, but metaphorically it refers to being refreshed.

Picture yourself as a panting, thirsty, bedraggled sheep just hoping for a little R and R around the next bend. You need a Shepherd to lead you there. You need Him to turn you from the wrong path to the right one. Recognize your tendency to wander off—possibly to your destruction. Trust the Shepherd to watch after you and turn you back when you stray. Back to those green pastures and still waters you're longing for.

That's what this time of year—the season of Lent—is about. Allowing the Shepherd to turn you back to the right path, where refreshment awaits. Open the door. Go to Christ now and find rest for your soul.

Prayer for Northpoint: Pray for prayer at Northpoint to become a regular habit, as people are drawn to Christ.

Prayer for the United States: Pray for righteous leaders and for people who are anxious to follow God's will.

Prayer for the World: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for the return of the Prince of Peace.

Prayer Supporting Ministry:

- *Women's Conference:* Ask God to teach the women of Northpoint to trust God to bear fruit in their busy lives.
- *Grief Share:* Ask God to turn the hearts of those who are hurting to Him to find hope and healing.
- *Carranza:* God has a people in northern Mexico that He is reaching with His love. Pray for our work there.
- *Ethiopia:* Pray that our teams who are going to northern and central Ethiopia will see a rich harvest of souls.

Go to God ...

Is there a person in your life that needs to know the Lord? **Go to God**, and seek their eternal salvation. Not just once. Keep going. Keep asking.

Prayer Record

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