



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

October 20, 2019

Not Forgotten*

When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing. —Genesis 29:31-35

This is one of the most poignant paragraphs in all of Scripture. Leah was a life overlooked—by everyone but God. But Leah's life was a rescued life—a vignette of transforming grace.

No doubt her husband, Jacob, felt justified in his neglect. He had been tricked into marrying her and never really wanted her as a wife. But Jacob's outrage should never overshadow the insult to Leah or disguise her father's unrecorded words, "What do I do about Leah? How can I marry her off." Her Dad had to "unload" her on to Jacob, because she wasn't "pretty," like her sister Rachel.

Each night she spent with her new husband, told Leah, "Oh well, you'll have to do—for now. Each day with her sister—and rival—reminded her in one way or another, "Not good enough. And I never will be!" It's so difficult to see, but God's grace filled the rough insensitivity of her broken relationships. He was teaching her where to put her faith.

God blessed Leah, not with what she most wanted but with what was most valuable. She longed for the true love of her husband, which never came. Instead, she received one of life's richest blessings—children. In the process, as Leah dealt with life's daily hurts, the LORD taught her that her greatest reward was in her relationship with Him. At its best, her husband's love was fickle and full of self-interest. Only God's love could truly satisfy. What mattered most was that she mattered dearly to God.

For each successive baby she bore, Leah gave credit to the LORD. *The LORD has looked upon my affliction, ... The LORD has heard that I am hated (29:32-33)*. Still she longed that each child she bore for Jacob would win his love. *Now my husband will love me, ... Now this time my husband will be attached to me (29:32, 34)*. But other than fathering her children, Jacob never seemed to be in the picture—at least not for her. He always stayed at the periphery of her story.

Prayer accomplishes mighty things, but it doesn't always bring what we want. Our deepest longings seldom reflect our truest needs, and God has a way of showing us what really matters. Prayer is an essential tool in the process of spiritual growth. As the sin and dysfunction of these reluctant believers—people much like us—ran its full course, God brought life into the family and kept His promise, despite their multiplying sins. That's how God rescues. That is the Gospel.

The saga of Jacob's family continued and life went on. But God was there, and Leah knew it. Conflict was the hallmark of Jacob's family, but it didn't hinder God's blessing or frustrate His plan. He still brought Jacob back to the Promised Land, and in the mess of family conflict surrounding Leah God was accomplishing a miracle beyond anything any of them ever truly understood.

When her fourth child was born, Leah laid aside her longing to be loved and simply praise the LORD. So she named her fourth son Judah—Praise. Through that son, God gave Israel their greatest king, David, and through him, their Messiah—Christ Jesus, who redeemed the world from sin with His blood.

To the praise of God's glory.

* with thanks to Tim Keller, "The Struggle for Love," November 11, 2001

The Power of Prayer in Our Lives

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. –1st Timothy 2:1-4

God calls Christians to pray—not as a last resort but as a frontal assault on the powers of darkness. It’s our job to greet news about the ascendancy of China, the duplicity of Turkey, or corruption in our own democracy with purposeful, believing prayer.

True prayer does not advise God about what He should do. It asks for His help. Here’s how God directs our prayers, so we can receive His help in accomplishing His ends on earth.

- *First of all:* Making prayer a priority puts God first and emphasizes our dependence on Him.
- *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings:* Prayer involves pleading, requesting, seeking help for others, and expressing our gratitude.
- *for all people:* Everyone on earth is a candidate for prayer. Let God’s Spirit guide how you pray.
- *for kings and all who are in high positions:* Expect God to make a difference in the most powerful people on earth.
- *that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way:* Godliness is the goal of the believer’s prayer.
- *who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth:* God’s purpose is always ultimately to redeem people from sin. Seek the salvation of sinners by name.

Prayer for Our Leaders

Pray for God’s blessings on our leaders, so they can lead us to accomplish His purpose,
Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Chelsae Grant, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. –Jeremiah 33:1-3