



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

January 26, 2020

Power Encounter

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. —Acts 16:16-18

Great evil doesn't hide in the shadows plotting sinister plots. The greatest evil is out in the open, all around us, seen and embraced by the vast majority. Contrary to popular opinion, evil isn't what all but a few reject. More often than not, it's what the majority wants, and what's bad for the soul is good for business.

Examples abound. Gladiator competitions, a great sin of the ancient world, were immensely popular and quite lucrative, until Christians opposed it. Two centuries ago, the main challenge to abolishing slavery was the money it made and the place in society that "respectable people" forced on those of the African race. Similarly, opposition to the Civil Rights movement came, because bigotry is more popular than we care to admit. As for abortion—a great evil of our day—claims of compassion for women thinly veil the funds that lubricate political machinery and society's preference for the sexual promiscuity that makes abortion thrive—while killing our souls.

The "spirit of the age" is more than prevailing opinions or trends. It's the manifestation of hidden spiritual forces that define the day. This world has been given over to Satan, God's adversary, and the spirits shaping popular culture are diabolical. So it's not surprising that as Paul and his companions *were going to the place of prayer*, they had a spiritual confrontation.

One Sabbath, on their way down to the river to pray, a slave girl began to tag along, spouting a sort of "equal opportunity" lie. *"These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."* As with all the best lies, this one was 99% true.

This *slave girl* had a python spirit—a spirit of divination, associated with the famous and popular Oracle of Delphi. This spirit enabled the young woman to tell people's fortunes and rake in large sums of money for her masters. Any Jew who heard the expression *Most High God* would have immediately associated it with the One True God—Yahweh, the God of the Jews. But any pagan would have thought she was referring to Zeus, the head of the pagan pantheon.

Paul couldn't allow this convenient blurring of an eternal distinction to go unchallenged, so one day, he *turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."* And it came out that very hour. That command identified Jesus Christ as *the Most High God* and demonstrated His power over all the other so-called gods in the world.

With the demon gone, the slave girl was free. But then the spirit of the age reared its ugly head. While possessed by the demon, the girl was a valuable commodity. Once she was free, her owners' diabolical business was gone—along with their profits. And who was responsible for their loss? Paul and Silas. Jews! Suddenly, their trip to the place of prayer was brutally interrupted. They were beaten and imprisoned without a trial because of bigotry and avarice of the crowd.

Prayer is a power encounter with the forces of darkness. There is a "Sweet Hour of Prayer" when believers find rest and refreshment in God's presence. At times though, prayer is wrestling against the powers of hell surrounding us. This spiritual battle is one of the main reasons so many find prayer so difficult.

When life attacks, we have God's reminder: *Though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds* (2nd Corinthians 10:3-4). Even in our worst moments, Christ is "over all victorious" and He's working out His victory in us and in the world. With Christ on our side, His victory is ours.

To the praise of His Glory.

Prayer for Our Community

Life has attacked our Body, claiming the lives of three of our young people and injuring three more. Please keep the Hawkins, Ivascu, and Ruiz families in your prayers as they grieve the loss of their sons and heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Pray for ...

- **Healing:** *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* –Psalm 147:3
- **Comfort:** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*
–2nd Corinthians 1:3-4
- **The Reality of God's Presence:** *Thus says the LORD, your Creator ... "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. "For I am the LORD your God.*
–Isaiah 43:1-3a
- **The Sufficiency of God's Grace:** *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* –2nd Corinthians 12:9
- **Helping Grace:** *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* –Hebrews 4:16
- **Divine Hope:** *Your faith and hope are in God.* –1st Peter 1:21b

Ask God to give these individuals grace that allows them to grieve, and hope that frees them to move on.

Prayer for This Week

Sunday (Church): Pray for our search for a Pastor of Outreach, to equip us to reach our community and the world, bringing people to saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Monday (Home and Family): Pray for future generations of your family to come to faith in Christ early, walk with Him all their lives, and enjoy Him forever.

Tuesday (Job/School): Make a list of people with whom you work closely and pray for their salvation.

Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community): Pray for the families of your children's friends. May they come to know Christ as Lord and Savior. Ask God to use you.

Thursday (Our Nation): Ask God to send Godly influences in the businesses of America. Pray that Godly principle will guide their practices, not just the dictates of the marketplace.

Friday (The World): Pray for the liberation of North Korea and the conversion of its people to Christ. Pray that God's light will shine brightly in that dark land.

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): Praise the Lord for the blessing of being in a healthy church. Rejoice in the "church family" God has given you.

Prayer for Our Leaders

Pray for strength to lead and minister to our church and to their families as well.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, Karen Sherwood, and Dani Tiqui.

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. –1st John 4:2-4