



The Traveling Pulpit

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God's Prerogative in Revival **(Part II)**

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (II Chron. 7:14)

Opening Remarks

As we continue part two, of this three-part series on **God's Prerogative in Revival**, we'll begin looking at what God expects of us if we want to live in the sphere of His blessings and promises. When God's people are obedient to Him and submissive to His Word, it will make us a spiritual blessing to the local congregation where we belong and the nation in which we live.

God Wants His People to be a Humble People v.14b

Humility is a biblical characteristic of a genuine believer (Jam 4:10). It is to bring the created into subjection to the Creator as we submit to God and bow before Him in

contrition (I Pet. 5:6). However, it's important to properly understand what it means to be humble. We're not humble because we tell God we're "humble." Have you not heard people pray and tell God that they're humbly coming before Him? God knows if we are or not.

Being "humble" is not necessarily getting down low enough to let everyone wipe their dirty feet all over you. God's people ought to be bold witnesses to the Glory of God, but at the same time we ought to humbly walk with God. Meekness is not the same thing as weakness. Christians are not the world's doormat, but neither are we to expect anything from the world except opposition (Jh. 15:18). Humility is a condition of the heart produced by the power of the Holy Spirit where we submit to God like a little child (Lk. 9:47-48). We need to realize that the arm of flesh will fail us, and we can do nothing pleasing to God apart from the "power" of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:8).

Pride is the opposite of humility and is used of the devil to hinder one's relationship or fellowship with God (Prov. 8:13). It refuses to let us confess our sin and ask God, as well as our fellowman, for forgiveness (Prov. 16:18). Only when God strips us of our "pride" will salvation or revival (spiritual restoration) be experienced.

God Wants His People to be a Praying People v.14c

Prayer is submission to the will of God and unless we know God's Word, then we'll not know the mind of God and how to properly "pray." Jesus did not say, "if you choose to pray," but "when ye pray" (Matt. 6:5-8). God expects His children to remain in fellowship with Him and on speaking terms with Him. Prayer should be a habit with every believer, just as it was with Christ (I Thess. 5:17). Prayer can rightly be called secret fellowship or intimacy with God. We cannot be a spiritual people without learning how to properly "pray" in submission to God's will.

Genuine prayer involves the condition of sanctification. Sanctification is the process of God molding the Christian into the image of Christ during his pilgrim journey of life. Part of that process is learning how to pray, seeking God's face, growing in grace, confessing our sin, and developing a desire to be more like Christ. When we stray, the Holy Spirit does His work of conviction and according to His Sovereign Grace, spiritual awakening.

Genuine prayer involves the condition of subjection. Just because Christians "pray" doesn't mean revival will come, but it will not come without God's people praying and getting right with God in confession of our sin. Let's remember that it's impossible to pray without learning submission and yielding to the will of God. Don't forget, we do not move the hand of God, but the hand of God moves us. God gives His "people" the desires of their hearts, including spiritual awakening. When individuals or congregations become burdened for revival, it may be a good indication that God is wanting to do a work among His "people." The fact remains that no ministry can be well pleasing to God without prayer. There will be no spiritual progress or spiritual awakening apart from prayer. Prayer was an important part in the earthly life of Christ

and is perhaps the most important part in His current ministry of “intercession” for the saints at the “right hand of God” the Father (Rom. 8:34).

There is no doubt that when we “pray,” we do battle with the devil because part of our spiritual armor is prayer (Eph. 6:18). The devil seems to be holding high carnival in the churches around the world, flooding her with discord, division, bickering, jealousy, envy, animosities, immoralities, heresy, and all sorts of false doctrine. Prayer and obedience to the Word of God will root out these problems as Christians yield themselves to Christ and put their faith into practice. We can not only define prayer as submission to the will of God, but bringing down to “earth” the “will” of God in “heaven” (Lk. 11:2). The only way that we can “pray” right is to “pray” in accordance to the “will” of God (I Jh. 5:14-15). Furthermore, the only prayer that God hears is the one inspired by the “Holy Spirit” and “intercession” made by “Christ” (Rom. 8:26,34, Heb. 12:2).

God does not always answer prayer immediately, but after much “importunity” which refers to shameless persistence (Lk. 11:8). God delights in the prayers of His people (Jer. 33:3). We could say that the secret of prayer is to “abide” in Christ (Jh. 15:4-10). When we are living in harmony with God, then our desires will be those of Christ. The purpose of prayer is to see the will of God done on earth and Him glorified in all things. The only thing that lies outside the reach of prayer is that which lies outside the will of God. For that reason, we could say that the most powerful thing a Christian can do is pray, seeking God’s will and not our own.

God Wants His People to be a Seeking People v.14d

We cannot “seek” God’s “face,” which means to enjoy His presence, outside of a life of holiness (I Pet. 1:13-16). We need to learn to pray the prayer of Robert McCheyne, “Oh God, make me as holy as it is possible for a sinner saved by grace on this earth to be.” A revived “people” are a holy “people” with a desire to separate themselves from worldliness and recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, there is much misunderstanding over the terminology concerning the fullness of the Spirit. The command to be “filled with the Spirit” is a command given to all Christians (Eph. 5:18). This is not talking about a second blessing or an ecstatic tongues experience, but it simply means yielding to God’s total control. Living the Christian life is the Holy Spirit daily living it in and through us.

Everywhere we look, it appears that many professing Christians are working in their own strength and worn to a frazzle. It’s not a matter of us working for God, but working with Him as He does His work in and through us. Therefore, we need to stop trying to do the work of the Holy Spirit and watch the Holy Spirit do His work through us. Its time for the modern-day church to stop playing church and be the church that God has called us out of this world to be. I’ve preached for years that there is so much of the world in the church that you can hardly tell that the church is even in the world. The Spirit filled life is one where God becomes a river of living water in you and flowing from you.

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer only once, but fills us repeatedly to live holy and serve Christ effectively (Eph. 5:18). One of the greatest needs in today's church is holy living by God's people. A spirit filled life ought to bear evidence by such things as confession of sins, hungering for God, and walking by faith. Always remember that God is never satisfied with anything from us outside of His "holiness" (I Thess. 4:7).

God Wants His People to be a Repentant People v.14e

Heaven will be closed to our prayers until we "turn" to God in repentance and confession of our "wicked ways." Even God's people can develop some "wicked ways" when we take our eyes off the Lord. I remind you of Peter, when Jesus looked at him and said, "get thee behind me Satan" (Mat. 16:23). Peter is a reminder to us of how we need to stay constantly on guard lest "Satan" use us as a hinderance to the cause of Christ. Confession of "sin" is a prerequisite for fellowship with God because unconfessed "sin" clogs the channel of Christian joy (I Jh. 1:9). Martin Luther recognized two elements of true repentance, recognition of sin and recognition of God's grace. King David is an example of a man who responded in such a manner when he penned Psalm 51 (Ps. 51:2,10). To confess our sin means that we agree with God about what we are and what we do and are willing to let go of that which is displeasing to God.

In some cases of repentance, restitution may have to be made as well as apologies offered. From my own personal experience, there was only one man in my life that I ever hated. God dealt with my heart several different times before I ever favorably responded. I finally wrote him a letter asking forgiveness, but when he responded, he was the same old hateful self that he always was, but this time, I felt pity for him with no more hatred in my heart.

Before we can know spiritual awakening, God has to break us, just like He must do before He can use us for His glory. Confession and Repentance will never come until God breaks us over our sinful condition. I remember Dr. Bob Ecklund saying many years ago, "For the first fifty years of the (20th) century, little emphasis was placed on repentance and as a result, (church) membership roles have been filled with people who have never repented" (Lk. 13:3).

A Ministry Update

Wilkins Radio Network has notified us that they have added another station to our list of broadcasters, without additional charge. It's a FM station in Greenville, SC, as shown on the front of this Quarterly Publication. As God continues to bless the outreach efforts of this little ministry, we appreciate all the prayers and financial support of our partners in ministry. We would like to request that you remember us in a special way as you pray that God will give us direction in possible changes in the months to come. It's our greatest desire that we do God's will and remain good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. It's a joy beyond measure to serve the Lord of glory. It's been a busy past few months for me as God has given multiple opportunities of pulpit supply. Thank God for health and strength to serve Him another day and thank you for being a faithful partner in this ministry.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM