



THE POWER OF PRAYER

There are many who pray without realizing the power that they wield. They have no concept of the power that they are tapping into. When the Apostles saw the fig tree that Jesus cursed all shriveled up, they were totally amazed.

Mark 11:20-26

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

This same power is available for the Christian today if only they would pray without doubt. In reality, many pray thinking that they will

not receive an answer; conversely they do not receive what they are seeking. When I was in the Army, I had a soldier who came up to me one morning telling me that he was going to commit suicide. I knew enough that when a person is totally rational and not being hysterical that they are really considering taking their own life. Thus this soldier and I went down to the First Sergeant's office. The First Sergeant gave the soldier three options:

- “You can check into ward 8 of the hospital and they will give a lot of good drugs but everyone I have seen come out of there was in worse shape than when they went in.”
- “You can pay a visit to the brigade chaplain who will give you a lot of good theology, but I don't think that is what you need.”
- Go home with Sergeant Cressy. The First Sergeant further said, “I don't know what Sergeant Cressy does, but I have never seen another like him in my whole career. Whatever he does, it works”

That night the soldier, my wife Rita, and I were sitting at my kitchen table praying. I heard a very strong command to cast the devil out of the soldier. So I laid my hand on the soldier's head and commanded the devil to come out of him. All of the sudden, the room became very cold and a black cloud came out of the soldier's head. Needless to say, I did not want the demon hanging around my house so I lead the demon to the front door and commanded him to leave and never return.

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About a month later, I was taking this same soldier to the hospital to have his appendix removed. I told him that he did not need to have the operation, and that the Lord could cure him. He told me not to touch him for if I touched him, he would be healed and not get the thirty-day medical vacation after the operation. I told him that this hospital does not have the best doctors and that they have a habit of botching up simple operations. This soldier was looking for a free vacation and not thinking about the serious ramifications of a botched operation.

Well, the doctors did botch the operation, and the soldier received a medical discharge. The point is that the soldier had faith for God's healing, but was looking toward man for his healing. Here was a man who saw the power of prayer in his own life, and refused the free gift of God. He was also counseled on the need to repent and be baptized in Jesus Name as described in Acts 2:38.

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

He was also counseled that if he did not repent the demon that was in him filling him with the desire to kill himself will come back with seven more demons.

Luke 11:14-26

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a

sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

With Jesus' teaching on the power of prayer it is imperative that we realize what powers we are using. We also need to recognize that there are demonic powers who are continually fighting against our prayers and power with the Lord. Look at how a cast-out demon will come back with seven other demons who are more wicked than himself. If the demon finds his previous house empty with the Lord dwelling in the house, then the person who

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had the demon cast out of him originally is in worse shape than when he only had one demon. Now if the demon finds the house filled with the Holy Ghost, there is no room for him and his seven demonic friends. Thus when Rita and I prayed for the demon to leave the soldier, when he did not see the need to repent and be filled with the Holy Ghost, he was diagnosed with appendicitis requiring an operation. The demons knew that he would be seriously damaged from the operation. Jesus was happy to heal him if only he would accept the healing. This shows the awesome battle that is continually surrounding us. Jesus is continually attempting to assist us while the demons are at the same time attempting to hinder everything that the Lord is attempting to do.

Satan and his demons are in a constant battle against the Christian who is filled with the Holy Ghost. Satan is constantly attempting to destroy, defeat, and diminish the Christian's witness and power. If the Christian lets down his guard, then he leaves a door open for his adversary the devil. The way to keep the door closed is to adhere to Paul's teaching to pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5

17 Pray without ceasing.

Praying when you do not have a pressing need is a great defense against the devil when he is planning an attack. There are times when you do not know what to pray for and you just thank the Lord for his goodness and mercy. Other times you feel compelled to pray and you don't even know why you are praying. It is at times like these that you are entering the realm of the angels. These are the times that you can see visions of things that are normally not seen in our universe.

When we were pastoring a church in Laurinburg, NC, I had the privilege of seeing angels sitting in the rafters listening to my sermon. This is not quite the norm, but it is what happens when you pray. Another time I was handing out tracts when a Doberman came charging at us from around a corner of a trailer. While the dog was taking a leap at us, I commanded, "Peace, be still in the name of Jesus!" and the dog stopped dead in its tracks and looked bewildered at us. The owner of the dog saw what happened and came to our church the following Sunday.

All of these events show the power of prayer along with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has given us the tool to be victorious against Satan and his demons. It is up to us to use the tools that have been given to us.

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Wednesday Evening 7:30 PM

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