



Father, heal our land.

BY GREG TRAINOR, Catholic Lay Missionary

One day, a friend of ours came over. She was very upset about the condition of her marriage and family. As Lydia and I were trying to encourage her, I said: “The least that you can do is pray about it.” As soon as I heard that statement come out of my mouth, I realized that it was wrong. I corrected myself: “No, that’s not right. The most that you can do is pray about it.”

When you have come to the realization that you cannot make it on your own and turn to God in prayer, then you are on the right track. This is why the Lord said to St. Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Your prayer opens you to the power of God and permits his action in your life. For this reason, everything you do must be based in prayer. Even prayer itself must be approached with an attitude of humility:

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or “out of the depths” of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that “we do not know how to pray as we ought,” are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2559)

Fighting the spiritual battle in prayer is the key to victory. I urge you to fast and pray for the people of the world. Pray for the repentance of sinners and the salvation of souls. Pray that God will open the eyes of the lost so that they will see Jesus. Pray that God will soften the hearts of those that are walking in rebellion, show the backslider the error of his way, heal the brokenhearted, and call them all home to his Kingdom.

It is easy to feel as though the problems of the world are so tremendous that you can’t have any effect on them. The tendency is to think that the world will be better when all of the unjust governments, criminals, drug addicts, and unbelievers “get their act together.” But God’s call is for his people to get right with him, and then we can see a great work of revival:

...and if my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my presence and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and revive their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

The above passage gives some specific directions to the one who is praying for this great work of conversion. God says that he will hear your prayer if you humble yourself, pray, seek his presence, and turn from your evil ways.

As I pray, I must realize that “I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5). If I am going to seriously pray for the repentance of the world, then I better get serious about repenting of the sin in my own life. I must pray that God will cleanse me of all sin. I must ask the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse my thoughts and speech. I must forgive those who have hurt me and allow God’s love to flow through me to those around me. I must persevere in prayer and read the Word of God. I must open to the power of God and be made perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect (cf. Matthew 5:48 NAB).

Offer your life as a prayer.

As you pray, come to the Lord with a willingness to repent of personal sin. Be willing to forgive those who have sinned against you (cf. Matthew 6:14-15). Realize that God has a perfect plan for each person that he created. It is only in his will that you will find fulfillment. Submit yourself to the loving hand of the potter; allow him to mold you and shape you. Then your life will become abundant and your prayer will be more effective:

If you live in me and my words stay a part of you, you will ask what you will-- it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

Beloved, if our consciences have nothing to charge us with, we can be sure that God is with us and that we will receive at his hands whatever we ask. Why? Because we are keeping his commandments and doing what is pleasing in his sight. (1 John 3:21-22)

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

There is something very encouraging in all of this: you can offer your life as a prayer for the salvation of souls. As you surrender to God's transforming grace, your life becomes a fulfillment of what God asks in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Walking in God's perfect will is the most effective way that you can bring about revival in our day. Even on the days that your schedule is filled with things that seem "unspiritual" like yard work and laundry, offer your day as a prayer: "Father, I give you this day. Help me to do the work that I have to do today to your glory and honor. I offer it up to you as a prayer for the repentance of sinners and the salvation of souls."

Pulling Down Strongholds

The Word of God tells us that the weapons of believers "have divine power to destroy strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). God is calling his people to move forward into even the most difficult of places. It is not the place of Christians to hold back in fear and cowardice (cf. 2 Timothy 1:7) but to move forward, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, and destroy "every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Some strongholds are so formidable that most Christians have simply accepted the status quo; but the power of prayer can destroy the fiercest of strongholds. Prayer is the key to destroying the strongholds (the invisible spiritual forces that influence the everyday world) that have long inhibited the preaching of the Gospel and conversion of the peoples of the world.

God wants his people to have eyes of faith. It is easy to look at the overwhelming obstacles to the Gospel in certain parts of the world and become discouraged. But our confidence lies in God and the power of his Word. When we walk in obedience to his lead, preaching the Gospel, nothing can stop us!

Walk by faith, not by sight.

When the Israelites were in the desert, Moses sent twelve scouts to explore the Promised Land and bring back a report. Ten of the men came back with a discouraging report:

Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we." So they brought to the

Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13:31-33)

It would be easy to have the same discouraging view of the areas of the world that pose the greatest opposition to the preaching of the Gospel. Using only human assessment, the remaining atheistic, communist nations, the seemingly impenetrable Islamic nations, and the nations of the 10/40 window would seem just as impossible to overcome as entering the Promised Land did to these ten scouts.

God is ready to do a great work and desires to give his people eyes of faith. It was with eyes of faith that Caleb and Joshua assessed the Promised Land. Listen to their words as they give their report to the people:

"The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only, do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are no more than bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them." (Numbers 14:7-9)

This is precisely the attitude that must prevail among God's people today! We are to walk in repentance and humility, obeying the lead of the Holy Spirit. Through prayer, the strongholds that have long hindered the preaching of the Gospel will be overcome! The lands that are the most oppressed are spiritually dry and will be set ablaze when the Gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit!

God is doing great things today. Offer your life as a prayer to change the world today. Allow God to use you to bring the Gospel to the world around you.



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