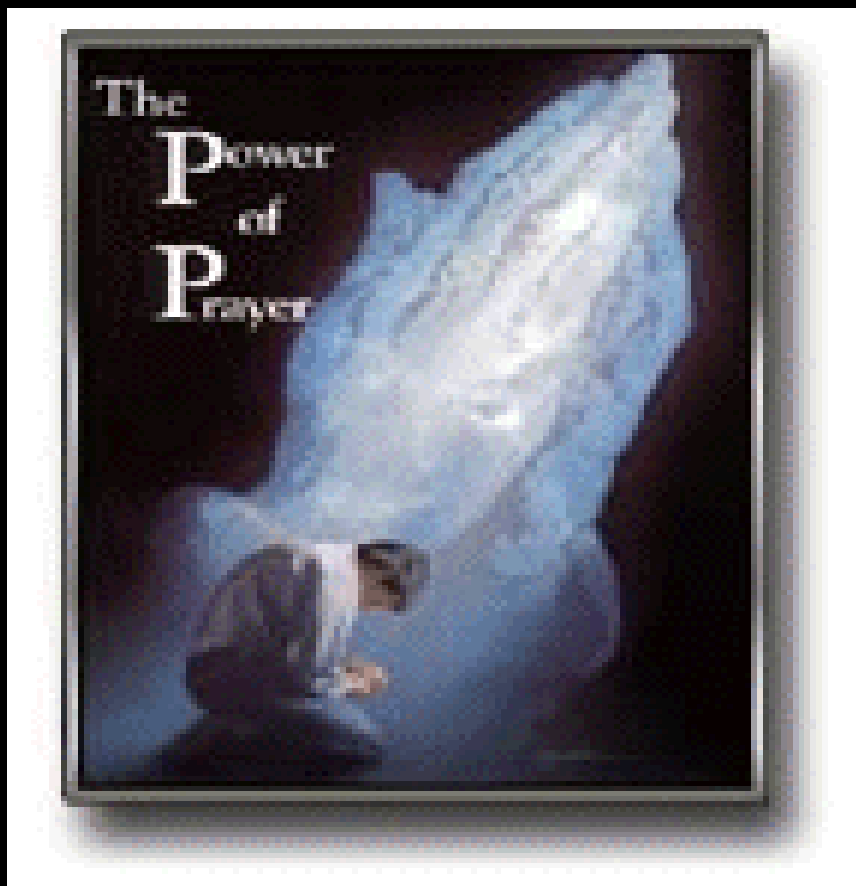


PRAYER

MAKES A DIFFERENCE



BOB STONE

Prayer Makes a Difference



 If you brought your Bible, could you please turn them to Acts 12:5 for a few brief moments as we discuss the topic, that prayer makes the difference?

Say that with me. Prayer makes the difference.

Now, Say it like you believe it. Prayer makes the difference.

Saints! The church was birthed by prayer. It was not the divine design of a group of men who sat and strategically planned where they would plant the Church and what day they would start the church, and what the letterhead would look like.

The Church began with a prayer meeting.

The 1st century Church knew political persecution unlike any Church that has ever existed before or since and yet they were successful.

The Church knew physical assault unlike any Church before or since and yet they thrived.

The Church was publicly attacked from every source that it could be attacked from and yet the LORD added daily to those who were being saved.

Why? Because there was constant prayer in the New Testament Church.

And there should be constant prayer in The Church of the Living God today.

Prayer makes the difference because when you read what the Word of God says can happen when we pray, mountains of impossibilities are moved.

When you read what the Word of God says happens when we pray, you recognise that the fire that was lit in the souls of the New Testament believers was not something of discipline, but it was something that they observed.

When they prayed, they saw miracles happen?

When they prayed, they saw things that could not be explained occur because prayer makes the difference.

Where do you need the difference in your life to be made today?

Do you need a financial difference?

Some people are searching for financial answers in a world without a solution.

I want you to know that prayer makes the difference.

Say that with me. Prayer makes the difference.

Are you searching for a physical answer?

You've got a circumstance that doctors cannot explain and outside of the miracle touch of God people have told you there is no hope.

It's just a situation that you're going to have to learn to live with.

You need to know prayer makes the difference.

Say that with me. Prayer makes the difference.

There are certain people who are searching for a Spiritual breakthrough.

They keep coming up against the same old hindrances time and time again.

No matter how hard they've tried to shake off those heavy bands, they can't seem to shake them loose.

You need to know, say it with me. Prayer makes the difference.

Some of you are searching for an answer in your families. You've got a prodigal who is away from the fold.

You've got a marriage that's been torn apart by selfishness. You've got a situation that others are telling you that every time they've seen it get this bad, it's over.

I'm here to tell you that it's not over because prayer makes the difference.

If we will learn how to be a praying people, we will be a powerful people.

James the 5th chapter says the effective fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much.

Why does it avail much? Because when you pray you are enacting God's Word and God is faithful to honour His Word.

Paul gave us this New Testament admonition. He said pray always and in praying always it becomes a lifestyle.

It's not upon the occasion.

It's not when the moment seems right.

It's what you do because it's in you to do.

Prayer made the difference on the top of Mount Carmel when Elijah asked for God to honour the sacrifice.

Prayer made the difference whenever Daniel sought the LORD for 21 days searching for an answer.

Prayer made the difference when Jesus went into the house of Jairus where his daughter had died and yet when Jesus prayed, she came back to life.

Prayer made the difference in the upper room as a 120 gathered in one accord and in one heart they asked God to pour out His Spirit and that Spirit rested upon each of them and spread from heart to heart, and house to house, and Church to Church, and

nation to nation until they became the people who turned the world upside down.

Why? Because prayer makes the difference.

It made the difference then and it can make the difference now.



I want for you to read with me a verse from the Bible where we see that prayer made the difference.

Read this, Acts 12:5.

The Bible says that Peter was therefore kept in prison, read these words, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by The Church.

Read the last half of that verse again.

But constant prayer was offered to God for him by The Church.

H Heavenly Father, let this Church become a constantly praying Church that we can recognise the difference that the power of prayer can make, not only in our lives, not only in the lives of our loved ones, but in the hearts and homes of the members of this Church until we can take this city, this state and this nation, for the Glory of Jesus Christ. We believe this because your Word tells us so, that prayer makes the difference.

We pray and ask, and all of God's children said praise the LORD.

T The situation is this in Acts 12:5, the New Testament Church is off, and it is running, and it cannot be contained.

Right after the upper room Peter preaches and 3,000 come to know Christ.

Shortly thereafter they're told don't you preach about Jesus anymore.

They go out, they preach with more boldness.

Thousands more come to know Christ.

And suddenly there's a problem that this movement starts to take the attention of political leaders.

The Bible tells us in Acts 12 that Herod, who was a political leader, not a religious leader, kills James who is a leader of the Church in Jerusalem with a sword, and he recognises that this makes the people who lived in Jerusalem happy.

And all of a sudden, he feels like the next thing he can do to rise up in the popularity poles is that he should take Peter and place him in prison.

Now his order was that Peter would be placed in prison and everybody knew that Herod placed Peter in prison, that because, he had just killed James with a sword.

It was just a matter of time before Peter was done.

Now all of the things that added up in this natural equation meant that the church should be sitting together in a room somewhere deciding who's going to bring potato salad to the funeral and who's going to write the thank you cards for all of those who signed the book whenever we memorialise Peter who has died at the hands of Herod.

Natural circumstances said that Peter was just days from dying. But there's something in this verse that's very different than any other circumstance of any other prisoner who had ever been placed under the house arrest of Herod.

That is the constant prayer was made to God on behalf of Peter by the church.

You see the word 'but' is a multiplying or it is a subtracting word.

We read in the first half of this verse the natural circumstance. It says, Peter was therefore kept in prison.

There's a natural set of circumstances.

Peter's days are numbered.

But then there's a supernatural situation but constant prayer was made before God by him.

And when you read the rest of this chapter and this verse you recognise that the night before Peter's execution an angel of the LORD walks into the prison where Peter is kept, not in one of the outer cells where it would be explainable that the angel of the LORD could knock down a wall and bring Peter out.

But he walked through the front door, he walked through the side door.

He went down the hall.

He took a left, he went down the stairs in the deepest, darkest part of the dungeon where Peter was chained with two Roman soldiers.

He unlocked the chains, he woke Peter up, and he said come with me.

He walked him up the stairs, he walked him down the hall.

He walked him right out the front door.

And Peter said, now what?
The angel said, I don't know.
You live in this town, go where you want to go.

Peter goes to the house where the Church is gathered together
praying for him and they knock on the door.

Who's there? It's Peter.
It can't be Peter. Peter's in prison.
No, it's Peter.
Child you've been up too long.
We've been praying hard.
We know that Gods going to answer but it can't be this soon
because Peter's still in jail.
And Peter walks up the stairs and says, it's me, Pete.

Now obviously, that's a paraphrase of scripture but here's what
happened.

There was a man plan and there was a God plan.
And the man plan was that Peter, who was doing things for
God, should be punished and put to death.
There isn't any reason to believe that Herod would not have
had his way because he was already able to kill James with a
sword.

However, God's plan was enacted when God's people got together and started praying constantly that His plan would come to pass.

God's plan came to pass when His people fulfilled what 2nd Chronicle 7 gives us the admonition to do.

When my people who are called by name will humble themselves and pray, then I will hear, and I will heal, and I will restore their land.

You see Church we've got a problem.

We spend all of our time listening to the man plan and don't ever get before the throne of God that we might enact his plan.

He's the sovereign, He sits on the Throne. The earth is His foot stool.

Why are we whining, listening to the voices of our day instead of kneeling before the LORD our God, our maker, and saying.

LORD! thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Well, you say, that doesn't work.

Sure, it does. We've just never tried it.

Constant prayer!

Prayer is an exciting thing when you recognise what the Word of God says will happen when you pray.

Jesus Christ said to His disciples if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say, which is to pray to that mountain be thou removed.

And it shall be cast into the midst of the sea.

The Bible tells us that when we pray under the anointing of Jesus Christ, covered by His Blood, and on the authority of His Word.

That we have powers, overpowers and principalities.

Jesus Christ cast out demons.

How? Through fasting and prayer.

He said that whenever we would come into agreement whatever we bound on earth would be bound in heaven.

Whatever we loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven.

He says through the authority of His Word we could rebuke the devourer and that the windows of Heaven would be opened and that He pours out upon us Blessings that we could not contain.

He says, if you abide in Me and My Word abides in you.

You'll ask what you will in the name of My Father, and He will do it.

There isn't anything in life more exciting than knowing that with one Word you can move Heaven and Earth.

Because with that Word you speak to the Man who holds the Earth in His hand and the mountains and the hills He holds in the balance.

His name is Jehovah God, and He is the one who sits upon the throne.

You have power when you pray!





Why does prayer work?

Prayer does not work because we are passionate when we pray.

Prayer does not work because we are really good at pleading with God Almighty.

Prayer works because God honours His Word.

It's an exciting thing and it also an awesome thing to recognise that God honours His Word.

Paul said to Timothy that even if we are faithless, He remains faithful.

Because He, God, cannot deny Himself.

That's remarkable.

That even if we choose to turn on Him.

He says, because I said I would, I will.

Recognise that when you pray the most effective thing that you can pray is the Word of God.

James says the effective fervent prayer of the righteous avails much.

Why? Because you pray the Word of God.

God honours that in your life.

Consider the other side of the equation that God honours His Word.

Not only does God honour the Blessings that are found in His Word, but God honours the judgements that He says He will impose upon the wicked found in His Word.

We do not get to pick and choose which scriptures we want God to honour.

He honours them all.

So, when you read that the soul that sinners shall surely die. God honours that one.

And you when read that he who believeth not is dead already. God honours that one.

And when you read the statement of Samuel, who was the prophet and the priest in Israel, when he said God forbid that I should sin against Him and ceasing to pray for you.

God honours that one.

Because we need to understand that prayerlessness is sin.

Say that with me.

Prayerlessness is sin.

How does this story unfold?

Samuel has served the LORD since his youth and God has made him the prophet over the nation.

He is the one who brings the Word of God to the people of God that they might know what to do.

And one day the people of God rise up and they say to Samuel, we want your job. You're fired!

We don't want a prophet; we want a king.

We want a king that we can be like every other people who we see in all the nations around us.

The problem with that equation is that the people and the nations around them did not have the blessings that they had.

So why would they want to forsake the good things of God that they had for the false things of Earth that other men had? Yet they did it anyway.

And Samuel gives his resignation speech this one line.

He says, God forbid that I should sin against Him and ceasing to pray for you.

Recognise that not only does God honour His Word when we pray.

But there are times that we have to pray even when it seems like the last thing we want to do.

Have you ever heard somebody ask you the question, have you prayed about it, and it irritated you?

It's still a good question.

It was a marvellous thing that Samuel refused to stop praying.

Why? Because through his fervent prayers God led him through the town of Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, where he found a giant killer in a shepherd's outfit named David.

Had he forgotten to pray, he would've not heard the voice of God leading and guiding him every step to fulfil God's plan.

Here's the application for us today.

The Bible says that husbands are the prophet and the priest of the household.

Let me ask you dads, have you ceased to pray for your family? Have you ceased to go before the Throne of God on behalf of them fervently asking that the plan and the purpose of God in their life be fulfilled?

Have you ceased to pray that no weapon formed against them would prosper and that a hedge of protection would be placed round about them so that they might be used of God and the generation which God has appointed them to serve?

That's your responsibility over your family just as it was Samuel's responsibility over his nation.

Wife, have you ceased to pray for your husband?

You're his help mate, the greatest assistance that you could offer is in recession.

Together husband and wife have you ceased to pray as parents for your children?

Why is that important? Because prayer makes the difference.



I give you this admonition today.

The next time you want to complain about something in your home.

Before you complain about it, pray about it and then see if you still have the strength to complain.

If you can complain after you pray, you haven't prayed hard enough.

Because when you pray effectively, it is the application of God's Word over your life that enables the supernatural things of Heaven to take place in your existence.

Prayer is a sledgehammer that you use to knock down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

You have more power than you know when you pray.

Why? Because prayer is your way of gaining authority and access.

You have an all-access pass to Heaven when you pray in the name of Jesus.

Have you ever been to place that's considered a special event and there's a group of VIPs who have a little badge and they pull it out and they shine it and they're whisked back through doors?

Whenever you go to the Throne room of God, the only way that you get access into His presence is if you pull out the name of Jesus and say in the mighty name of Jesus, and suddenly angels open the door to the Throne room, and you have an audience with The Almighty.

If you come in your name, God says no.

If you come in the name of another, God says not a chance.

If you come in the name of a denomination or a Church or a group of people, your access is denied.

But when you open the door of Heaven in the mighty name of Jesus, it is an all-access pass to the supernatural power of Heaven at your disposal.

For Jesus Christ said I will give you keys to The Kingdom and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven and whatever you loose on the Earth, will be loosed in Heaven.

We have the authority because that's what Christ gave to us.

How do we exercise this authority?

We read that verse in Revelation the 12th Chapter, the 11th and 12th verse.

It says, and they, being believers, overcame Him who is Satan.

How? By the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony.

How did we do it? By the Blood of the lamb and the Word of their testimony.

The Blood of the Lamb that is spoken of in Revelation the 12th Chapter, is the same symbol of the Blood that was shed in the Book of Exodus during the Passover.

The same Blood that God told the children of Israel to apply to the door posts of the house.

The Blood of the sacrificial Lamb is the Blood of Jesus Christ sacrificed for you at Calvary that you place over the door posts of your life.

Why? So, when the angel of death begins to snatch things out of the houses of those on your right and your left, you can stand confidently and say, no plague shall come near my dwelling.

Why? Because you're under The Blood.

Not the blood of goats and turtle doves.

Not the blood of bullocks.

But The Blood of the only begotten Son of Jesus Christ.

Now it's important to understand that if sacrificial Blood in Revelation is the same symbol of the Blood we read in Exodus, that there is very important process in its application.

There is an effective and ineffective way to pray.

We read in James that the effective fervent prayer.

Say those two words with me, effective fervent prayer.

If there is an effective prayer, there is an ineffective prayer.

If prayer is how, you apply The Blood of the Lamb to your life.
Then there is a proper way to do so.

When you read the Book of Exodus, the 12th Chapter, the 1st through the 13th verse, you recognise that God very meticulously told Moses how to tell the children of Israel to obtain this Blood.

He said, here's the animal that you are to choose.

Here's where the animal is to be placed.

Here's how he is to be killed.

Here's how he's had to have the blood captured.

Here is how the blood is to be applied.

You're not going to get to do it with your finger, you have to do with hyssop.

You're not going to get to do it anywhere you want.

There's a certain place that you have to put it.

If you do not do this properly it will not be effective.

There are a lot of people who are misapplying the Blood of Jesus Christ in their life.

They're walking around going the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, the Blood, but it's ineffective.

Why? They're not doing it according to scripture.

How? First, when you properly apply the Blood of Jesus Christ, you have to do it in faith believing.

The Bible says everything that is not of faith is not of God.

You cannot use the Blood of Jesus Christ on the mantle of many other things that you have faith in.

There is only one thing in which we have faith, and that faith is in Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God for sinners slain.

You have to do it in faith or don't do it at all.

Not only do you have to do it in faith believing but this detailed process of application also lets us know that it is by Christ and Christ alone that we are redeemed.

For 1st Corinthians, 5 and 7 says, for indeed Christ is our Passover and He was sacrificed for us all.

His Word and His Blood are the places where we find our answers.

Just as there was a bowl that the Blood of the sacrificial Lamb in Exodus was contained, the Blood of Jesus Christ is contained in His Word.

I said earlier in this message and say again, that when you pray, pray The Word.

You don't know what you should pray.

Open up the Bible and pray it.

Say, I don't know where to start.

Genesis 1 and 1 will work just as good as Revelations 22.

Just crank it out!

Why? Because this is place where the Blood of the Lamb is contained.

This is place where the effective fervent prayer of the righteous avails much.

Not only do you apply the Blood through the Word of God. But you apply the Blood through the word of your testimony.

In Exodus 12 God told the children of Moses that He wanted them to apply the Blood with hyssop.

Now here are the things that are important about hyssop.

Hyssop was a very common weed. It was plain.

Nothing really special about it.

You could find it growing everywhere and you can find it growing everywhere still.

It was a bitter thing if you were to taste it.

And so, what God told Moses to tell the children of Israel to do was take hyssop, a common thing, put it in something that is not common, the Blood of a sacrificial spotless Lamb and apply it to the door posts of your life.

Your testimony is like hyssop.

It's a common thing.

The Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.

Sometimes the Church has created more Glory for the testimony than the God who delivered you from the test.

But it's a common thing.

It's a bitter thing.

Why? Because the person to your right and to your left, in front of you and behind you, everyone all over the world has been lost in their sin and like sheep has gone astray and preferred his own way.

But because of the Blood of the Lamb of Jesus Christ, an uncommon thing, we who are common have been redeemed that we might be used of God for his purpose in this life.

Do not consider yourself greater than the person in front of you or behind you, because you are redeemed.

Consider yourself to be a brother, a sister, an heir, a joint heir.
A part of the body of Christ, grafted into His family by Grace
divine, through the Blood of the Lamb.

We apply the Blood through the Word of God and through the
word of our testimony.

This testimony is your way of reminding the enemy of his
failure.

Acts 12:5, there was a man plan.

Herod wanted to kill Peter.

But the Church prayed constantly.

They prayed in the name of Jesus.

They prayed according to the word of God that Peter would
be delivered from that prison.

Peter, if you read the rest of the Book of Acts, continued in the
ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and continued to
establish the Church that eventually would turn the world
upside down.

Do you know what Satan got to hear every time that Peter
preached?

Not only God's miracles performed but Satan 's failure to
manifest it.

Every time Peter echoed the name of Jesus Christ, Satan says,
I almost killed him.

I just about got him.

But that Church.

That praying Church.

That Church that gathered when I couldn't keep them apart.

That Church that refused to become discouraged no matter
how much I threw at them.

That Church that kept praying morning, noon and night
unwilling to fall from God's Throne before they received their
answer.

That Church sent an angel of the LORD into that prison, and
he brought him out of that prison.

And now Peter continues to walk the streets and he continues
to declare the Gospel and he continues to see miracles perform,
and he continues to cast out demons.

There's nothing I can do to stop him because the Church was
praying constantly.

If they, did it, we can do it. If they saw it, we can see it.

There is no magic formula to receiving an answer from God.
All it takes is a relentless effort not to be willing to cease and
desist, until you see God's answer come through.

Prayer makes the difference.

I want this Church to be the kind of Church that when the devil comes to the doors of this Church.

He says the marriages I've tried to destroy that have found their way into that Church.

The lives that I've tried to ruin that have found their way into that church.

The sicknesses and infirmities that I used that have been wasted because they found their way into that Church.

The sinners that were lost in their sin but suddenly they found their way into that Church.

Every time that I have a plan it finds its way into this Church.
It's slaughtered because this Church is a praying church.

I can't stop this, Church.

I can't hold back this Church.

I can't keep this Church down.

I tried to discourage them, but they get back up again.

I tried to move them but they're unshakeable.

I tried to silence them, but they just get louder.

Church! there is a plan and God's plan is that we would overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

We need to be that Church.

Give the LORD a hand clap of praise.

But it's not a moment, it's a movement.

It's a movement that you have to choose to be a part of.

Can we stand in the presence of the LORD?

Bob Stone



