

WEEKLY SERMON

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Text: James 5:16-18

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Sunday March 5, 2023 Pastor David Miklas

Message: The Family of God #8

In Exodus 14:1-4 we read, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,(2) Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. (3) For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. (4) And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. "

The word trapped is not in the text, but you can easily see how this word creates an image of the phrase found in verse 3 "They are entangled in the land,..." They are trapped! Picture in your mind some area in your life in which you feel trapped and do not know where to turn. You are entangled, trapped!

Many pastors are in this spot right now and are wondering, "How do I go on? I can't take another step. The struggle that I'm facing is so great, that I think it best for everyone that I just resign as pastor. I'm still going to serve God, but not in this pulpit." Perhaps they feel trapped because the attendance and the offerings are so low that the church is on the verge of collapsing. Maybe other problems in the church seem insurmountable, and they feel trapped. Husbands and wives are struggling in their marriage. The Devil comes to either husband or wife and says that he or she is worthless and doesn't deserve his or her marriage or even to serve in the church.

When **church staff members** are discouraged in their service to the Lord, they feel trapped. **Church** members who are distressed because of their finances or health may feel trapped. Christian parents who did all they could for their children including family prayers, family altar, Bible reading, and Christian schooling feel trapped when instead of growing up to live for God, their children are not living for Him.

The truth is that sometimes we trap ourselves. But just as often; God deliberately traps us even though He's not displeased with us. Still we are shut in. We can't go left or right; we can't go frontward or backward. We are trapped! When you are trapped between a Pharaoh and the Red Sea, remember that there is a God! In verses 13-14, He gives us a little formula for when we feel trapped, "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. (14) The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

First: Notice the phrase, "Fear Not." When fear enters in, faith moves out. God never rewards fear. That's why dozens of times in the Bible we are told not to fear. When fear replaces faith, it is impossible to please God. All things are possible with God - even getting across that sea, even defeating that army, even going a different way if it's God's way.

Second: Notice the phrase "Stand Still." This second part of God's formula is not easy to do. He says, "Stand still." He is saying, "Stop trying to figure it all out. Just stand still!" One of the most difficult things for us to do is to wait on God. "Wait on the LORD...wait, I say, on the LORD." Psalm 27:14. God's entire formula for overcoming fear when you are trapped contains only five words: "Fear ye not, stand still." In today's words, "chill out" and stop trying to figure it out on your own.

<u>Third</u>: Notice the little word "See." I've been in the ministry now for 57 years. Over these years the Lord has done a lot, and He has a lot more in store for me, but I have to take care of my part. I have to "fear...not." I have to "stand still." When I have done those things, then God will come through with His one word for me: "See." The problem is that we want to "see" without the "fear...not" or the "stand still."

Please notice verses 14-15, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (15) And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:..." It's not about your name; it's all about God's name. Verse 18, "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD."

Right now you could be in the biggest trap of your life. Maybe you did it to yourself or maybe God created it for you. Nevertheless, it's not the time to quit; it's not the time to accuse; it's not the time to throw in the towel; it's not the time to ask, "God, where are You? Are You listening to me?" It is the time to say, "All right, I'll use Your formula, God. I will "fear...not." I will "stand still," and then I'll "see."

In His Amazing Grace Pastor David Miklas

Some Quotes to Ponder on:

- 1. Trying to do the Lord's work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting and tedious of all work. But when you are filed with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you."
- 2. Christianity is not a new leaf, it is a new life in Christ. Christianity begins where religion ends with the Resurrection.
- 3. A Child of God can see more on his knees than can a philosopher on his tiptoes.
- 4. It is impossible, mentally and socially to enslave a Bible reading people.
- 5. The Lord has some wonderful things to display if we strive all our lives to be His showcase.
- 6. God has not called us to be successful, but to be faithful.

"My life-long experience as a businessman, and as a Christian worker among young men, has taught me that the only power in this world that can effectively keep one from evil and sin, in all the varied and often attractive forms which they assume, is that which comes from an intimate knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as a present Savior. And I can also heartily testify that the safe Guide Book by which one may be led to Christ is the Bible, the Word of God, which is inspired by the Holy Ghost." - George Williams, Founder of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 1844

"Praying for One Another in the Family of God"

INTRODUCTION: In Psalms 61:1-2 we read "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Prayer is our absolute dependence upon God.

We ought to thank God for those **CIRCUMSTANCES** that cause us to pray.

We ought to thank God for those **SITUATIONS** that bring us to the end of our strength.

We ought to thank God for those **TIMES** that allow us to see the power of God in answer to prayer

Prayer is that wonderful means provided by God to meet the NEEDS, the DIFFICULTIES, the TRIALS, the ADVERSITIES, the TEMPTATIONS and the PROBLEMS of life.

Someone said, "When it is hardest to pray, we ought to pray the hardest. Daily prayer is the gymnasium of the soul. The only way to do much for God is to ask much of God."

Now, perhaps the greatest thing that one individual can do for another is to sincerely pray for him. Turning to James 5:16-18 we read,

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (17) Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

In this message we want to call your attention to verse 16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another...,"

FIRST: James tells us to "Confess your faults one to another." It is rather significant that James puts confession before prayer. Before we can pray to God we must make confession of our sin. In Psalm 66:18-20 we read,

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: (19) But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. (20) Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."

The word confession means "To say the same thing." Or we may say it means "to agree with." When we confess our sins to God we are agreeing with God's assessment of that sin in our lives. When we exercise I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins..." We are agreeing that whatever that sin is we are agreeing with God that it is a sin.

Someone said, "If we are to have powerful praying, bold intercession before the throne of grace, we need to be of one heart and one soul together <u>WITH NOTHING BETWEEN US</u>." Do not misunderstand!

If we tried to make right every sin we have done against God, If we tried to make right every sin we have done against another,

We would be spending the rest of our lives introspecting and responding. But there are situations that should be made right. Thus, James is saying, "Confess your sins to each other." In order to seek human forgiveness for the sins we have committed against one another; we must be honest and agree with them that we have sinned against them. Listen. God may have forgiven us a long time ago. But human forgiveness may be necessary for emotional healing to take place.

Please do not miss this point. Confession is to stimulate prayer, not criticism. Our response to another family member in the household of God should be, "Thank you for bringing me into your confidence, now let's pray for you."

SECOND: James tells us to "pray for one another." Here, James uses the same word for "one another." By doing so he is teaching us **reciprocity in prayer**. Now the word "FOR" is the word meaning "on behalf of or for the benefit of." James is saying we are to pray for the benefit of one another. This is the lesson in Christian reciprocity. We expect others to pray for us, so we in turn ought to pray for others. Never forget that the sins, heartaches, problems befalling someone else could, in fact, become ours some day. In praying for one another we will find that God will build a bond of love, strength and fellowship.

The Apostle Paul felt the need of the prayers of God's people. He strongly hinted of this in his letters.

We read this in Romans 15:30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that you strive (literally agonize or wrestle) together with me in your prayers to God for me." Paul said when others prayed for Him, they <u>FOUGHT HIS BATTLE WITH HIM AND ENTERED INTO HIS LABORS</u>. Literally, Paul was encouraging these folks to <u>share in the battle</u>, share in the burden. How I thank God for others who have <u>shared in our burden</u> over the years through prayer.

In Ephesians 6:18-19, Paul points to our responsibility to intercede on the behalf of others, and here he gives a personal request. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me (Here Paul asks these people to intercede in a very specific way) that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel..."

He wrote to the Colossians asking the saints there to pray for him in Colossians 4:2, **"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."**

He sought prayer support from the Corinthian people in II Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

He sought prayer help from the Thessalonians in II Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."

He showed confidence in the prayers of his friend, Philemon, in Philemon 22, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."

In the churches God has given me to pastor, I have made this statement to the Deacons on many occasions. "There is no way that I can succeed in this place as your Pastor apart from the prayer of you men, and the members of this congregation."

Not only did the Apostle Paul feel the need of the prayers of God's people, but he also reminded the people of God that he prayed for them. For example:

Such assurance was given to the Romans in Romans 1:9, "For God is my witness, Whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

He told the Ephesians that he constantly prayed for them in Ephesians 1:16, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."

To Timothy in II Timothy 1:3 Paul wrote, "Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."

Again James tells us to, "PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER..." We have an obligation to pray for

each other. I am to pray for you, as you are to pray for me. In I Samuel 12:23 we read, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." What could be more plain? If we do not pray for others, we sin. Here are five benefits of praying for one another.

Number 1: Praying for each other is getting things done for others that you cannot do for them. We read in II Corinthians 1:11, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us..." When we find someone in need, our first reaction is to ask, "Can I help?" However, if that need is beyond your ability to help, then the only thing you can do is go to our Heavenly Father and ask Him to help.

There have been times, I have felt helpless in knowing how to assist another staff member or friend with a need in their life, only to discover that as I interceded on their behalf through prayer, the Spirit of God either worked in their life or answered their prayer.

Over the years there have been many, many people who have helped us practically, financially and in any number of ways for which we are eternally grateful. On the other hand there have been situations and circumstances in our lives and ministry where the only thing others could do for us was pray. What a blessing to know that these prayer warriors were sharing our need before our Heavenly Father. Yes, **praying for each other is getting things done for others that you cannot do for them**.

Number 2: <u>Praying for others enables us to love people that we otherwise would not love</u>. Our Lord said to us in Matthew 5:44, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Do you know someone "...which despitefully used you?" Do you know someone who has "persecuted you?"

Then put them on your prayer list and begin to pray for them. Perhaps you cannot change the circumstances, nor their attitudes, actions or reactions, but you can pray for them. You can bless them, and in love you can do good things for them. Yes, praying for others enables us to love people that we otherwise would not love.

Number 3: <u>Praying for others gives us an interest in their lives</u>. One of the greatest investments I can make in the life of my wife, our five children, their mates and our twenty-one grandchildren, as well as other believers, is through the ministry of prayer. When Paul wrote to his friend Philemon, we read in verse 22 of this short letter, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."

Do you want to feel close to your children? Then pray for them daily by name and by need.

Do you want to feel close to your **friends**? Then pray for them by name and by need.

Do you want to feel close to your **husband or your wife**? Then pray for him or her daily by name and by need.

Do you want to feel close to your **Pastor**? Pray for him by name and by need.

Do you want to feel close to a part of the ministry in your church? Then pray for that part of the ministry.

Do you want to feel close to a **missionary**? Pray for them by name and by need.

When we pray for others we not only show interest of their lives and ministries, but we also have an investment in their lives and ministries. I cannot help but wonder how much more effective and fruitful our pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and Christian schoolteachers might be, if we took seriously our responsibility to pray for them. It is possible that there are some Christian leaders who might have been protected from the assault of the wicked-one on their lives, marriages, and ministry, had they been

adequately covered by our prayers.

NUMBER 4: <u>Praying for others enables you to share in their victories.</u> There is no scripture to share here apart from the principle found in I Corinthians 3:5-9 where we read.

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (6) I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. (7) So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. (8) Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. (9) For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

In the passage, please notice that both those who plant the seed and those who water the seed share in the increase God gives. Herein is the principle: when the people for whom you pray, receive the answer to your prayer,

Their victory is your victory.
Their thrill is your thrill.
Their achievement is your achievement.
Their answer to prayer is your answer to prayer.
Their blessing is your blessing, because you can both praise God!

You have become a part of their team by praying for them and sharing in their victory. Here on earth, do you not rejoice with others as they praise God for the answers to their prayers? Likewise in Heaven, I am convinced we will share the reward of those for whom we diligently prayed.

Number 5: <u>Praying for others makes us grateful for one another.</u> Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus and said in Ephesians 1:16 that he, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." One of the surest ways to feel loved is to know someone is praying for you. One of the blessed ways to feel close to someone is when I pray and when you pray, we meet at the same throne of grace. Though physical distance may separate us, we are actually together, because:

We are meeting at the same throne. We are talking to the same God. We are asking for the same thing.

No wonder prayer partners become close friends! Yes, **praying for others makes us grateful for one another**. Remember again I Samuel 12:23, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

THIRD: Again in James 5:16 we read, "...and pray one for another..." Perhaps you have wondered, "How can I make intercessory prayer for others more evident in my life?" Well, here are <u>five</u> practical areas you could consider as you become consciously aware of interceding before God on the behalf of others. It is a simple outline and easy to follow. Let me give you the major points, and then explain each for you in detail.

First Pray for the World as you become world conscious.

Second Pray for our Nation as you become conscious of our Nations needs.

Pray for our Church as you become conscious of your church needs.

Fourth Pray for your Family as you focus on each family member and need.

Fifth Pray for Others as you intercede on behalf of other's needs.

This entire schedule should take you no longer then 30-40 minutes. Basically you set up a 14 day schedule and then repeat yourself unless that request is answered by God. In some cases you may need to pray for several days, maybe for several weeks, or for

several months on a certain area. All this, as the Holy Spirit gives you the liberty to do so. Here is a schedule that will keep you focused in your praying.

First: Be WORLD conscious. As you begin to pray for the world, you actually become a part of the world. Here are three areas to consider.

A. <u>Pray for the trouble spots in the world</u>. It is amazing how we wrap ourselves up in the world of our children, our family, and our needs and forget there is a world full of people who also have needs. It appears as long as God blesses me and my family and my little world, that's all that concerns me. Doesn't God care about the rest of the world as He cares about us? As you listen to the news of tragedies, and you hear that someone loses a love one, they are grieving like you would if it had happened to you.

Ask God to love them and bless them.

Ask God to comfort them and give them strength.

Ask God to send someone their way to perhaps lead them to Christ.

Ask God to intercede for these individuals as you would for yourself, even though they may be on the other side of the world. Remember, those who are suffering are perhaps our brothers and sisters in Christ.

B. <u>Pray for missionaries</u>: This is a good time to select a group of missionaries for whom you will regularly pray and with whom you will regularly correspond.

Pray for their physical well-being and protection.

Pray for their family members by name.

Pray for their emotional well-being.

Pray for their spiritual well-being.

Pray for their ministry.

Pray for their financial needs.

C. <u>Pray for specific areas of the world</u>. This is the time to divide the world into twelve geographical areas and regularly pray for missions in each of those areas.

Asia, South America, Russia, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Island of the Sea, Far East, Central America, North America, Israel, Caribbean, United States.

Each day, pray for one of the twelve areas that God would send missionaries to that area to help those people hear the Gospel and find Christ.

Second: <u>Pray for our Nation</u>. When you pray for our nation you will become conscious of our national needs. Here are four areas to consider:

A. <u>Pray for our government leaders</u>: Every day pray for the leaders in various parts of our government as we are instructed to do in I Timothy 2:1-2,

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Pray for our President, his Cabinet and the Federal Congress.

Pray for our Governor and the members of our State Legislature.

Pray for our local government and various councils.

Pray for wisdom as they lead, and that God would intercede and change the hearts of the leaders on matters that would destroy the moral, spiritual and godly fiber of our Nation.

B. Pray for trouble spots in our Nation. Pray for God to intercede for people and their

situations in the troubled spots in our nation. The people in these areas have needs, concerns and feelings as we do.

Pray that God would protect them in some cases.

Pray that God would comfort them.

Pray that God would bless them.

Pray for believers in these situations.

C. <u>Pray for the salvation of our Nation</u>. Remember in Genesis 19 we find Abraham pleading with God not to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of the righteous. Let me ask, "Who among you will stand in the gap, and pray for the salvation of our nation?" Again, as you pray for the salvation of our nation, pray for it by geographical area. Such as:

Pray one day for the northern states.

Another day, pray for the southern states,

Another day, pray for the mid western states.

Another day, pray for the south western states.

Another day, pray for the north western states.

Then last, pray for our detached states and territories.

D. <u>Pray by geographical area for churches, pastors, and ministries in the United States</u>. This would include radio programs, Christian schools, and colleges.

Third: Pray for your Church. Here are a number of areas about which you could pray for your church, its ministries, its staff and members. Each day:

Pray for ONE of the Staff members at your church.

Pray for ONE of the ministries of the church.

Pray for a section of pews that God would bless the families who regularly sit in that section.

Pray for the salvation of souls in the areas of your community where the church people live.

Pray for REVIVAL in YOUR CHURCH, EACH AND EVERY DAY.

Pray for the special needs of your church including the needs of the sick and shut-ins.

Pray for the Pastor and the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power in preaching.

Fourth: Pray for your Family: Spend time each day praying for the members of your family by name and by need.

Fifth: Pray for the needs of others that are known to you. Here you focus on the needs of other people that have requested that you to pray for them.

Casual praying will not suffice. We must pray fervently. If our generation is to experience genuine revival, we must pray persistently. Prayer must become as vital and natural a part of our lives as breathing.

<u>WE</u> must pray when we can feel the presence of God, and we must pray when the gates of heaven seem to be locked against us. Like the needy widow in Jesus' parable, we must knock relentlessly on the door of heaven, until God hears and answers.

WE must pray when it is convenient, and we must pray when great sacrifice is required.

<u>WE</u> must pray when we are strong, and we must pray when we feel that we have no strength left.

<u>WE</u> must pray when we have time to pray, and we must pray when the demands on our schedules seem more than we can bear.

Persistent prayer requires getting before the Lord, and staying there, until the reality of

Ephesians 3:20-21 is seen, "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory..."

Before we draw this message to a close, let me challenge you with one more thought. Jesus said in Mark 11:18, "My house will be called a HOUSE OF PRAYER for all nations."

The most important times in the life of any church are the times of prayer. "I sincerely believe that until a church accepts the burden of prayer nothing of real importance will begin to happen." I trust you caught that statement. To be sure you did, let me repeat it, "I sincerely believe that until a church accepts the burden of prayer nothing of real importance will begin to happen."

Having made that statement I also sincerely believe the fervency of the church's prayer meeting is the barometer of the church. What happens during the prayer meeting service ought to be the gauge by which you judge success or failure, because that will be the measure by which God is able to bless us.

I trust this message will help you to become proficient at **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**. I leave you with these two great promises that have been a constant reminder to me.

Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto ME, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

Ephesians 3:20-21, " Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ASK or THINK, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be GLORY.

Start the day with God in prayer, pray on schedule, but do not hang up. End each time you pray with a comma or semicolon, and stay in touch with God all the day long. Which brings me to I Thessalonians 5:18, "Pray Without Ceasing."

Ere you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the Name of Christ the Saviour,
Did you ask for loving favor as your shield today?

When you met with great temptation,
Did you think to pray?
By his dying love and merit,
Did you claim the Holy Spirit as your guide and stay?

When your heart was filled with anger,
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another,
Who had crossed your way?

When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was bowed in sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow,
At the gates of day?

Oh, how praying rests the weary, Prayer will change your night to day; So when life seems dark and dreary, Don't forget to pray.

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon, "Praying for One Another in the Family of God" right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you. Why not ask God to give you someone for whom you can pray this week?

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."
Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation."

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know? Please send an e-mail to, pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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