



THE PRAYER OF FAITH AND THE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶ 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. (KJV)

In this Lesson, we will explore the prayer of faith and the prayer of a righteous man.

I. The Prayer of Faith

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

J.K. Johnston told a story about a small town that had historically been "dry"—it was an alcohol-free town. No liquor stores. No bars. No wine list in the town's restaurants. One day, a local businessman decided to build a tavern. Bothered, a group of local Christians gathered for an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene. Soon, after the meeting, there was a great thunderstorm, lightning struck the bar, burning it to the ground. As a result, the bar owner sued the church, claiming the church was responsible because of their prayers. But the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible. The presiding judge, after his initial review, said: "no matter how this

case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and these Christians do not" [**Paraphrase of J.K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin, Discovery House, 1992, p. 129, cited on the 'net**].

This story may sound funny but it clearly reveals the reality that many times Christians are praying without really believing that their prayers will be answered.

A. What is Faith?

- ❖ Faith is the **awareness** that there is God who eternally exists, the **admission** that without Him we are nothing, and the **acceptance** that He is a loving, compassionate, just and righteous God who never lies and does everything He says He will do.

Hebrews 11:6 says, And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- ❖ Faith is the **confidence** we have that He who began a good work in us is faithful to complete it. ***Philippians 1:6***
- ❖ Faith is to be fully **persuaded** that God has the absolute authority and power to deliver His promises. ***Romans 4:21***
- ❖ Faith is the **Power of God** in us received through His Word.

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Faith provides us the energy to obey the will of God, gives substance to our hopes and dreams, gives us the courage to stand our ground in the midst of danger, provides us with the spiritual wings to soar above the storms of life, and the supernatural strength to carry on the will of God amidst insurmountable obstacles.

B. Personal Crisis of Faith

In 1994, I was on my fifth year as Pastor of South Greenheights Bible Centered Fellowship in Muntinlupa, Philippines. The ministry was doing all right but for some unknown reason I started to feel bored in the ministry. Negative things are beginning to flood my mind. The exercise of my pastoral duties became mechanical and as I look at the future, I was no longer motivated to take the challenge, the zeal and enthusiasm were gone, and I have no more drive to strive to excel. This feeling dragged on for months. I was still praying but I feel like my prayers are not making a difference.

One morning while reading Isaiah, this verse struck me like a lightning. **Isaiah 7:9b** ***"If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."*** "God spoke to me through this verse.... saying, *"I have given you faith that can move mountains, bring healing, and can do anything for you. Now if you will not use this faith right where you are, you will never see it work wherever you go. If you will not prosper right where you are, you will not prosper elsewhere."*

The transformation of my faith that day was so strong. I began to live by faith, as never before. I began to give, to serve, to teach, and to pray like never before. I began to see spiritual, emotional, relational, and financial miracles happening in our family and in the Church's body. What I was trying to do in the last five years is happening before my eyes. The Church experienced tremendous growth not only in numbers, but also in maturity. The Church through the generosity of the people of God was able to purchase its own lot and a multi-million Church's building was started. But most importantly, Souls were getting saved, new believers were being disciplined.

Since that experience, I have seen that everything I set my heart to do, God brought it to completion. It may not happen within my timetable but it did happen within His timetable.

C. Challenge to Pray the “Prayer of Faith”

“The Prayer of Faith” is a prayer born out of faith. We need to pray the Prayer of Faith because it is the ingredient that makes a difference in our prayers. It is the prayer that resulted from believing in God and in His Word. It is the prayer that is rising from the heart stretched towards heaven connecting us into the heart of God. It is the prayer that moves God to shower us with His Favor. It is the prayer that ushers the supernatural into the natural making way for the impossible to become a real possibility. It is the prayer that breaks the wall of unbelief. It is the prayer that gives birth to miracles after miracles.

There is a story that was told about a group of people in Kansas who after a long drought, they came together to pray for rain. As they gathered to pray for the rain to come, it turned out that only one of them brought umbrella, and she was a young girl. This story reveals to us that everyone prayed but it seems only the young girl believed that their prayers will be answered. If God did have answered their prayers I believe it would be because of the prayer of that young girl. It appears to me that she was the only one who has the faith. [Source Unknown]

It is the prayer of faith that the Leper prayed when he came to Jesus and said, **“Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean”** to which Jesus responded, **“Yes I am willing be thou clean”**. That very moment the leper received his miracle of healing.

The prayer of faith is the prayer that the two blind men prayed when they called out to Jesus for help. He asked them “Do you

believe that I can do this?” To which they replied “Yes Lord”. Jesus touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you”.

Jesus said in *Matthew 21:22* *If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.*

II. The Prayer of a Righteous Man

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

A. What is a Righteous Man?

A righteous man is a person whose conscience is clear before God and men. He is a person of honesty, integrity, and transparency.

B. How Can a Person Become Righteous?

1. Through Faith in Jesus Christ

Romans 10:1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

The Jews pursued righteousness by observing the law. This kind of righteousness is okay but it is not enough to obtain favor from God because this righteousness results in pride, prejudice, and

judgmental attitude. This is reflected in the lives of the Pharisees, the Teachers of the law.

True righteousness is received not made. This transpired when you received Jesus in your heart by faith. This is the acceptable righteousness God. The result of this righteousness is humility, gratitude, generosity, and compassion. And this is reflected in the lives of the Apostles, the disciples and in the lives of every genuine believers of Jesus Christ from every generation.

NOTE: *The righteousness obtained through faith, grows, matures, and bear fruit that will last.* (The fruit of the Spirit, The fruit of Worship, and fruit of Discipleship)

2. By Living Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

NOTE: To live under the Lordship of Jesus is to constantly and continuously feed our spiritual bodies through our daily personal bible reading, through bible studies, and through worship services, so that we will grow mature and bear fruit.

C. How Can a Person Become Righteous?

In 2nd Kings chapter 20, it tells us that Hezekiah the king of Israel became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

Upon hearing this, **2 Kings 20:2** *Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,* ³ ***"Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes."*** And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. This is the reason God cannot deny the prayer of Hezekiah. **2 Kings 20:5** ***"Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. ⁶ I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"***

D. Challenge to live a righteous life. To live a righteous life is to follow Jesus.

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

To follow Jesus is extremely difficult. It's like a salmon fish swimming upstream against all odds to its place of birth to spawn and reproduce. I'm not sure if the salmon is aware or not that this journey also means the end of its life. But I am sure that if it's aware it will never regret its decision because the sacrifice means its kind would continue to exist. When you follow Jesus, you go against popular opinions and cultures. You will face dangers, temptations, insults, persecutions, even death. This is your cross. But if you continue, you can say with confidence as you come to the end of your life that it is worth the sacrifice because you are seeing the fruit of your labors.

If you live a righteous life....God promised you this...

❖ ***Psalm 34:19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;***

❖ ***Proverbs 24:16*** *for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.*

III. Conclusion

The prayer of faith and the prayer of a righteous man were put together in the same passage, because these two are like twins. They are inseparable. In Hebrews 11, the people of faith that were mentioned like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and many more were also righteous men. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that you cannot be one without the other. You cannot be a man of faith at the same time a man of the world. You cannot be righteous and lack faith. It's either both or nothing.

FAITH HONORS GOD [Source Unknown]

Faith honors God and God honors faith! A story from the life of missionaries Robert and Mary Moffat illustrates this truth. For 10 years this couple labored faithfully in Bechuanaland (now called Botswana) without one ray of encouragement to brighten their way. They could not report a single convert. Finally the directors of their mission board began to question the wisdom of continuing the work. The thought of leaving their post, however, brought great grief to this devoted couple, for they felt sure that God was in their labors, and that they would see people turn to Christ in due season. They stayed; and for a year or two longer, darkness reigned. Then one day a friend in England sent word to the Moffats that he wanted to mail them a gift and asked what they would like. Trusting that in time the Lord would bless their work, Mrs. Moffat replied, "Send us a communion set; I am sure it will soon be needed." God honored that dear woman's faith. The Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of the villagers, and soon a little group of six converts was united to form the first Christian church in that land. The communion set from England was delayed in the mail; but on the very day before the first commemoration of the Lord's supper in Bechuanaland, the set arrived.