

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG181 – Effective Prayer

Welcome to this podcast. Today, I am talking to you as a result of a prayer meeting that I was in this morning. We got into this discussion about our intercession and the effectiveness of it. Really, the conversation was born out of the fact that this is being recorded during the time of the Israel war with Hamas. Of course, we are into a lot of prayer and intercession for Israel and the situation at this time, and I know that a lot of Christianity is. So I want to just talk about our effectiveness in our intercession, or as a result of our intercession; because I think that not only should we be praying, but we should really be able to look at and find out whether our prayer is being effective or not. My concern, personally, for my prayer is that I would like to see a great deal more actual manifestation of effectiveness from my intercession than what I am seeing up to this point. And I feel like, spiritually, it is a right thing to do, to go before the Lord and to really evaluate your walk before Him, and how you are doing on certain things. Certainly, prayer would be one of those areas of our spiritual life that could be evaluated as we move along.

So, I want to start out of Matthew the seventeenth chapter, with verses 14-21. This is a story we are all very familiar with, following the transfiguration of Christ. It says,

When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.” And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?” And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. [¹But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]”

As we know, this verse is generally not accepted as being valid, because it was not in some of the most early, original manuscripts that we have of these verses. I personally bear witness to that, because I think it is kind of an excuse; whereas Christ was pointing to the problem – Yeshua was saying, “Look, you guys have a problem with your faith, and that is why your prayer was ineffective.” Now, to me, this is kind of a way in which I believe I can evaluate my prayer, my walk with God, my life before Him, and check my effectiveness in every area. Right now, I am talking about prayer, but you have a couple of issues here. And I appreciate, really, what the disciples did in this instance; because they were trying to accomplish something through their prayer, laying on of hands, however they were manifesting this attempt to heal this young boy by casting the demon out. They had worked at it themselves. Christ comes along, Yeshua comes into the scene, and He rebukes the demon, the demon is gone, the boy is cured instantly. Then, kind of the third step in the story is that the disciples come back to Yeshua, and

¹ Early manuscripts do not contain this verse.

they say, “Look, obviously You were very effective here, and we were not effective. We could not do it. Why?” They were trying to learn. And I think that it is important for us, number one, to evaluate our effectiveness; and number two, to learn from our mistakes, or our lack of effectiveness at times. That is what I think the disciples were doing here, which is very important. They tried to move in God, it did not work; they watched Yeshua have instant results from His prayer, or His proclamation; and then they went to learn from that. And He did point out to them what the problem was, so that they could correct it. I think this is something that we should do.

I think that we all have walked with the Lord for years, and when we talk about growing in God and maturing in our spiritual walk before Him, we can look back on our history and see things that have not gone the way we hoped that they would, or where we have not been able to accomplish what we were trying to accomplish. Therefore, we recognize our ineffectiveness. When we measure our effectiveness against Christ and His perfect effectiveness, then we have an opportunity to learn, and not just go on doing what we have done in the past, the way we have done things in the past; but instead, look for a brighter future, in which we can grow and mature and be more effective in what we are doing. So, personally, I am doing this with my prayer relative to Israel right now, and the situation that we are in with the war against Hamas. I am recognizing, “Hey, I’m doing a lot of praying here”; and honestly, the reason I am bringing this podcast is because I believe a lot of people are praying, praying more than they usually pray, and praying for something very specific like these disciples were. They were specifically trying to cast this demon out. And I think that right now, we are specifically looking to see a victory on behalf of Israel, to end the problem of Hamas and their determination to annihilate the Jewish state and to annihilate the Jewish people.

That is really what is at stake here in this situation. That is what the cry, “From the river to the sea,” literally means – it means absolutely doing away with Israel and doing away with the Jewish people, globally. So, be very specific, when you hear that cry, about what is being declared and what is being sought by those who are making these statements. This is one reason why there has never been a successful accomplishment of a two-state solution, because there is no desire for a two-state solution with the Islamic jihad. They are looking for one state, and that would be under Sharia law, under Islam; which is the Islamic determination, globally, that anybody who is not practicing Islam is an infidel and will be dealt with.

It is very important right now that our prayers, as Christian believers, be effective for Israel, and for the Kingdom of God, and for the will of God in the earth. It is kind of life and death, as it was for this young man – if he was not delivered, this spirit was going to destroy him. And we are dealing with life and death. We are dealing with a situation that there is no seeming solution to on a natural level; only God in His divinity can bring about that solution. Therefore, our cry is for divine intervention into the situation on every level, in order that Israel be delivered, and in order that the evil of this call for annihilation be dealt with, completely and thoroughly; and that not only Israel, but the world, is free from this threat of Islamic jihad. So, I want my prayer to be effective; and I believe we should be effective, and we can be effective. And I think it is good to stop and evaluate – are our prayers being effective right now in what we are believing for to see God’s intervention?

I do believe that this determination for annihilation, Islamic jihad, is born of satan and is demonic in its origins; and I believe that only judgment is going to bring a solution to it. And I think we find that in the Scriptures.

I will go to Ephesians the sixth chapter, verses 10-18.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness [this evil, this wickedness that we are facing], against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one [then these are flaming arrows, coming from the evil one]. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

That is what we are doing during this time. I want to go on to Second Corinthians chapter 10, verses 2-6. It says,

I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

Now, if you put these two pieces of Scripture together, we see a picture emerging. One is the fact that our battle is not against flesh and blood. What we are up against here, and I believe this very much, is the rulers, the powers, the world forces of darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. That is what we are dealing with. We are not going to just deal with things on a natural level, on a fleshly level, a human level, and get the results that we are looking for. So, we understand that we must be able, as believers, by the power of God, by the Holy Spirit, to move in a level of prayer and intercession that is divine in its power and anointing, and is able to tear down these spiritual forces.

This is nothing new. What we are dealing with is nothing new. I brought a podcast just recently, before this one, that talked about the fact that this issue of the annihilation of Israel is over 3,000 years old. We see it in the book of Esther, in the Hebrew Scriptures, that Haman put out a proclamation for the annihilation of the Jewish people. That had nothing to do with Palestine, nothing to do with Gaza, nothing to do with religious issues; it had everything to do with the fact that this determination that the Jews will be annihilated is a long-standing determination in the heart of satan, in the heart of these spiritual forces of wickedness. They have made this determination and this proclamation, just as Haman did back in the days when the Israelites were living in Persia, and under the king of Persia. We also see in the Scriptures the fact that Daniel in his prayer had to have angelic forces work against the prince of the power of Persia, because the will of God was being blocked, and the answers to Daniel were being blocked.

When these things come, these are longstanding battles that we are now fighting. I mean, the natural level in the media wants to confuse it all within the context of Gaza and Palestinian people, and we could go into all of that and the history of all of that and bring out all the truths. But the biggest truth is, this is evil. This is demonic. This has been a determination from thousands of years ago to not have a State of Israel, and to have the total destruction of the Jewish people. So, our prayers must be effective, because these are prayers for life and death. We are praying for the salvation of, the saving of, the Jewish people, lest they be destroyed; and not only them, but as we know from the discussion of Christ in Matthew 24 about times of tribulation, that if the time is not cut short, there will be no flesh saved alive. And of course, that is what Israel keeps warning the world: "Hey, we may be first, but you are next, so you should assist us in this." And the greatest way that we can assist, as believers, is through effective intercession to bring down these spiritual forces of darkness which are behind everything that is transpiring in a natural level.

The spirit world is affecting the natural world – always has, always will; and what we deal with is not flesh and blood. Flesh and blood are being driven by what is transpiring through the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Paul in Corinthian says, "Our weapons are not flesh, but they are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." He is saying, "Look, we can bring these down. Our weapons are powerful. Our war is won in the Spirit." We are fighting these principalities, these powers, these spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, and our intercession has to be a weapon that is not fleshly. We do not need soulish, fleshly prayers right now; we do not need emotional prayers; we need prayers that are divinely powerful for the destruction, once and for all, of these fortresses, these strongholds in the heavenly places.

Verse 5 goes on to say, "We are destroying speculations." Boy, look at the news. People are so moved by speculations. It is absolute lunacy, what is being promoted on college campuses, what is being promoted in the media. It is craziness. These are lofty thoughts that are raised up against the knowledge, the truth of God, in Christ. "Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" is what we need to be able to do through the power of our intercession. So we need, like the disciples, to stop for a moment and say, "Are we being effective?" When we look out on a natural level, are we seeing the truth really winning the day in the media? Are we seeing it winning the day on college campuses? Are we seeing the spiritual forces of this thing change in a positive direction towards Israel, and away from the forces of evil? Boy, and people have almost forgotten what initiated it, and how it was initiated – absolute, horrific, unbelievable crimes that were committed against civilians, children being decapitated. It is like all of a sudden, the only focus is, "Israel is the enemy. Israel is committing war crimes." They are not committing war crimes – that is the motivation and the intent to kill innocent civilians and children, and you do not see that here. There is no army like the Israeli army that is so careful in its drive to protect civilians and citizens. That is just the truth of it. But it is all covered over, you see, because of these speculations, these lofty things that are raising themselves up against the truth and the knowledge of God. So we, in our prayers, have to be able to take these thoughts captive, and end these lies, and see the truth prevail.

This is something that we are up against, and it is not the first time that we have been up against this. The nations were in an uproar about what Hamas had done. But, you know, give it a week, and it has shifted completely, where now they are saying, "Crucify Israel for what they are doing! It's their fault." I am telling you, this is spirit driven. It is not the individuals, it is these principalities and powers, the spirits of wickedness. We have to, once and for all, be able to bring these down, and I think it is time for us.

Christ Himself spoke about it in John 16. At verses 7-11, it says,

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

I think we need to recognize this in our prayer and intercession right now, as believers. We are not entering into judgment; the judgment has already been determined. The ruler of this world, these spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, they have already been judged by Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father. We must remember that and recognize it. We must recognize what the Scripture says: He is seated at the right hand, reigning until every enemy is made the footstool of His feet. Well, who is doing that? That is what is left for us to do. That is what Christ is saying: “It is better for you if I go, because if I go, the Holy Spirit is here with you.” And the power of your prayer, the power of your petition, is able to now execute the judgments that have already been brought through Christ upon the spirit world.

You say, “Why is it taking so long? When is Christ going to return and establish the Kingdom on Earth?” Well, He must reign until every enemy is made the footstool of His feet. And these enemies, they have already been proclaimed as judged; but the execution of that judgment must be done. Look at it in our normal legal system. You go through a trial of a murderer, and that murderer in the trial is found guilty; and so, he is declared guilty. He will go through another trial that declares what the judgment is against him for his crimes, and what he must suffer for his crimes. But then, there is a time of execution. So it is a several step process; and spiritually, we are in a similar process. We have seen that through Christ, satan, the prince of this world, has been judged; these princes of darkness, these spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, have been judged. Christ Himself has ascended to the right hand of the Father, and is seated with Him. Therefore, He will convict the world of sin and righteousness – “Righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me.” So, we are to move in this righteousness of God which brings the execution of the judgment that has already been determined against these spiritual forces. We are the ones that execute those judgements; and we are the ones that will bring these spirits as those who will be under, as the footstool of His feet, and reside in that judgment.

In Daniel 7, it talks about this issue of judgment. It says in verses 21-22, “I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.” See, the judgment is something that has been determined already against these forces. But we, in our intercession, must execute those judgments written.

Look at Psalm 149, verses 1-9.

Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of the godly ones. Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King. Let them praise His name with dancing; let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation.

Let the godly ones exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations

and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings [again, we are talking about these spiritual forces that are over the nations and over the peoples] with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written.

You say, "You are entering into judgment." No, we are not entering into judgment. We are establishing that the judgments that were written by Christ and won at the cross are being enforced. It is not enough to have a decree of judgment; it is only effective when it is executed. And that is what is necessary now.

The judgment of Christ on the cross must be executed on the spiritual forces in the heavenly places, until they are made the footstool of His feet, and He, in fact, reigns with every enemy under His feet. "This is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!" See, this is our honor. He won the judgment on the cross; but the execution of those judgments, placing those spiritual forces under His feet once and for all, this is the honor for all of His godly ones. Our prayers need to be effective now in accomplishing this.

As we are watching on television, on the news, we are seeing people driven by these spirits in the heavenly places, these principalities and these powers. It is time that by our intercession, we execute the judgments which have already been written, and we see the total victory won that Christ died for. It is time that He is handed the absolute, total victory over His enemies. That is an honor for all of His godly ones, and we enter into that by faith today. We enter into it through our intercession that we proclaim in the victory of the Lord. His victory is the blessing and the establishment of Israel as a nation, and the restoration of His promises to every one of them; the oneness of His people; a new heart, a new spirit, a new ability to walk with Him, where He said, "And I will be their God, and they will be My people." That is what we are working to establish through our intercession now and our prayers for Israel.

And we believe for it, in the name of the Lord.

Amen.