

## As in the Ancient Days

April 17th, 2011

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.

**Isaiah 51:9a**

## The Lessons from Yesteryear

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed,

and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

**Mark 2:1-12**

## Breaking Up The Roof

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, **they** uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

**Mark 2:4**

## The Tile Ceiling Over the American Church

Give me children or I die.

**Rachel**  
**the wife of Jacob the mother of Joseph**

Give us the stuff of old or we die!

**The 21st Century Church**

## The Agony of Barrenness

The beginnings of persistent prayer

- **The Barren Woman** is shamed by her fruitlessness and cries out in anguish of soul
- **The Barren Woman** is moved to prayer to cover her shame of fruitlessness, begging God night and day for life to form within her

- **The Barren Women** is supernaturally aided through prayer to bear, not a mere human, but a mighty man, a prevailing hero of Israel
  - **Sarah**, barren until ninety years of age, begets **Isaac**
  - **Rebekah**, barren, and then after Isaac's prayer, she begets twins, Esau and **Jacob (Israel)**
  - **Rachel**, Jacob's wife, is barren and then begets **Joseph**, who delivered the nation of Israel
  - **Manoah's wife** was barren and then she begets **Samson** (another deliverer of the nation)
  - **Hannah** was barren and then has **Samuel**, a prophet of Israel
  - **Ruth** barren and widowed, finds mercy, and begets **Obed**, who begat **Jesse**, the father of **David**, of whose line is Jesus Christ
  - **Elizabeth**, elderly and unable to bear children after the natural, begets **John the Baptist**, of whom Jesus said there was no greater prophet born of women.

If shame of childlessness had not subdued these women, what mighty men would have been lost!

**Leonard Ravenhill**  
**P137, WRT**

**NOTE:** Are we shamed over our childlessness? Do we weep in the anguish and shame of our ministries that conceive not the new life, the new birth in others? Are we not grieved over our impotence, our infertility, our inability to beget children in the faith? Are we not yet fed-up with our weakness to pray and see liberty won and captives set-free? Are we not yet sickened that this world sees nothing marvelous or powerful in our lives to cause them to wonder what it is that we possess? Are we not shamed that this world sees us not as a threat, but merely as a nuisance? May we, the barren in Israel, cry out in supplication. May we echo the demand of Rachel unto our Bridegroom – “Give me children or I die!”

## The Vow of the Barren

Now there was a certain man . . . and his name was Elkanah . . . And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the

other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, **but Hannah had no children** . . . And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: **but the LORD had shut up her womb**. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? **am not I better to thee than ten sons?** So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk . . . And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And **she vowed a vow**, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head . . . and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that **she bare a son**, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

### **1 Samuel 1:1-11;19-20**

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him **until the breaking of the day** . . . And he (Jacob) said, **I will not let thee go, except** thou bless me. And he (God) said unto him, What

is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he (God) said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

**Genesis 32:24,26b-28**

## Israel

Yisra'el {yis-raw-ale'} – contender, soldier of God, the prevailing power of God, the power of God unto victory

You must pray with your might. That does not mean saying your prayers, or sitting gazing about in church or chapel, with eyes wide open, while someone else says them for you. It means fervent, effectual, untiring wrestling with God. It means that grappling with Omnipotence, that clinging to Him, following Him about, so to speak, day and night, as the widow did to the unjust judge, with agonizing pleadings and arguments and entreaties, until answer comes and the end is gained. This kind of prayer be sure the devil and the world and your own indolent, unbelieving nature will oppose. They will pour water on this flame. They will ply you with suggestions and difficulties. They will ask you how you can expect that the plans and purposes and feelings of God can be altered by your prayers. They will talk about impossibilities and predict failures; but, if you mean to succeed, you must shut your ears and eyes to all but what God has said, and hold Him to His own word: and you cannot do this in any sleepy mood; you cannot be a prevailing Israel unless you wrestle as Jacob wrestled, regardless of time and aught else, save obtaining the blessing sought – that is, you must pray with your might.

**William Booth**  
**p136, William and Catherine**

# What is Prayer?

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. - Matthew 6:10

## The Doctrine of Answered Prayer

*God has promised and He cannot lie*

Ask, and it shall be given you . . . - Matthew 7:7

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. - Matthew 21:22

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. - John 11:22

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. -  
John 14:13

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. - John 14:14

. . . whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. - John 15:16

. . . Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. - John 16:23

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. - John  
16:24

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. - James 1:5

## The Six Things that Hinder Prayers

### 1. **Born of Flesh**

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

**James 4:3**

**2. Errant - not in alignment with God's nature, will, and purpose on Earth**

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us . . .

**1 John 5:14**

**3. Wavering, Unsure**

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

**James 1:6-7**

**4. Living in Disobedience and Impurity**

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

**1 John 3:22**

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

**Isaiah 1:15**

**5. Lack of Heavenly Honor**

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

**1 Peter 3:7**

**6. Lack of Abiding**

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

**John 15:7**

# The Recipe for the “Impossible-For-God-Not-to-Answer” Prayer

- **Ingredient #1 - Praying God Prayers**
- **Ingredient #2 - Praying with Faith**
- **Ingredient #3 - Praying with Persistence**

## Ingredient #1 - Praying God Prayers

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

**John 15:7**

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

**1 John 5:14**

## Ingredient #2 - Praying with Faith

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

**Matthew 21:22**

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

**James 1:6-7**

## Ingredient #3 - Praying with Persistence



## **Effectual Fervent praying**

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

**James 5:16b**

## **Go Again!**

. . . Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain . . .

**1 Kings 18:42-45**

## **Wrestling Until the Breaking of Day**

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day . . . And (the man) said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

**Genesis 32:24,26**

## **Always to Pray, Not to Faint**

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect,

which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

**Luke 18:1-8**

### **Importunity**

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

**Luke 11:5-10**

### **Unwavering Pursuit**

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

**Matthew 15:21-28**

## Euchē (yü-khā')

The Vow of Consecration

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: And the prayer (*euchē*) of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 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. 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. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. - James 5:14-18

## Euchē

The Sacred Vow of Givenness, The Immovable Position, The Unbreakable Resolve, and thusly, The Unstoppable Prayer

There is no power like that of prevailing prayer – of Abraham pleading for Sodom, Jacob wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the breach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief, Jesus in sweat of blood. Such prayer prevails. It turns ordinary mortals into men of power. It brings power. It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God.

**Samuel Chadwick**

Prayer in its highest form of faith is that prayer which carries the whole man as a sacrificial offering. Thus devoting the whole man himself, and

his all, to God in a definite, intelligent vow, never to be broken, in a quenchless and impassioned desire for heaven.

### **E.M. Bounds (p498 TCW)**

Success is certain when the Lord has promised it. Although you may have pleaded month after month without evidence of answer, it is not possible that the Lord should be deaf when His people are earnest in a matter which concerns His glory. The prophet on the top of Carmel continued to wrestle with God, and never for a moment gave way to a fear that he should be non-suited in Jehovah's courts. Six times the servant returned, but on each occasion no word was spoken but "Go again." We must not dream of unbelief, but hold to our faith even to seventy times seven. Faith sends expectant hope to look from Carmel's brow, and if nothing is beheld, she sends again and again. So far from being crushed by repeated disappointment, faith is animated to plead more fervently with her God. She is humbled, but not abashed: her groans are deeper, and her sighings more vehement, but she never relaxes her hold or stays her hand. It would be more agreeable to flesh and blood to have a speedy answer, but believing souls have learned to be submissive, and to find it good to wait for as well as upon the Lord. Delayed answers often set the heart searching itself, and so lead to contrition and spiritual reformation: deadly blows are thus struck at our corruption, and the chambers of imagery are cleansed. The great danger is lest men should faint, and miss the blessing. Reader, do not fall into that sin, but continue in prayer and watching. At last the little cloud was seen, the sure forerunner of torrents of rain, and even so with you, the token for good shall surely be given, and you shall rise as a prevailing prince to enjoy the mercy you have sought. Elijah was a man of like passions with us: his power with God did not lie in his own merits. If his believing prayer availed so much, why not yours? Plead the precious

blood with unceasing importunity, and it shall be with you according to your desire.

**Charles H. Spurgeon**

He prays not at all who does not press his plea. Our praying needs to be pressed and pursued with an energy that never tires, a persistency which will not be denied, and a courage that never fails.

**E.M. Bounds**

Oh Lord, give me Scotland or I die!

**John Knox**

1510-1572

Give us the stuff of old or we die!

**The Church at Ellerslie**

## Exceedingly Abundantly Above

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us . . .

**Ephesians 3:20**