

Teach Us To Pray...

Message by: Leroy Surface

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Luke 11:1-4

I can well remember when I was a small child. My daddy would gather his children into the living room at night for prayer. He would read aloud to us from the bible and ask us questions about what he had read. Then we would all kneel at the couch or a chair, and begin to pray. Dad would always begin family prayer by having us all repeat *"The Lord's Prayer"* together. Oftentimes we would not finish this simple prayer before dad would begin to weep before God, and begin to pour his heart out to God in intercession for the needs of the family, church, and nation. He would submit himself to God: *"...not my will, but thine be done."* He would worship and rejoice in the Lord: *"...I magnify thy name."* Most of dad's prayer was a total surrender to the Lord, and a *"pleading"* for the intervention of God in the affairs of those he loved. As a very small child I didn't understand all that was happening, but no one could be in the house when dad prayed and not *"feel"* the presence of God almighty.

"The Lord's Prayer" was given to us as a result of one of the disciples asking Jesus to *"teach us to pray."* Several of the disciples had overheard Jesus praying. My, what a blessing that must have been, to hear the *"Son"* praying to His *"Father."* Certainly, we would think, Heaven must have come down when Jesus prayed. The scripture tells us of occasions when the heavenly angels came and ministered to Him. What glory that must have been.

Our Father which art in heaven... The expectation of receiving anything from God is based on this one truth; God is *"Our Father."* This is not the *"sinner's prayer,"* but it is the *"believer's prayer."* It is the prayer of the *"child of God."* We can, as Hebrews 4:16 says, **"come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."** Further in *"The Lord's Prayer,"* there is a *"pattern"* for prayer, and things we should seek every time we pray. It is, however, far more than a *"prayer outline."* This prayer, as with every other *"religious"* work can be just a *"dead work"* with no value at all to the one *"saying"* the prayer. Jesus' response to *"teach us to pray,"* was far more than a *"prayer"* to memorize. His teaching on prayer is found in the next several verses of this text.

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.

Luke 11:5-8

Jesus said to His disciples, and to us, *"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight..."* He puts us in a *"hypothetical situation."* Company comes to our house late at night. They have just arrived after a long journey from a distant land. They have spent days walking or riding through the hot, dry countryside. They are tired and weak from hunger, and you have nothing to set before them. There is no

“bread” in your house. You are ashamed! The custom of the land is to welcome them into your house, wash their feet, and set a hearty meal before them before giving them the best beds in the house for their rest, but you have nothing to set before them. You do not hesitate to go to a friend’s house, even at the midnight hour. You knock on the door, but the friend tries to ignore the knocking. You continue to knock until a voice comes from inside the house, saying, “*what do you want.*” You ask for three loafs of bread. Your friend tells you to come back in the morning. You explain the situation, but your friend tells you the doors are locked and barred and he is in bed with his children with him: he cannot open the door to you. Your friendship does not open the door, but because of your “*importunity,*” he rises up and gives you all the bread you need. He doesn’t feel sorry for you! It wasn’t his “*friendship*” that caused him to open the door; it was your boldness, your desperation, and your perseverance, even your “*brashness*” in daring to come at midnight. Now listen to the conclusion that Jesus brings to us concerning how to “*pray.*”

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. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Luke 11:9-13

Jesus is telling us to approach our “*Heavenly Father*” in the same way you would approach the “*friend*” at the midnight hour. You wouldn’t normally be so “*bold*” or so “*brash,*” but necessity is upon you. Needy people, the “*lost,*” the “*sick,*” the “*afflicted,*” and the “*oppressed*” have come to your “*church*” or into your life, and you realize, you “*have nothing to set before them.*” In your Father’s house there is plenty. Do not hesitate to come “*boldly*” to Him.

I raised six children. We did not “*trust*” in doctors or medicine. When fever or pain struck any of my children, they always came to “*daddy*” to pray. Dozens, if not hundreds, of times I saw the Lord immediately break the fever and take the pain away. There were times, however, that I knew I had nothing to offer. I could not take my child in my arms and call upon the Lord with confidence. I had not “*prayed in secret.*” My business or other cares of this life had robbed me. Maybe I had been “*too tired*” to pray for days at a time. In those times we still did not put our trust in the doctors or medicine: I would leave the child in the crib, or with their mother and go into a back room, or over into the corner of the room and begin to call on “*Him who is able* (Hebrews 5:7). I would repent for not praying. I would “*humble*” myself before God. I would ask for “*mercy.*” I would plead for His Spirit to return to me. I would ask! I would seek! I would knock! until He opened to me. Then, rejoicing in Jesus, I would return to the sick child and speak to the sickness or fever in the name of Jesus Christ, and it would cease.

In II Chronicles 7:14, God said, “**If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way...**” Every child of God can pray when they are awakened to the desperation of the situation. No one can pray when they seek to come as God’s “*equal.*” The attitude, “*how lucky God is to have me*” is not one that will ever move God in our behalf. Paul asked the question of the Corinthians, “*What do you have that you did not receive*” (I Corinthians 4:7)? Any child of God that has anything to “*give*” has first “*received*” from God. Even Jesus said, “**The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**” Jesus had to “*receive*” from the Father all that He “*gave*” to the people. Let Jesus, in the days of His flesh, cease to “*pray,*” and He will have nothing to offer. In John 14:10 He tells us, “**Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.**” Apart from the “*Father*” that was in Him, Jesus had nothing to offer.

Notice the final words of Jesus' teaching on prayer: **"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"** (Luke 11:13) The *"answer"* to every problem or situation a person may face is for the *"Father"* to give the *"Holy Ghost"* to the seeker. All the *"asking,"* the *"seeking,"* and the *"knocking,"* that Jesus exhorted us to do, was for the Holy Ghost to be given to us. The answer to every part of *"The Lord's Prayer"* is that we would be presently *"filled with the Spirit,"* that we would have something to give to a lost, sick, and oppressed world.

Thy Kingdom come... Wherever the scripture speaks of *"The Kingdom of God,"* it is speaking of either the *"realm,"* or the *"reign"* of God. Christ is the *"realm."* No one will ever find *"God"* apart from Christ. Jesus told us, **"No man cometh to the Father but by me"** (John 14:6). Every child of God will *"abide in Christ."* John said, **"...in Him is no sin. Whoso abideth in Him sinneth not."** Much could be said about the realities of the realm, but it is the *"reign"* I would address in this message. Jesus told His disciples in that day, and us in this day, to pray, *"Thy Kingdom come..."* He is speaking of the *"reign"* of God rather than the *"realm."* As long as Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, the *"realm"* is in heavenly places, and yes, the believer **"sits together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"** (Ephesians 2:6). The Psalmist speaks of the *"realm"* in Psalms 110:1, **"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;"** next, he speaks of the *"reign"* in Psalms 110:2, **"The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."** Zion is the church of Jesus Christ. God has promised to *"rule in the midst of His enemies"* even while Jesus *"sits"* at the Father's right hand." The prayer, *"Thy Kingdom come"* is the cry of God's children for the *"rod of His strength"* to be sent out of Zion. It is a cry for the Holy Ghost to *"come upon us."*

In Luke 3:22, the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon Jesus. In Luke 4:1, **"Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness..."** There He fasted and prayed for forty days, and was tested by the devil. In Luke 4:14, **"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."** In Luke 4:18, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."** In Luke 4:21, He said, **"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."**

In Mark 1:15, Jesus began His ministry, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, **"The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."** Jesus was not preaching a *"kingdom"* that could not come for at least another two thousand years at His *"second coming."* Neither was He preaching about a kingdom that would not come for another three years, at the *"day of Pentecost."* Jesus said, *"The time is fulfilled...the Kingdom of God is at hand"* It was time for the Kingdom to come immediately. Now, read the rest of that first chapter of Mark, and the second and third chapters.

It is evident from the record of the gospels that Jesus' miraculous ministry, apart from His turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee, began in the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath day. Notice the response of the people to His teaching:

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:22

In the synagogue that day was one possessed with an unclean spirit. He began to cry out as Jesus was teaching, saying, **"Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God"** (Mark 1:24). Jesus immediately rebuked the spirit, saying, **"Hold thy peace, and come out of him."** The scripture records that the spirit **"...cried with a loud voice, and came out of him."** Notice the people's response to this:

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Mark 1:27

On that same Sabbath day Jesus went to Simon Peter's house and healed Simon's mother-in-law of a fever. About sunset, the people of the city began to bring the diseased and those that were possessed with devils. They came until, as the thirty-third and thirty-fourth verses say, **"And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him."**

The following day Jesus began visiting the surrounding towns, teaching and casting out devils everywhere He went. He reached out his hand and touched a **"leper,"** and cleansed him from his leprosy. After this miracle, Jesus could no longer come openly into the city (Mark 1:45), but stayed in the *"desert places,"* yet the people *"came to Him from every quarter."* Several days later, Jesus came to a house in Capernaum. Immediately the people, when they heard that He was there, crowded around the house until it was impossible for anyone to enter because of the multitude. It was there that He healed the man who was sick of the palsy. The multitude was amazed, and glorified God, saying, **"We never saw it on this fashion."** To those who understood the things they saw and heard, it was evident that the Kingdom of God had come to them.

In Luke 9:1-2, Jesus gave *"power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases"* to His twelve disciples. He sent them to *"preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick."* In the sixth verse they departed, and *"went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere."*

In the tenth chapter of Luke, Jesus sent another seventy disciples in the same manner as the twelve. In the eighth verse, He instructed them, **"And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."** In Luke 10:17, **"the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."** Jesus answered them in the eighteenth verse, **"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: an nothing shall by any means hurt you."** Such is the Kingdom of God wherever and whenever it comes upon men.

Thy will be done... Jesus instructed us to pray continually, *"Thy Kingdom come..."* The reason is given in the next phrase, *"Thy will be done..."* The Kingdom of God did not come in the earthly lifetime of Jesus until after the Holy Ghost came upon Him. Jesus came *"in the power of the Spirit"* into Galilee and began to do the works of His Father in Heaven. The Father's will was done *"in earth"* exactly as *"in Heaven."* In John 5:19, Jesus confessed, **"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel."** As Jesus was to later tell us, *"without me, you can do nothing"* (John 15:5), so it was with His ministry, without the Father, Jesus could do nothing.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Mark 1:35

I have heard people say many times, *"I believe in the power of prayer."* I must tell you, there is no power in prayer. Prayer is simply the means of communication between a child of God and our Heavenly Father. A person may hear a burglar breaking into their home at night. They dial 911 on their phone and shortly the police arrive and capture the burglar before great damage is done. How foolish it would be to go around telling people, *"I believe in the power of the telephone."* The telephone didn't save them. It was just a means of communication with the police who did come and save. So it is with prayer. The secret of Jesus' ministry is

that He was in daily communication with the one who sent Him. He called on the Father to lead Him, to instruct Him, to anoint Him, to always be with Him and upon Him by the Holy Ghost. The “*Spirit of the LORD*” would come upon Jesus; He would see the purpose and will of His Father, and “*in the power of the Spirit,*” He would do His Father’s will on earth.

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Psalms 127:1-2

as in heaven, so in earth. Solomon was right when he said in Ecclesiastes 1:2, “*vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*” Every work of man is vanity. Every “*human effort*” to please God, or to do His will is vanity. Everything that God does not do is vanity. Our knowledge is confusion. Our wisdom is foolishness. Our works are vanity. Without Him we are nothing, can do nothing, and know nothing. We “*try*” to do His will and end up in a mess. The Psalmist reached the same conclusion. Except the Lord build the house, we labour in vain. Except the Lord keep the city, we awake in vain. Everything man does as a mere “*method*” towards the will of God is an exercise in futility. It is only when we realize this futility in all our works that we will truly turn to the Lord with all our hearts. “**Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.**” Notice, He said “*as in Heaven, so in earth.*” Only God can do that. His Kingdom must come upon us. The Holy Ghost must fill us, and anoint us. We will wait at the altar for the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost. We will tarry until He “*clothes*” us with miraculous power from Heaven. Then, His WILL, will be done in earth as in Heaven. Jesus never studied philosophy, psychology, medicine, business, government, or any other human system. He was a carpenter until God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:38); then He became the “*healer*” of all that were oppressed of the devil. Let us lay aside the vanity of human efforts to serve God, and seek His face, waiting upon Him at the altar of prayer until He fills us and clothes us with power from on high.

Give us day by day our daily bread... In that we are children of the Kingdom of God, our “*daily bread*” has nothing whatsoever to do with the natural food we eat. Remember the man Jesus told us of who went to a friend at midnight to get three loaves of bread? This plea for bread was not to satisfy his own hunger, but to set before others who had arrived unexpectedly at his house. He had bread enough for himself, but not for company. Far too many Christians see no reason to pray or seek the Lord. Many who live good clean lives are satisfied to casually “*serve the Lord*” with the expectation of Heaven when they die. The vast majority of “*Christians*” today have never been “*baptized with the Holy Ghost,*” but it is the “*promise of the Father*” that Jesus told us to “*wait*” for (Acts 1:4-5). Far more have never had the “*Spirit of the Lord*” come upon them to anoint them for the work of God. How many have obeyed the command of Jesus to “*tarry*” until they are “*endued*” with power from on high (Luke 24:49)? The promise is that we will be “*clothed*” with “*miraculous power*” from Heaven. The majority have never even “*tasted*” of that which Jesus called our “*daily bread.*”

Our daily bread from Heaven is foreshadowed by the “*manna*” the children of Israel ate in the wilderness. The manna covered the ground each morning when they awoke. Every man of Israel was to gather enough manna for that day. If he tried to gather enough for two or three days, it would breed worms and stink. It was to them a “*daily bread,*” and it was given “*day by day.*” Jesus told us to pray “*give us ‘day by day’ our daily bread.*” In Matthew 6:11, it is said, “*give us ‘this day’ our daily bread.*” We are to come boldly to the throne of God in prayer and intercession every day of our lives, to receive for that day that which we would minister to others.

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God...

I have been a night person all of my life. I would almost never go to bed before midnight regardless of how early I might need to get up in the morning. Often I would write until three or four A.M. and still wake up around 7:30 in the morning. I would do my praying and bible study late at nights. The problem with this

routine that I followed for many years is that it was not unusual for other things to take away my time with the Lord. Some time back, during a time of fasting and prayer, the Lord spoke to my heart about coming to the church at six AM to pray. The next morning I did so, but that night I stayed up and wrote a message until three AM. That morning I did not go to the church to pray, but waited until night as I had in the past. Then something strange happened. Each morning I would wake up about 5:45 AM, but I would turn over and go back to sleep for another hour. The first morning I did this I had a troubling dream. The next morning I had another dream, even more troubling. It seemed that every morning the Lord would wake me up to pray, but I would go back to sleep and the adversary would come to talk to me. Within a week I was in such a state of mind that I thought all my fasting and praying was in vain, and that God would not hear me. One day, being troubled and tormented by the adversary, I questioned the Lord as to why, and I received an amazingly simple answer. I realized for the first time that the adversary only came during the hour I was supposed to be in the altar of prayer. One thing I quickly understood; if I were at the church talking to the Lord, the devil would not be in my bedroom talking to me. The next morning I was awakened 4:30 AM. I got up, went to the church, and the Spirit of the Lord met me at the door. His presence settled on me and He began to speak to me. *“The only way you know you are sanctified is because I shed my blood for you. The only way you know you are crucified is because I suffered the cross for you. The only way you know you have victory is because I destroyed he that had the power of death, that is, the devil. I spoiled principalities and powers. I triumphed over them. I cause you to triumph. I give you the victory.”* The next hour was spent rejoicing in Jesus.

When you start your day early in the altar of prayer, nothing will ever “*come up*” to keep you from that appointment. Other things will fall by the wayside, but your time with the Lord will only increase. You will ask, and you will receive the Holy Ghost; you will seek, and you will find His will and purpose for you; you will knock, and the “*Kingdom of God*” will be opened unto you. Your prayer will become one of expectancy; *“Thy Kingdom come...today! Thy will be done as in Heaven so in earth...today! Give me bread today to give to others; healing for the sick, miracles for the afflicted, and deliverance for the captives.”* God’s answer to all of these is to “*send the Holy Ghost upon you.*” Pray, worship, rejoice in Jesus until Heaven opens and the Spirit of God is poured upon you. You will leave that altar understanding why Peter could say to the lame man, *“such as I have, give I thee...”* You will have received something you can give.

Please pray for our nation and our president. There is still time to save America if we will humble ourselves and pray. Satan has launched an all-out attack against the “name” of Jesus Christ and anything that has any connection with Christianity. The true church will stand victorious, but we must know, the victory will be received at the altar of prayer.

Part II of

“Awake!! Ye Watchmen!!”

Message by: Leroy Surface

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

Isaiah 56:9-11

The message God has burned into my heart is not a pretty one. It is certainly not one that I find any pleasure in giving, but it is a message that must be given to God's people of this present hour. More than we can possibly understand, our own future as a nation or even as a church depends on our response to what the Spirit of God speaks to us in this present hour. I had set myself aside to seek the Lord for a period of several weeks. One night I was awakened by the Spirit of God, whether out of a dream or vision, I do not know, but I was hearing a voice, calling all the beasts

of the field to come and devour, to kill, and to destroy. As I heard, I realized I was hearing an *“invitation”* for unclean spirits, demons, and devils to fill the land, possess the people, and do their horrible damning work on the population. I knew the scriptures, though I had not considered them for several years. **“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.”** I immediately understood what it was that God was telling me, but I was not prepared for the understanding He gave me that night.

The message I bring to you began for me thirty-seven years ago, in September of 1966. I was a very young man. I had been in the ministry for about two and a half years, and was presently ten days into a time of fasting and prayer. I was staying in a tiny camper trailer that belonged to Pastor Bob Arriola. When I say it was tiny, it consisted of a single bed with room only to lie down. You had to crawl into it to go to bed, and crawl out in the morning. You could sit on the bed, but you could not stand up because the ceiling was too low. Sometime after midnight on the tenth day of fasting and prayer, as I lay awake for a time after praying and worshiping God, the Spirit of the Lord took me into one of very few *“open visions”* I have experienced in the years of my ministry. As I lay there in the total darkness of night, I first saw a purple covering of some kind, as if it lifted from my eyes. It split into two parts and was taken away, and I heard the voice of the Spirit say, *“I have lifted the veil from your eyes.”* Immediately I saw a most horrible scene. While yet awake, it was as if I was taken to the end of the world. I saw fire and smoke everywhere. I saw multitudes fleeing, seeking some hiding place. I saw the mountains crumbling, volcanoes spewing; fear and chaos was everywhere and there was nowhere to hide. The scene changed. Now I saw what must have been the *“great white throne judgment.”* I saw the judgment bar, and I knew that He that sat in judgment was almighty God. Just beyond the judgment seat I saw smoke as it ascended out of a pit. I did not see the pit, but I saw the amber colored smoke coming from it. I never heard a word from the judge as the people were brought before Him. I would see the people walk up to the judgment bar, and in every case in this vision, they would raise their hands as though to worship God, each one expecting to hear, *“well done”* from the judge, when suddenly their faces and countenances turned to expressions of sheer terror as they began to scream, each and every one, *“There's blood on my hand's! There's blood on my hand's!”* Without a word of condemnation from the judge, and without a word of defense from the people, they were one by one led out and cast into the pit, still screaming, *“There's blood on my hands.”* I saw this same scene repeated over and over, each time with a different person before the judge.

How long the vision lasted, I do not know. I saw this scene repeated over and over. I knew none of the people, but I knew who they were. They were pastors, teachers, evangelists, and parents. All of them were those that were unfaithful in the place God had given them charge. Each of them had people *“under”* them, looking *“to”* them, and they failed to faithfully speak the *“truth”* of God. Each of them, in the place God had given them charge, was placed as a *“Watchman,”* but they failed to sound the warning when the enemy came in to destroy.

Please, before you judge this vision wrongly, read Matthew 24:45-51. Clearly the “*unfaithful*” minister can and will be “*cut off*” and receive his portion with the “*hypocrites*.” This is what I was seeing in the vision. It was God’s judgment of unfaithful watchmen.

As this scene passed, God was speaking to me by His Spirit, and I heard Him saying, “*I have set thee a watchman unto my people...*” His words to me were very similar to those spoken to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:17-21: **“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”** Ezekiel was made a “*watchman*” to the entire nation. I was the pastor of a church; I was made a “*watchman*” unto them. I was a parent to six children; God had placed me as a “*watchman*” to them. Many others would become my responsibility over the years, but my first responsibility was to be “*sober*” and “*vigilant*,” and “*watch*” for the souls of the church congregation and my immediate family.

It was only about ten days ago as I write this, that I was awakened from sleep, hearing the call for the “*beasts of the field*” to “*come and devour*,” because the “*watchmen are blind*.” I was surprised to find that the “*warning*” God was giving that night was to be given first and foremost to...

Parents

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

I Peter 5:8

Every parent is a watchman, set by God to watch for the souls of their children. In fact, in the “*battle*” for the soul of America, the “*parent*” is in the frontlines of the conflict. Second only to the parent is the local “*pastor*,” as a “*shepherd*” to God’s “*flock*.” After these come all the God-given ministries, some of which have the entire nation as their “*pulpit*.” Each and every one of these have been given an awesome responsibility by God, and will give account to God in the last day for all they have done. Some of these ministries are so large, with such far reaching programs, that it becomes easy for the average pastor, and especially the parent, to feel small and insignificant in the work given to them. This is not the case. If the parent and local pastor abdicate their God-given responsibility, all is lost. We must be at our post. We must be sober and vigilant through these night hours. We are “*watchmen*,” and we must be found faithful to “*sound the alarm*.”

In that we are “*watchmen*” on the front lines of conflict, there are a few things we must understand about the “*adversary*.” First, our “*adversary*” is the “*devil*.” He wasn’t always a devil, however. He was once the “*anointed cherub that covereth*” of Ezekiel 28:13-17.” He was “*perfect in beauty*” and “*full of wisdom*” (verse twelve). He was “*perfect in all his ways*” until “*iniquity*” was found in him (verse fifteen). His heart was “*lifted up because of [his] beauty*,” and he “*corrupted [his] wisdom by reason of [his] brightness*.” In Isaiah 14:6-19, his name is revealed as “*Lucifer*,” meaning “*day star*,” or, “*the shining one*.” The “*iniquity*” that was “*found*” in him was the desire to “*exalt himself*.” **“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High”** (Isaiah 14:13-14). In Revelation 12:3-11, he is called the “*great dragon*,” “*that old serpent*,” “*the devil*,” and “*Satan*.” It was when Jesus died on the cross and shed His precious blood that “*the devil*” was “*destroyed* (Hebrews 2:14),” and cast out of heaven unto

earth (Revelation 12:9-11). Revelation 12:4 tells us that His tail “*drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.*” These we understand to be a third part of the angels of God that were caught up in the rebellion of Lucifer, and cast out with him (Revelation 12:9). They know they have but a short time (Revelation 12:12). They know the lake of fire is prepared for them (Matthew 25:41). These are delivered “*into chains of darkness*” until the judgment (II Peter 2:4). This simply means there is no possibility of salvation for them. These are the “*unclean spirits*” that dwell in spiritual “*darkness,*” but they seek a place of rest in the bodies and souls of humanity.

The Adversary wants your Child

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Matthew 12:43-45

I will call your attention to the forty-fourth verse of this text where the “*unclean spirit*” says “*I will return into my house from whence I came out.*” We are well aware that God has “*purchased*” the bodies of His children. The “*purchase price*” was the precious blood of His Son. He tells us that our “*bodies*” are the “*temple of God*” (I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, II Corinthians 6:16).” It is also true that the “*devil*” and his “*angels*” likewise claim the “*body*” of every living person to be their “*house.*” They are continually seeking a way of entrance into the body of some person where they will find a “*place of rest.*”

Every parent desperately needs to understand what I am about to say. The moment your child was born into this world, unclean spirits were looking upon that precious, innocent baby as a potential “*house*” for their habitation. The child is helpless against the advances of this horrible adversary. This is where the parents “*ministry*” as a “*watchman*” begins. It is given to you, parents, to be “*sober and vigilant,*” to “*watch and pray,*” and to “*keep*” that little “*house*” over which God has given you charge. Your child will not be very old before an unclean spirit makes its first “*bid*” for an entrance into their body and soul.

It is a fact of fallen humanity that every child born into this present world is born with sin in its heart and nature. While this is true, it is also true that no child has ever been born with an unclean spirit dwelling in it. We are born “*sinners,*” but we are not born “*perverted.*” It is “*human nature*” to sin, but it is “*demonic*” to be perverted. As parents, we can do nothing about our children’s “*sin nature*” but lead them to the “*saviour,*” Jesus Christ. We can, however, and it is our responsibility as their “*watchmen*” to prayerfully “*keep*” them from the “*evil one*” that seeks to possess their body and soul.

Train up a Child...

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Modern psychology tells us not to “*discipline*” a child until they are old enough to reason and understand right from wrong. If we obey this psychology, it is too late for the child. Notice that the scripture did not say, “*teach a child in the way he should go,*” instead, it said, “*train up a child...*” A very wise older lady explained this verse to me many years ago, while my children were still very small. She pointed out that man can “*train*” every kind of bird and animal to obey and to do every command of its master. “*If we can train a bird, or a puppy, certainly we can begin to train our children from the time they are born. We do it,*” she said, “*with much love, and a mixture of discipline and reward. Before the child is old enough to reason, it will already be trained, and will never depart from that training.*” What a wise lady she was! Incidentally, the Hebrew word translated “*train up,*” is “*chanak (khaw-nak),*” and means, “*to narrow, to initiate or discipline.*”

The Attack Begins

I am going to describe an incident that happens at some time in almost every child's very early life. It must be recognized for what it is. It is the adversary's first attack to gain admission into the body and soul of your child. The child is too young to understand what is going on, and if the "watchman (parent)" is "asleep" or "ignorant" of what is taking place, an unclean spirit just may find itself a place of rest in your child. We have all seen what I am going to describe. At some point in the child's young life (it can happen from about eighteen months or even younger, or as late as three or four years), the child will seem to rebel against the parent for apparently no reason. This will be manifest by the child "throwing a fit." They all seem to do the same thing. They throw themselves on the ground, screaming at the top of their lungs, kicking with their feet, beating with their fist, and their bodies stiffening as a "dead weight" if you try to pick them up. If you pick the child up to go on your way, he will often beat you in the face, kicking and screaming until you let them have their way, whereupon the screaming instantly stops and the child races off to do whatever it was he wanted to do. You should notice that there are no "tears" with the screaming, and no "sobbing" or real crying, only loud screaming. It still amazes me that the "pattern" of this behavior is always the same with every child, regardless of whether a boy or a girl, regardless of race, nationality, or culture. It is as though the small child has been schooled in "how to throw a fit, and get your own way." Of course we know that is not so, or, do we? Consider that this was not "just" your sweet child having a bad day. You will notice, if you give in to the child in this "fit," that their entire nature and attitude seems to change from that very day. I have actually seen small children "take control" of their parents. I have seen three and four year old children giving "orders" to their parents, and the parents obeying them. I have seen cases where parents were actually "terrorized" by their four or five year old children. I knew a minister's wife who had two five year old boys she was deathly afraid of. Fear would grip her heart at the very sight of them when they were upset. They would look at her, saying "I will kill you," and she would go into hysterics, unable to do anything. This was not natural. No adult is afraid of a five-year old child, but an unclean spirit that has entered that child is another matter. How was it possible that a spirit could possess such a small child? Were they "born" that way? Of course not! The unclean spirit was able to come in and possess the children of that home because the "watchmen" were blind: they could not see when the adversary came to their innocent, sweet little children. A parent that is ignorant of the devices of the devil, and unwilling to admit that such could ever happen to their child, gives an open invitation to demons and devils to "come and devour" their children.

In the present moral climate of our nation, if this "first attack" begins in a public place, immediately drop everything you think you must do and get the child back to the privacy of your home. Do not give in to the child in any way, and the fit will continue until you can deal with it. In a past generation, we would have dealt with the child on the spot of the attack, but our nation is so under demonic control today that is more advisable to deal with this in the privacy of your home. When the kicking and screaming continues, you must spank the child equal to what the situation requires. If you do this right it will probably be a once in a lifetime affair, so be sure you "do it right." Never hit the child anywhere at any time with a closed fist. Never hit the child about the face, or anywhere above the "belt line," or in front of his body. In the case of the "fit," it is best to use your open hand on their bottom, where they sit. Pick them up while the "fit" is in progress and spank them what you think should be sufficient. Turn them loose, and if they fall back to the floor, screaming and kicking, immediately pick them up and spank them again, only harder. Again, release them, but if the "fit" continues, repeat the process. Proverbs 19:18 says, "**Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.**" This is certainly the time to obey this scripture, and not spare for their "screaming." Patiently continue the repeated spanking until the child, when released, does not fall to the floor, but instead clings to your body or leg and cries with real tears. At this point, pick your child up and hold him (or her) close. They will throw their arms around your neck and sob with tears. Hold them close. Reassure them of your love. Tell them over and over how much you love them. Pray for them, thanking Jesus for their safety from the "evil one." I raised six children of my own. Every one of them suffered this same attack against their soul. With most of them, it happened only one time. When it happened a second time with one or two of them, our response (as parents) was the same. None of our children ever had the third attack. Today, of my six children, four are deeply dedicated to the Lord in ministry. All of them are far above average successful on their jobs or

in their own businesses. None of them have ever been arrested; none of them do drugs, alcohol, or even tobacco. I have never once had to “*bail*” any of them out of trouble, financial or otherwise. In fact, in recent years, they have together been a great blessing to me in every way. Certainly, I have found the scripture in Psalms 127:3-5 to be true: **“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.”**

Building a “Bird House!”

Have you ever built a birdhouse? If so, you probably understand that you build the house in different ways according to the species of bird you hope to attract. If you want to attract “*Martins*,” you will build a two or three story “*apartment*” complex with rooms for at least a dozen or more nesting birds. You will place the house high upon a pole away from the clutter of other buildings. If the house is neat enough, clean enough, and attractive enough, you just may attract several families of Martins. If, on the other hand, you want to attract “*Blue Birds*,” you will build single dwelling houses, and place them about five feet above the ground, often attached to a tree. Be sure not to make the entrance hole too large, for the Blue Bird will not feel safe in the house and will not nest there. Someone built several “*Blue Bird*” houses for my wife one year, and made the entrance holes too large. We put the houses up, but not one of those houses attracted Blue Birds. Strangely I did notice that “*Tree Frogs*” set up house keeping in two of them.

The last house I want to talk about is the “*bat*” house. Now a bat is not really a bird, but a flying mammal. He is a creature of the night that loves darkness and lives on mosquitoes. If you want to attract “*bats*” to your place, you can easily do so by building a bat house. To do so, take four 1x6 boards about two feet long, nail them together forming a 6x6 square frame. Put a slanted roof on it, but put no floor in it, and nail it to a tree. Seal any cracks so no light can penetrate the house, and you will attract bats. Fifty to seventy five bats may come to live in your bat house. You may not realize there are any bats around, but if you build their house, they will come.

Have you ever noticed in the scriptures that “*spirits*” are sometimes spoken of as “*birds*?” We know that the “*Holy Ghost*” came to Jesus in the bodily form as a “*Dove* (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32).” On the other hand, devils and unclean spirits are likened to “*unclean and hateful birds*” in Revelation 18:2. Like different species of birds, they also are attracted to a certain kind of “*house*.” Remember, it is your child’s body that is being looked upon for a house. If you, as a parent, will closely watch for the changes that take place in your child as they grow into adolescence, you will be aware and know when another spirit is seeking a place of rest with your child. I saw a public service advertisement on television. A mother was speaking to her son. You see only the mother as she speaks, telling the son to “*be careful, call me when you arrive at your friends, be sure to be home by midnight, etc.*” You hear the son in the background, politely saying, “*yes mom, I will mom, etc.*” Then the son steps forward and kisses his mother as he goes out the door. He is dressed in baggy grunge clothing, has body piercings with several rings in his ears, nose, tongue, etc. and long spiked orange hair. In the background you hear the announcer saying, “*Let your child be himself, but always know where he is.*” It sounds like good advice, but it is not. Yes, always know where your child is, but NO, that is not your child “*being himself.*” One of two things has already happened. Either an unclean spirit is manipulating your child’s thinking, and is gaining complete control of his soul, OR, you have allowed your child to design a “*house*” of their own body that will attract demons to it. Why parent, would you allow children to ignorantly build of themselves a “*house*” that would attract unclean spirits to them? I know that you love your child. Don’t give them up to the devil. Be a faithful watchman, and fight for their souls.

Trying the Reins

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 17:10

God says that He “*searches the heart and tries the reins*” of His people. This is terminology that any good horseman will understand. The first thing you want to do when mounting a fresh horse, or one you have not ridden before, is to “*try the reins.*” Find out if the horse will obey every command of the reins without hesitation. Will it turn left with just a touch to the left, or to the right with just a touch to the right? Will it instantly stop with the slightest tug of the reins, or gallop, or even run upon command of the reins? This is what it means to “*try the reins.*” Have you ever “*tried the reins*” of your child? You need to do so; you may be surprised what you will find out. Far too many parents have never “*broken*” their child to the “*reins.*” What will your child’s response be to a “*suggestion*” to “*do this,*” or, “*don’t do that?*” What will their response be to “*No, you can’t go there, or do that.*” This is what it means to “*try the reins.*” I have often seen the sad case of a family that is totally dominated by the “*whims*” of a small child, boy or girl. Often it is the youngest child of two or three. You may have dealt with and delivered your older children through the attacks of the adversary. It is when the last child comes along that the parent is often weakened in their resolve. This child is different. Instead of “*breaking the spirit*” that brought the child to “*fits*” to have its own way, it seemed easier to simply “*give in*” to the child. Every other child is forced to yield to the whims of this “*special*” child. They get what they want, when they want it, and as long as everything goes their way, there is reasonable peace and calm. Try the reins of that child. Tell them no! Stand by it. You’ve already lost the first conflict; don’t lose this one. Their very soul is at stake. If this child is not “*broken to the reins,*” he (or she) will have trouble with teachers at school, and with authority at every level. They will never be able to “*get along*” on the job as an adult, and they will go through their lifetime, still “*throwing fits*” when things don’t go their way. If you are the kind of parent that goes to war against every authority that crosses your child, you, parent, are damning your own child to Hell. Repent of your ways, and become a watchman for the soul of your child. The rebellion can and must be stopped while the child is very young, and kept under control until the child reaches maturity.

If your three or four year old son would rather carry a purse and play with a doll instead of a ball, there is a problem. Be a faithful watchman and deal with it, prayerfully. If your son wants his hair to his waist and your daughter wants a “*crew-cut,*” there is a problem. The answer in both cases is NO! If your son wants to “*pierce*” his ears, the answer is no. If your daughter wants to go “*half naked,*” the answer is no. Your child must know from babyhood the meaning of the word “**NO.**”

When I was fifteen years old, my mother was fifty. I was taller and a lot stronger than she was. One day she told me to do something I didn’t want to do. I got just a little “*sassy*” with her. She looked up at me and got right in my face. She said, “*You think you are to big for me to handle, but I want you to know, you’re not.*” As she said the word “*not,*” she caught the hair of my temples with both her hands and began to bring me down to my knees. “*As long as you live,*” she said, “*I will be able to handle you.*” Before she finished talking, she had my face almost in the kitchen floor, and held it there until I “*understood*” her. Momma went to be with Jesus in 1986, but she is still “*handling me*” with the things she put in me. I “*rise up and call her blessed*” (Proverbs 31:28). She was a faithful watchman. Mom and Dad raised four sons, all of whom are gospel preachers, and have been pastors of various church congregations.

Patience in Discipline

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Hebrews 2:2

This text, while not specifically dealing with the discipline of our children, does give perhaps the greatest single principle in child discipline. With God, “*every transgression and disobedience*” receives a “*just recompence of reward.*” I have seen parents warn their children repeatedly without ever taking disciplinary action. I was in a public place once and noticed a small boy repeatedly doing something the parent had told him to stop. Finally the parent took the child firmly by the arm and said, “*I’m not going to warn you but three more times.*” Permission was given to this child to “*go to the limit,*” and even then he knew that mom or dad wouldn’t really do anything. Another time I saw a young child doing bad things for several days with nothing said to him but

“no, no,” or “naughty, naughty.” He had done some really destructive things with no real discipline whatsoever. Finally, on Friday night, this families “television night,” the child stood in front of the TV. The parent was so angered that they gave the child a very hard spanking. The anger had been pent up all week, and released for this small offence, but it certainly sent a confusing message to the child.

Not every “offence” is worthy of a “spanking.” Many times simply a sincere “talking to” is enough. Other times grounding, or losing privileges is sufficient. Two of my children got with some other children one time and smoked a cigarette. I heard about it and called them into their bedroom, ready and determined to give them the “spanking of their life.” I asked them if they had really done this, and they hung their heads and said, “yes sir.” I began to tell them how disappointed I was when I was overwhelmed by the situation, and broke and began to cry, sobbing uncontrollably. When I regained my composure, I knew there was no need to spank them. There was no way anyone could have made these children smoke another cigarette after seeing their daddies heart, broken for them.

Patience is required in discipline because “every” transgression and disobedience must be dealt with. If this is established at a very early age, however, you will seldom have to spank or chasten your child at all. You will have an obedient child that will honor you and make you proud to be their parent.

Most Important

In order to follow the things given in this message, you must love your child with all your heart. Love them enough to discipline them, severely if necessary. Proverbs 13:24 says, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Take time to “play” with your children, and equally take time for them to “work” with you. Teach them to work while they are very young. Instill good work habits in them; it will bless them all the days of their life. Above all, and more important than anything else I have said, you should pray continually for your child. You cannot be a faithful and true “watchman” for your child without the authority that only comes from God. You cannot watch your child at all times, but if you are a faithful watchman, God will keep them also. More than one of my children thought that God was a “tattletale,” because more than once I had dreams of wrong things they did at the very time they did them. The Lord will work with you if you are fully submitted to Him. You must be under His authority. Do these things, and your children will willingly be under your authority. They will rise up and call you blessed. **More on “Awake Ye Watchmen” next month**

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