

Desperate Prevailing Prayer By Mark I. Bubeck

Classic Christian Writings:

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One of the many Psalms we could turn to as an example of desperate, prevailing prayer is Psalm 143. I want you to notice as we read the first six verses, the intensity and the desperateness of David in this Psalm: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul [one translation has it, he has pursued me]; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land."

Prayer

"Precious Lord, You know that there are times when all of us have been brought to the place where the only comfort we found was in desperate, prevailing prayer, where You have ministered to us, You have taught us, You have humbled us, You have broken us. And we thank You for those times, painful though they are when we experience them. We pray that as we are focusing on prayer in this hour that You will teach us the importance of walking with You in those times of desperate prevailing prayer, that we might be Your servants who walk in Your freedom and victory in the Lord Jesus we pray. Amen."

I believe it is for the sovereign purposes of the Lord, many times known only to Himself, that He takes all of us who are His servants, all of us who have been washed from our sins by the precious Blood of Christ, to that place where we resort to desperate, prevailing prayer. He has done that in my life a number of times. Since I have been here at the conference God has reminded me of some things that I should have remembered. IÂ've said to the Lord, "I need to be revived," and IÂ've asked the Lord to help me remember times in my life when He has brought me to that place of desperate, prevailing prayer that were significant.

There was a time in my life when I was a young pastor in Colorado serving with the Conservative Baptist Fellowship of churches and during those days we came into a very serious fracture in the fellowship of that body of believers. It was over the degree of separatism that was acceptable in the fellowship. Some of us were called "the soft core." They thought we were a little mushy on this issue, and it was sort of a negative reference. Then there was the hard core, those who thought that separatism needed to be pressed just as far as it could be.

What triggered it was that Billy Graham was coming to the Denver area. The churches that were part of this fellowship of churches that were going to support him came under severe criticism. The contention became so severe that it almost came to the place where we couldnÂ't serve the Lord together anymore and yet neither group had enough of a majority to vote the other group out. We were stuck with each other, which I believe was of God. As a young pastor, this tormented me. I was an idealist. I knew we ought to love one another. We ought to serve the Lord together.

The day came when each pastor was to bring two laymen with him from his congregation and we were all to meet together and talk, and see if we couldnÂ't resolve the matter. I was so troubled by it that I got up at 4 oÂ'clock in the morning, and I went over to the church and I walked and poured my heart out in brokenness and repentance over what was happening to the fellowship that I loved. I knew it was wrong. I didnÂ't know what to do. I was walking and praying for about 45 minutes or an hour. As I was walking up the center aisle of our sanctuary praying, all of a sudden God drew near to me and He crushed me to the floor. I didnÂ't hear a voice, but I heard God. He said He had a plan in which He was going to use me, and I remember the terrible sense of unworthiness that swept over me. All I could say was, "Why me, God, why me?" The answer came back, "ItÂ's all of God and itÂ's all of grace." I donÂ't suppose that experience lasted over a minute, but it was life transforming.

I kept wondering what it meant. I thought maybe God was saying that He was going to use me to somehow resolve the issues. Yet the brokenness I experienced made me know it was more than that. He did use me to suggest a resolve that eventually was usedÂ—to disband the association of churches and to let each church decide where it wanted to fellowship. For four more years after GodÂ's word to me, there was a total silence from Him on that issue but on my part there was much praying, much wondering what God had meant by that

unexpected visit.

Then through John Wesley White, my wife and I and our musician were invited to go to Britain for three months, and my church gave me a leave of absence and sent us on that journey. It was a wonderful time, but I remember in the middle of it was a time of barrenness. We had been in Lincoln and not much had happened there and then we had gone to the heartland of Britain near Birmingham. We were in a Methodist Church. There was good attendance. I sensed wonderful liberty as I preached the Word, but nothing was happening. The night just before our final night I gave the invitation and no one came forward, nothing happened. I said to the folk, "If you would like to meet with me and some of the team in the prayer room after the benediction, you come in." I expected there would be some. You know who was there? My wife and me and our song leader. I went home to our place of rest very troubled. I didn't sleep much. The next morning I said to Anita, my wife, "Will you go down and be with the lady of the house? I just want to be alone."

That whole morning I sought the Lord and I explained to Him, "Lord, You didn't bring me here to England just to have some nice little meetings. You had a purpose. And somehow nothing is happening...." I was pouring my heart out like this and all of a sudden another visitation from my Lord came to me, like a startling wind. God spoke to me and told me that He had His plan to use me, and that I needed to speak that night on the atonement. I argued with the Lord, "Lord, I don't have any sermons with me on the atonement. I don't know anything about the atonement." It was overwhelming.

We had some meetings in the afternoon. I said, "Lord, You have to give me a message in twenty minutes," which was about all I had left, and He did it. The service that night was the closest to revival I have ever been. There was a sense of the presence of God in that place that those people were talking about years later. When it came time to dismiss the people to go home, they wouldn't go home, and we were still there at two o'clock in the morning. Desperate, prevailing prayer.

Henry Blackaby told us earlier that he believed that September 11 was mainly a message to the Evangelical Church, and I agree completely with that. I have groaned and been wounded over the apathy and indifference in the church, but God has reminded me of my sin of not entering into desperate, prevailing prayer for the Evangelical Church, and I have had to face that. I solicit your prayers that God would take me into that travail which He has taken me into a number of times.

The first time I remember was when I was in Seminary. I went through an emotional time, almost a breakdown time. It was overwhelming, and I was getting counsel which helped me wonderfully. But the real help came from one of my professors who had gone through a similar experience in seminary. I went just to talk with him about it. He listened to me and he said to me, "Mark, you're afraid you're going to have a nervous breakdown, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, Mark, if God wants you to go through a nervous breakdown, you ought to want to do that more than anything else in the world." All of a sudden God "turned on the light." I went to our apartment and got on my knees, and I said, "Lord, if You want me to go through a nervous breakdown, then here we go," and I believed it was going to happen. But that was when the healing began. In desperate, prevailing prayer there was surrender. I look back on that as one of the greatest learning experiences in all of my years of ministry—just to surrender to my Lord.

That is what desperate, prevailing prayer leads you to if it is of the kind we have in Psalm 143. I want to share some thoughts from that Psalm that I hope will encourage you as they have encouraged me.

Reasons For Desperate, Prevailing Prayer

First of all let's consider the reasons for desperate, prevailing prayer. They are here in verses one through four. Let's look first at verses one and two: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

What is the first reason that this psalmist gives us as to why he is in this state of desperate, prevailing prayer? I believe it's his desperate weakness. He recognized that something was coming his way that he was not sufficient to meet and somehow we know that it was related to some of the human failure in his own life, perhaps his own sin. Notice in verse two that he asks God not to enter into judgment with His servant, "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." That is another way of saying, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The psalmist put himself back into the awareness of that great, wonderful truth. The real secret of brokenness that leads to revival is knowing your weakness, knowing that you have no adequacy to meet the desperate needs of this hour. The only adequacy is God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. So what

brings us to that place of desperate, prevailing prayer? It is our desperate weakness, our frailty.

Another factor that brings us there is Satan's desperate attack. Look at verses three and four: "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground..." One translation has it, "The enemy has pursued me; he has crushed me down to the ground." Have you ever been there in the battle with evil and darkness? Satan has been on your trail. He is pursuing you. He has crushed you to the ground. "He hath made me to dwell in darkness..."—you don't see any light—"as those that have been long dead." It's like death has come. "Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate."

Those of us who have a vision for revival are greatly hated by the devil. I've often been asked in light of the books that I have written, *The Adversary*, and *Overcoming The Adversary*, if when I wrote those books I sensed a great assault from the evil one. I would have to say, to some degree, but it wasn't until I wrote my book, *The Rise of Fallen Angels*, which is a study of Nehemiah and the urgency of revival, that I really suffered. It was a very painful thing to write that book. The battle was fierce. There were times when it was so fierce that I had to say, "Lord, somehow lessen the assault, the darkness! It's too dark! The pain is too severe." Satan hates us with a cruel hatred. If we have a vision for revival, he hates us with a passionate hatred. He will do everything to bring us down, but God is sufficient.

The Resources for Desperate, Prevailing Prayer

Let us now see the resources for desperate, prevailing prayer. Where do we turn when we're desperate in prayer? The answer is to some people and to the Word of God. God has always used those two wonderful resources to minister to me. Sometimes it's people. Other times God opened His Word and helped me see myself and the burden He was allowing me to feel so that I could enter into the intercession He wanted me to express before Him.

There is first of all the resource of proper remembrances. Look at verse five: "I remember the days of old..." How important that is in times of great stress and battle and when desperate, prevailing prayer is the only place where you find any comfort at all. We can lift up our eyes to God's people who have walked with Him through those times and see what God did in their lives. I'm sure David must have thought about Moses and Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. He must have thought about those who had ministered so mightily for God in history.

How all of us ought to flee to read Joseph's story time and again. I don't think any of us have experienced the time of desperation that came to that man of God. Read how he walked with God through it. In the great messages of the New Testament, we're called upon to remember the faithfulness of God in the past.

Then there is a proper reaching. Look at verse six: "I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land." We reach out, confessing our own dryness and the parched condition that we find ourselves in, in that time of desperation, and we thirst for the water that will relieve the parched land and bring life again to the vision of our own heart.

The Rescue

Then we need to focus on the rescue. Beginning with verse seven you have the switch in study to the rescue. "Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit faileth:" Lord, I need a quick answer! "Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit." Here is the desperation of his heart, his longing for the rescue which comes through the travail of prayer. When we come to those times, it is God's way of calling us to this kind of desperate, prevailing prayer.

And then the expectant trust. Look at verse eight: "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk..." There was this longing for the Lord to meet him in the morning. "It is good to praise the Lord and to make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night" (Psa. 92:1,2). How many, many times the Lord meets us in the morning, when we shut ourselves away with Him.

Then the writer cries out for miraculous intervention. "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee." He's seeking guidance. He's seeking miraculous intervention.

Another wonderful resource in the rescue is warfare praying. Notice verse nine: "Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me." That's one of the greatest statements about the proper place in

spiritual warfare battle that you'll find in all the Scripture. It has to do with knowing who you are in Jesus Christ and hiding yourself in Him, hiding yourself in His Name. Oh, how Satan trembles before that name—Lord Jesus Christ! You can have a hallelujah time just praying through that name—claiming your union with Christ and the triumph of His Name. He is Lord. He is one with Jehovah God. He's Jesus the one and only Savior. He's Jesus, my Savior. And He's the Christ, the anointed prophet of whom Moses spoke, the anointed priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, and the anointed King who rules and will rule in absolute justice and truth.

Hide yourself in His name. Hide yourself in all of His work; hide yourself in all of His incarnation, His humanity. I never understood the importance of the humanity of Jesus until God took me into the study of my union with Him, that He walked as one of us in the path of humanity, fulfilling all righteousness, overcoming all evil, and His victory alone makes us worthy to expect God's blessing while we walk before Him. We are one with Him in His cross, the power of Calvary, not only to take away your sin, but also to destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil.

It is wonderful to hide yourself in the cross of Christ, to hide yourself in His resurrection and the newness of life that flows from the empty tomb. Hide yourself in the authority of His ascension, where He ascended up far above all principalities and powers and then seated you there with Himself in the Heavenly realms. You're one with Him in His glorification, one with Him in the hope of His coming. What a marvelous place to hide! And the psalmist knew that fact when he was in battle with the evil one. He fled to the Lord to hide himself in His Lord.

And then obedience. Notice in verse ten: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God." He longed for obedience, and he longed for the Holy Spirit to lead him: "Lead me into the land of uprightness."

Resolve of Desperate, Prevailing Prayer

What is the resolve of desperate, prevailing prayer? First of all, it's the glory of His Name. God gets glorified when we enter into that kind of prayer—praying in harmony with the will of God and the ways of the Lord. Notice verse eleven: "Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake." For Your Name's sake, Lord, I need you to intervene. I need you to quicken me so that You will be glorified in my coming out of the desperateness.

Then he longs for the use of righteous methods: "For thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble." He wants the righteousness of the Lord to be honored and to bring about his victory. And then to depend upon the unfailing love and mercy of God. "And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul."

The Psalm closes with a wonderful affirmation. He says, "For I am thy servant." I am committed to You. I belong to You. Everything about my life belongs to You. It is a statement of abiding humility, of abiding trust, and of servanthood commitment. What a beautiful challenge to be people of desperate, prevailing prayer.

Those of us who see the problem and who pour our hearts out to God are the only ones who can do something to bring healing to the visible Body of Jesus Christ. Wounded, struggling local churches need our desperate prayers. The broken, barely-surviving lives of people wounded by sin require desperate prayer. Let's be a people of desperate, prevailing prayer; prayer that wins; prayer that glorifies God.

Prayer

"Our loving Father in Heaven, we know that times of refreshing revival come when You draw near to us, and those are unusual moments, when we could not duplicate them by any efforts of our own. No person remains standing when they come into the presence of God, where there's a brokenness that breaks over us. There's a sense of unworthiness and a humbling that is so refreshing to Your heart and as a result to our own hearts. Lord, that's what we are asking from You in this day. We're praying that the winds of Heaven would again lovingly blow over the hearts of Your people, that the fires will burn, that You will revive your church, O Lord, in the midst of the years; in wrath remember mercy and grace. Have mercy upon us. Help us to continue to hear all that You want to say to us. Might there be a deep, mighty moving of the Spirit of God flowing among us, awakening us, refreshing us, renewing us, glorifying Your Name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."