

"Touching Heaven Sermon Series"

Part 2 –The Purpose of Intercession

Sunday, January 8th, 2012 – Eastgate Community Church (*DID NOT PREACH*)

Pastor Dale Campfield

Intro:

Today, we will continue our sermon series entitled, "Touching Heaven" that follows our 40 day fast.

READ: **2 Cor. 10:3-6**

I. What is Prayer?

1. Prayer is communicating back to God what He has already said.

It is putting Him in remembrance of His Word, which are the promises and blessings for the Saints, His consecrated people.

2. Prayer is the act of bringing God into every situation and asking Him to change, re-arrange and bring from the spiritual supernatural realm into the natural realm.

Then we can sit back and look at it and say, "Here is it, just as God has said in His Word."

3. Prayer is showing our total dependence upon God as our Father...

...as we seek FIRST His Righteousness, acknowledging Him in ALL our ways!

4. Prayer involves two-way participation.

I speak and then I listen, allowing God to speak to me. The most important thing in prayer is what God says. I must be willing and obedient, that I may be fruitful in every area of my life. I will do just what He tells me to do!!!

5. Prayer is our secret place with the Most High God!

II. Why is Prayer Important?

1. Prayer is the key to developing and establishing covenant, relationship, fellowship and friendship with God.

2. Prayer gives strength, wisdom, comfort and answers for any and all situations and circumstances.
3. Prayer gets God's and heaven's attention. God says that even before we call He hears us, and He will answer us.
4. Prayer ushers in the Holy Presence of God.

We cannot afford not to pray. This is the life of a born-again believer. Satan hates it when we pray because prayer ushers in the Holy Presence of God, which no foe can withstand.

Satan knows that when we go to God our Father in prayer, he (Satan) has no dominion over us. We have given our attention and focus to God and Satan has no authority over us.

III. What is Intercession?

Excerpt from C. Peter Wagner's book "Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow".

“The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.”

The picture of an intercessor is that of an advocate. For instance, you would not see your need of a defense lawyer unless you found yourself at odds with the law. At that time, the advocate would stand between you and the law to help resolve the situation. So there are those situations which arise that seem to naturally call for someone to step forward and work for a solution. But unlike some defense lawyers, the goal of the intercessor is not to find a loophole, or help the guilty "beat the rap" by getting the case tossed out on a technicality.

In Ezekiel 22:30-31 we see, again, God seeking out a man to "stand in the gap" to turn His wrath from the land, but finding none. **The intercessor, then, comes between judgment and the judged.** But dear friend, never get the idea that God's judgment is wrong when poured out, or that God makes a mistake in whom He punishes. The Bible simply tells us that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" that He might forgive them instead. The intercessor's prayer is that men would turn from wickedness, right the wrong that the Lord may turn His wrath. The intercessor looks for the mercy of God to be poured out! In Ezekiel 13:3-6 we see another of God's purposes for the intercessor, to come between trouble and the troubled. Israel's prophets were not getting the people ready for the trouble that was coming their way. They were telling them lies instead. The leaders dished out service after service of soothing sermons, causing the people to hope that what they were hearing would come to pass. The Lord looked for someone to "stand in the gap"; to put themselves between the coming trouble and the soon-to-be troubled. The intercessor here acts on behalf of the ignorant, the indifferent and sometimes even the obstinate. He or she is burdened for those who do not know, do not care or do not care to hear. They cannot let it go. They cannot shut out what God has shown them, told them. Their prayer is for victory instead of defeat; recovery instead of ruin. They cannot walk away until God moves...until God is glorified!

LIVING STONES THEOLOGY: THE GIFT OF INTERCESSION Rev. Bill Versteeg

“Intercession is the homework of the kingdom.”

It is the work that is done in secret which the Lord rewards openly.

Matt 6:6

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Like students who do all that extra reading at home, who do all their assignments, eventually the rewards show up in their marks. Intercession is the homework of the kingdom. Without this ministry, the church spins its wheels in the icy blizzard of this world. In that analogy, intercession is the traction of the church's work. Intercession turns our worn out summer tires into fresh new blizzaks... Enough already, you get the picture.

This evening, there are two basic principles that are involved in intercession. Regardless of the intercession these principles apply if intercession is to be effective.

2 Basic Principles Involved in Intercession**1 - THE PRINCIPLE OF IDENTIFICATION**

Very simply this means that the person who intercedes has to identify with the parties for whom he is interceding.

The gift of intercession contains especially this capacity to identify with others, in their situation, their struggle, their pain, and at the same time to identify with God, who in the riches of his grace and love longs to see people reconciled with him, that all to come to a knowledge of salvation, that people might be healed and restored to life in Christ.

Those who have the gift of intercession experience this identification in their lives. They identify first of all with God's desires. They long to see the realities of his kingdom in this world, in the lives of people, administered through the church. When it comes time to speak, they do. Most of their identification is in an insatiable hunger that is not satisfied until they have seen the grace of God at work. At the same time, when they see the need, **they feel the burden.** This is not just empathy, though it includes empathy, it is a burden, a worry, a responsibility, something that has to be brought to God's attention for his work, something that sometimes becomes an overpowering concern that God take action. People with this gift sometimes identify so deeply that other parts of life are put on hold for the purpose of intercession for the burdens that the Lord has placed on their hearts.

Do you identify with the needs of others, and do you have a longing to see God meet those needs? So much that it drives you to sometimes very fervent prayer?

You may be demonstrating the gift of intercession! The church needs you!

2 - THE PRINCIPLE OF MEDIATION

That is the point of the passage that we read this evening. Ezekiel the prophet saw that the just and fair judgment of God was going to be upon the nation of Israel for their rebellion and sin, a judgment that would destroy them as a nation. God who is loving and just longed that somehow they would be saved from that punishment but there was no one to stand in the gap for them, no one who would plead with God for mercy, no one who would argue with God like Moses, no one to argue that God's reputation was at stake, no one to argue that his purposes were being thwarted, no one to debate that the rebellion of his people is also forgivable. And so, since there was no one to stand in the gap the judgment of God rolled like thunder.

This passage, like so many others in the Old Testament cries out for a Christ, a Messiah, a Savior, one who would be mediator between God and men, who would secure the mercy of God by his intercessions. And so, of course, this passage does point us to Jesus Christ our Lord. *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men."* 1 Timothy 2:3

But at the same time it points us to the ongoing work that we have today. We are called to be intercessors through prayer. We too are to cry out to God for his mercy in a whole variety of situations, to remembering the promises of God that secure for us and others God's grace, to struggling with God so that the finger of God will be at work in our time, in our country, in our city, in our church and homes and lives. The gift of intercession includes a theme of mediation between God and others. We are, with Christ the middlemen, the people who stand in the gap so that God's grace might flow to those in need, leaders included.

In the process of this mediation, there are three perspectives that we see in scripture because the dynamic includes more than just God and humanity.

THREE PERSPECTIVES

1 - GODWARD perspective.

Intercession clearly cries out to God, pleads for his mercy, longs for his grace, remembers God's promises, in faith clings to God's goodness.

So to, the intercession of Christ on our behalf had a Godward focus. Jesus made atonement for us to satisfy the justice of God. He propitiated the wrath of God. So much of what we theologize about our salvation has to do with what Jesus has done in our relationship with God.

Intercession also has the...

2 - MANWARD perspective (without gender bias).

Jesus, our intercessor came also to us, and told us to repent, to make changes to our lives because the kingdom of God was at hand. He spoke to us the truth. He healed sickness and disability. He raised the dead, both spiritually and physically. Jesus changed us.

So to, as intercessors, we are called to seek the changes and wellbeing of others so that in the grace of God, they can grow, changes can happen, people are restored to new life by the grace of God. This is the obvious 2nd side to the process of joining with Christ in the work of intercession between God and men. The intercessor often is called to speak, to exhort, to confront on God's behalf as the Spirit leads.

3 - SATANWARD perspective.

If we watch, Jesus, our intercessor at work in the scriptures, what do we see? **We see Jesus rebuking evil spirits.** We see him in an all out war against the forces of evil, using his God given authority to command them, disable them, remove them from their influence on the children of Abraham. **Intercessors, whether they like it or not end up facing the challenge of evil head on, and they will find that victory comes only by taking the authority that God has given us to command and disable the forces of evil in this world.** Some of the fastest growing churches in the world today are churches in third world countries where preaching includes open confrontations with the forces of evil. This is not emotional manipulation. This is intercessory ministry as Jesus did it. We must stand our ground in Christ against the forces of evil.

This morning, we will look at the different purposes of intercession. There are many purposes, I just want to share with you 7 of these.

The purpose of intercession is to...

1. Secure Healing

James 5:14-16

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

2. Avert Judgment

Numbers 14:11-21

11 Moses Intercedes for the People

Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

13 And Moses said to the LORD:"Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.15 Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,16'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.'17 And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying,18'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

20 Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word;21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD - NKJV

3. Insure Deliverance

I Samuel 7:5-9

5 And Samuel said,"Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you."6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there,"We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

7 Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.8 So the children of Israel said to Samuel,"Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

9 And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

The purpose of intercession is to...

4. Give Blessings

Numbers 6:22-27

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:²³ "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

²⁴ "The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ The LORD make His face shine upon you,

And be gracious to you;

²⁶ The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace."

²⁷ "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

5. Obtain Restoration

Ezekiel 22

Vs. 1 – 29 God is telling Ezekiel how wicked Jerusalem has become. He points out all of the sins of Jerusalem. And says...

Ezek 22:30-31

³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.³¹

Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

6. Encourage Repentance

Romans 10:1-4

(Paul writes) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

NKJV

7. Draw Nearer to God ask Abba Father to Change His Mind

Exodus 32:7-14

⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!¹⁰ Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

¹¹ Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" ¹⁴ So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

NKJV

Conclusion:

Let me conclude by talking about **THE HARD WORK OF FINISHING intercession**. So often, we start a task of prayer, and after a while, we give up because we see nothing or little happening, or things just seem to get worse.

The challenge of this kind of prayer is to see that when we pray, we are doing the work of the kingdom. Sometimes that takes hard work over a long period of time. Like renovating a house, if we quit in the middle of the project because we just do not see the end product quick enough, we are left with a bigger mess than when we began. Jesus taught that those who intercede must be like the persistent widow who did not give up until she had her fair request. Jesus too, had to persist to the very end. For him, intercession was not completed until he said "It is finished" as He hung on the cross and died. For Jesus, the work of intercession killed Him, the work of forgiving us was terminal. Yet it was effective, eternally effective for all who come to Him in faith.

INTERCESSORS - YOU HAVE TO BATTLE...

A. Physical Exhaustion. You just get tired.

B. Spiritual Exhaustion. It takes it out of you when you do warfare.

C. Emotional Exhaustion You just want to quit. You feel like crying, or get depressed.

D. Psychological Exhaustion. You start wondering, is it really working? It messes with your mind.

The results of all of that exhaustion – Discouragement = makes you want to quit!

Intercessors – Don't Give Up!