

How To Pray In Times of Trouble *Psalm 20* “Thy will be done”

Introduction

Over the past few weeks, I have heard a great deal of “spiritual leaders” weighing in on the crisis we now face. Their responses have been all over the spectrum, with some saying that this is God’s judgment upon our nation, while others of the more charismatic persuasion are telling us that we should “bind this sickness” in Jesus name. Sadly, I believe that both approaches are misguided.

Could this disease that is ravaging the world perhaps be the judgment of God? Sure it could. Heaven knows we deserve it. This world now celebrates and idolizes things that are detestable and offensive to a Holy God. Certainly, there is judgment coming for these things, but I have no idea if this disease is that judgment, and quite frankly, neither do those who proclaim it with such certainty.

And then, there are the “name-it-claim-it” types, who say this disease is an attack of Satan, and we, as the church, should claim power over it in Jesus Name. News flash, God wasn’t surprised by this disease. He is both omniscient (all knowing) and sovereign (over all). Some time ago, I felt led to teach through the book of *Job* in our church. The reason I felt The Spirit was leading me to do this was because there are so many misconceptions about the sovereignty of God. In *Job*, we are shown that Satan can do nothing to God’s people, without God’s permission. God had a purpose for allowing Job to suffer. Although He loved Job, He was willing to test him in order to make him better. He used the suffering of Job to humble him and make him more like Christ. *The Bible* teaches us that the suffering of trials is actually good for us, and we should learn to embrace it.

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”
James 1:2-4

That is exactly what happened to Job! God allowed him to be tested, so that he would be strengthened. He does the exact same thing for us. Trials for the believer are not punishment, they are discipline sent for our own good. There will certainly come a time when God will pour out His wrath upon the ungodly, but the things that He allows His children to experience do not come from wrath, but from a desire to make us more like Christ. Therefore, we embrace our trials, because:

“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.”
Romans 8:28

So, just how should The Church pray when hard times are upon us? We pray for God’s will to be done. That’s how. *Psalm 20* has been on my mind ever since this pandemic began. It is a prayer offered in a time of warfare. The first four verses are the people praying for their king, as he leads them into battle, and the last five verses are praise for the victory that he is sure to win. I believe it is a picture of Christ and His Church, teaching us how we must pray when trials come. For He is our King, and the battles that we, His chosen people, face are not ours, but The LORD’S. There is nothing that we cannot overcome, when we are in Christ Jesus.

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.”
Romans 8:37

So how are we to pray in times of struggle? We Pray for the Savior’s will, and we offer Praise for the Salvation that’s sure to come!

Prayers for The Savior

“May The LORD answer you in a day of trouble: may the name of Jacob’s God protect you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and sustain you from Zion. May He remember all your offerings and accept your burnt offering. Selah. May He give you what your heart desires and fulfill your whole purpose.” Psalm 20:1-4

As stated previously, the first four verses of this Psalm are the prayers of the people offered up for the king who will lead them into battle. In this particular Psalm, the king is David, who is also the one who wrote it. However, there is a deeper meaning to this scripture. It is meant to show us that we too have a King, Who leads us into battle, and our prayers must always be that our king be victorious. We place our trust fully in His mighty power. Jesus is our King.

The prayer begins with asking The LORD to answer the King’s prayers. *The Bible* tells us that Christ is standing at the right hand of God The Father, and He is there to intercede on our behalf. In other words... Jesus, is PRAYING for YOU! Now, I don’t know about you this morning, but if Christ Himself is praying for my victory, I certainly want The Father to answer His petition. Many Christians live in defeat simply because they do not reckon themselves to the fact that Christ is not only praying for us, but cheering us on! He is FOR us. Therefore, we have nothing to fear. Whatever enemy we face upon the battlefield, we must be ever reminded, the battle is not ours, but The LORD’S. Just pray that Christ’s prayers will be answered, not because our prayers help Him succeed, but rather, because it reminds us in whose hands we are safely held. Our King cannot fail, and the Father always hears His prayers!

When Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He earnestly prayed for the strength to do His Father’s will. He prayed so fervently, that he actually sweat blood. The Father sent an angel to comfort Him and give Him the strength to endure the cross (**Luke 22:43**). When Christ faced His greatest challenge, God heard His prayer from heaven and sent Him help from the sanctuary. The Father always gives The Son what He asks for. Again, be reminded, that same Son prays... for YOU!

“May He remember all your offerings and accept your burnt offering.” vs. 3

Before the king of Israel went into battle, he would offer up sacrifices to The LORD. Those *Old Testament* sacrifices were always intended to be a picture of our LORD Jesus. His sacrifice on calvary’s cross was a “holocaust” (whole or burnt offering) for He gave His all as a payment for our sin. His sacrifice was accepted by God. How do we know this? Because of the resurrection! That’s how. At calvary the payment was made, but at the resurrection, the check cleared! Know this, we are able to pray in the name of our King, because His sacrifice has been accepted!

“May He give you what your heart desires and fulfill your whole purpose.” vs. 4

Now, we come to it at last. How should we pray in times of crisis? Do we claim that our suffering is the work of the devil and “bind him in Jesus name”? NO. We pray for the will of The King to be accomplished. Jesus taught us this in The LORD’S prayer. Remember?

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:11

Is the Coronavirus God’s way of punishing the world? I have NO IDEA. Is it God’s way of drawing people back to Him? Again, I have no idea, and quite frankly, neither do you. Therefore, how should we pray? We should pray that whatever The King is doing in this circumstance, that His will be accomplished. You see, it is The King that leads His troops into battle, not the other way around. We trust the King to lead us wherever He sees fit. He is eminently more qualified to decide where to lead His army. He is The LORD of hosts. When He leads us into the struggle, the ultimate goal is His and His alone. I don’t pretend to have His qualifications, and I don’t presume to know everything that He knows. I

only know that He is good, and His will is best. My prayer for The Church during this time of crisis is simple:

“Thy will be done”

And I have the confident assurance that all things will work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (***Romans 8:28***). I have no idea if this is “the end of America”, but I know for certain that The Church of Jesus Christ our Lord will emerge victorious! And that, my friends, is all I need to know. I choose to trust and obey The King of Kings.

Praise for The Salvation

“Let us shout for joy at your victory and lift the banner in the Name of our God. May The LORD fulfill all your requests. Now I know that the LORD gives victory to His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with mighty victories from His right hand. Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in the Name of The LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand firm. LORD, give victory to the king! May He answer us on the day that we call.”

Psalm 20:5-9

Now for the really good part! Singing praise for the victory before the battle has even started. There’s a word for that kind of behavior. It’s called faith, and without it, it is impossible to please God (***Hebrews 11:6***). Now, remember this song was written by David, you remember him. He’s the guy who wrote songs of praise and deliverance, when he was living in caves hiding from King Saul. This guy knew a little something about faith. It is easy to praise The LORD, when things are going great. It is even easy to praise Him, when you’ve just won victory, but to praise Him for the victory, before the battle has even been fought, that takes faith in an unshakable King. And this is what Christ expects of His Church in times of crisis. Complete faith that The King will be victorious.

The Hebrew word that is translated “victory” in the CSB is *Yshuw’ah* (pronounced *yesh-oo’-aw*), and it is mentioned in some form or another here four times in ***verses 5-9***. The word actually means “salvation”, and it should sound kind of familiar to most believers. It is actually akin to the Name given to our Savior. In the English version of *The New Testament*, He is called Jesus, but His actual Hebrew Name that was given by the angel to Mary is Yeshua, and it also means “salvation”! You see, because of the saving work of Christ Jesus (Yeshua), those who place their faith and trust in Him are guaranteed the victory. As we have been studying in the book of *Romans*, to be saved by grace through faith is to be baptized into Christ. And as such, we become inseparable from Him. We are IN Christ, and therefore, every victory that He wins is our victory. You cannot be in Christ and suffer defeat. Why? Because He ALWAYS wins! So have faith. As I said earlier, I do not know if this crisis will spell the end of America, or even the world for that matter, but I know without a shadow of doubt that those who are in Christ have absolutely nothing to fear.

“Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in The Name of The LORD our God.” ***vs. 7***

I have had this particular verse on my mind since the onslaught of the pandemic we are now experiencing. The original Hebrew actually reads more like; “Some horses, some chariots, but we remember the Name of The LORD our God.” You see, God had forbidden His chosen people to have horses and chariots in their army. The primary weapons in Israel were the bow and slingshot. There were actually no blacksmiths in the land of Israel. So, in order to even obtain swords, they had to either take them from enemy soldiers or trade with their Philistine neighbors. God wanted His people to rely on Him to fight their battles, and not the modern weapons of warfare. Their mortal enemies, the Philistines, had these weapons, but David had defeated them time and again. Why? Because The LORD was with David! This verse is a reminder to all of us that while others may place their trust in things, we will

remember our God, and what He has always done, and what He always will do for His own. We rely on His strength, and nothing else, to guarantee the victory.

Isn't it amazing what people put their faith in these days? We boast in this country of our military prowess. We have the most powerful army in the world, armed with every possible "chariot" that you can possibly imagine. We are also the richest nation in the world, with our New York Stock Exchange as the driving force behind the world's economy. We idolize our sports figures and Hollywood celebrities and hang on their every word. Now, fast forward to today's events. A flu virus has brought this "mighty nation" to its knees! Everything in which this world boasts and relies upon has been brought low. Kinda makes you think doesn't it? Stop trusting in chariots and horses, and place your faith in Christ The King. Then, you will know true confidence my friends. All of our 401K's may all be worthless in a few months, but our riches in Christ are eternal.

"Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." **Matthew 6:19-21**

The Psalm concludes by reminding us that God's people will rise when everyone else falls. There is nothing to fear for the child of God, who has been baptized into Christ. For The Son's prayers are always answered, and His victories are our victories. We have been made one through Him with the Creator God of the universe, and no matter what may befall, we shall overcome. Or as the hymnwriter has so eloquently said:

*"Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you
Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you
God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

*No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you
Lean weary one, upon his breast, God will take care of you
God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way
He will take care of you, God will take care of you."*

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in The Name of The LORD our God.

And let His people say... TRUTH!!!