

Now is the time to Pray

Dear Friends,

It took 10 plagues to shake Pharaoh's grip on Israel. What 10 plagues will it take to wake up America to repent and pray? Time is running out. Liberties are drying up. We would be better off living six months with a heart aflame from repentance and prayer, devouring sin in high and low places, turning this nation back to God than die after 90 years loaded with theological degrees and every honor of man.

Preachers make pulpits famous through earnest prayer. Prophets make prisons famous through intercessory prayer. God knows we need a generation of preachers and prophets awakened, burdened, bent and broken under the vision of impending judgement and the doom of never-ending hell.

Today almost everything detestable in the scriptures has become morally acceptable. Right and wrong is determined by political correctness. May God make us fearless prayer warriors who are too bold for the system to hold and too hard to be heard. It is time for us to become prayer warriors who know in the depths of their being that through the intercessor's prayer the course of history will be changed and the miraculous unfold.

Intercessory prayer is defined as believing, persevering prayer where the intercessor identifies with the need. This involves not only agonizing over the need, but also going before the very throne of God and standing on the authority of the Risen Christ.

Effective and powerful prayers are needed at this time because when God looks at our world, He weeps. He weeps because He loves this world. God weeps because the lust for power has blinded and corrupted the human spirit. As a result, instead of gratitude there is resentment. Instead of praise there is criticism. Instead of forgiveness there is revenge and instead of healing there is wounding.

It is time that as members of the Body of Christ we wake up and pray. This is urgently needed because instead of compassion there is competition, instead of cooperation there is violence and instead of love there is fear. This fear is seen particularly when it comes to helping the homeless and hurting during the coronavirus pandemic.

God weeps when he sees the destruction that the lust for power has brought. His heart is broken as He sees those He loves going into a Christ-less eternity as they refuse to accept the redemption that Jesus provides. God's love causes Him to weep among the homeless, the hungry and the hurting who are denied help by many who claim to be Christians.

God weeps as He sees the corruption and systematic racism that has caused North St. Louis to be devastated to the extent per capita it has the number 1 murder rate in America. This systematic racism was developed over 50 years ago when a team four plan was put into place. This plan called for the denial of basic services and community action funds in North St. Louis, where the majority of the residents are African American. The plan was to let the area deteriorate so extensively it would make it possible for developers to come in and acquire, for

little or nothing, large tracts of land they could profit from. As a result, in this area, many African Americans lost their homes to developers. Those that remain, because of inadequate medical assistance, are experiencing the largest numbers of the covid-19 cases.

Individuals who have sold out to the status quo and made peace with injustice, benefiting economically from social inequality, will have neither desire nor ability to be powerful prayer warriors. They will not pray for police brutality to stop nor for compassion among the poor and homeless to flow.

In the midst of injustice God has called each of us to wake up and be prayer warriors. As prayer warriors, we are intercessors, who by the power and the promises of Scripture, visualize an alternative future to one that now seems out of control.

The unexpected will become suddenly possible because prayer warriors like you and I have prayed in faith. *“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them”* (Matt. 18:19, 20).

History belongs to the prayer warriors who wake up and believe, agree and stand on the promises of God. They are the people who persevere for justice in spite of the obstacles and the odds. They know what is right according to scripture and, as a result, will engage in prayer that brings forth actions of hope and help.

Prayer warriors who are awakened to the power of prayer know that prayer is never a private act. It is not vocalized worry. True prayer comes from the heart where a victory has resulted from an interior battlefield in which Christ now reigns supreme. In such a life, inner liberty results where the prayer warrior is free to act in obedience to God’s Word and not the expectations of others. When that happens, the status quo is rendered obsolete and the obedience to Christ reigns supreme.

If Jesus is not Lord of our lives, then all activity and activism only further enslaves us to the god of self. As a result, we will simply be caught up in self-centered passions and fail to discover the possibilities of believing prayer.

Prayer in the life of the prayer warrior becomes the theater where one experiences the healing needed, as they battle the principalities and power of this world.

It is prayer that awakens us to the fact that Jesus paid the price and we get the change. He gives us more than a new start. He gives us a new heart. As prayer warriors we will see the new normal following the coronavirus pandemic as new opportunities to shelter the homeless, feed the hungry and declare in word and deed there is hope because Christ has risen.

True prayer is not just talking to God with our mouths, but it also involves the use of our ears and central nervous systems to hear and experience what God desires to say to us at this time and place. When I go out as a 1st responder to help the homeless, I must first pray for God to direct me to those who, in their hunger and homelessness are crying to Him for help. When I do this God will lead me to the hungry and homeless who need help the most.

To pray means to breathe in the life of the Spirit of God by exhaling fear and unbelief and inhaling God's grace and goodness. The prayer warrior not only speaks, hears, tastes, and smells God's goodness in prayer, but, like the woman who was bleeding in Luke 8:43-48, touches the very hem of Jesus' garment. This touch involves grasping the impossible, knowing that with God all things are possible

It is Prayer that breathes the life of the Spirit into the present culture of death.

Prayer sharpens our vision. As we pray, God can open the eyes of our hearts to those things that really matter. On a recent prayer walk, God was speaking to me, showing me more and more of His wonders of creation. Then in His own still small voice He spoke to me how foolish it is to seek the things of the world when all we need can be found in Him

Prayer makes the prayer warrior a better listener when it comes to hearing and responding to the needs of the poor, sick, fatherless, widowed, hurting and homeless. *"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble"* (Ps. 41:1).

God commands us to pray constantly in I Thessalonians 5:17. "We pray to obey God, not to play God" as Peter Kreeft stated. He goes on to say, "We pray to 'let God be God.' Prayer is our obedience to God even when it asks God for things, for God has commanded us to ask. (Matt. 7:7) Prayer gives truth to our mind, goodness to our will, and beauty to our heart."

Prayer warriors in tune with God will not sit back doing nothing as the rich and powerful try to keep 1411 Locust closed to the hurting and homeless. Prayer warriors will pray. Yes, they will pray but they will also arise as the Spirit of God comes upon them and speak truth to power. They will know in the depths of their soul that silence is violence in a culture of death, such as we experience in St. Louis.

No matter what problem our community may be having, as we pray God will show us the answer. I have seen this happen over and over during the past 48 1/2 years. Through prayer I have witnessed Dollar Help come forth along with, Missouri Renewable Energy, KNLC TV 24, safe houses for the woman and children, and many other programs that directly help the hurting, hungry and homeless.

It's time to wake up and pray. Our stay on earth is temporary. Every day we live could be our last. How long are we going to laugh it off and sleep it off? Isn't our hope greater than our hang-ups? After all time is short. Hell is hot. Jesus is coming back whether we are ready or not.

Now we must wake up and pray until we leave the prayer breakfasts for the battlefields of prayer. We have feasted long enough. Now is the time to fast and fight through intercessory prayer. We have clapped our hands long enough. Now is the time to let those hands grasp the sharp two-edged sword of God's word and fight principalities and powers which hold the people of God in bondage and fear.

We must accept the fact that we can't really pray effectively without the Holy Spirit's help for, "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for." (Romans 8:26) As we begin to pray in the power of the Spirit, we must aggressively come against Satan in the powerful name of Jesus, and with the sword which is the word of God. In James 4:7 we are told, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

As intercessory prayer warriors experiencing the victorious work that Christ has done, we are told "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil.4:6,7)

With our minds at peace, trusting in the Lord, we are then able to pray with power as we intercede in the name of Jesus who, "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Col.2:15) We can pray with the authority of Jesus knowing that through His work of redemption, the powers and authorities have been disarmed. Christ has truly triumphed over them by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

It's time for us to wake up and take the limits off God and realize there is a place where we come to the end of ourselves. Then God is free to move in our lives far beyond what we can ask or think. There is no limit to God's plan, purpose and promise for our lives. Intercessory prayer under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit enables us to move into this limitless dimension. Through the power of intercessory prayer, provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can be freed from all that entangles and frustrates our lives, and keeps us from reaching our full potential.

What New Life Evangelistic Center needs now more than anything else is fearless intercessory prayer warriors. As the New Testament points out, there is a spiritual battle under way. This battle requires each one of us to put on the full armor of God (see Eph. 6:10-18, 2 Tim. 2:1-5, I Tim. 6:12). Clothed in the full armor of God and equipped with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, we are then able to intercede in prayer, assured of victory.

In order to effectively intercede in prayer for the needs of the homeless and the oppressed, we must understand the hurt and pain that so many are experiencing. My long-time friend Matt Carter recently shared this with me, "There was a deacon at my church, who had been stopped and beaten almost to the edge of his life and put in jail. He was a broken man

after that. He sued the city and won the suit. The judge awarded him 2 cents. This further broke his heart.”

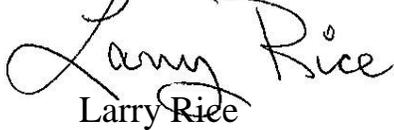
How we must pray that God will raise up for us great leaders like Abraham Lincoln who called both the north and the south to repentance in his second inaugural address. Today in the midst of social unrest and the COVID-19, we heed Lincoln’s words when he says the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Daniel expresses this in his intercessory prayer found in Daniel 9:1-19. He begins his prayer by confessing his sins and that of his nation. Then he calls upon God for mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus makes it clear that earnest intercessory prayer performs a vital role in destroying the citadels of injustice as He asks, *“Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:7-8)

During this time of social unrest in the middle of a coronavirus pandemic how we need more men and women of faith who will wake up to the need for prayer. As you wake up and pray earnestly, know that Christ’s power is working in you in a mighty way. When this happens, you will see Him do exceedingly more than you can ask or think.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial "L" and "R".

Larry Rice