

Pk's Perspectives ... Obey and then Pray

In 1 Kings 18 we witness one of history's most unique prayer meetings: Elijah versus the prophets of Baal. (if you're not familiar with the story then stop reading this newsletter, go read 1 Kings 18, and then read the rest of this article!) If you examine the passage carefully, you will find that the prophets of Baal by far exceeded Elijah in both time and effort in prayer. It's a terrible thing when you waste a life of prayer on the wrong god.

Elijah, on the other hand, prayed a very brief prayer: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." (1 Kings 18:36-37). End of prayer.

The truth of the matter is that around the world people pray, and there are endless number of religions where people pray both earnestly and incessantly. Some pray five times a day facing east; others have escaped the noisiness of the real world and have locked themselves away in caves or castles that they may only pray. I do not believe that God calls any one of us to a life of prayer that forever isolates us from the world around us. The same God who calls us to meet Him in the solitude of a lonely place also commissions us to return to the crowded streets where people desperately need a touch from God...

Small prayers have huge impact when they come from people who are living lives of obedience to God. Elijah wasn't praying and then obeying; he was obeying and then praying. When we pray before we obey, we imply that we're the initiators of the relationship with God. When we obey and then pray, we acknowledge that God has initiated the relationship with us. God has spoken. He sent the first word. Our first response is to hear His voice and move in alignment to His commands. Out of that obedience our intimacy with Him grows, and then when we speak to Him, He answers us and makes Himself known.

Prayer can actually be a religious form of rebellion. While feigning a need to get clarity from God, we are actually avoiding what God has already made clear. Even though the instructions are clear, even though the will of God is written without ambiguity, we feign obedience by claiming a need to seek God in prayer. There are some things we just don't need to pray about. It's not as if we're going to change God's mind about things He has spoken out of His character. Prayer is an obstacle to experiencing divine moments when we neglect to pray; conversely, prayer keeps us in step with God's Spirit and in tune to His voice. Prayer is an obstacle when we keep praying about things of which God has already spoken; if He has commanded us in His Word, there is nothing to pray about — just obey. Prayer can also be an obstacle when we hide behind prayer while the moment needs action. There are moments when it is too late for praying. It is when God has already spoken and we are late to the appointment. When that's the case, we need to run! ~ *Erwin McManus*

A part of our worship gathering this past Sunday was selecting the following men to serve the church as active Deacons:

*Jackie Bowen Alan Curtis Jimmy Davis Jason Little
Daniel Mullis Chansé Reardin Shane Savant*

Gentlemen, thank you for your willingness to serve!