

## Prepared, Powered, Prayed Up (Matthew 26)



I started out my day spending time talking to God, reading His word, praying for all that the day would hold. Always a wonderful way to start the day. This was another travel day, heading to see family for the holidays. Four flights ahead of us before we would reach our destination. Along the way, I continued to be all prayed up, enjoying the day.

And then....

Arriving at a different airport, and not knowing this airport, we searched for our connecting flight. It happened that we were right next to a coffee kiosk, so I took the opportunity to pay my \$4.50 for a small pumpkin spiced latte before flagging down a TSA agent who was walking by to ask where our gate could be since we saw no signs directing us to it. She was new to the airport herself, and had to go ask another agent. When she came back it was with the surprising news that we had to leave the secured terminal we were currently in and travel by tram to another terminal, where we would then take another tram to our gate area, where we would then have to go through security all over again. Really? Security again? Seemed absurd, made no sense, but, ok. A quick readjustment of our thinking, and no problem, besides, our connecting flight was still a bit out, and we are TSA pre-check flyers, so off we went to our TSA checkpoint in the different terminal.

Upon arriving there, we were aimed into the Pre-check line, but because our original flights were with one carrier and this connecting flight (which they booked for us) was with a sister carrier, our boarding passes would not work for pre-check, so our options were: go back downstairs to the airline desk and request new boarding passes, or just go back out and around to the normal TSA check point line. That seemed the most reasonable, so around we went. But when we got to the front of that line their machines weren't scanning our boarding passes either. So, off went the agent with our ID to get some help. We moved aside so others could get around us while we waited. (Amazing how many TSA agents have not ever seen a St. Croix drivers license! It's a US Territory, for Pete's sake!) Finally she returns with the good news that we are approved! Yay! So we unload our gear, our shoes, our life, onto the conveyor belt and head through the gate. Remember that PSL I had just bought? Yeah, it can't go through the checkpoint, never mind that I just bought it IN the airport. Oh, and in the disruption of enjoying my PSL, I totally forgot the water bottle in my purse that the previous airline had just given me. Yeah, that had to go too. I took a couple steps back, guzzled down my PSL (bet I can say Java, Java, Java, faster than you right now!) and walked through the checkpoint, still doing just fine, taking it all rather matter-of-factly, as it went along.

But then...

The TSA agent who found my offensive water bottle in my purse says, "Follow me over here.", "Don't touch any of your belongings while I am checking them." Uh, ok. Then she says, "Don't fly much?" I explained we hadn't been to this airport before and have never had to go outside a secured area to change planes, that we had just gotten off another flight and they had given us the water bottle on the last plane. She says, "That doesn't matter, You should really go online and check out the restrictions before coming to the airport. You can't take that on board." She was more than a little condescending in her tone, and this wasn't seeming so matter-of-fact anymore. I said, that's fine, just throw it away. She replied with another comment about we should know better next time.

Now, right now, being prayed up is NOT on my mind! Both HubbyMan and I have decided we will not be coming through this particular airport again! And wow, how quickly an attitude can change when life throws some distractions your way.

It was earlier, as I started this day, that I was reading in **Matthew 26**. It's the part of the story where Jesus, on the night of the last supper, goes to the garden to pray, and He takes along Peter, and the two

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brothers, and tells them to stay there and pray. An hour later, He comes back to find His friends have fallen asleep. He says, can't you just stay awake long enough to pray? Stay awake and pray so that you won't fall into temptation (apparently the biggest temptation at present was to fall asleep) meanwhile, Jesus goes off and prays sweat drops of blood about what He knows is about to take place, possibly even more concerned knowing that His Disciples were little prepared for what was coming. He prayed, only to come back and find the men asleep again, they still aren't praying.

He tells Peter to stay awake and pray so that he won't **"fall into temptation."** Knowing Peter is always gung-ho to defend in the moment He gives them the reason why they should be praying, **"The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."**

I wonder how different that night would have been for Peter had he taken Jesus' advice and been prayed up? How would he have reacted when asked if he was a follower of Jesus if he had only been praying instead of sleeping earlier? Peter's heart was generally in the right place, a true follower, a defender. Jesus, his Lord, knew Peter's spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak, and he ended up denying His Savior three separate times before the night was over.

Jesus also knew that what Peter and the others needed was to know the power to endure could only come through the power of the Holy Spirit working in them, not by getting enough sleep. The only way to fend off the temptation to react rather than to respond would come by staying prayed up.

I don't know about you, but I have found myself on more than one occasion praying for sleep! Having to take care of some things when all I wanted was to sleep. At some point I remember saying, Lord, You know better than I what I need, so help me to handle life with whatever amount of sleep You think I need. And He did. He didn't give me more sleep, but empowered my days as I was dependent on His Spirit.

Perhaps if I hadn't been "asleep" in this situation, perhaps if I had kept prayed up and focused on Him supplying what I needed in the moment, then my reaction would have been different, too. Oh, I didn't cause a disturbance, or lash back at her, I didn't openly cause others to hear words that would be a denial of who my Savior is, but my thoughts were not what a follower of Christ should be.

As in the garden, Prayer was the only answer. Preparing our minds for action. Gaining perspective. Looking for God's will in the matter. Confession. If Peter had understood the situation that night, his perspective would surely have been different. I dare say, his reactions would have been different, also. He would have been prepared and powered by prayer. Thoroughly equipped.

We may not understand the situations we find ourselves in, but our perspective is changed when we are praying continuously, before, during and after whatever comes. We can be prepared, and powered, and if our spirit is aligned to God's, then our responses will be aligned as well.

Like Peter, quite often, our spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. So pray! And keep praying. These light, momentary afflictions are not without purpose when we learn from them, perhaps giving us opportunity to change our reaction the next time, having been prepared and powered by prayer.

*Thank You Father for the power of prayer in our lives to change our perspective and grant us everything we need to walk powered to meet the day. You are so gracious to Your children. Thank You for the forgiveness when we fail you and the joy that comes as we trust You in each moment. In Christ's name.*