

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, January 17, 2010
God Answers Prayer

This morning my son-in-law Ryan gave testimony about the power of prayer announcing the joy of my daughter Jessica giving birth to their first child, Isaac Parsons. He shared how difficult it was for them as their plans of having a child on their time table was not met. So after being married for 7 years and much prayer their baby came at just the right time. God knew the perfect timing as well as what faithful prayers, patience, and faithfulness would produce in them. What a blessing; another grandson for me!

No doubt you've been hearing about the devastating earthquake that decimated Haiti and the enormous need for humanitarian aid. We received an offering for Convoy of Hope, the A/G's compassionate relief arm of our fellowship. If you would like to participate in this offering contact us and we'll add your gift to our relief effort. In addition to that let's remember to pray. God answers prayer.

In Psalm 27 the author addresses his confidence in the Lord in the midst of devastating trials knowing that God was the stronghold of his life. The reason for his confidence can be seen in the desire of his heart. He says, **"One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple."** He goes on to say, **"My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek."** God listens to those who desire him and seek his face. He's longing for us to participate in the things that are dear to his heart. He wants us to feel his compassion and be passionate for the same things. Peter tells us in his second letter that God has given us great and precious promises so that through them we may participate in the divine nature. Jesus exemplified the life we are to live and told us that he had all authority and that as the Father had sent him, he was sending us. There were instances when Jesus seemed a bit perturbed at the disciples for their lack of faith to do the things he was doing. The miracles Jesus did he said we would do. He healed the sick, multiplied the loaves and fishes, and calmed the storms. Imagine the church today rising in corporate anointing to do what Jesus did. Would it be possible to calm the storms and avert disasters?

I heard on the news that Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and the 700 Club and former presidential candidate, made some remarks about Haiti that made it sound like he was being insensitive to the plight of these devastated people. My initial reaction was to be offended at the insensitive comments that some Christian leaders make that give the church of Jesus Christ a bad rap. However, later, knowing the anti-Christian bias of the media, I looked into the comments Pat Robertson made and discovered that he spent a major portion of his broadcast at the need for relief and what they were doing to help. He later went on to speak about some of the history of Haiti and the fact that a large part of their population believes in Voodoo. As Christians we need to guard our hearts against offenses that can come from sources that do not believe in a Sovereign God. We need to pray for Christian leaders and those in the public eye for God to protect them and that they will have wisdom to speak what God would have them say; Also that what they say will be reported accurately. The secular media does not understand it when we say, "This can be a blessing in disguise." We realize that God can use a natural disaster to have people call upon the one true God as Christians rise to the occasion and demonstrate the love and compassion of God in tangible ways; the very thing that is happening right now in Haiti. This disaster can turn a nation to God. **"Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance." Psalm 2:8a** I don't believe that God causes these things to happen by design, but the Word tells us that the land is under a curse because of sin and that the creation can be affected by us. **Romans 8:19-21 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.**

While man can wonder why God just doesn't use his sovereign power to fix all problems, right all wrongs, and prevent all disasters, his doing so would sacrifice the ultimate design of his creation, namely, to become a family of believers who would choose to love him out of their own volition and enter into what it really means to be a child of God participating in the redemptive process and advancing the Kingdom of God. He did do his part by graciously sacrificing his own son on our behalf to set us free from our own selfishness and preoccupation with sin. When we come to that place of faith where we see the glory and goodness of God and the fact that he is our Father and loves us so much, wanting us to be conformed into the image of Christ and live just like he did with a hilarious

joy, that's when all Heaven can break loose. What potential! What joy! What excitement! With the prophet Jeremiah (33:3) let's obey the Lord's words, **"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."**

You may ask what the cost is. It's already been paid for through the Cross, but it will mean letting him become your life. We don't use him as part of our resources for our own ends. We recognize that we've been bought with a price and don't belong to ourselves. He is the grand end of it all. It began with him and it ends with him. He is our life.

Matthew 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Take note of the great joy this man had in getting this treasure. Nothing can be compared to the glory of what will be revealed in a life that is fully surrendered to him. Jesus lived a sacrificial life of joy not drudgery. He was not miserable even though he had to suffer like he did. Hebrews 12 tells us that it was for the joy set before him that he endured the Cross. Read the following verses and prepare yourself for a joyful and exciting new Christian life! **John 15:7-14; John 16:24; John 17:13; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 1:9; Hebrews 12:2**