

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

November 2013

Dear Friends,

I was reading through some of the prayers of the New Testament again this week, and I was struck by how deep and true and good they are, and how they so accurately name and describe exactly what I need from God. For example, this prayer from the first chapter of Colossians...

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light (1:9-12).

My heart stirs within me, *Yes! I need to know God's will for me – in about a dozen places right now. I long for all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And yes, yes – I need to be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. Yes, God!* So rather than just reading it, being moved and then going on with my day, I paused and went back, and prayed through the passage for my life, asking God for the very things the prayer is asking God for. It was so good.

I wanted to share with you this month the power of praying the Scriptures for your life, and for those you love. Not only do they so powerfully name and put words to the many inner groanings of our hearts, but they also reveal to us what God *wants* us to pray for! To pray along with the Scriptures is to pray right along with the Spirit who wrote them, to come alongside the heart of God and make deep agreement with him. How good is that? And, there is more – when we pray alongside the heart of God, we pray with a greater confidence that the things we are asking for will be done...

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him (1 John 5:14-15).

That confidence strengthens our hearts and our hope as we pray!

Here is another beautiful and powerful prayer given to us, this one from Ephesians...

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together

with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (3:14-19).

Oh man – if these things were to come true in our lives, we would be in a far better place than we are today. We would be unstoppable. Strengthened by the glorious power of God in our deep inner being? So that Jesus might abide in our hearts more fully? Not just hearing about but *knowing* the vast love of God for us? And that last part – I want to be filled to all the fullness of God! Don't you?!

So I prayed this one too, several times over.

And that is important as well, praying several times over. We need to stay with it, agreeing with it, “pressing in” as the saying goes. I think too often we approach prayer – particularly in group settings – with the idea that one pass is sufficient. It feels like skipping rocks – we just name this, that and the other thing and tag on “in Jesus’ name.” And it has about as much effect as skipping rocks. James says that it is the “fervent” or “earnest” prayer of the righteous that is effective (5:16).

I don't mean striving; I don't mean meaningless repetition. But yes, my goodness we need to press in during prayer, stay with it more than our flesh wants to, linger, agree with God (and one another if we're with others), and then do it again. When you're playing a song you don't just hit one note and end it at that; when you are trying to tell someone something important you don't just say a word or two and drop it. “Staying with it” is a really important element of effective prayer, so I'll pray through these scriptures, and then do it again, or repeat phrases again and again.

And may I ask, as you do this, that you would include in your prayers “the team at Ransomed Heart?”

“Father, I pray that you would fill the team at Ransomed Heart with the knowledge of your will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. That they may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please you in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to your glorious might so that they may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

That would mean so much to us!!

As we enter the upcoming holiday season, I wanted to offer you something for your strength and (dare I add) sanity? Praying the scriptures will do that and boatloads more.

With love from your allies here,


John