

'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' - Knowing Jesus More! October 18th, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,

"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."

Colossians 4:12 (NIV)

So, when was the last time we wrestled in prayer? I'm not talking a soft, cozy, firelight evening around the dinner table with loved ones, nor am I talking about a group of people sitting around comfortably in Pastor's office. I'm talking about where we lie on the floor, and struggle in prayer with battle seriousness. I'm talking, take the gloves off and bloody your knuckles in prayer. I'm talking about getting down on the mat in the arena, and doing prayer battle. I'm saying, we need to consider getting down and attacking with martial-art likeness the enemy with true fervent prayer. Are we willing to wrestle in prayer like that?



As we've been closing our study of Colossians, I noticed how Paul described the one man in his list of saints that closed Chapter 4. His name was Epaphras (Col. 4:12). Listen to what Paul said of him, "who is one of you and a servant of Christ" (vs. 12). We know he was a faithful minister and most likely started or pastored the church meeting in Colosse (Col. 1:7). He obviously brought news to Paul who had never met those in this congregation and shared the testimony of their faith, love, and hope (1:5-6). He brought to Paul's attention the false teaching of the Gnostic heresy which was plaguing the church (2:8,16), seeking Paul's advice to combat their false teachings. Paul obviously had affection for Epaphras, who ministered unto his need and the need of others. It was in his prayer ministry; however, that Epaphras is conspicuous. He was a giant of prayer, and knew how to lay it all before the Lord. Colossians 4:12 says, "He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of

God, mature and fully assured" (ESV). Did you catch that phrase? He "wrestled" in prayer. The idea in the Greek is that he strove earnestly. It is the word used for "gymnastics". He wrestled in prayer that they would grow in perfection to Christ. He wanted more than anything to pray that they loved Jesus more and more. E. M. Bounds says this about such aggressive prayer: "Prayer for such men was an engaging business. Prayer was to them what it was to Paul, a



striving with earnest effort of the soul, as a runner of the Olympics. Prayer was to them what it was to Jacob, a wrestling and prevailing. Prayer was to them what it was to Christ: 'with strong crying and tears' (Hebrew 5:7). God's true people prayed 'always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance' (Eph. 6:18). The effectual fervent prayer has been the mightiest weapon of God's mightiest soldiers!" (Power Through Prayer, pg. 74).

Epaphras' numerous prayers for the stability and maturity of others were continuous and strenuous. Like him, do we know how to wrestle in agony of prayer? Epaphras also manifested great zeal or properly "great labor of anxiety" for those under his care. Too few of us are concerned about the spiritual welfare of others. I think it is time we "wrestle" in our prayers not just for our church, but also for our country!

Remember in Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle [literally our wrestling] is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Eph. 6:12-14 NIV). An election year is often long, difficult, stressful, and polarizing. This year has been no exception. Take time to read God's Word and be reminded of His truth. We pray the following truths and passages from God's Word will be an encouragement to you.

For the next two weeks I want to give you "Ten Biblical Truths to Remember During an Election." I will give five this week and continue next week with the other five.

Also remember as we pray to use the acrostic: P.C.B.C.- praise, confession, big picture, and current events. Today we are wrestling with current events in our Partners to challenge us to keep praying more. Here are the first five Biblical truths to remember during an election:

1. God rules over everything. "The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). Isn't it true that often we are called to pray for nations and kings even when it seems there is nothing to stop them? But much like Nebuchadnezzar, God was able to rule over his human "strategies and power" to humble him and prove God is sovereign. Ending a time of judgment and insanity, Nebuchadnezzar was able to come to his senses and do the following: "At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified Him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;

His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the peoples of the earth
are regarded as nothing.
He does as He pleases
with the powers of heaven
and the peoples of the earth.
No one can hold back His hand
or say to him: ‘What have you done?’” (Daniel 3:34-35).



So the good news is no matter how boastful, how corrupt, how evil, how rude, or how despising a governor, president, senator, representative, or local area leader may be, God is still in control and rules over everything. We don't give up and not vote because of this fact. But we can prepare our hearts for whoever wins in the election in just two weeks to know whether it was the outcome we wanted or not. God has a plan and He will bring all of His plans for our country to a point of being ready for His coming or His judgments. Comfort your heart with this truth: “God rules over everything!”

2. God reigns over the nations from His throne. “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne” (Psalm 47:8). At no time does God ever step out and leave the throne of the universe unattended. At no time does He ever vacate His throne. He is always attending to our needs. Christ is always sitting at His right hand. As we pray, we are told to pray when we need grace! “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ... Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:14, 16). But we know that the enemy is working against God's plans. So that is why we need to pray! What are some things we can wrestle with in prayer for our country? One is that things that are “evil are not called good and good is not called evil” (Is. 5:20). It is time for the voice of God's people to rise up. It is evident that morality is rapidly deteriorating in America today. John Adams, America's second president once said, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” I think history showed us how true that is, for when France fought for its democracy, it tried to do so without the moral foundations that our founders had, and it ended in a bloody battle of senseless lives lost. So remember that when we approach God and wrestle in prayer, He is right to our reach at the throne and is ready to give grace in these times. God is on His throne!

3. God ultimately appoints leaders and rulers.

“Praise the name of God forever and ever, for He has all wisdom and power. He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings” (Daniel 2:20–21 NLT). This was given to us from Daniel during his time under two empires, the Babylonian and Persian. What I notice most about Daniel isn't that he refused to work in these political environments only if they agreed

with his political philosophy. Chances are there will never be an election in America that we will always agree with the lifestyles or philosophies of everything the candidates do. But our part is to vote! I don't really care who people vote for; I allow others to vote differently from me. And I don't try to persuade others who to vote for, but I do ask people to "vote!" If we don't, we are giving away the responsibility that is ours as "we the people." Thomas Jefferson wrote, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." If we don't vote because we don't like who is running, we make that greatest mistake of all, and that is giving up our responsibility.

Well, who should I vote for? I never vote always based on my political background or by the ticket I'm registered with. I always vote for "A person that when I stand before God, I am able to say why I voted my conscience for those individuals." The bottom line is when we vote, we will be responsible for those we vote for. How does God do that? The same way He judges the hearts and minds of all people. "Pastor, are you saying I will give account for whom I vote?" Yes, I really believe we will. That is why we must do our homework. Don't just vote because you hate someone, or love someone. God will ultimately appoint the leaders to fit His purpose!

4. Jesus is supreme above all. Here is where we let some of what we've learned from the book of Colossians touch our lives right now. "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:15-18). When we vote, we must pray that we as "born-again believers are living Christ!" One of the worst things I keep hearing today is that "If you are a real Christian, you will vote for ...". I believe that is a pious, proud and shameful way to treat people. We must be careful never to "Christianize" a candidate. Who are we to even do that? Yes, I know that it is hard to vote when some issues have changed in the last 40 years. We've broken away from civic differences about taxes and minor laws and rules, and now have stumbled over into Biblical moral issues. But even with that to be true, who are we showing? Followers of Jesus must first show that they follow Jesus; that their testimonies and redeemed lives are for real. Our loyalty must be to Christ and not to parties or to men. Is Jesus supreme in your prayers and life?

5. God calls us to put our ultimate hope and trust in Him.

"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes" (Psalm 118:8-9). I can't say it any better than David did for us. Who do we really trust? I wish I could say

that I came up with this following quote, but I didn't. But it expresses where our trust can be found: "After the elections are over, your neighbors will still be your neighbors. Trump won't be there to ring up your groceries; your neighbors will. Biden won't be there to fix your car or help you out with yard work; your neighbors will. Both Trump and Biden will still be in their wealthy political world, and we'll be in ours. They'll both be doing their things, while you and I live together, work together, learn together, shop together, eat together, worship together, and pump our gas next to one another. We are what makes America great. We are the ones who choose to be decent, loving, caring, and compassionate human beings. Vote for whomever you choose to vote for in November, but remember... "We, the people" choose to shape our communities. Not them." So is your trust in God?

Let's pray! Remember the enemy isn't "people" but it is Satan and his forces. Since we are God's army, let's march on our knees! Keep praying. Election Day is coming.

"Father, Almighty and infinite, in times such as ours we grow weak, keep our faith alive. Help us 'walk by faith, not by sight.' Oh, how we need Your power and grace in protecting us and helping us in these days of division, riot, and fear. One cannot assume Christianity as the religion of our land. Both religious diversity and pervasive secularism have transformed our American culture. Change our hearts from 'debate' and fighting to 'compassion.' Our greatest desire should be the Gospel of Christ, and not our political persuasions and agendas. That doesn't mean we shouldn't care about truth or right and wrong. But help us be a people who dialogue for Christ and His message of salvation. Christianity has continually had an impact on society... it still does. But we need to care about people. Father, we pray for true revival in our nation. We pray for this election only twenty-some days from us. No matter the outcome, let us have grace. Humble us as a people. Revive us again! Holy Spirit, lead us back to the good news of the gospel: that all our sins have been put to death, fully and finally, by Christ on the cross. Give us heavenly-mindedness. Give us a strong faith to believe that You are always for us and never against us, no matter how often we fall. Give us spiritual wisdom to behold our risen Lamb, perfect, spotless, and worthy to receive all our worship, adoration, and praise. In Jesus, our wonderful merciful Savior we pray. Amen."

Wrestling in prayer, and grappling on the floor for Christ, Pastor Corvin <><

*Voting Humor--
From the Desk of:*

Don Genereaux



Honorable Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

My friend, Dan Hansen, over at Honey Creek, Iowa, received a check for \$1,000.00 from the government for not raising hogs. So I want to go into the "NOT RAISING HOGS" business next year.

What I want to know is, in your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to raise hogs on? And what is the best breed of hogs not to raise? I want to be sure that I approach this endeavor in keeping with all government policies.

As I see it, the hardest part of the "NOT RAISING HOGS" program is keeping an accurate inventory of how many hogs I haven't raised.

My friend Hansen is very joyful about the future of the business. He has been raising hogs for twenty years or so, and the best he has ever made on them was \$422.90 in 1968, until this year when he got your check for the \$1000.00 for not raising 50 hogs.

If I get \$1000.00 for not raising 50 hogs, then would I get \$2000.00 for not raising 100 hogs? I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself to about 4,000 hogs not raised the first year, which would bring in about \$80,000.00; then I can afford an airplane.

Now another thing - these hogs I will not raise will not eat 100,000 bushels of corn. I understand that the government also pays people not to raise corn and wheat. Would I qualify for payments for not raising these crops not to feed my hogs I will not be raising?

I want to get started as soon as possible as this seems to be a good time of the year for the "NOT RAISING HOGS" and "NOT PLANTING CROPS" business.

Also I am giving serious consideration to the "NOT MILKING COWS" business and any information you would have on the endeavor would be greatly appreciated.

In view of the fact that I will be totally unemployed, I will be filing for unemployment and food stamps, and was wondering how long that process takes.

Be assured, Mr. Secretary, you will have my vote in the upcoming election.

Patriotically yours,
Don Genereaux

P.S. Would you please notify me when you plan to give out the free cheese again?

Unknown.