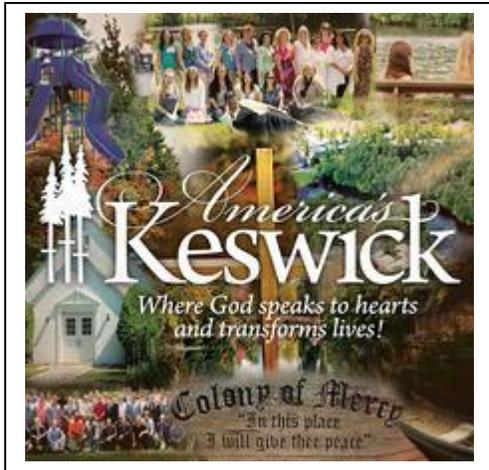


PARTNERS IN PRAYER- “God We Exalt You!” March 27th, 2022 America’s Keswick Sunday

Dear Prayer Team,



*“Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom.”*

2 Corinthians 3:17 (ESV)

How is your hearing? I don’t know about you, but as I age, I’m becoming harder of hearing. I find myself frequently asking people to repeat their words and phrases. And it isn’t because I’m not hearing them talking, I have tones and clearness that I’m not any longer able to detect.

The doctor diagnosed it to be “Tinnitus”. What is that condition? It is when one of the three of our body’s smallest bones in our ears becomes misaligned. The result is a continual, never-ending ringing. Whether you frequently experience that ringing, buzzing, or hissing sound in your ears or whether the sound just doesn’t go away, tinnitus can be annoying and even distracting. But one of the consequences of it is that you miss things you once heard, and after having the condition for a while, you stop listening for certain sounds, even though the sounds are always occurring. It made me think of Jesus often saying, “He that has ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt. 13:9)! So are we spiritually ready to hear from God?

I happened to find an illustration from Christian writer Tim Hansel in his book entitled *When I Relax I Feel Guilty*. An American Indian was visiting as a tourist in downtown New York, walking with his friends who lived in New York City. Suddenly he said, “I hear a cricket.” “Oh, you’re crazy,” his New York friend replied. “Honestly, I hear a cricket. I do! I’m sure of it.” “It’s the noon hour. There are people bustling around, cars honking, taxis squealing, and noises from the city. I’m sure you can’t hear it” replied the friend. The Indian man said, “I’m actually sure I do.” Listening attentively, he walked to the corner, while his friend followed behind him. They stopped at the corner, waited for the light, crossed the avenue, and walked further down the street. Finally on the corner of a townhouse, he stopped and looked around. He started looking in the large cement planter. He moved leaves and found the cricket. His friend was astounded. But the Cherokee said, “My ears are no different from yours. It simply depends on what you are listening to. Here, let me show you.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a handful of change. There were streams of people passing them. He dropped the few quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies. Every head within the block turned following the sound. “You see what I mean?” he said as he began picking up his coins. “It

depends on what your heart is always listening for.” So what are our hearts listening for today?

Not only must Christians have “ears to hear” the message of God’s Word, but they must learn what to listen for. So what are we listening for in our worship, prayers, and time today? As we enjoy the ministry of America’s Keswick, I want to challenge all of us to keep listening for the things which move our hearts. Do we realize how much brokenness, addiction, and bondage surround us? Do we hear the needs of others? Are we in tune to praying? Prepare your hearts to hear in three ways:

1. God needs us to see and hear of His exalting greatness!

Remember our theme for the year: “God we exalt You in 2022!” Keep learning the church verse from Psalm 34:1-3 “I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify [or magnify] the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together.” Here is the principle of the word “exalt” from this Hebrew song “in order to exalt something upwards because of its greatness or superiority, something else must be lowered.” Like the law of gravity, “What goes up must come down”; when we magnify or exalt God, we must lower ourselves. That is why it says in 1 Peter 5:5-6, “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.” We must humbly lessen ourselves to lift up God. Everything about God is fitted to fill our minds with awe. He is the inexhaustible foundation of all being, all life, all intelligence, all wisdom, all power, all good, and all true happiness in the universe. He “gives all men life and breath and everything else” (Acts 17:25, and “every good and perfect gift” is from Him (James 1:17).

Reality is that “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28); each of us can confess with David, “My times are in Your hands” (Psalm 31:15). He is “the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:15-16). He is “sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men” (Dan. 4:17). But do you really think people are hearing this about God in these days of war and hardship in places like the Ukraine and Myanmar? People are hearing things, but they are not in tune to the greatness of God. And because that is so, they are not cherishing His awesomeness. It is He who judges: “He brings one down, He exalts another” (Psalm 75:7). People in this world are listening only for money and power, but they are not hearing the quietness of the Spirit of God. “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.” (Rom. 11:36). To fear God and acceptably worship Him is to cherish an awesome sense of His greatness! So, will you reflect on the greatness of God today?

I love what the prophet Jeremiah proclaims about our God which we all must learn to hear:

**“No one is like You, Lord;
You are great,
and Your name is mighty in power.
Who should not fear you,
King of the nations?
This is Your due.
Among all the wise leaders of the nations
and in all their kingdoms,
there is no one like You” (Jeremiah 10:6-7 NIV).**

But in all of our meditation on God’s greatness and grandeur, we should remember that when we have strained our faculties to the utmost, we are still an immeasurable distance from the reality of who He is. He is the truly and infinitely awesome God whom we should fear. Are you hearing Him today? Are you willing to humble yourself so you can hear Him speak to you?

2. God has saved us to be worshippers! Here is the second thing that God wants us to hear. I’ve been learning from A. W. Tozer as I’ve prepared and preached on the Holy Spirit, that we must be careful that how we worship must be correctly done. This is a reminder of what Tozer wrote in his book, *Whatever Happened to Worship*: *“Whatever happened to worship? Much that is called worship today in churches is not. Worship originates with God and comes back to us and is reflected from us, as a mirror. God accepts no other kind of worship. I can only remind you of our great needs in this terrible day when men and women are trying their best to cut God down to their size. Many also believe that it is possible to gain control of the Sovereign God and to think Him down to a plain where they can use Him as they want to. Even in our Christian circles we are prone to depend upon ourselves in the work that Christ has given us to do. Without a complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit, we can only fail. I tell you again that God has saved us to be worshippers. May God show us a vision of ourselves that will devalue us to the point of total devaluation. From there He can raise us up to worship Him and to praise Him and to witness.” (A. W. Tozer *Whatever Happened To Worship*, pg. 72)*

When we turn on the radio, television, or our media, and we listen to sermons, we may think we are hearing God’s Word, but are we? We need to make sure we are letting the Holy Spirit teach us to be true worshippers in Spirit and truth (John 4:22).

Here is the last principle we need to listen for:

3. God wants us to be helpless so our prayers will become stronger. I have been announcing the coming of our prayer conference April 1st and 2nd. I wonder if we are really hearing and heeding what the Spirit wants of us to keep learning the great work of prayer. We may feel it isn’t necessary, but like when people hear the sound of change falling on the sidewalk, and it captures their

attention, we need to be listening for the needs and praying for the work of the Spirit through these difficult times. In Paul Miller's book, *A Praying Life*, he tells the story of the helplessness of his severely handicapped daughter Kim. Often, in the early years, their daughter would wake them at all difficult hours of the night because she could not stop pacing. This is what he says: *"Little children are good at being helpless. It's what they do best. But as adults, we soon forget how important helplessness is. I, for one, am allergic to helplessness. I don't like it. I want a plan, an idea, or maybe a friend to listen to my problem. This is how I instinctively approach everything because I am confident in my own abilities. This is even true in my work of teaching people about prayer. Even though I lead prayer seminars and wrote a study on prayer [which everyone who comes to the prayer seminar will receive free], up until a year ago, it never occurred to me to pray systematically and regularly for our church prayer ministry. Why not? Because I was not helpless. I could manage our prayers on my own. I never said this or even thought it, but I lived it. Ironically, helplessness is one of the central themes in our prayer seminar. I wasn't helpless about the ministry of prayer and the ministry didn't grow and move forward- until I became helpless in my prayers. Prayer = Helplessness! God wants us to come to Him empty-handed, weary, and heavy-laden. Instinctively we want to get rid of our helplessness before we come to God."* (pg. 42).

One person who has come to the prayer conference gave this testimony: "I am starting to see there is a difference between 'saying prayers' and honest praying. Both can sound the same on the outside, but the former is too often motivated by a sense of obligation and guilt; whereas the latter is motivated by a conviction that I am completely helpless to 'do life' on my own. Or in the case of praying for others, that I am completely helpless to help others without the grace and power of God." (pg. 43).

Prayer mirrors the gospel. In the gospel, the Father takes us as we are because of Jesus and gives us His gift of salvation. In prayer, the Father receives us as we are because of Jesus and gives us His gift of help. The free gift of grace in Jesus only works when we realize we don't have it all together. The same is true of prayer. So, are you coming ready to hear how you can grow in prayer? God is looking for us to pray, and it doesn't matter to Him that we are sloppy, meander in our thoughts, or pray awkward phrases. He just wants us to pray. We have a wrong view of maturity. We tell ourselves, "strong Christians pray a lot. If I were a strong Christian, I'd pray more." The real truth is, strong Christians do get stronger when they pray, and they really pray more when they realize how weak they are. Then they pray. An interviewer once asked Edith Schaeffer, author and wife of evangelist and philosopher Francis Schaeffer, "Who is the greatest Christian woman alive today?" She replied, "I don't know her name, I once met a dying woman in a hospital somewhere in India, and when I prayed with her, she prayed with a sense of helplessness. It

had become part of her nature... almost like breathing. Why? Because she was weak. That is the one woman who seemed to be the greatest woman alive.”

So let’s remind ourselves that we should not just talk about prayer. Let’s really commit to pray! Come to the seminar. Sign up! Humble ourselves and listen to the things that the Spirit is trying to tell us.

Will you pray with me?

“Awesome God and Father, we worship You. With the eyes of our heart, we can see You ‘robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of Your strength’ (Is. 63:1). O, Sovereign Lord, You have begun to show Your servants Your greatness and Your strong hand. Glorious Savior, You hold in Your hand the billions of stars, and yet You direct the entire heavenly host with little effort (Is. 40:12). This is a faint picture of Your infinite greatness! Indeed You spoke the universe into existence in the beginning, and now by Your mighty power You hold it all together from hour to hour (Col. 1:15). Jesus, fill our minds with awe and adoration as we worship You today. By our guest’s special music and testimonies from Keswick, let us learn to hear the sounds around us of broken people whom we can pray for and help find. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with gratitude and gladness as we realize that You want us to come needy and trusting as little children. Grow us! Fill us! Strengthen us! And help us to hear You rightly! Through Jesus Your Son we praise You. Amen.”

Praying and moving mountains, Pastor Corvin ◀◀

A Quote from the President of America’s Keswick on memorizing Scripture!

“I was privileged to attend Camp Sandy Hill for a week for nine years. It was awesome. One of our Sunday School teachers, Woody Adcock, MADE our whole class of boys memorize the Scriptures so we could all go to camp together. It dawned on me later that the whole purpose of this discipline was not just to get a free week at camp. The purpose was to hide God’s Word in my heart. Our Colony residents memorize 120 Bible verses during their 120-day stay. And you don’t get a free pass if you are over 50!!! It’s an amazing discipline. Pastor Paul Chapman gives 20 benefits of memorizing Scripture:

1. Memorizing Scripture allows you to abide in Christ. (John 15:5)
2. Memorizing Scripture empowers your prayer life. (John 15:7)
3. Memorizing Scripture convicts us to obey, demonstrating our love for God. (John 15:10)
4. Memorizing Scripture results in a joyful



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heart. (John 15:11)

5. Memorizing Scripture imparts wisdom. (Colossians 3:16)
6. Memorizing Scripture teaches us as we go through life. (Colossians 3:16)
7. Memorizing Scripture corrects us when we stray. (Colossians 3:16)
8. Memorizing Scripture inspires you to sing about God. (Colossians 3:16)
9. Memorizing Scripture generates faith as we quote it. (Romans 10:17)
10. Memorizing Scripture helps you overcome the wicked one.

There are ten more benefits, but I will wait to share them. Our theme verse for this year is **Ephesians 4:4-5 - There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

How about starting with these two verses? I will do it with you." ...Bill Welte, President/CEO America's Keswick.

Could this be our Baptism service?...

