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March 2010

Dear Friend,

Recently, in our services we were exploring the subject of lost prayers. I'm speaking specifically about what seems to be unanswered prayers. Does such a place truly exist in the realm of the spirit? Is there a place where our prayers are unheard, misplaced, forgotten or placed on a shelf for later? The answer to this question lies within the heart of God's word.

First, we will look at it from a human perspective.

Anyone who has ever prayed numerous prayers during a lifetime would have to reconcile that not every prayer prayed got answered in the timing and fashion in which they were prayed. Sometimes the most sincere desires of our hearts have yet to show themselves in the natural realm. The answer to some prayers may have gone past the time frame in which they were to be answered. Some things are of a now necessity! The prayer needs to be answered now or the person dies. It's answered now or the bank comes and gets the car, house or whatever. It's answered now or the job is lost.

What if the percentage of answered prayers becomes your teacher? What if previous answers to prayer become your confidence? What if your history in answered prayers becomes the teacher of how willing God is to hear and answer? If these examples are the case for you then you have become the terrible victim of experience instead of truth.

It is important here that we discuss programs. No not an orchestration of man made events but rather a subconscious approach in our hearts to the reality of the next prayer being answered. The program of confidence that runs inside of each of us is the single most important component to answered prayer.

If life in and of itself has become your teacher then you have been victimized by those experiences which say sometimes God does and sometimes he doesn't, sometimes yes and sometimes no. Where is the certainty in all of this? Where is the confidence to act on this planet in the stead of Jesus Christ? To declare an issue settled and see it not miss the mark of the appointed time necessary for fulfillment?

Now we will look at our example to follow in the course of answered prayers? The word says in **Hebrews 12:2** *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.* No man other than Jesus himself can set for me the precedence of prayers being answered. If I look at any man presently or in the past and set them as my standard for prayers being answered then I sabotage myself.

Imagine someone that you really respect in the kingdom and this person may have great results when praying against certain diseases in peoples bodies. And yet you may read or hear

where that person came up short in being able to help a certain person overcome *liver cancer*. If I take them as the standard then I set myself up for eventually failing in particular areas. If I approach a hard situation like liver cancer and think well if that person couldn't get this done then my confidence is sabotaged by the expectation or confidence I have in someone else's success.

Let's consider Jesus.

John 11:41-42 says *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Jesus was about to raise his old friend Lazarus from the dead. The prerequisite to the power was a confidence that his Father always heard him. The communion that Jesus walked in with his Father empowered him with a knowing of how intricately involved his Father was with every part of his life. He believed that his Father heard him and was interested in everything he spoke to him.

This friendship is the confidence that we have in him for answered prayer is how much our Father desires being our Father and wants to answer every prayer prayed.

Just how intimately involved is your Father with you?

Matthew 10: 28-30 says *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

This is an old familiar passage that people like to use when their making fun of some guy's balding head. They might say, "Boy that guys sure keeping God busy counting missing hair. " But the truth of this deserves far more inspection than just an occasional laugh.

Think about what Jesus is saying Friend. He is telling us that this infinite God, the Creator of the entire universe is so intrigued with us, so passionately enthralled by us that he takes the time to know exactly how many hairs are on our heads. What more could Jesus say?

How could he better express how much our Father loves us? This was not an exercise to prove God's omniscience (*all knowing power*). This is not for him, it's for us. This is telling us that if he is that involved in the most insignificant things, wouldn't he hear the faintest whisper of a prayer? How much more when we bow our heart in earnest prayer for his will to take affect in our life or the life of someone we love? It is absolutely impossible for someone that is counting your hairs to loose your prayer or better yet to drop the call. Everybody knows what a lost or dropped call feels like. Just when you are about to get to the most important part of the conversation there is no sound on the other end of the phone. If God is counting our hairs, we can be assured he is not dropping calls.

You may ask then brother Bronc, “If he is that intent on me, then why doesn’t everything I pray come back to me in a cascade of answered prayer?” I believe this is where we should head into the word for answers.

As we take another step we note that we have already talked about a God that must hear our whispers if he is counting hairs. What about something even deeper in intimacy?

Psalm 139:1-3 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*

This is one of my most favorite Psalms because it describes the intimacy that God, our Father intends in fellowship with his offspring. David says that God has searched him and known him. This knowing is not to know about him but rather in great intimacy, way past the outer courts of the flesh.

Next, he says “*you know my downsitting and uprising.*” If we just see this in the physical sense God always knows of our whereabouts but look at the next part, “*Thou understandeth my thoughts afar off.*” Many commentaries will tell you this is saying from the far away place that God lives he can see and discern our thoughts but in this portion of scripture he is conveying something far greater, something far more intimate and personal than that.

What this scripture is telling us is that God is so acquainted (*remember counting our hairs*) with us that he sees our thoughts in their conception. He understands them before they are fully formed. This means that **God** understands me more than I understand myself. God knows me better than I know myself. When I am not sure of the barrage of thoughts swirling in my head God sees and understands them.

God not only will hear my whispers but monitors my thought processes. Why? **Psalm 139:17-18** *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.* So that he can process his unending thoughts towards me to build me up in confidence and receive his will from heaven being done on earth.

As we delve deeper into the New Testament concerning the confidence necessary for answered prayer one of the places that this is spoken of most powerfully is in I John. The scriptures we are about to read from tell us something about answered prayer.

I John 3:21-22 *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

and

I John 5:14-15 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Notice Friend that in both of these passages keeping his commands, doing what is pleasing in his sight and asking for things according to his will are directly linked with getting our prayers answered. In keeping with the context of the entire message of I John we must recognize some things. I John is all about the love of God, first his love to you and then his love through you.

The walk of obedience this scripture suggests does not revolve around a walk of works. Having our prayers answered did not relate to how many times we attended church last month, how much we've given in the last year nor how many hours we've prayed or fasted recently. It was related to place of fellowship. This place was not being cancelled out from a program deep down inside that keeps something questioning our confidence in God.

Our personal and intimate relationship with our God, our Creator is of the utmost importance in arriving at a place of confidence where we can know and comprehend that at our very heart's cry our heavenly Father has already made a way and that he has provided the answer to our prayers if we can but receive his provision for us.

In closing, let's talk about grace and confidence through fellowship. Grace is a wonderful characteristic of God, without it none of us get saved. Thank God it follows us past salvation all the days of our life. God's unmerited favor, his strength traded off for our weakness, simply employed by the act of faith on our part to believe in him.

For example: I might be living a real ugly life not communing with God. Treating people far less kind than what is pleasing to Christ. If I become sick or desperate for help for a loved one, in less than the time it takes to say Jesus I can receive help, cleansing and the strength to pray and receive my answer to prayer. This is all employed by stepping over by faith into his grace but I am not going to be able to consistently live a life where my heart or confidence is living outside consistent fellowship with God and get my prayers answered.

Why? The problem is not with God or his ability to always cleanse us from our weaknesses. The problem is a cancellation of the heart. When I walk in a pleasing place of God's love, I am continually receiving the witness of confidence from the Father because I am in communion with him. Then, when I step up to the impossible situation and offer out of the communion of my heart a prayer or petition of faith that same confidence that I feel in him by living a life pleasing to him through love also witnesses to me that if I ask any thing according to his will, he hears me and if I know that he heard me, whatsoever I asked, then I also know that I will have the petitions that I have desired of him.

This is not to be legalistic, like I've dotted all my I's and crossed all my T's. This is I am not perfect yet but me and daddy God are in a continual place of communion and because of this even my weakness are no problem to him. Leave out long periods of fellowship with him and you will find that your heart, not him (God) cancels out your confidence, you're not sure. It's like broken communication.

Friend the great solution to all this is as simple as a choice. We can of our own accord – ***choose!*** Choose a life of answered prayer by choosing a place of solitude with God. Time spent in intimacy increases confidence which ultimately increases faith, which only sees the answer as done. There is very little lack of confidence in the answer to prayer where intimate words are consecrated to our heavenly Father in private worship. Give yourself a vitamin B-12 shot in the spirit today. Increase your confidence 100% more. Compel yourself to set up a regiment of private time with the Lord on a daily basis - *30 mins, 45 mins, or an hour* of communion with our God will begin to increase your confidence that “***all things our possible to him that believeth.***”

Hallelujah!

God bless you and your family as we continue to seek a deeper understanding of his love for us and all that he’s provided to assure our confidence in his answering all of our prayers.

Love,

Pastor Bronc

P.S. - The word says that we are to exhort one another daily while it is called today and that if two shall agree as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of our Father which is in heaven. If you have a prayer request or a praise report to share please let us hear from you. You can contact us through the web site at www.broncflint.org or email us at fpc@broncflint.org and/or feel free to write us at:

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