

John 1:1-18; 1 John 4:1-6

God Is Still!

I prayed for healing – I prayed that God would heal this man. I felt the confidence of faith in ways I rarely experience! I was praying with expectation, the way the books tell us to pray!

There's so much written about prayer; written by charasmatics, and pentecostals, and biblical scholars, and those who have learned through the college of hard knocks, and those who have been great prayer warriors, and those who are simply trying to understand the biblical teaching, to the point that you can get really confused about your prayer life.

But I was feeling the *assurance* of “things hoped for”; I felt *confident* healing would be the result of our praying. I was praying to the One who is “the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever!” believing and trusting in Him!

It floored me when we learned of his death.

I believe I've witnessed God's healing, in what you and I would call miraculous ways. I believe God heals, that He does magnificent works; that the parting of the Red Sea wasn't the last time for Him to act. So if God can – why doesn't He?

Maybe we're confused about the purpose of prayer. So let me start here: Prayer is the avenue to help us find as much of God for ourselves as possible! Many of us think of prayer as a dial-up “request-line” to heaven. But we ought to think of it more like the pre-teen boy and girl on the phone together gabbing back and forth; two youngsters in love, connected by the only means of communication they have. And when the two don't have anything new to say, they just sit quiet listening to the other breath – because being “together” by phone is better than being apart all together.

Prayer is the “connection” we make to feel the pulse of God. It is the intentional effort to be in the presence of God! It was in the attitude of prayer that the first Christian martyr, Stephen, was able to look heavenward and see God's glory as a crowd of strong men pummeled his body with rocks and stones until he was dead. In that time of agonizing pain, when he implored the Father to forgive his tormenters, it was as though Stephen was lifted out of his trials simply by seeking the face of God.

Prayer can be very formal, with wonderful flowing words spoken to God; but it can be a deliberate state of mind, where you simply put yourself in the presence of the Kingdom and Power and the Glory!

When you're in need you go to someone who can help you, right? A peasant may go to his king. One who's been cheated will go to the judge. A weak person goes to the one who is strong. A child goes to the parent! Prayer is the admission that we are inadequate, but we know the One who *is adequate*, and more!

Now a servant doesn't always receive everything that he wants from his king. It is his privilege to ask. But it's also the king's privilege to give in the measure he knows to be proper – in the context of all his other subjects and the king's greater purpose!

We cannot possibly know the ways of God. What God has planned behind the scenes of time and space is infinitely complex to our place in history. God said as much to Job: **“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?”**

God has a purpose and mission for His world. His will will be done in *His* time! We are moving through history according to God's schedule. The Bible says, In “the fullness of time

God sent His Son..." (Galatians 4) God has proven His love for me and you "in the fullness of time," at the cross – so I trust God ...not because of what is to happen – but because of what has *already* happened!

Will you trust God and be content even when prayer is *not* answered, and the worst happens? This is the key question for us that arises out of this closing phrase of the Lord's prayer. Can you still affirm that to God belongs "the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever" regardless of your personal circumstances!?

Max Lucado asks the compelling question: [*In the Grip of Grace*; pg.129-130] Are you satisfied with the one gift, the gift of salvation for eternal life? Are you satisfied that Jesus saves you from the judgement of sin that condemned you to hell? Are you satisfied with *that one thing*? Because that one thing ...is the most incredible gift – ever conceived! Ever given! Eternity with God in a paradise greater than we can imagine!

There are times when the one thing *you* want is the one thing you never get. You obey His command to "ask God for everything you need"; all you want is an open door, an extra day, another opportunity, an answered prayer.

But what if God says no? What if God says, "You have My grace, My kindness, My promise, My love ...and that's enough." Will you be content? *Content* is the condition of your heart at peace with God.

What if God's only gift to you is His *promise* to love you and keep you to Himself forever and ever? Would you be content? You beg God to spare the life of your child. You plead with God to help you make ends meet. You implore Him to remove disease from your body. What if His only answer is, "My grace is sufficient" – and heaven is your only reward?

It *is enough* if you know this awesome God of kindness and love! If you *believe* in Him!

But do you know His *kindness* and His *mercy*? That's not a trite question. God is not hiding from you. Have you found His love lifting you out of the foul habits or bitter memories?

Have you come to that relationship with Your Father, the King of creation? And have you taken seriously the appeal of Christ Himself to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...?"

You see, from heaven's perspective, grace is enough! If God did nothing more than save us from hell, could anyone complain? Having been given a place in eternity dare we grumble at anything short of heaven?

What courage it demands to close your prayer, "for Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever and ever! Amen!" What courage it demands to absorb the pain and agony of a thousand trials ...and still affirm of God: "for Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever and ever!"

How great it is to have walked with the Lord through such trials, that faith in Him is ever stronger than when you first entered the race.

How great it is to know the assurance of His power despite all signs to the contrary – as those who have suffered and have been imprisoned for their faith will testify!

How great it is to hold to the love of the Father when wars and destruction dot the landscape of our world – as it does for believers who are removed from their homes and families on foreign soil even today!

How great it is to continue with confidence even though unemployment, cancer and an environmental disaster seem to be the most powerful presence in the world?

Will you endure with God?

Will you end your prayer, your day, with the words: "for Thine is the Kingdom and the

Power and the Glory forever and ever.” Your loving Father wants you to trust Him. Will you?

John, one of Jesus’ most trusted friends, waited and believed under the burden of tremendous personal turmoil. Surely it wasn’t easy to trust Jesus, but he did. John and his brother James were a part of Jesus’ inner circle, two of the three whom Jesus selected to share special privileges: James and John, the sons of Zebedee, the sons of “Thunder!” But James was killed in the first years of the Church’s life; a senseless murder (Acts 12).

I can’t begin to understand what that meant to John, whose best friend was his brother. How his heart must have broken over the frivolous murder by Herod. Yet it was John who later wrote these words that had such great meaning for him: **The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.** [READING 1 John 4:1-6]

¹ Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. ² This is the way to find out if they have the Spirit of God: If a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ became a human being, that person has the Spirit of God. ³ If a prophet does not acknowledge Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the antichrist. You have heard that he is going to come into the world, and he is already here.

⁴ But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won your fight with these false prophets, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. ⁵ These people belong to this world, so they speak from the world’s viewpoint, and the world listens to them. ⁶ But we belong to God; that is why those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

You’ll find the same testimony in Peter, who declared the authority of Christ so clearly: Jesus “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.” (1 Peter 3:22) This from a man who would later be crucified upside down.

But despite the trials and suffering they experienced they held on to the absent Jesus – because Christ was present to them through His Spirit! They’d never met a man like Jesus before! The waves were His subjects the winds were His servants. And that was just the beginning of what His sea mates would witness. Before it was over, they would see fish jump into the boat, demons dive into pigs, cripples turn into dancers, and cadavers turn into living, breathing people!

And when Peter and John suffered, they still *believed* God was active just beyond the visible world they could see. They *trusted* Him! Is it any wonder the disciples were willing to die for Jesus? Never had they seen such *power*, never had they seen such *glory*. It was like the whole *universe* was His *kingdom!* ☺ And death was merely a doorway into a new existence!

They knew what it meant to end their prayers, “For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

So whether we get our way or not – God is still King! Whether His power is demonstrated in our lives or not – God is still all powerful!

God will be for you the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever if you *believe* in Him! Do you hear that? It is *through faith* that He becomes *real* to you in this way! It is *through faith* that God becomes for you the power and glory you need in any circumstance in life.

Will you trust the Father to love you and all those who are precious to you? That’s a huge

question when you're suffering through the brokenness of an evil world.

I know the conflict you may have: We don't have answers to all our prayers.
Circumstances in life would break our spirit.

But God is still God – and He loves you! He wants to be your Anchor, your Fortress,
your Rock and your Savior!

God the Father wants you to trust Him, regardless of the pain – for *ultimately*, we live
and move within His Kingdom and Power and Glory ...and He will save the innocent, the guilty,
and the forgiven for all eternity.

INVITATION: Is God moving you to that place of faith – where you want to trust Him with your
all and declare, “for Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever and ever!
Amen!”