

Power of Prayer

**Prayer is powerful, because the person to whom we are praying has all Power!!!
all power and therefore everyone and everything must submit to His will.**

1. God knows everything
2. God made everything
3. God has power over everything
4. with God nothing is impossible because nothing or no one can thwart his will
5. **God has all power and effectively handles any situation brought to Him in prayer...prayer is our greatest asset..**

the power of prayer is not that we pray it is that God will answer every prayer according to His will...

When we pray...we pray to our father who is the source of all power, we are allowed by God to come to him as a vessel or channel seeking His, knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Dominion, Control, of whatever it is we are praying about ...fully assured that His Will and Power will be released though the vehicle of prayer to effect whatever it is we pray for or about.

Our problem often in prayer is that *We measure the God's ability and willingness to answer prayer by the standards of men.*

We forget we are priests and the living breathing Temples of God

Jesus stated this priority In His Temple/house and Peter tells us in

1 Peter 2:⁵ And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests.

- **We are priests...one of the main jobs of a priest is to offer up prayers on behalf of the people...intercession between God and people...prayer**

Because Jesus said so...

Matt. 21:13 ¹³ He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer'

...Quoted from... Isaiah 56:7 "my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

2 Chronicles 7:5 My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. ¹⁶ For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:17¹⁷ Never stop praying

I think I know why often our (prayers) from us priests don't produce much... we have a strong tendency to pray *what is on our minds which are normally consumed with "me" prayers...prayers for ourselves, our needs, our wants... Not on praying how God wants to build his house...*

- Remember the prayer Therese's and I not only prayed but wrote down...we will serve you and you will take care of us...
- And he has...just like James says...

James 5:16 "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. "

- *Then James gives us an example*

James 5:17 Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! ¹⁸ Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.

- **Elijah an ordinary man praying for the Heart of God to return his people to him by drought...why? Ahab the unrighteous King of Israel...following the Idol Baal...and setting up Asherah poles. Elijah prayed God's Heart to return the people to Himself, and prayed against Baal. The Fertility god...so he prayed drought...Drought...where nothing grows!**
- **The drought would be a blessing in disguise for God's people...turning them back to him...and a judgement against Ahab and Baal .**
- **He was a good priest!! Prophet....Yet Elijah suffered also... 1 Kings 7 1-4**
- **When we are right with God our prayers begin to resonate with His heart! And there is great power...**

In Fact it is the greatest action we can partake in, in this temporal world, the spiritual world, regarding people, places and things.

Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

- **Seek the powerful Holy Spirit in how we ought pray**
- **And stay alert, don't fall asleep...Think about it ...the disciples were regularly falling asleep when they prayed, how often us...**
- **We enter into the throne of our God and Father...then nod out as we are in discussion with him. Be alert...rise above our tendency to be weak in prayer**

- And one of the great joys of the Christian life is in seeing prayers answered, and nothing builds faith like answered prayer!!! And a Great part of that Joy is that God allows us to be part of his unfolding plan of redemption of man.

God has all power and effectively handles any situation brought to Him...according to his will

Matthew 6:33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

- Lord, too often I refuse to just trust you and do as you are seeming to direct.
- Leave here today knowing that every promise God has made ...He will keep...Nothing will be left undone...

Perhaps some in here this morning are worried about time in a situation
Time running out.....Too shortPressed for time for something to happen...

1) So First ...We must learn to embrace the slow pace of God's answering of many of our prayers.

2) And second we must understand why God appears to often take so long to answer prayers? and that is what we will look at today...

Prayer is powerful! but the answers have everything to do with God's Timing!

1. Sometimes it takes time to prevail against Demonic resistance or entrenchment

Daniel 10:12 Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. **Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.** ¹³ But for twenty-one days the spirit prince^[c] of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels,^[d] came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come."

²⁰ He replied, "Do you know why I have come? Soon I must return to fight against the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia, and after that the spirit prince of the kingdom of Greece^[g] will come. ²¹ Meanwhile, I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one helps me against these spirit princes except Michael, your spirit prince.^[h]

- **Daniel continued to pray for 21 days ...persistence in prayer is often necessary for battles are taking place we know not about...and the gathering of who else needs to be involved..**
- **And Jesus picks up this idea when discussing the disciples inability to cast out a particular demon...**

Mark 9:28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁹ And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

2.Sometimes it takes Time for God to coordinate circumstances to bring pressure on a person until that one becomes willing to do what God wants him or her to do.

Jonah...

For Example George Mueller prayed for five different friends:

- **after five years one came to Christ...after ten more years two more came to Christ**
- **He once said that I prayed for two of them by name everyday, on land or sea, sick or well, and I shall continue to pray for them until they are saved or die!**
- **After thirty five years of prayer the fourth was saved, and after fifty two years the fifth was saved...just after Mueller's death!**

Therese prayed for Her father's salvation for sixteen years, and was privilege to lead him to the Lord a year before his death, and the last words out of his mouth were praise God, Praise God every time!!

3.Sometimes Time is needed for the cumulative effect of a great amassing of prayer

2 Chronicles 7:14 ¹⁴ Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

Revelation 5: (He is the lamb looking like he was slaughtered) ⁷ He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. ⁸ And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. ⁹ And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth."

Rev 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal on the scroll, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. ² I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets.

³ Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar before the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out. ⁵ Then the angel filled the incense burner with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth; and thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and there was a terrible earthquake.

4. Sometimes it take time to prune from our own lives thing that are hindering our prayers

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands treat your wives right or it hinders your prayer.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.sin that so trips us up ...keeps us from prayer

Prayer may not change things for you, but it sure changes you for things. Many times God is working to enlarge our faith and intensify our commitment to his purpose, preparing us for the sacrifice ahead that we will have to make.

5. Sometimes it takes time for separate parts of complex situations to fit together. God knows the perfect time to give maximum results.

- Timing is a key with the Lord at just the right time Romans 5:6 there is a right time. Rest in that

Luke 5: ⁶ Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations.

- ***In describing Zechariah and Elizabeth this way, Luke is also telling us that God looked upon this couple with favor, not only because of their faithful behavior, Which in their culture, meant that they were behaviorally obedient in observing the Ten Commandments, as well as all the Levitical laws concerning diet, including all the feasts and festivals. And because their hearts were right in God's sight as well.***
- ***and in their culture You were either "righteous" or you were a "sinner." You***

were either “in” or “out.” Therefore, it is no surprise that in this culture “barrenness was a woman’s and a family’s greatest misfortune.”an indicator of being in sin and under the judgment of God...

- **Luke gives us insight into they handled this progressive accumulation of cultural disgrace. They persevered in being faithful.**

*LK 1:8 **Once** (one time) when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen **by lot** (coincidence), according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And **when the time** for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.*

- Incense was burned in the Temple twice daily. 9am before the morning sacrifice and 3pm after the evening sacrifice... **By this time in Israel’s history, the number of ordinary Levitical priests is estimated to be upwards of 20,000. For organizational purposes, the priesthood was divided into 24 divisions of approximately 850 priests each.**
- **Since there were generally more priests in a division than might ever be able to perform the incense offering, a priest was allowed to serve once in his lifetime. As a result, a lot-casting system was established to allow God to select the priest He desired to honor with that service.**
- **One of the obligations of each division’s service was performing the four mandated daily offerings and sacrifices. This included the incense offering in the Holy Place which, because of its location so close to the Holy of Holies, was considered to be the most coveted service for a priest to carry out.**
- This great honor could only be done once in a priest lifetime... Lots were cast to decide who would enter the sanctuary, **After decades of participating in this process (some consider Zechariah to be sixty years old when**
- But what appeared to be chance was not by chance ... Zechariah was chosen that day to enter the Holy Place—to light the incense and afterward would pronounce a blessing on the people from the balcony
- When the people saw the smoke from the burning incense, they prayed. The smoke drifting heavenward symbolized their prayers ascending to God’s throne along with the sacrifice...
- So we pick up the story

Luke 1: 8 One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. 9 As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. 10 While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying. 11 While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. 12 Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. 13 But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.

- *they quit praying that prayer 20 years ago...God did not forget)*
- **The " Do not be afraid " of yet unanswered prayer** know this my friends every prayer will be answered, every wrong righted, every hurt healed...all the suffering will end...that is what the Christmas promise is all about...we give each other gifts...

What he had hoped for and given up hope on....God simply saw it as a timing issue! But there is more...

- Certainly Zechariah and Elizabeth had been praying not only for the birth and advent of the Messiah for their people, but they had also been praying for the birth and advent of a child of their own. God was about to answer both prayers through a faithful, married couple who were advanced in years—
- The last verse of the last book of the Old Testament prophesied that before the Messiah would
- the nation waited 400 hundred years for the fulfillment of this promise...Zechariah and Elizabeth waited many years for their prayer to be answered...you will wait on the timing of God also...

Luke 1:16 And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17 He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

*******The angel not only tells him he will have a son but what name to give him..**

- **John means "the LORD is gracious," and Jesus means "the LORD saves."** Both names were prescribed by God, not chosen by human parents.

- The last verse of the last book of the Old Testament prophesied that before the Messiah would come his immediate predecessor...would be a prophet with the power of Elijah...
- the nation waited 400 hundred years for the fulfillment of this promise...Zechariah and Elizabeth waited many years for their prayer to be answered...you will wait on the timing of God also...

Zechariah and Elizabeth most likely died sometime before John's adulthood, even perhaps during his formative years. If so, Zechariah and Elizabeth would never have seen the fullness of God's intended plan for their son, nor the impact he would have on the nation and world this side of heaven

While they both saw and experienced enough to be enormously grateful to God, the full implications and reason for their lives in God's hands awaited their arrival in Heaven.

And so as you go forward in faith remembering the persistent faith of this couple:

Always remember Zechariah and Elizabeth's reality as you journey through life with your unfulfilled longings. God never forgets a prayer and at the fullness of time...you will see the answer **We must wait for God to work in his way, in his time.**

END

- **Angels are also involved in God’s answering prayers**

Hebrews 1: ¹⁴ Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.

- **And demons try to thwart the will of God..but unsuccessfully**

^{2 Cor 2:7} No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. ⁸ But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. ⁹ That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

1 Kings 16:29-33 ⁹ Ahab son of Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of King Asa’s reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, even more than any of the kings before him. ³¹ And as though it were not enough to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal. ³² First Ahab built a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. ³³ Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.

Perhaps we need to pray the prayer of relinquishing...

- Not just the prayer to help you get out of something
- Not just the prayer to get through
- But the prayer of relinquishing the situation to the control of God.
- The submitting of our will to his direction
- It is a prayer of release with hope for our confidence is in God and His Character...He knows the right direction and has perfect timing ...we trust him..

Ephesians 3:20 If we know that our God is truly “Able to do Immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” Then we will pray great prayers and have the Faith to trust and expectantly wait for God’s sure answer!!

6. Sometimes the answer is delayed because Satan is so **entrenched** Matt 9:29 comes out by fasting and prayer Luke 8:30 Legion ... many demons

Eph 6:12 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Prayer is not meant to be incidental to the work of God! In all work for God...Prayer is the working power of all that God would do through His people.

Col 4:2 -4

1. **Verse 2** Devote you to prayer... Paul probably did more to advance the Gospel than anyone in History Besides writing Half the New Testament...yet his foundation was prayer.
2. **Verse 3-4** Asked them to pray for an open door... to see them and spreading the Gospel...He is in prison...no record of Him ever seeing them ... however His letters from that prison exist today as part of our Bible...Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon.

Arthur Mathews said...” The spiritual history of a mission or a church is written in its prayer life. What counts with God are not statistics but prayer depth and God’s presence and power in Lives, church service, and outreach? All our goal setting,

effective management techniques, and computerized administration will accomplish little unless empowered by mighty prayer.”

Remember:

1. Whatever gets you to busy for prayer time
2. whatever distracts you from Holy prevailing
3. Whatever robs you of hunger for God, for souls and prayer warfare is a hindrance to god and his Kingdom.

You cannot afford it personally and we cannot hope to expand the Lord’s kingdom without it. Matt 11:12 Forceful men...men who spiritually strive...Striving is done on our knees!!

There is no easier sin to commit then the sin of prayerlessness.

1. Prayerlessness proves that a person has little love for God...we demonstrate that by spending little time with Him
2. The prayer less person is more carnal than spiritual Zech 12:10 and Romans 8:26
3. Prayerlessness a sin of disobedience...1 Tim 2:1-2 Luke 10:2
4. Prayerlessness is a sin against our own spiritual life...How do you grow in grace without praying Luke 18:1 Hebrews 4:15-16
5. Prayerlessness is a sin against God 1 Sam 12:23

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But this is where we come to understand the power of God.....

There are two things about God which really impress me...

1. He never fails...
2. He is never afraid...

**you will find no scripture not one that says...God failed...or God was afraid!
Which mean that no matter the odds against anything God wants to happen...it will happen**

Here is what I will leave with you today....all your prayers are heard and will be answered....

We don’t pray understanding it’s power

Luke 5:6 Both of them were upright in the sight of God, **observing** all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.

- Luke informs us that Zechariah and Elizabeth were upright (“righteous” in several other translations) in God’s eyes. In this culture, that meant that they were behaviorally obedient in observing the Ten Commandments, as well as all the Levitical laws concerning diet, including all the feasts and festivals.
- **In describing Zechariah and Elizabeth this way, Luke is also telling us that God looked upon this couple with favor, not only because of their faithful behavior, but because their hearts were right in God’s sight as well.**
- Luke’s use of the present tense “observing” tells us that this couple consistently lived out this righteous life...in the mindset of Luke’s first-century readers, there is nothing unusual or unexpected in the unfolding of this story.
- So far it all fits with their understanding of how things work for “good” people.
- **GREAT EXPECTATIONS The only question is how many children, and more particularly, how many priestly sons might God bless them with?**
- **in their religious culture** You were either “righteous” or you were a “sinner.” You were either “in” or “out.” Therefore, it is no surprise that in this culture “barrenness was a woman’s and a family’s greatest misfortune.”an an indicator of being in sin and under the judgment of God...
- *And in defining their expectations for a family, they unknowingly set the stage for future disappointment...*

Often when we set our expectations, we also set the stage for our disappointments.

- Life seldom turns out like we thought or hoped it would. Thus we need to be people who hold our hopes and dreams loosely, not clutching them as if there is only one way they can be.
- **God is faithful, yet very unpredictable. As a result, we can comprehend only a small portion of what God is really doing in and with our lives. So it is best to avoid rigid expectations of how and when God should be doing things in and with our lives.**

Luke gives us insight into how Zechariah and Elizabeth handled this progressive accumulation of cultural disgrace. They simply persevered in being faithful.

*LK 1:8 **Once** (one time) when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen **by lot** (coincidence), according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And **when the time** for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.*

- **A Jewish priest was a minister of God who worked at the Temple managing its upkeep, teaching the people the Scriptures, and directing the worship services.**
- **Zechariah was a member of the Abijah division, on duty this particular week. Each morning a priest was to enter the Holy Place in the Temple and burn incense. This great honor could only be done once in a priest lifetime...**
- **Lots were cast to decide who would enter the sanctuary, and one day the lot fell to Zechariah.**
- **But what appeared to be chance was not by chance ... Zechariah was on duty and that he was chosen that day to enter the Holy Place—**

Incense was burned in the Temple twice daily. 9am before the morning sacrifice and 3pm after the evening sacrifice... By this time in Israel's history, the number of ordinary Levitical priests is estimated to be upwards of 20,000. For organizational purposes, the priesthood was divided into 24 divisions of approximately 850 priests each.

Each division was further separated into six family branches, or clans.¹⁹ Through rotating the Temple work among these 24 divisions, each division would be on duty for one week's service, then off for 23 weeks while the other priestly divisions served in their appointed order. While on duty, each of the family clans served for one day with all six clans joining together to serve on the Sabbath.²⁰

One of the obligations of each division's service was performing the four mandated daily offerings and sacrifices. This included the incense offering in the Holy Place which, because of its location so close to the Holy of Holies, was considered to be the most coveted service for a priest to carry out.

Since there were generally more priests in a division than might ever be able to perform the incense offering, a priest was allowed to serve once in his lifetime. As a result, a lot-casting system was established to allow God to select the priest He desired to honor with that service.

The lot-casting procedure was well prescribed. Those priests who had not been previously chosen in the family clan for this service would gather prior to the incense offering . There they would position themselves in a circle with the leader of the

family clan at the center. After required prayers, the leader approached a priest of his choosing in the circle and removed his headdress (turban). This act indicated where the lot counting would begin. As the headdress was being lifted, each of the priests in the circle simultaneously raised a hand in front of himself, pointing one finger upwards. The priest with the 187th finger was the one selected from the family clan to perform the incense offering that day.

After decades of participating in this process (some consider Zechariah to be sixty years old when Luke introduces us to him, Zechariah never gets selected. Sometimes the count ended just before him, and sometimes just after, but never with him.

- The selected priest would be told when to light the incense and afterward would pronounce a blessing on the people from the balcony
- When the people saw the smoke from the burning incense, they prayed. The smoke drifting heavenward symbolized their prayers ascending to God's throne along with the sacrifice...
- finally as an old man he gets selected...

LK 1:11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. (quit praying that prayer 20 years ago...God did not forget) Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.

- Know it is in the silent years...where obedience is taught practiced and matured...
- Persevere...they know that life is always in a preparation mode...a journey
- Interrupted by arriving at destinations...yet to begin the journey again

*****Super important

- This is not only Zechariah and Elizabeth's prayer that the angel mentions in John 1:13—this is also the prayer that the people of God had been praying for ages. Certainly Zechariah and Elizabeth had been praying not only for the birth and advent of the Messiah for their people, but they had also been praying for the birth and advent of a child of their own. God was about to answer both prayers through a faithful, married couple who were advanced in years—just as Abraham and Sarah had been so long before. We ask, "Why God, why?" a lot.

Seems like even when we put our faith in God's plan, we still say, "When God When?"

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- God makes us wait. Things happen in God's time—not in our own.
- Simeon is told to sit in front of the temple and wait, because eventually he will see the baby born to be the Messiah.
- Elizabeth and Sarah had to wait to have children until they were old women. Can you imagine running after a five-year-old when you're one hundred?

The " Do not be afraid " of unanswered prayer: " *Luke 1:13* ***But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.***

know this my friends every prayer will be answered, every wrong righted, every hurt healed...all the suffering will end...that is what the Christmas promise is all about...we give each other gifts...

God gives us the gift of his promise to heal us to answer our prayers, to bring justice... however the timing and circumstances are in his control...but his promise to do it gives us the courage to face anything and go through it... knowing he has a timing for everything

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What he had hoped for and given up hope on....God simply saw it as a timing issue!

- He will be filled by the Holy Spirit from Birth...He will be connected to God from birth...
- He will be a joy to you! And you will be *delighted* (enjoy, enchanted by) by him
- He will never have a drinking problem

*******The angel not only tells him he will have a son but what name to give him..**

➤ **John means "the LORD is gracious," and Jesus means "the LORD saves."** Both names were prescribed by God, not chosen by human parents.

➤ John was set apart for special service to God.

MAL 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet *Elijah* before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the

hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

- The last verse of the last book of the Old Testament prophesied that before the Messiah would come his immediate predecessor...would be a prophet with the power of Elijah...
- the nation waited 400 hundred years for the fulfillment of this promise...Zechariah and Elizabeth waited many years for their prayer to be answered...you will wait on the timing of God also...

Zechariah and Elizabeth most likely died sometime before John's adulthood, even perhaps during his formative years. If so, Zechariah and Elizabeth would never have seen the fullness of God's intended plan for their son, nor the impact he would have on the nation

While they both saw and experienced enough to be enormously grateful to God, the full implications and reason for their lives in God's hands awaited their arrival in Heaven. Only then would the culmination of their providential purpose be fully revealed to them. And so as you go forward in faith remembering the persistent faith of this couple:

May God grant you daily strength to walk blamelessly before Him while you wait. May you wait expectantly, but without any sense of rigid expectations, for the gracious glimpses and sovereign surprises He has in His perfect plan for you.

May you live each day knowing your life is a case history being written by God's hand to glorify Him and encourage the faith of others.

May you become a practicing historian of your own life always remembering both who God is and what He has already done for you.

And may you never forget that "nothing is impossible with God."

Always remember Zechariah and Elizabeth's reality as you journey through life with your unfulfilled longings. God never forgets a prayer and at the fullness of time...you will see the answer end here

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¹⁶ Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the

fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous (from the heart)--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

- "Angels are spirit beings who live in God's presence and do his will. Here, Gabriel (1:19) delivered a special message to Zechariah. This was not a dream or a vision. The angel appeared in visible form and spoke audible words to the priest.
- God had heard his prayer for a son...why the delay in answering?...once past the childbearing age ...spiritual enemies would not be looking at you any more...

God worked in an "impossible" situation—Zechariah's wife was barren—to bring about the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

- If we want to have our prayers answered, we must be open to what God can do in impossible situations.
- And we must wait for God to work in his way, in his time.

Disillusionment prayers

- Scripture does not use the term disillusioned, but there are many examples of people in scripture whose symptoms attitudes and feelings parallel ours....that gives me some hope!

And how about Elijah when exhausted and disillusioned after a powerful time of victory in ministry made these statements... ..

1KI 19: 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

- **here is a guy who destroyed four hundred false prophets for God!!!... and apparently no one really cared, not even God ...it gained him no popularity... it actually did the opposite and put him on the Kings most wanted list**
- **I thought the outcome would be different**
- **completely disillusioned.....i am in the desert... I have had enough...take me out**
- **and a little motive has shown thru...A little bit of pride revealed..."I'm no better than my ancestors" which translated means...I thought I was better!**
- **Forty days into his disillusionment...a lot of self talk has been taking place... he comes to this conclusion...**

1KI 19: 10 ¹⁰ Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

I have been a good prophet... totally sold out for you...

- **not like your people...who not only reject you they kill your prophets...**
- **apparently you don't appreciate me, and they don't appreciate me, and no one helps me.... in fact they even are trying to kill me...**
- **I am the only one who works hard for you...I am all alone... what a waste of time and energy...all for nothing. Now that's a major funk!**
- **I am completely disillusioned...I have certainly not received the results I worked so hard for...**

19 When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ²So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them."

³Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

⁵Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" ⁶He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

⁷Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

⁸So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, ^(S) the mountain of God. ⁹There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

¹¹"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the

earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Elijah climbed up on top of Mount Horeb to hear the voice of God, but the voice did not come in a mighty wind, earthquake, or fire, but in the sound of a low whisper ([1 Kings 19:12](#)). We have been scripted to believe we can only encounter God in big, loud, dramatic experiences. The truth is we more often encounter God in silence when our hearts and minds quiet their frenzied chattering. If prayer is about carving space out in our day to be attentive to the presence of God, then our times of prayer require moments of intentional silence where we do not speak, moments when we sit quietly. Maybe God speaks to us and maybe God doesn't, but a regular habit of silence puts us in a place where we are alert and attuned to the Spirit of God.

[A regular habit of silence puts us in a place where we are alert and attuned to the Spirit of God.](#)

And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied again, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

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Author and seminary professor Bruce Demareset noted that the average Christian spends five minutes a day in prayer and the average pastor seven.

[Not what is on Gods heart which is forming a people for Himself to declare His Praise Isa 43:19 & 21?](#)

1. we live in a prayerless success-oriented culture
2. many grew up in a prayerless church environment
3. many of us battle a prayerless personal life
4. many don't believe prayer really changes much
5. Many of us don't know enough about God's Word to know what is on His Heart!
6. Prayer.....to God.....About someone or something
- 7.

8. God speaks to our heart...we pray to God about it...God moves to answer our prayer...according to His will John 15:7
- 9.
10. Wishing... about someone/something....no God, no power
- 11.
12. Good Luck...wishing good about something....no God...absolutely no power
- 13.
14. Charms/trinkets? Rabbits foot etc No God no power
- 15.
16. Buddha's, tarot cards, palm reading, astrology... no God...actually asking demons to help you....they actually work against you!!
- 17.

- John 15:7-8

1. His word in us...we pray it, because it is a part of us
2. Brings the Father Glory
3. Bears fruit...power and effective ...produces
4. Shows us as His disciples...

Base your Prayers on The Promises of God's word

One must first be righteous with God, as explained in the pattern of prayer given in Luke 11:2-4.

1. Family relationship "Father"
2. Honoring God's name and position
3. first priority of prayer...seeking God's kingdom to come
4. then our daily needs
5. remembering our need of forgiveness
6. forgiving other in light and knowledge of our being forgiven
7. Asking the Lord to protect us from giving into temptation.

During the Dark days of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln was quoted as saying " I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I have no where else to go."

James 5:16 says it is also effective!

It is effective because God has all power and therefore everyone and everything must submit to His will.

The most effective person is the one that:

1. knows everything
2. made everything
3. has power over everything
4. To whom nothing is impossible....That is God!

Psalm 127: 1Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted.

Benjamin Franklin prayed for the emerging nation of the United States and wrote this: I have lived a long time and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without His aid. We have been assured in the Scripture that "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe that without his concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better then the builders of Babel. Prayerfully build all things!