

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests
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Unexpected Power – Part III

By Zachary Page

[If you missed part I and II of Zac's testimony, please see the last two week's prayer blogs.]

As I entered back into the flow of normal pastoral ministry after my seminary experience, I knew I could not go back to the way things had been before. Five years later, I no longer set the clock for six hours. But I have found that, just like George Müller, I cannot leave His presence until I am truly “happy in God Himself.” For me, this usually takes at least three hours, sometimes more. I think it is probably because my heart is harder than most.

You see, I expected power to come from a closer connection with God. But I am not sure what I expected this to look like. I think I expected to see phenomenal results in my pastoring. I hoped to see thousands flocking to my church. I wanted the miracles found in the book of Acts to be repeated in my ministry. And I believe God longs to do these things among us. However, what has taken place has been more valuable, and I believe actually more powerful, than any of these things.

As I have spent time in God's presence day after day, fixing my eyes on His beauty, I have come to recognize more and more of the ugliness of my own heart. I can remember, time after time, where I have been deeply convicted about how my actions have hurt others. I began to see how my anger and frustration toward others, even when they were making mistakes, was so incredibly un-Christlike. Rather than bringing the healing that always attends Christ's actions, my leadership in ministry had created wounds in hearts.

I began to see how my attitudes toward my wife had been selfish; I began to long to be a better husband. For example, because of my extreme competitiveness, my wife was afraid to have me play games with her family. She would have to step carefully, or help others step carefully, around saying things that might provoke me because of my sensitive pride. I was reminded of how my antics in high school and college had misrepresented God in so many ways. But all of this, although it may sound painful, was so incredibly healing. Like a doctor digging the gravel out of an infected wound, God was applying His scalpel to my heart in ways that brought deeper repentance, humility, and ultimately joy. The phone calls and messages to those I had mistreated were not easy, but the peace that always came in knowing I had done my best to make wrongs right was delightful.

Day by day, as I continue to fix my eyes on Jesus, it becomes clearer and clearer to me that what makes God powerful is that He “is love” (1 John 4:8). And the greatest possible power in my ministry comes from allowing Him to exchange my hard heart for a soft one (Ezek. 36:26), creating in me a clean heart that beats in unison with His (Ps. 51:10). Without this,

my preaching is just “a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1), and despite all of my knowledge, faith, miracle-working, and giving, “I am nothing” (v. 2). I find that the longer I stay in God’s presence, surrendering everything and asking Him to change specific areas where He reveals that I am totally unlike Christ, the more it unleashes His power to chisel away at those abrasive spots in my character.

I still struggle with feelings of inadequacy. I still question why I do not see greater results. But God is teaching me to use these feelings as fuel for seeking a more intimate relationship with Him. This is the only thing that truly satisfies anyway. And after all, it is only as I abide in Him that I will bear “much fruit” (John 15:5). There is incredible peace here. “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:6, 7).

HELPFUL TIPS I’VE LEARNED FOR DELIGHTING IN GOD

1. Ask God to wake you up as early as He wants, to spend time with Him (Isa. 50:4).
2. Ask God to cause you to hear His lovingkindness (Ps. 143:8) and see His beauty (Ps. 27:4).
3. Ask God to search your heart, convicting you of any sin (Ps. 139:23, 24).
4. Ask God to create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you (Ps. 51:10).
5. Ask God to open your eyes to see “wondrous things” from His law (Ps. 119:18).
6. Ask God what is on His heart for you today (Ps. 143:10).
7. Take time to allow Him to answer (Ps. 46:10).

Zachary Page is pastor at Templeton Hills SDA Church, in Templeton, California. He and his wife, Leah, have been married 13 years and are enjoying life and ministry together with their twin two-year-old daughters. This testimony was originally featured in Ministry Magazine.

World Church Prayer Requests

April 30 – May 6, 2021

- Pray for our brother’s and sisters in India who are currently being hit by a widespread wave of COVID. They are in urgent need of miracles as hospitals are running out of beds and oxygen and many are dying.
- Pray for those struggling with the Corona virus pandemic in Brazil, and other South American countries. Pray for God to intervene, and lives to be spared. Pray especially for protection in the midst of the crisis for church members.
- Pray for God’s leading in all the logistics for the online General Conference Camp meeting that is being planned for May 19-23, 2021. Pray for God’s blessings on all the meetings and on all the seminars that are being planned. Anyone can attend!
- Pray for God’s Spirit to be poured out on the online prayer room that will be open 24 hours a day during the General Conference Camp meeting, May 19-23, 2021. To register for free, for this event, visit: <https://www.campmeeting.com>