

MOVING THE MOUNTAIN



In each of our lives there's at least one person we're quite troubled about. Things are not going well with them ... we're worried. And so we pray. Yet even as we pray for this person we seem to find it almost im-possible to really expect any change. It's as if all we're really doing is paying our respects to this person before God.

We wish the mountain would move ... yet we just know it won't.

And, if we're having such trouble expecting anything from God concerning this person that we're really worried about, what's the use of the prayers we pray for people only because we promised them we'd pray for them? or because we feel we should?

We know that

- praying for people has to be the foundation of all ministry to others,
 - praying for people is the basic way we get under the yoke with Jesus who lives to make intercession,
-but we just can't seem to get into it.

And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:22-24)

There are two mountains we have to move:

1. The ***mountain*** of our own inadequacy.
2. The mountain of some problem in the life of another person ... which as far as we can tell, is hindering God's purpose in them and blocking the flow of life in the body or in the world.

Now we have no business messing with the mountain of our brother's problem unless we are also seriously dealing with the mountain of our own inadequacy.

Daily we need to confess our inadequacy to the Father and come to him for bread.

... "A friend of mine has come on a journey and I have nothing to set before him."

..."There is no way I can help these people who come to me, Lord, unless you refresh me again with the life of the Holy Spirit."

Luke 11 has to be our constant dwelling place.

"And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Luke 11:9-13



But there's something wrong with our conception of the Kingdom if the only mountain we're ever trying to move is the mountain of our own inadequacy.

"Lord, help me.... give me bread anoint me with your Spirit."

Surely we should reach a point where this continuous cry for more of the Spirit becomes our second nature – like breathing or eating – and we start becoming genuinely concerned about our sister's or brother's need...

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" in their lives.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." And he said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." He said, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you three times deny that you know me."

Luke 22:31-34

The weakness in Peter's life was a mountain our Lord had to move. He could see Peter heading for a stumble. Words of warning were doing no good ... Peter wasn't listening.

The one effective thing Jesus could do for this hardheaded disciple was pray.

Notice Jesus doesn't gossip about Peter's weakness, doesn't complain about it. In fact, Jesus does the opposite. He charges this weak disciple, at one of the weakest moments of his life, with responsibility for his brothers who aren't as weak as he is.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have (all of) you that he might sift you as wheat (the "you" here is in the plural), but I have prayed for you (singular) that your faith may not fail. And when you are turned again, strengthen your brethren."

"but I've prayed for you, Simon,".....

Jesus prayed for Peter

with faith,

with hope,

with love.



Not some cold mechanical routine where Jesus mumbles the magic words to the Father and the results come out at the other end of the prayer machine!

It's living prayer. Jesus raises Peter, with all his vanity and bluster and cowardice, up before the Father, and surrounds Peter before the Father with three things:

Jesus *surrounds* Peter with faith

.... believes the Father for Peter. He takes the mountain of Peter's unstable nature and removes it and casts it into the sea.

What good does it do to pray for someone if we are un-willing to believe the mountain will move?

--- God help us to pray with faith!

"Lord God, I've judged this brother long enough. I've gossiped about this sister in too many ways. I repent of my attitude."

And now, instead of judging and gossiping I look at this problem which appears to be plaguing their life and command it to be taken up and cast into the sea.

"I believe, before your throne, for their healing and freedom in this matter!"

Then, as Jesus prays for Peter he *surrounds* him with hope.

He looks forward in hope to the day when Peter will be out of this valley of vanity and standing on solid rock where the mountain once was.

"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you've turned again

... not "if" but "when"...**strengthen your brothers."**



Yet how often our prayers for brothers and sisters are lacking in hope even as we pray for them.

- We picture them always trapped by their problem.
- We see them hemmed in by the mountain.

What a difference it makes when we pray for others in hope – when we look beyond their present bondage to the freedom won for them by the blood of the Lamb.

- You're worried about your child,
- You're burdened for your spouse, your friend,
- You're trying to pray for an enemy who does you nothing but harm.

Hope in God!

Know that a door of some kind will open!

God deliver us from our lack of hope when we're praying for others.

God give us vision to begin to see their conversion, their healing, the softening of their hearts, the quieting of their troubled spirits,

---the change.

Picture that person standing free before God ... **hope!**

And finally, as Jesus prays for Peter, he *surrounds* him with love

...it was a love which was on its way to a cross to die for Peter as if only for Peter, taking Peter's sin upon himself ... suffering ... carrying Peter's sin down into the grave ... lifting Peter up out of death into life.

It was a love for Peter which held on to Peter and wouldn't let go.

If I'm really praying for a person with the love of God it must mean that I am taking that person's burden. In a mystery which links us to the Lord, we take that person's....problem, pain, sin, hardness of heart....and before the living God, in the name of his Son, we get under that burden *and lift*.

Many times this praying for someone with love means that I begin to help in specific ways.

- If it's a financial problem, I share what I have.
- If it's a sickness or loneliness, the very least I can do is visit them.
- If I'm praying for their bad temper, I may have to experience what it's like to bear the receiving end of that temper.

And if it should be that while I'm trying to pray for this person with the love of God I suddenly remember that I'm still carrying a grudge against someone else, I need to stop right where I am and lay aside this grudge.

We're never going to see the mountain move for our friend, our child, if we don't get rid of the grudge.

And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, what-ever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when-ever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Mark 11:22-25

Jesus moved Peter's mountain.....

"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, And when you've turned again, strengthen your brethren."

Peter was turned again and he did strengthen his brethren.

And we will move mountains too – mountains which up to now we resigned ourselves to accepting and never really expected any change.

People we may have been praying for for years but somehow without faith, without hope, without love.

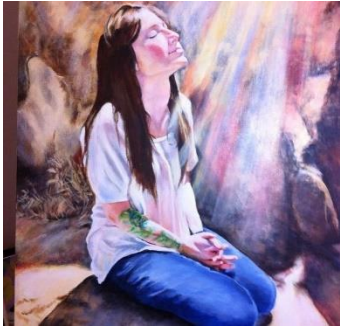
Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:18-20

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; and pray for us also, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:2-4

When we pray for other people, we're not just paying our respects to them before God,



- we're moving mountains!
- we're effecting change,
- we're clearing obstacles out of their way,
- we're breaking the chains of Satan that hold them immobile,
- we're driving clouds away from above them so that the light can shine in,
- we're opening springs of living water before their feet.

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Mark 11:22-24

May God get us beyond mechanical, faithless, hopeless, loveless prayer....

... and help us to pray for each other, and for others, as our Lord prayed for Peter.

God help us to begin moving mountains!



Prayer- Draw us so close to you Holy Lord that the mountains in our lives are cast into the sea. Move our hearts so we can rise up with the faith, the hope, and the love that will move the mountains in the lives of those we pray for. Merciful Lord, deliver us from our own lack of hope. Give us the vision to see the change you call them to, to see them free and alive in you. Help us to love them enough to get under their burdens and truly lift them before you. Break the power of evil, the plans of Satan in their lives. Shine light into their darkness, Pour your living water into their lives. We believe, we believe you can do all things.

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