

Melva's Corner



"2008" Ready To Pray

Central Truth: When Jesus became our Mediator, He put all other mediators out of business.

Prayer is a powerful weapon. But, there is a right and a wrong way to pray. Just like any powerful weapon, without the proper instruction, it may be useless and even dangerous.

Wrong prayer is not only ineffective, it can also release the power of the devil. I've experienced this firsthand.

As we approach the new year, millions of Christians will be praying for God to move in our nation. Typically, they will be pleading with what they think is an angry God to turn from His impending judgment and have mercy. That's wrong praying. And wrong praying can open the door to wrong results.

There is a right way to pray for our nation. But first, we need to recognize that God isn't angry at us. His mercy under the New Covenant is extended to all man not the judgment we read about in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God's punishment was poured out on individuals and entire nations. In the New Testament, God's judgment was poured out on Jesus. Now, God's mercy and grace are ours.

Through His mercy, we avoid getting the bad things we deserve and through His grace, we receive the good things we don't deserve. The good news of the Gospel is that we don't get what we deserve, we get what we believe. Jesus has made all that God is and has, available to us, and it is through faith that we access that grace (Romans 5:2).

So, the typical Christian who is making intercession to an angry God, asking Him to turn from His fierce wrath is the wrong way to pray. I can just hear someone say, "But that's exactly what

people did in the Old Testament!" That's true, but there is a major difference between the Old and New Covenant. That difference is Jesus. Jesus has forever changed the way we approach God and how we appropriate His favor.

Let's look at an Old Testament example of intercession that will be used by many as the benchmark for the way they should pray for our nation in 2008. Moses was pleading with God for the nation of Israel. The children of Israel molded a golden calf and had an orgy as they worshiped it. The Lord became so angry that He told Moses he would destroy those people and make a new nation through Moses' seed. Moses told the Lord in **Exodus 32:12, "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people."**

It's amazing that a mere human being had the audacity to speak to God this way! What's even more amazing is that God allowed Moses speak to Him this way and actually repented (Exodus 32:14). This example will be held up all across this land as the standard we are supposed to emulate.

However, this is not the way that we, as New Testament believers, should approach God. Galatians 3:19 refers to Moses as a mediator. The dictionary defines a mediator as "someone who seeks to resolve differences between two or more conflicting parties." It was appropriate for Moses to act as a mediator because Jesus had not yet come and the atonement for man's sins had not yet been made. God and man were not reconciled.

But now, because of Jesus, God has been reconciled to man. All that is left for man is to receive that reconciliation and that should be our message (II Corinthians 5:19-20). To approach God as an adversary who is ready to destroy us is to approach God without Jesus. It doesn't honor the mediation that Jesus purchased. **I Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."**

When Jesus became our Mediator, He put all other mediators out of business. In the days of Moses, it was appropriate and necessary for him to act as a mediator and intercede for his nation, pleading with God to turn from His wrath. Why, because Jesus had not yet come and taken His place as the only Mediator. Now that Jesus has entered the scene and paid for the sins of the whole world, it is wrong to continue to pray the

way Moses did. It's against everything Christ accomplished. In other words, it is anti-Christ. I know those words are strong, but they are the truth.

How then should a New Testament believer intercede for their nation? Start by praising God for what He has already accomplished through Jesus. Then take your place in what Christ has already done, and use your authority as a believer to speak God's blessing over your nation instead of the curses that Christians so often pronounce. It's really that simple. There is tremendous authority given to us if we will use it and there is awesome power in our blessing.

Before I learned these truths, I used to say that God would have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah if He didn't judge America because we are just as deserving of judgment as they were. But now that I know the truth, I say, "If God does judge America, He will have to apologize to Jesus because Jesus satisfied God's demands of justice."

That doesn't mean that America is safe from the consequences of continuing on its current path. God won't judge America; He has already judged Jesus on our behalf. But the farther we walk away from the Lord, the farther we get away from His protection. God won't force Himself or His blessings on us. We have to pursue them and obtain them through faith (the God kind of faith). Without a change in the hearts of people and a change in the greed associated with idol worship, we will forsake our own mercies (Jonah 2:8) and reap death (transition) instead of life (Romans 6:16).

I encourage you to be a New Testament Intercessor in 2008. Honor Jesus by approaching a loving God who has already made every provision for the revival this nation so desperately needs. Speak words of faith that release the goodness Jesus has so graciously provided. And then, do your part in sharing this good news with your friends and neighbors.

Most of America will be praying for a move of God in the new year, but I will be praying for a move of God's people. God has already done His part. It's up to us to take this good news to the world. Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good will toward man.

Scriptural References:

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 2:5)