

THE REACH

filtering everyday life through the word of God

In our profession things change all the time. What seems feasible to an administrator may bring on more problems for the educator. Often, when situations like this come up quickly, we minimize the fact that God can change the minds and hearts of those in charge. However, we must never underestimate what God can do when we devote ourselves to prayer.

Read James 5:16.

“IS PRAYER YOUR
STEERING WHEEL OR
YOUR SPARE TIRE?”
CORRIE TEN BOOM

- Can you share a recent example of how *fervent* prayer got you to the other side of a difficult situation?

“TRUE PRAYER IS A
WAY OF LIFE,
NOT JUST FOR EMERGENCY.
MAKE IT A HABIT,
AND WHEN THE NEED ARISES
YOU WILL BE IN PRACTICE.”
BILLY GRAHAM

Read Esther 5:1-4. This portion of Esther’s story is the outcome of intense, fervent prayer. Mordecai, her cousin, advised her to go to the king *unsummoned* regarding the proclamation of the destruction of the Jews. Through prayer, Esther’s fear was replaced with courage to do so, even though the law stated that anyone who approached the king without an invitation would be put to death. However, when King Xerxes saw her, his mind and heart changed and he accepted her by extending his golden scepter. **Read Prov. 21:1.** This word picture regarding a pagan king, (such as King Xerxes), involves water.

When water is running through a canal, or gutter system, it can be pushed or changed to go in a different direction. In Esther’s story, God pushed and changed the heart of King Xerxes to accept and listen to her request, rather than kill her. God’s providence is like that! While our daily lives filter through his hands, he bends and changes our hearts and desires, as well as the hearts of those around us to accomplish his purpose.

“PRAYER IS NOT ASKING.
PRAYER IS PUTTING ONESELF
INTO THE HANDS OF GOD,
AND LISTENING TO HIS VOICE
IN THE DEPTH OF OUR HEARTS.”
MOTHER TERESA

- Can you share an example of when you had a heart change, or a desire change, diverting you into God’s will? Maybe this was regarding a person, a new location, or perhaps a job situation.

“PRAYER LAYS HOLD OF
GOD’S PLAN AND BECOMES
THE LINK BETWEEN HIS WILL AND
ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT ON EARTH.”
ELISABETH ELLIOT

To conclude Esther’s story, **Read Esther 9:20-28.** This annual feast (known as “Purim,” meaning “lots”) celebrated God’s deliverance and gift of rest that was provided as a result of Queen Esther and her courage and obedience! The Jewish nation was saved from persecution and death. Therefore, Purim is a joyous festival commemorating the survival of the Jews.

Hone in on the final phrase of verse 28. *Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among the Jews.* Do you ever wonder if God's word *really* stands the test of time? Well, Purim has! The celebration has not escaped a generation since the 5th century BC! Ask any Jewish person and they will relate their devotion to this cherished, annual event. (Incidentally, the book of Esther is read during the celebration of Purim with cheering and booing at the names of the heroes and villains.)

Let's circle back to the most sacred, annual Christian celebration... EASTER. **Re-read Esther 5:1.** *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes.* This is the turning point of Esther's story (her life, really), as well as a significant "foreshadowing" of Jesus Christ.

During three days of prayer and fasting Esther 'died to herself,' so that others could live! Following that time, Esther emerged from 'death to herself,' proclaiming her new identity.... She took off the old (clothes of weeping and mourning) and put on the new (clothes of royal robes). **Read 2 Cor. 5:17.**

"OUR LORD HAS WRITTEN
THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION,
NOT IN BOOKS ALONE, BUT IN
EVERY LEAF IN SPRINGTIME."
MARTIN LUTHER

- I put my faith in Jesus Christ as a child. Since then, "taking off the old and putting on the new," has occurred in both small and large portions of maturity. Regardless, think about your most recent turning point, or, defining moment when you turned away from something (ie. fear, anger, disappointment), and added a fresh garment of identity in Jesus Christ.

"IF THE RESURRECTION IS TRUE,
THEN EVERYTHING'S
GOING TO BE ALRIGHT."
TIM KELLER

To further spotlight our holy season of Easter, **Read Hosea 6:1-2.** Like Esther's story, clearly, this is a foreshadowing of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is said in the Bible that the resurrection would happen *according to the Scripture*, both Old and New Testaments. For all the prophets of the Bible testified of the *sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.*

Hosea's message, (similar to Esther's), reads clear, RETURN! Stop following after foreign gods and serving pagan kings. This behavior will bring on destruction! But the Lord, a skillful surgeon with a tender hand, binds up the broken bone and bleeding wound. THIS is the power of God, he permits tearing, (which can look like fear, disappointment, pain, etc.), while performing healing. **Job 5:18** *"For he bruises, but he binds up; he wounds, but his hands make whole."*

"THE DEVIL, DARKNESS, AND DEATH
MAY SWAGGER AND BOAST,
THE PANGS OF LIFE WILL STING
FOR A WHILE LONGER, BUT
DON'T WORRY; THE FORCES OF
EVIL ARE BREATHING THEIR LAST.
NOT TO WORRY...HE IS RISEN!"
CHUCK SWINDOLL