

It is so refreshing not to always be praying for the crisis before us. We can pray these last prayers happily, confidently, *triumphantly*, like the great allies of God we are.

We can pray until that day comes when every prayer will be an immediate incarnation, becoming reality even as we speak it, like creation became reality as God spoke it. For we *are* his sons and daughters, and he is maturing us to love all that he loves, and to do all that he does. To move mountains, and more.

Let us pray.  
Jesus keep me focused on you and your goal for life. Thank you that you have won. That

you have defeated sin, death and the devil and in you we have life, forgiveness, and salvation. Thank you that we know you and can walk confidently with you, living out your passion for life, in your authority. Jesus we rejoice in knowing you come daily into our lives; we look forward expectantly for your return. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

5 November 2017

## MOVING MOUNTAINS

### Week 8: Holding the Heart in Unanswered Prayer



Today we come to the conclusion of our series on prayer looking at the theme; 'Holding the Heart in Unanswered Prayer'. Not all our prayers get the result we expected or wanted. Some seem to go unanswered.

Today I'll share what John Eldredge writes in his book 'Moving Mountains'. He first urges us to 'guard our hearts' so that we don't give way to defeat or despair.

He urges us to be very careful how we interpret 'unanswered prayer'. For our hearts can be so vulnerable in these moments. The conclusions come rushing in like; God isn't listening; he doesn't care, I'm not faithful enough, prayer doesn't really work.

Don't fall for these lies. Don't let your heart go there! Rather, ask Jesus

to help you interpret what is going on. Pray; Jesus – catch my heart. Catch my heart, Lord. Help me interpret what is going on here. Beware of those nasty soul-killing agreements.

Disappointment is real, and the best thing to do is invite Jesus into our disappointment. Invite him in to love us. Whether you're lead to cry or grieve, or rant and rave, invite Jesus into the midst of it all. And Jesus will come, for he never betrays us.

Sometimes we many need to rest from our persistent prayer, asking Jesus and following his lead that we find rest and are better placed to hear what Jesus is doing. There are times to let it go. As you stay close to Jesus, he will let you know what to do

It is good to remember that we only see part of

the whole picture. At times the longing for Eden rises within us giving us the desire to see heaven on earth here and now, and that distorts our perception on life.

The apostle Paul saw some pretty staggering answers to prayer as he fought for the beachhead that was early Christianity. He healed people; he cast out demons; he brought salvation to thousands; he raised the dead. But he was also stoned and left for dead; he was shipwrecked three times; five times he received the 'thirty-nine lashes' (once was supposed to kill a man); he faced sleepless nights; he knew exposure, hunger, and cold. And remember – *all of heaven was committed to this man being successful*. His life was magnificent, powerful, triumphant. But no, Paul did not try

and make his life like retirement in Hawaii. He knew there is only one paradise – and we’re not there yet.

How do you reconcile yourself to the partial view we have?

To keep things in perspective we need to stay focused on the goal of life. The maturity we are being grown into is not found in a life free from affliction. There is something even greater than happiness, something far higher God has for us.

The goal of human existence is union with God, an absolute union of heart, soul, mind, and strength, the union Jesus knew with his Father: ‘I and the Father are one’ (John 10:30). God is weaning us to the place we will be able to say like David, ‘Your love is better than life’ (Psalm 63:3). To truly and actually believe in the marrow of our bones that God’s love surpasses anything this world has to offer. To

find Jesus Christ as our absolute all-in-all. To be able to say with Paul, ‘For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain’ (Phil. 1:21)

Yes, our maturity certainly involves doing the things Jesus did. Healing and all, but that maturity also involves becoming like him in the transformation of

our character. It involves holiness – loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Being willing to suffer the loss of everything for him. Choosing Jesus in the midst of suffering. Having the character of Jesus within us.

And how does God shape our character? We hate the answer, but we know it to be true: affliction. In the letter of Hebrews we read; ‘Jesus learned obedience through what he suffered, he was

perfected through his suffering.’ (Heb. 5:7-9)

In the letter of Hebrews Paul writes; “these saints were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God has planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:33-40)

So don’t miss the goal of life, which isn’t unending breakthroughs, but something far more beautiful and everlasting – the beauty of Jesus Christ, which your Father is committed to forming in you: “God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the life of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in Jesus.” (Romans 8:29 MSG)

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### The goal: Union with God.

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What may appear to be unanswered prayer doesn’t mean God hasn’t heard and acted to mature us, to grow us up into Jesus. He’s got his goal in mind and is working towards it. His goal is to grow you to maturity as his loved child. And part of that growth happens when we go through times of suffering, or lose, or just not knowing what is going on but simply trusting in Jesus as we go through those difficult times.

John Eldredge finishes his book; Moving Mountains, reminding us of the hope we have. The hope we have is that in Jesus life wins. Just as we must fix our eyes on Jesus when we pray, we must also fix our hearts on this one undeniable truth: life will win. When you know that unending joy is about to be yours, you live with such an unshakable confidence it will almost be a swagger. You can pray boldly, without fear, knowing that, “If this doesn’t work now, it will work

totally and completely very soon.” We can have that kingdom attitude of the prophet Daniel’s friends, who said, ‘God is able to deliver, and he will deliver. But if not... we will not lose heart.’

Remember Jesus hasn’t come to do a few home owner renovations; he’s come to change us from

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### Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

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the heart. He will be making all things new; and that begins with trust in him. If our hearts aren’t renewed in Jesus, nothing has changed. Jesus gaol isn’t to leave us trapped in a world without any pain or suffering but with no purpose, with no acceptance by Father, with not passionate love of Spirit, or being able to walk through the cool of the garden with Jesus.

So the last prayer in the bible points us to the

wonderful return of Jesus; “He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!’” (Rev. 22:20 NLT).

In the book of Acts we are reminded; “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people... before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:17,20-21).

“Pour out your Spirit, Jesus!” We pray for one last great harvest, that’s the focus of all our prayers ultimately. Answers to healing prayer and the like simply point forward to that great day of Jesus return. They point to Jesus as our Saviour, as our LORD and King, the one we trust with our lives, even when we can’t make heads nor tails of life. We trust him, we trust Jesus.