

Faith Is Action

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In This Issue:

THE POWER OF ONE PRAYING MAN



One saint of God who will pray with the Spirit is more powerful and invincible than a great army of mighty men! This dynamic truth is wonderfully illustrated by one of my favorite accounts of Israel's triumphs over her enemy: The story of Elisha's comical victory over the mighty Syrian army in **2 Kings 6 & 7**. Once again the Syrians sought to bring Israel into bondage, but there was *one praying man* in the camp of Israel—one man of God in the land who had not forgotten how to pray—who knew how to touch the throne of God, and whom *God answered!*

The enemy and death were all around. Men's hearts were failing them with fear; sudden destruction seemed imminent as the terror of war filled the land. But in the midst of it all, God had a prophet, God had a man who did not faint, but who began

to *pray*, and God heard him and used him to bring deliverance to the children of Israel!

Don't Lose Heart!

What we can do when we pray! Jesus said, "*Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (Lk.18:1). In other words, if you don't pray, I don't care how strong you are spiritually, you will faint, and this term in the Greek means "*to lose heart—to give up.*" No matter what you are up against, *prayer will give you the victory!* Prayer made Elisha more powerful than the mighty Syrian army, and prayer will make the child of God more powerful and mightier than all the devils and satanic forces in the universe! If you will pray and not lose heart, God will give you the victory!

I can just picture Israel as they were surrounded and intimidated by

THE POWER OF ONE PRAYING MAN

BY R.G. HARDY



what was the greatest army in the world of that day. They were fearful and facing defeat, but what they were to soon find out was that God had *one praying man* in the camp, who knew how to intercede for His people. The Syrians began to attack Israel, and the old prophet *began to pray!*

As a result, again and again, Israel was able to slip out of every ambush that the enemy had plotted against her. Each time that the Syrian military would plan an attack against her at a certain time and certain place, Israel would successfully evade them. Finally, the king of Syria stopped all attacks against Israel and suspended all battle plans in order to call an emergency conference of all his generals. He suspected that there was a traitor in their midst.

Having summoned them all to a private meeting, the king spoke, “Generals, we are here to find out which of you is on *Israel’s side*, because every time we get together and plan out our strategy to attack them in secret, they seem to disappear right from under our noses! Now, I want to know *who is giving us away?*”

One Praying Prophet

Then one of his servants answered, “*None my Lord, O king: but Elisha the prophet that is in Israel. None of us are spies, but there is a praying man, a prophet of God in Israel, and when he goes into his prayer closet, God speaks to him, and what you whisper in secret in your*

bedchamber, God tells him in his ear what you are going to do” (Paraphrase 2 Kings 6:8-12).

(I’ll tell you what, Child of God, if you will go into your closet and pray; if you will seek God and not faint in the battle, God will whisper in your ear the strategies of the enemy! He will lead you right around the pitfalls and snares of the wicked one!)

So when the king of Syria was told that none of his trusted men were spies or traitors, but there was *one praying man* in Israel who was causing all the problems, he said unto his men, “*Where is this man Elisha?*” He commanded them: “Stop all fighting! Stop all campaigns, and *go and fetch him!* We’ve got to stop this one praying man before we can defeat Israel!” (Ref. vs.13).

God can use one praying man and make the devil look like the fool that he is! No matter what the odds are against me, I am not going to give up! I am not going to faint and become weary in well doing: I’m just going to keep on praying! Prayer will bring the victory!

God will make the praying man or woman greater than all of the powers of the enemy and forces combined against him. If he’ll only pray, He will make him greater than the kingdom of Syria, greater than the rulers of evil, greater than sin, greater than the habits of the flesh, greater than the cunning craftiness of Satan!

It was told the king that the prophet Elisha was in Dothan, and immedi-

ately he sent forth *“horses and chariots and a great host to encompass the city of Dothan by night”* in order to kidnap that *one praying man!* (vs. 14).

I can see it now: All of the king's great men are summoned, and all of his mighty generals are instructed to drop everything and stop all fighting and return to the king for their next battle plan. I can visualize these great ones standing there stalwartly in their finery and the pride of Syria. All the valiant soldiers are readied for battle with armor, horses, and chariots. It is an awesome host marching to war. One of the men asks another, *“Where are we marching to? What are our orders?”*

The command comes down the line from the king himself: *“To Dothan—To fetch that one praying man!”*

“Why do we need to go after *one praying man* in Israel?” was the next question.

I believe the king answered, “Because that *one praying man* is doing more damage to us than we can inflict on them with all of our military power, horses, chariots, helmets, swords, and spears put together! We cannot win the battle and defeat Israel until we get a hold of that *one praying man* and **stop him from praying!**”

As long as we pray, the devil can't win! As long as the believer is praying, he is winning the battle. As he continues to pray, the demons in Hell will curtail their wars and onslaughts of sin and come against him to stop him from praying! And

while they are coming against *him*, God can deal with his loved ones and pour out conviction upon them to lead them to salvation!

Have you been feeling the pressure of the enemy against you increasing? Have you been feeling a greater warfare against your prayer life? He is trying to get you to quit praying! He is trying to get you to throw up your hands and quit, but you know what you must do: Roll up your sleeves, and *pray one more time!—Keep on praying!*

The Violent Take By Force

You are feeling the pressure of the battle, because the enemy is not going to let go of your unsaved loved ones without a fight. The devil is not going to lay down and play dead for you. You are going to have to cast him out and tread upon him and stomp him! Jesus declared in Matthew 11:12: *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force.”*

John had come on the scene crying, *“Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand!”* Immediately, Satan grabbed him and cut off his head, and then turned his hand against Jesus to try to stop Him from setting up the kingdom. Finally, he even overtook Jesus and killed Him, but it was all in God's plan to give unto us power over Satan that *we can take back the kingdom by force!*

Sometimes God allows the enemy to touch something of ours to get

us to pray. As long as the king of Syria and his armies were attacking other nations, Israel was not moved to call on God, but when they began to encroach on her land, she got down on her knees and began to pray! Sometimes God allows the enemy to get a hold of one of your loved ones to get you to get down on your knees and pray for them. Sometimes, He allows trouble and calamity to come close to you to get your attention and cause you to pray!

Don't Stop Praying!

Let me stop for a moment and make this point while I can: When you begin to pray for your loved ones, *at first they may even get worse!* They almost always get worse right before they get saved. The enemy knows he is about to lose them, so he tries to get you disgusted so you quit praying for them to give him time to really bind them. *But keep praying!* If it is your unsaved husband, he may throw a nasty fit *Just keep on praying!* If it is your unsaved children, they may get more rebellious—*Keep on praying!*

You may think, “*My God, they’ve gotten worse since I’ve been praying and fasting!*”

That’s right, but keep on praying! It is about to break loose—The victory is about to come if you’ll pray and not faint!

When the Syrians attacked Israel, they were attacking the land and the people that Elisha loved, and he began to pray, and God heard his

prayer to save Israel from her adversary.

“*Then the **king of Syria**.... took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the **king of Israel** saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place, for thither the Syrians are come down*” (2 Kings 6:8-9).

Every time the king of Syria whispered his battle plan to his secret counsel, God would whisper it in secret to Elisha in his prayer chamber. Then Elisha would report to the king of Israel, and the armies of Israel would evade the snare. I can imagine what great joy this was for Elisha to be able to *spy on* the enemy of Israel right in the privacy of his prayer chamber!

Of course, things started getting a little more personal when he heard that the mighty hosts of Syria had been dispatched *to fetch him!* (At least he knew that this was one night that the armies of Israel could get a good night’s rest!)

I believe that night Elisha slept like a baby. There is something about abiding in the presence of the Lord: His perfect love casts out all fear! Elisha was in contact with God, and he probably heard God speak to him: “*If I am for you, then who can be against you?*”

The next morning his servant rose up early and went outside. He was greatly alarmed to see that the entire city was surrounded by the Syrian army with all of their horses

and chariots. Scared to death, he ran back inside and exclaimed to Elisha, “*Alas, my master, how shall we do?*” (vs. 15).

You see, folks who don’t pray get scared when they see the enemy. They get scared when they see the fiery furnace. They get alarmed when they see the lion’s den; when they see ole Haman building his scaffold! They don’t know the plan of God, and they are not familiar with God’s *boomerang principle!*

When you pray and fast, Haman is going to start building his scaffold, but don’t worry about it, because God is going to defeat your enemy and even let him use his time and energy to build the scaffold, and then hang him on it! (Ref. Esther 7:9-10).

When you pray, the devil will start shooting darts and arrows at you like he did Daniel to try to get you to **stop praying**, but Daniel kept on praying. When the lion’s den was all ready, and those lions were looking forward to a nice meal, God said, “Daniel, you have been so overworked and stressed with all of the affairs of the state, that I am going to let you go down there where nobody will bother you. You could use a good night’s sleep!”

That night Daniel slept in peace, while the king in his plush palace was troubled all night long, walking the floor! You see, *prayer will stir up the enemy to come against you*, and get you in hot water, but if you *keep on praying*, it will bring you the victory and put your enemy in a position of defeat by his own hands! (God

always uses *poetical justice* on the devil: He hangs him on his own scaffold, burns him in his own furnace, and feeds him to his own lions!)

Offensive Weapons

I have had people come to me who were frustrated and perplexed, saying, “Brother Hardy, whenever I begin to pray and fast, instead of feeling good, *I feel terrible!*”

I tell them: “I am not surprised: Your prayers are an *offensive weapon!* They are a means of attacking the kingdom of Satan.”

You see, whenever one has *put on the whole armor of God* as outlined in Ephesians 6, he begins with the *defensive weapons* of the armor: His loins are girded with truth, his vital organs are protected by the breastplate of righteousness, his feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, his head is covered by the helmet of salvation, and “*above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked*”. (Eph. 6:11-17).

These are all *defensive weapons*. They are designed to *shield and protect* the child of God from injury from Satan’s attack upon him. There are only two *offensive weapons* of the armor of God, and they are “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,*” and “*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*” (vv.17-18).

Jesus declared, “*Whatsoever you ask the Father in my Name, I will*

give it you” (John 16:23).

This is an *offensive weapon*. We can ask in the Name of Jesus for the Father to give us the victory over sin, over sickness, over fear, over unbelief, over poverty. Whenever we pray in the “Name of Jesus,” we wage an *offensive war* against the enemy.

An even stronger example of prayer as an *offensive weapon* against the enemy is found in Matthew 16:19: “*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*”

In Scripture, *keys* denote *authority*, and we have been given the authority of the *power of attorney*, the right to use the Name of Jesus in prayer to bind the power of Satan and to loose the bondage of Satan. In either case, it is backed by the authority of heaven!

When we pray in the Name of Jesus, we can tear down strongholds of the enemy. Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (in the heavenlies).

Knowing that this is not a natural battle, but a supernatural battle, our weapons must also be supernatural: “*For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God*

to the pulling down of strong holds;) *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Whenever you begin to pray and fast, you enter into a wrestling match with Satan. You are entering into combat with the forces of darkness, and of course, you are going to feel the pressure. You should *expect the enemy to strike back*. Your prayers are *offensive weapons*. You have begun an attack against the kingdom of Satan, and you should be ready for and expect Satan to *counter attack*!

Whenever God’s people pray and fast attacking Satan’s kingdom, and souls are saved, I look for his counter attack. You see, before one enters into combat with the enemy through prayer and fasting, he is safe and sheltered under God’s protective wings, hidden in His pinions. Like Job, he is “*all hedged up*.” No wonder he doesn’t feel any pressure.

This is the place of the newborn babe in Christ. God has him totally surrounded by His protective shield while He whips the devil for him and feeds him with the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby (Ref. 1 Peter 2:2). Then when he gets some teeth, he can eat the strong meat of the Word, growing up in Christ, even unto the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ (Refs. Heb. 5:14, Eph. 4:13).

Then, Paul said we “*put on*

Christ”—putting on His power, and the whole armor of God. Now we begin to use the *offensive weapons* of God’s armor. Prayer now thrusts us into the arena of active warfare against the enemy. The more we pray, the greater and more potent his attack. Soon the enemy will dispatch a special brigade against him **to stop him from praying** and destroying his kingdom. And so the great Syrian host was sent to Dothan **to stop** that *one praying man*, the prophet Elisha.

There Are More For Us....

When Elisha’s servant had awakened the next morning and gone outside and saw all the host of Syria encamped around the city, he was petrified. He frantically ran to Elisha, bemoaning, “*What are we going to do?*”

And Elisha, that *one praying man*, calmly answered: “*Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them*” (v.16).

I am sure that this was not much comfort to his servant. He was totally governed by his natural eyesight and senses at this point, and they were all signaling great alarm. But Elisha did what he had been doing all along—the very thing that had led the Syrian host to come after him in the first place—*He prayed one more time!*

“*And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see....*” (17a).

If you keep on praying, you will lose your natural eyesight, and your spiritual eyes will be opened. Then

you will look beyond the enemy that is surrounding you, and you will see that **the Lord has the enemy surrounded!**

(I know that God has a supernatural army, and there are more for us than are against us! Satan may have caused one-third of the angels to fall with him, but God still has two-thirds who remained faithful to Him, and they have the enemy surrounded two-to-one!)

“*And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha*” (vs.17).

Elisha never had to draw a sword or shoot one arrow. He did not even have to get up from the breakfast table. He just began to *pray*, and that *one praying man* defeated the entire army of Syria with all of their horses and chariots! In one prayer, he prayed for God to *open the eyes of his servant*, and to *blind the eyes of the enemy!* God used that *one man* who would not lose hope and would not faint, but knew *how to pray*, and utterly defeated an entire army through prayer.

The glorious army of Syria was completely paralyzed. Totally blind, they were stumbling all over one another. What a comical sight this must have been. What is even funnier to me is picturing ole Elisha going up to the captain of the host and offering to help him find the way and the man they were after:

“*And Elisha said unto them, This*

is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man you seek” (vs. 19).

I can just see Elisha telling his servant to get them all in marching order, and they lined them up single file and led them out of the city! My God, here comes the great generals of the mighty Syrian host being led by the hand into captivity *by that one praying man!*

“...One.. Two... Three.. Four... There go the mighty men of war!”

Just imagine how ridiculous they must have looked and how humiliated they must have felt! The entire Syrian army of mighty warriors, blind and confused, being led meekly out of the city by the little bald prophet Elisha—*that one praying man!*

Elisha led them to Samaria, and when they got there, the king of Israel wanted to kill them, but Elisha was irate at this, pointing out that if they were captives that had been taken by the sword and bow, they would not be killed. Instead, he commanded that they be given food and drink, and after they had refreshed themselves, he sent them home to their commander, humiliated and utterly confounded by the *power of one praying man!*

The Power Of One Praying Woman

This delightful story is found in Luke 18, and is the account of the widow woman who beseeched the

unjust judge to avenge her. When Jesus gave this parable, He began by declaring, and I quote again, *“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”* This was the entire gist of the parable: If one does not pray, he is going to faint (lose heart). Someone may reply, “I have prayed, but nothing’s changed.” Well, *pray again!* I believe in *praying one more time*, until you touch God!

Jesus said that there was a certain judge in a city *“which feared not God, nor regarded man,”* and there was a widow in that city who went to this judge, saying, *“Avenge me of my adversary.”*

Now that judge did not even lift up his eyes, but flicked his finger to the bailiff to take her out. (If that would have been most of us Pentecostal folks, we would have quit right then.) But that didn’t stop that little widow woman! When the evening session of court opened, she came again: *“Judge, avenge me of mine adversary!”*

This time the judge looked up over his glasses and said, *“Bailiff, get her out of here!”*

(I know most of us would have quit then. I’ve had people tell me, “Brother Hardy, I went through this prayer line, and that prayer line, and I prayed, and I did this, and I did that...”)

The next morning, here came the little widow woman. By that time the judge was thumping his fingers on the desk. *“Here comes that worrywart again,”* he muttered to himself.

Then to the bailiff he shouted: *"Take her out!"*

Of course, she was back for the noon session of court, and the judge was watching the door, because *he knew she'd be back!* Again he sent her away, and again that evening she returned, only to have the judge tell her to get out and not come back.

But that night the judge could not sleep. He imagined that he saw that little widow coming through the door. He could hear her determined plea: *"Avenge me of mine adversary!"*

He jumped out of bed and paced around the bedroom. *"Now tomorrow I am going to open up court,"* he said to himself, *"and that little widow woman is going to be there just as sure as the sun rises, crying, 'Avenge me!' I don't fear God. He can't make me help this woman. Neither do I regard man, whether it's the king or the mayor, or the chief of police, but because this woman troubleth me and is causing me mental exhaustion, I will avenge her; lest by her continual coming, she weary me to death!"*

Sure enough, the next day when court opened session, that little widow was there. The judge hadn't slept all night. He couldn't eat his breakfast he was so edgy, and now he had heartburn. And here was this woman standing in front of him again beseeching him to avenge her.

I am sure that little widow was no fonder of that judge than he was of her, and I am sure that she was just as aggravated by the situation as he

was. She didn't like having to come to him either again and again to be insulted and refused, but she knew that he was the only one who could avenge her of her adversary, and she was determined to get him to help her.

That unjust judge looked at her, and said, *"All right, woman! I've had enough! I don't fear God, and I don't regard man, and I sure don't like you. I wouldn't do it for my friends, and no body else can make me do it. You are nothing but a widow woman, and you can't give me money or bless me or speak to the king for me, but you are worrying me to death. And I am going to move for you just to be rid of you: I am going to avenge you of your adversary!"*

And Jesus said, ***"Hear what the unjust judge saith."***

That little woman could not buy his favor. She had no money. She wasn't anybody, nor did she know anybody important enough to influence him. She wasn't a relative who might be able to obligate him. Nor could she appeal to his compassion or sense of honor, because *he was unjust!* But because she would not take *"No"* for an answer, and would not give up and lose heart, she made him move for her!

Now Jesus did not just tell this story for the sake of the widow woman, but He was telling *us if we will pray and not quit and not faint*, God is going to give *us* the victory:

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with

them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?" (vv.7-8).

The key to this parable is *Men ought always to pray and not to faint!* The secret of that little widow's deliverance was her persistence in prayer. And if that woman was avenged of her adversary by an unjust judge who didn't even like her, how much more will God move for us? Jesus admonished: "*Listen to what the unjust judge saith*"—Look at what that woman's unwavering faith and power of prayer made him do for her! When he was set against her; when he had made up in his mind not to help her, she persisted and would not give up!"

What Jesus declared in this parable is *the power of one praying woman!*—***The power of prayer!*** He assured us that if the unjust judge was moved to avenge this woman, how much more will God, who is neither unjust nor uncaring, be moved to avenge us when we call in faith—if indeed, we have faith?

Jesus, knowing the times and what the conditions of men's hearts would be, asked the question, "*When I come, will I find faith on the earth?"*" (vs.9). I believe that He may have meant: "*When I come, will I find prayer on the earth?"*"

We have seen what the *power of just one praying man or woman* can do, confirming the Word of God that declares, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16).

Another translation of this passage from the Greek reads, "*The fervent prayer of a righteous man is very powerful in its operation.*"

My own personal translation, if you don't already know by now, is simply: "*O, the power of one praying man!*"