

Good morning. When Kun Sam asked me to share a message with you today, I couldn't help but reflect on the past year and how our lives have changed so dramatically with the emergence of the Worldwide Covid epidemic.

As Christians, when faced with uncertainties and fear, the first thing we do is turn to Our Lord for help and strength through prayer.

Yes, as Christians, we turn to prayer.

Kun Sam gave a wonderful sermon a few months ago about HOW to pray. I remember he told us that prayer is opening our hearts to listen to what God tells us to do.

Psalm 46: 10 : Be still and know that I am God.

If you Google prayers , you will come across a list of prayers that cover a wide range of topics and needs:

Prayers for peace, for health, for recovery from surgery, for relief from stress, for courage...many prayers for many needs.....

Here is one prayer I came across that I wondered about:

Dear Lord, so far today I am doing all right.

I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I have charged nothing on my credit card.

But.., I will be getting out of bed in a minute or two and I think I will really need your help.

In the Bible there are many powerful examples of situations where there are different kinds of prayers, given for different reasons.

What I would like to share are some powerful prayers from the Bible and our everyday lives that required different kinds of prayers for different situations.

The first prayer ,and most important prayer, that Christians learn is the Lords Prayer. Jesus was asked by his disciplines to teach them how to

pray. It is by far the best known . Another name for the Lord's Prayer is the Perfect Prayer because within it are different types of prayers: A statement of our faith,(Our Father who Art in Heaven) an acknowledgement of God in our lives,(Thy kingdom come thy will be done) There is worship and praise, (For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory) , Our faith, our praise, our adoration are all contained in this simple prayer that Jesus taught us.

A second powerful prayer came from Moses and is found in Exodus 32: 9-14 .

In this prayer, Moses pleads with God to preserve his name and not to destroy the people of Israel.

Moses had been up on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights receiving from God ,the terms of the covenant, setting up Israel under the kingdom of God. Finally, the finger of God inscribed the 10 Commandments on two stone tablets.

But while Moses is there before God, the people below have become impatient . They demand that Aaron make visible gods from gold and fashion them into a golden calf.

God, of course, is filled with righteous anger and tells Moses that he will destroy the nation of Israel. God had destroyed mankind once and restarted it again with Noah. However, Moses offers a powerful prayer of Intercession. Moses appeals to God , interceding for the people of Israel and pleads for mercy.

His basic prayer: Turn from your fierce anger and do not bring disaster to your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Issac and Israel to whom you swore by yourself. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky .

God relents and answers the prayer of Moses for his people.

Another powerful prayer from the Bible comes from David. It is David's prayer for Pardon and forgiveness of his sin. David's prayer is a prayer of repentance.

It is found in Psalm 51.

Have mercy upon me O God, according to your loving kindness, Blot out my transgressions . Cleanse me from my sin.

This prayer was born out of David's fall into sin. David had committed adultery and had a man murdered to cover it up. David's friend, Nathan, Confronted him with his sin . God worked a spirit of repentance in David's heart and raised him back up. This was a prayer for mercy. David was a man of great deeds and had done many good things, David prays for God's mercy and is cleansed from his sins. When God pardons us from our sins, as he showed with David, God shows us his mercy and loving kindness.

Another powerful prayer from the Bible comes from Hezekial. It is a petition for Deliverance and healing.

Hezekial , a godly king ,is about to see his nation conquered and destroyed by the mighty Assyrian army. He hears from a prophet that he is very ill and should prepare to die soon. He offers a prayer putting his trust in God.

One of the remarkable things about Hezekial prayer is the content. He never asks God for healing for himself . His prayer only offers a prayer for his faithfulness in God.

Now ,therefore, O Lord our God I beseech you, save us that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God.

The Lord shows his blessing on Hezekial by healing him, raising him up, granting him 15 more years of life, giving him a son, and delivering Jerusalem from annihilation by the Assyrians.

Another powerful prayer is found in Luke 22: 39-49

This is the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane. Jesus offers a prayer of submission. He asks to be spared from his suffering of the crucifixion but then prays for his Father's will to be done. It is a beautiful solitary prayer.

“ And he was drawn from them about a stones cast and he knelt down and prayed saying: Father if thou be willing remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will but thy will be done,

In this prayer of resignation, not my will but according to God's will. Jesus places himself in his father's hands.

There are many other powerful prayers in the Bible and I have offered just a sampling. There have also been powerful prayers offered to our nation in times of great need and peril.

On the evening of June 6th after the allied troops had stormed the beaches of Normandy . Loosing 2500 men killed and 8500 wounded, President Franklin Roosevelt gave the following prayer while addressing the nation by radio:

My fellow Americans:

Last night when I spoke with you about the fall of Rome . I knew at that moment that troops of the United States and our Allies were crossing the English Channel in another and greater operation. It has come to pass with success thus far.

And so, in this poignant hour. I ask you to join me in prayer:

Almighty God, our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms , stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith.

They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard, For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces . Success may not come with rushing speed , but we shall return again and again : and we know that by thy grace, and by righteousness of our cause , our sons will triumph.

They will be sore tried, by night and by day, without rest- until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men's souls shall be shaken with the violences of war.

For these men are lately drawn from the ways of peace. They fight not for the lust of conquest . They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and goodwill among all Thy

people. They yearn but for the end of battle, they yearn for a return to the haven of home .

Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, receive them, Thy heroic servants into Thy kingdom.

And for us at home- fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters. And brothers of brave men overseas , whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them- help us , Almighty God to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

Lord give us faith in Thee, Faith in our sons , faith in each other, faith in our United crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit be dulled. With thy blessing we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogance. Lead us to saving our country with our sister nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace . A peace that will let all men live in freedom, reaping the rewards of their honest toil.

Thy will be done, Almighty God
Amen

In closing , for whatever the reason you pray let your heart be open and the words will come. I hope your prayers will be answered .
Here is a simple Jesuit prayer that I offer to you today:

In times of pain
Give me comfort.
In times of despair,
Give me hope.
In times of hatred,
Give me love.
In times of doubt,
Give me trust.
And even when I feel far away from you-
Be close to me , Loving God.

Amen