

# **Praying With Healing**

## **Three Pivotal Acts**

**Daniel 10:1-14**

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Cindy awakened with a start. The clock showed 2 a.m. A sense of danger and agitation gripped her heart. “God, what is wrong? Is someone in trouble?” she prayed. A mental picture formed in her mind. She saw two friends Dave and Cheryl driving a van with their three children curled up sleeping in the back. They were scheduled to arrive soon and probably were on the road. Suddenly in that picture, the van’s right front wheel rolled off, and the vehicle careened wildly into a horrible accident. Cindy, believing both that her friends were in danger and that God wanted her to pray, began asking God that the wheel bearings would hold until they arrived and she could warn them. The rest of the night she did not sleep. The hours dragged by as she episodically called out to God. (Some people think prayer is one long continuous stream of talk. No communication occurs like that other than my sermons.) As Cindy prayed, she sensed something more was happening than bearings being held in place or a wheel staying attached. She believed a powerful conflict was occurring between unseen, spiritual creatures and the outcome would affect her friends’ lives. When the family arrived safely the next day and heard of Cindy’s concern, Cheryl admitted that she had heard what

could be bearing noise, but Dave had not. They took the van to a mechanic. Remember that Cindy saw the right wheel come off. The mechanic pulled the left wheel bearings and exclaimed, "I don't see how you could have driven this without having it seize up on you." After checking the right wheel he was really amazed: "This is worse than the other!" He explained that the wheel should have come off, but for some reason the spindle, which should have been ruined, was undamaged.

Cindy's story may be dramatic, but it is not unusual. I've heard many stories like this from believers. There's something about the nature of life that makes prayer to your heavenly father absolutely pivotal. It is the pivotal act. It is the one most critical and influential thing a person can do.

Cindy prayed with faith. She kept praying and asking until she saw God respond. She didn't work a formula on God. She didn't control God. She responded to God. She prayed with faith. When we don't pray with faith, we give up praying, or we resort to manipulative rituals and actions. Cindy also prayed with eyes. She watched for God's response. When her friends arrived, she did not assume her prayers were misguided or answered. She evaluated. She had them take the van to a mechanic. It is my experience that any *prayer not evaluated is soon evaporated*. Communication is dynamic not stagnant. It changes as each party responds. It is necessary then to watch and pray.

In 1968 a monster F-5 tornado dropped out of the sky and ripped through Tracy, Minnesota. Only two F-5 tornados have touched down in this state. The one that plowed through Tracy took many lives and changed many more. Among them was a woman whose home was destroyed and whose husband was permanently disabled. Over

time the effects of the storm continued to eat away at her health. She went through amputation after amputation. Bitter and angry she told me, “God is seeing how tough I am.” She was a hard woman who saw hard times and was shaped by hard things. As a result, she saw God as hard-hearted or hard of hearing. Unlike Cindy, this woman sensed no unseen battle in the spiritual world. She saw only a hard God. Not much use in praying to God, unless it is to avoid a harder time.

If you see only God, yourself and hard times, you begin to assume that God is hard. The cross shows us something radically different. Paul put it this way. “If God did not even spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, why would he withhold any thing? Along with his son he will generously give us all things” (Romans 8:32 ). God responds to your call. He responds to your prayer. However, the Bible reveals a battle that influences what you experience. Jesus took up that battle by fasting and praying. Jesus prayed with hunger. After he was baptized by John, Jesus immediately spent forty days praying with hunger. The apostles tell us in their gospels that there was an invisible battle going on. They even give us short summaries of three difficult skirmishes. When that period of struggle was won, Jesus began to minister with confidence and power. Praying with hunger led to incredible works of God.

Praying with hunger exposed an amazing truth in the book of Daniel. Daniel was part of the young Jewish royalty who were exiled from Jerusalem to Iraq . He was now older and serving his fourth emperor. One reason Daniel was so valued by the emperors was that God gave Daniel understanding into their dreams. However, in the tenth chapter it appears that Daniel had a dream himself that he could not understand. At least that is

the best sense I can make. For three weeks, he mourned. He fasted from meat and favorite foods and drink. He probably just ate vegetables and drank water. He refused his normal treatment of lotions and wore no perfume. He was praying with hunger. It wasn't a total fast. It was a type of fast where he profoundly altered his lifestyle while tending to his responsibilities. He was talking continually to God with his hunger.

So much communication is nonverbal. Have you ever had children share their heart by their actions as well as their words? They want something, so their room is spotless. Dishes get washed, clothes get picked up, and chores get done. You get the idea that they really, really, really want something. That spotless room or completed chore is their constant reminder of the request. They are communicating, aren't they? They are giving you an idea of the importance they place on the request. There's a lot more to fasting than that, but that's part of it. It is continual communication. Daniel was doing that. His altered lifestyle, his type of fast, called out to God continually. It told God, "You are my life. Your response is my health and joy. I'm dependent on you."

After three weeks of this, an angel visited Daniel. He said,

***Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia . Now I have come to explain to you what will happen...***  
(Dan 10:12-14)

The angel revealed that there was an invisible struggle delaying Daniel's answer to prayer. His words suggest that there's a lot more to life than just what we see. (This

fall we'll consider that with the sermon series *Winning the Real Battle* .) God was willing when Daniel first prayed, but it took 21 days, the exact time of Daniel's fast, for the angel to overcome opponents of Daniel's prayer. Praying with hunger engages us in battle.

The Bible talks much about fasting, and there are many types of fasts. We will revisit this subject. For now, however, it is important to know that fasting is not formula, ritual or a way of manipulating or controlling God. It is a means of communicating. It is a way of praying when words run out. It is also a measure of our seriousness. How hungry are we for God to act? How important are the issues you bring to God? It is also a means of battle. The nature of life is much more complex than we might admit. The nature of life requires persistent prayer to overcome what opposes us and our blessing.

Do you believe in God enough to pray with faith? To keep on asking, seeking and knocking when you don't see the answer? Do you believe in God enough to pray with eyes? To watch, pray and evaluate? Do you believe enough in God to pray with hunger? To make your lifestyle a prayer and form of battle? Will you pray? Your response is pivotal!