

## H.C.C. PRAYER BULLETIN No. 82 New Year 2022

As we move into the New Year, we hear all the usual stuff about making resolutions and trying to keep them. In the “New Year Cycle” our resolutions are so often followed by feelings of defeat and guilt when we fail. If our resolutions have to do with our seeking first the Kingdom of God, or living pure and holy lives, failure makes for despair.

There is a biblical principal which intercessors must firmly grasp when considering this issue. John the Baptist spoke into it at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel:

This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. <sup>5</sup>All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup>His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.<sup>7</sup>

John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!” Mark 1:4-8

Right there at the beginning of the Gospel, which Peter preached and Mark recorded, is the necessity for our confessing our sins, repenting and turning to God for forgiveness. That is a necessity for salvation and for peace in our hearts. But John the Baptist knew the Spirit’s power for sanctification in his own life because he was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. He must have observed the “New Year Cycle” in those who responded to his preaching. So when he tells of the coming Messiah, the major characteristic he gives him is that “he will baptise you with his Holy Spirit.” Holy Spirit power in our lives is the central characteristic of the gospel message, which takes us beyond legalism to victory in our spiritual lives and in the expression of Christ life through us. Jesus taught that in John 7:38-39. He said:

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Paul talks about it in Roman 8, after his passage in chapter 7 in which we mourned his failures with the words: “The good that I would I do not and the evil that I would, that I do! O wretched man that I am. Who will rescue me from this body of

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4

death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So the answer to the “New Year Cycle” is not better framed resolutions or more grit and determination as we grind along in our own strength. It is so growing in Christ that we abide constantly in him, “for apart from him we can do nothing”(John 15:5).

But often we know all that in theory, but we have never known how to walk according to the Spirit. The solution generally comes when we ask the Holy Spirit to give us victory over 2 things: The first is our pride in holding on to the belief that we can do things without him. That has to be confessed and relinquished humbly and gratefully!

The second is the fear of submitting our lives to the Holy Spirit’s filling or baptizing us. Jesus addressed that in

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Luke 11:9-13:

Either word, filling or baptizing with the Holy Spirit describes what is a necessity that Paul highlights in Ephesians 5:17-18:

<sup>17</sup> Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. <sup>18</sup> Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>19</sup> singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

In the Greek, the force of the tense Paul uses is that we must keep on being filled with the Spirit in a life that constantly celebrates his presence and power to give us victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

In 2 Timothy 3, Paul talks scathingly of the people living in the last days as those who are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power. And truly our generation is like that.

We see the suffering and the darkness around us, but think that the solution lies in more wealth, more education, more regulation and laws. We fail to understand that none of those successfully address the place in people, which really changes behavior. Knowledge and rules don’t change hearts and wills. But the Holy Spirit in converted hearts does.

So our work of intercession in the nation is critical. And because the situation in this nation is so critical in this New Year, our persistence in praying for revival is a supremely important work, demanding our time and dedication. “To him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to his power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout the generations forever and ever. Amen” (Eph.3:20-21)

## PRAYER POINTERS

### Disciplines for private prayer:

- **The end of the day: 1 John 1:7-9**

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness

Make time for review at the end every day to celebrate what was good and to confess failures and sin. Receive the gift of forgiveness. Sleep in peace!

- **At the beginning of each day: Psalm 37:7**

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh as he filled those early disciples. Wait in faith and silence to know his presence. Keep focused on his presence in your heart with a short pray like, "I love you Lord".

### Prayer for the Body of Christ in RSA:

- Pray for revival and its fruits to be clearly seen in God's people so that hearts and will are deeply changed and we all do everything in the market place as unto Christ.

Pray for a deep hunger for:

- holiness and purity
- righteousness, kindness and gentleness
- generosity and hospitality
- just hearts that seek equity
- compassion with wisdom
- zeal for the kingdom of God and its values and ethics
- Jesus' gifts of prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and missionaries to respond to his call
- REVIVAL across the land
- Pray that all our brothers and sisters in Christ will take a full hold of the call and joy to be found in Christ this year.
- Pray that we will celebrate in the amazing truth that we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation called out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- Pray for the freedom in every home to be different for the Lord's sake— intentional in expressing the truth we celebrate, with great love, joy, purity, holiness and creativity.
- Pray for love that overflows, grasping the truth of the incarnation with such integrity that there is an explosion of compassionate witness to the lost and of care for the unemployed, hungry and needy in our towns.
- Pray that the Prince of Peace will bring in wonderful gifts of reconciliation, healing and acceptance in divided families.

### THE NATION: The municipalities:

Praise God that a multiparty democracy is expressing itself, and pray for those men and women now in power who seek the common good, especially those who confess faith in Jesus

- Pray for the negotiations between parties, that they will be done in integrity, and that the well being of the people will be the focus, replacing the lust for power and wealth.
- Pray for the new councils in the many failed and deeply dysfunctional municipalities. Pray that those responsible for the past failures will be unable to undermine new and capable good government.
- Pray that the corruption that is now revealed will be properly dealt with, and justice will be served.
- Pray for good services to be provided to all sections of the community, and real solutions found for the employment and housing needs of our citizens.

#### The Courts:

- Pray that the President will obey the Lord when he selects of our new Judge President and the judges in the Concourt. Pray for the absolute commitment to truth and righteous to remain established among our judges. Pray that they will not let our postmodern worldview influence objectivity and truth.
- Pray for the protection of our coasts and underwater fauna from multinationals wishing to explore for gas using seriously damaging seismic blasting.
- Pray that the findings of the Zondo Commission will enable the NPA to successfully prosecute those so deeply responsible for the nation's poverty and unemployment.
- Pray for the identification and successful prosecution of the leaders of the July unrest and looting.

#### Sabotage:

- Ask the Lord to reveal the forces responsible for sabotage at Eskom, Prasa, Metrorail and our ports. Pray for an end to the steady destruction of our national infrastructure, and the uncovering of ongoing corruption. Pray for courage and protection for whistle-blowers.
- Pray for security and policing services, who seem to ignore their responsibilities in this regard.

#### Violence:

- Cover in prayer the 16 days of Activism against Violence against Women and Children. Bring to the Lord the rising numbers of kidnappings and human trafficking in RSA.
- Pray to the Lord about policing services, with their low morale, poor training and inadequate numbers.
- Pray much for the Lord to enable the police and army to deal successfully with the growing numbers of big armed gangs, and the threat of warlords arising to terrorize whole areas.

#### Peace:

- Pray for peace in RSA and peace in eSwatini.
- Praise God for the mercy of a less dangerous COVID virus in this a fourth wave. Pray for an end to the pandemic.

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