



North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

September, 2019, Volume 10, Issue 5

A Word on Prayer

The Weather Channel announced on Monday morning, September 3, that Hurricane Dorian had been downgraded overnight, had lost intensity and the eyewall had begun to deteriorate. Their assessment was that somehow the waters beneath it had cooled and caused the storm to lessen in intensity. We knew differently, though. This was not the first time we had seen the downgrading of a hurricane in recent years – and knew the change had come in direct answer to our prayers. Skeptics would doubt that “mere” prayers could affect such a change; and perhaps some who believe in prayer might doubt as well. Thankfully, there are still those who believe in the “mustard seed” principle that says that the size of our faith is not the primary factor in seeing answers to our prayers. The primary factor is the power of the One to Whom we pray. That’s what most of us would call some REALLY GREAT NEWS.

How thankful are we when we realize the power in our prayers does not depend upon our ability to imagine them being answered, but upon the Ability of GOD Almighty? Would our attitude towards prayer change if we looked at the story of Moses and the burning bush to instruct our attitudes?

Exodus 3:1-3 records:

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.”

Many of us would read that account and imagine shaking in our boots – which would seem appropriate. But what if we think of the burning bush not as GOD’s way of repelling Moses, but attracting him? GOD introduced Himself to Moses in this way, because – well, because that is Who He is. How did He reveal Himself to the Israelites in their flight from Egypt? A pillar fire (Exodus 3:21) was

their light and assurance of His Presence with them. In Numbers 9, we are told the Presence of the Lord came upon the tabernacle and it was covered by cloud by day, that appeared as fire at night. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses reminds the Israelites that their GOD is a “*consuming fire*.”

In light of that reminder by Moses, we can appreciate more deeply the encounter he had at the burning bush, where GOD invited Moses into His Presence, but did not consume him. What better symbol could we have for how GOD wants us to view Him than fire? We could not exist on this planet without it. It was one of the greatest gifts to mankind. It allows us to cook, and, at the same time, provides lifesaving warmth. It purifies what is tainted, and at the same time, is to be respected and recognized for the power it holds.

What if we came to see Moses’ burning bush encounter as a picture of how GOD would like for us to see our prayer life. Just as He called to Moses, He calls to us, revealing His true nature to those who would answer His call. Just as He was with Moses, His Presence is awesome (reminding Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground) but inviting at the same time. Just as He revealed Himself in such truth to Moses, He reveals Himself to us, but also reveals His will for our lives, just as He did to Moses. Consider the amazing exchange that occurred between them, and imagine how incredible our encounters in prayer could be if we came to Him with such rich expectations?

As we begin to invite and expect “burning bush” experiences, we would remember our GOD is a “consuming fire,” which would prevent our taking the time with Him for granted or creating an inappropriate familiarity. There would certainly be no room for boring, lethargic prayers when we consider that we are entering into a Holy and exalted temple of the highest level of intimacy possible – since we are encountering the very One Who created every cell of our body and knows us literally inside and out. As we approach Him with this mindset, there should also be an exhilarating rush of adrenaline when we speak His Name in prayer in anticipation of revealing our heart’s deepest needs and most intimate thoughts, and learning His highest plans and desires for our lives.

How energized and empowered would our prayer life be if we saw ourselves approaching the Fire of Heaven every time we bow our heads to Him. What storms could be conquered! Can you feel the heat yet? Pastor Becky

Birthdays & Anniversaries

6 – Darla Barber
 10 – Ardyth Eldridge
 Becky Garner
 Lynn & Janice Kent
 14 – Linda Young
 Lee & Jean Monroe
 16 – Dorothy Chapman
 20 – Dave & Sherry Chapman
 24 – Richard & Brenda Loubier
 Martha Pickett
 25 – Anna Marie Anderson
 28 – Mitchell & Nancy Irvin
 29 – Helen Beatty



Calendar

11 – Food Distribution
 19 – Church Board Meeting
 21 – All-Church Work Day
 Tree trimming
 District Team Day
 28 – Set-up for Pumpkin Patch
 Open Mic Nite
 29 – Alabaster Sunday



Prayer Needs:

Phoebe Barr
 Steve Cox
 Dave Fregeau
 Ryan Woodby
 Sheryl Colie & Family
 Ardyth Eldridge
 Mark & Kim Barr
 Kenny & Gail Goodman
 Children & Teen Depts.
 Phillip Lindsey
 Our missionaries

Tom Blakeman
 Ida Chaplow
 Dave Peck
 Ernie Rybold
 Matthew Morgan
 Eileen Massett
 Louis Perez
 Phyllis Obney
 Eileen Jennings
 Marlene Ryan
 The Nation of Israel

Carl Baxter
 Janice O'Lynn
 Ray Holman
 Paul Jones
 Orion Predko
 Joseph Groves
 Cody Church
 Regina Williams
 Kitty Baxter
 A Youth Pastor
 Our Church Leaders

Ben Bergman
 Susie & Jamie Lorenson
 Dan Bowker
 Betty Predko
 Paul & Grace Boling
 Lorraine Jungles
 Betty Retter
 Alice Daugherty
 Dorothy & Laurel Chapman
 Unsaved Loved Ones

Open Mic Nite

Saturday, September 28
 6:00 P.M.

Join us and share your talent
 or bring the family and friends
 and relax and enjoy the rich
 sounds of the singers and musicians
 of our church and the community.



We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wednesday, September 11, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, to help with a variety of tasks. Please spread the word to anyone you think could benefit from this special outreach and join us as we partner to help those in need. And once again, thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in North Fort Myers.

**Saturday, September 21 and
 September 28**

Lend a Helping Hand
**Church
 WORK DAY**

**We need all hands on deck for Tree
 Trimming on the 21st and Pumpkin
 Patch set-up on the 28th.**





Southern Florida District Church of the Nazarene

Team Day

Saturday, September 21
9 AM – 3 PM

Fort Myers First Church of the Nazarene
13545 American Colony Blvd
Fort Myers, FL 33912

Hurricane Dorian

Hurricane Dorian, one of the most powerful Atlantic hurricanes ever recorded, stalled over the Bahamas Sunday and Monday, September 2 and 3, killing at least five people and causing massive destruction on the Abaco Islands. Although the storm was downgraded from a Category 5 with sustained winds up to 165 miles per hour to a Category 2 with sustained winds of 110 miles per hour, the extended exposure to the storm has devastated the Bahamas.



There are five Nazarene churches on Grand Bahama Island, at least four of which have water damage along with most of the homes in the communities. The full status of both the churches and the surrounding community is unknown. Teams from the Mesoamerica Region are standing by to assist in the Bahamas and are anticipating the need for aid, including skilled workers, food, water, care packs, clothing, and medication.

More than 1 million people in the U.S. were ordered to evacuate the east coast of Florida ahead of the storm's advance. Thankfully, and in answer to many prayers, the storm, for the most part, stayed off the coast and direct impact was avoided. In Florida and South Carolina, the Church of the Nazarene is mobilizing supplies and organizing teams to respond as the need becomes better known. The Florida District is also mobilizing 3,000 crisis care kits, and Nazarene Disaster Response teams are standing by.

How we can help:

Pray for those who have lost loved ones, and pray those facing loss of homes and livelihoods. Pray for the swift delivery of the supplies and care they need, and pray for the months of recovery ahead. Pray for those who have been the most vulnerable during the storm, especially senior adults, individuals with disabilities, and people living in poverty. Pray for church leaders and churches responding to the needs around them.

Assemble Crisis Care Kits – Although we have only recently completed assembling Crisis Care Kits, it is understandable that the need for more has arisen, and we need to help create additional Kits. The instructions for a Crisis Care Kit is to fill a 2 or 2.5 gallon Ziploc bag with:

- 1 medium-size bottle of shampoo (12-18 oz.)
- 2 bars of soap (bath-size or larger)
- 1 medium toothpaste (4.0-6.4 oz.)
- 3 toothbrushes (in original packaging)
- 1 box of Band-Aids (30 or more)
- 1 fingernail clipper
- 1 sturdy hair comb
- 2 hand towels
- 4 pocket-sized packages of facial tissue
- 1 Beanie Baby-sized stuffed toy

Give We will be taking up a special offering in order to assist in the recovery effort soon, so anticipate that offering and ask the Lord what He would have you do to help. We will be updating our congregation as more info comes in.

Steve Egidio, a friend and fellow pastor, posted these thoughts on Facebook some time back, and with his permission, I thought it should be read by more than just our Facebook pals. I pray it is a blessing to you.

I am hyper-challenged by Pastor Brett Rickey's sermon today - which was based on 2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:10. I must admit, that it is the words of Paul in Chapter 4 that actually challenges me, especially 2 Corinthians 4:17. The idea of suffering....and when it happens, it certainly does not seem to be 'light' or 'momentary.' It often feels like the very opposite - heavy and it will never cease. And that may be the case if you just focus on the situation in the moment. Like all of us I have known hard suffering. Losing a parent when they were young (my mother died at age 36, I was 16). That was tough. It certainly did not feel "light or momentary" at the time. And as an immature teenage boy I could only think about the moment – 'what am I going to do now?' There was no way I could see happiness in the future without my mom. And as I look back on the two years that followed that event - I see a mess. It would be several more years before I could even accept the next words of Paul in V 17. I read that those afflictions 'are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.' In another version, it says 'is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.' It is a matter of perspective. You cannot simply focus on the moment - but must look beyond the moment. And Paul can certainly teach me a thing or two, because he suffered greatly and learned to see beyond the suffering, because the Holy Spirit revealed something greater was to happen in his life.

My takeaway: when I encounter suffering, and I will (and so will you), I will look beyond it. Oh, it will still be there (suffering does not go away), but by looking beyond it, I will see the good Jesus is working in my life from it. So that I can say with Paul.... 'Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Hebrews 11 1-2

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

In this day and time when so much is going on that we cannot seem to make any sense of – on top of that, it is hurricane season – it is great to know that we serve a Heavenly Father Who is in charge and control of it ALL.

Our church was one of many that helped pray hurricane Dorian out into the ocean and away from the State of Florida. We also prayed it would weaken and saw it downgraded to a Category 2.

For those of you who may say, "That was just a coincidence. That is what it was going to do all along." I invite you to go back to the top of this article and read more slowly and thoughtfully. Hang out at these words from Paul... *light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Is your faith shining through? Are you starting to see the eternal instead of the temporary? When you do, that is when you will begin to see your faith grow.

Blessings for a wonderful September,
Pastor Van



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