

Intercessory Prayer

Steve Durham—September 1, 2015

- How many would like to make a difference in the lives of others?
- How many believe that you are making or could make a difference in other people's lives?

But you just don't know how! Sometimes we feel that way. In our jobs we think that it's really mundane, that you're not building a big skyscraper or this thing or the other. At home the ladies take care of the kids and the house and sometimes it gets routine and kind of mundane in some ways; although it's a very, very special calling. Men go out every day and you have a job that you do and you fulfill a purpose in society.

How do we make a difference in our lives as Christians, as called-out ones, the sons of God? We have a purpose, but sometimes we lose sight of that.

I want to give you an example today to kind of bring this in. A lady named Hermine Santruschitz (Miep Gies) who is Austrian died in 2010 at the age of 100. She made a difference in the lives of eight people. In 1943-45 in Nazi occupied Europe, she took eight Jews and hid them in an upstairs attic. There were 140,000 Jews in Amsterdam at that time, and only 5,200 survived. There were quite a few that didn't make it.

I think there were about 8,000 who were hidden, and out of that only the 5,200 survived. That was certainly a holocaust for those individuals. Miep Gies fled Austria at age nine because of a food shortage and she came to Amsterdam. When she was 16-years-old she worked for a gentleman who ran a spice factory and his name was Otto Frank, and he had a daughter named Anne Frank.

Soon after WWII had started, and the Nazis began rounding up and deporting the Jews, Otto came to Miep Gies and asked her to hide them upstairs in the attic of the warehouse, which could be closed off so you couldn't see it.

Of course, she said—and this was special for her—*yes, of course*. It was the human thing to do and she went about doing that for 25 months. The Franks camped out and hid in that very cramped attic. There was Otto and his wife, Anne and her sister and four others. Miep would give them food and shelter, books and writing material, encouragement and a smile/a cheery face, and tell them of the news that was going on around.

Miep was the window of hope for these eight people for that 25 months. One day the police raided, they had gotten a tip from somewhere. What

Miep would do is go to different grocery stores and mix it up so no one would be suspicious. They would get extra food stamps from the underground so they could feed everyone. It was very, very difficult for all of them.

One day the news leaked out and the police showed up and the Gestapo agent put a gun to her head and wanted to know about who was hiding upstairs. It was very, very tense. She survived that and they took the eight people down to the police station. Miep Gies did not stop there in talking care of and making a difference in the lives of these eight people. She followed them down and tried to plead for their case, tried to intervene and save them. It was too late, they had already been taken off.

Anne said in her diary about Miep, 'We were never too far from her thoughts. We were always in her thoughts.' Miep intervened even to the end to make a difference in their lives. She had genuine sincere concern for their lives and she showed compassion, love and an attitude of humility in an interview. They called her a hero, but she said that she didn't feel like she was a hero. She felt that anybody would do that.

If you can imagine what was going on at that time, the entire community was out looking for Jews, to kill them. If you were someone who hid them you could go to the death camp, as well. As a matter of fact, two of the people who were helpers along with Miep did go to the death camp, and they were Germans.

So, if you hid a Jew you could go to the death camp, as well. It was not a usual thing that you would do. Miep was an amazing example of courage and compassion and bravery for her fellow human being. She said that it was her human thing to do. It was her fellow human in trouble, they were powerless to help themselves.

Sometimes we see situations, as I spoke on all the things we see in a mouse cage and you're powerless to do anything about those. {Note sermon: *Joy* by Steve Durham} That's just the way it is and you really need help, someone to step in and help.

Miep helped at the risk of death, her own death. Those who went to the death camps for helping survived, but went through the whole ordeal along with the Jews.

Through great physical and emotional sacrifice for others, Miep devoted her life, time, effort, thoughts, sustenance and everything she had to take care of those eight people. Uncharacteristic, unpopular, selfless and unselfish acts for the world

today. I'm not sure that people would do that today if the society today would turn on any one religious group and start putting them in concentration camps. I'm not sure that we would get the same kind of care and concern from individuals as Miep did for Anne Frank and her group.

That made a difference in their lives, for those eight people. It also affects us today and continues to affect us. It's a triple-down, kind of continuing what we are affected by and what we understand and how we're encouraged and inspired because of what Miep did. Millions of people since that time have been affected by what Miep Gies did for Anne Frank.

She wasn't called. She didn't have God's Holy Spirit like we do. A very unusual, very amazing example of courage and compassion.

- What about us?
- How do we make a difference?
- How can we make a difference in the lives of other people when they find themselves in trouble and powerless?
- When they find themselves in need of someone to step in and stand in the gap?
- Are we making a difference?

You might say:

- I don't know anyone who needs to be hidden
- I don't know how to make a difference
- What do I do?

There are people who have health problems, financial problems or attacked by outside powers. Maybe it's because of their belief that they lose loved ones. We have loneliness, depression, stress; those who are in need are many. How do we help? *God is looking for people to help!* There's a special group that He expects to have the attitude that Miep Gies had.

Ezekiel 22:30: "And I sought for a man among them who should build up a wall for the land, and stand in the breach before Me, so that I should not destroy it.... [here's the sad part]: ...**But I did not find one.**" He found no one in Israel at that time.

That's really not unusual when you consider a selfish, self-centered, carnal nature. But Miep had that, as well. She was carnal, but she had the love and compassion innately in her to step up and help.

- We have God's Holy Spirit!
- We're called!
- We have purpose!
- We have a goal!
- We have a reward waiting!

- We have fellowship!
- We have groups of people that we bond together with love in the Holy Spirit!
- How are we doing?
- Are we making a difference?
- Are we helping?
- Are we stepping up where we can?

I'm sure we are; I'm just throwing the question out so we can chew on it and think about it. God is looking for people to step up like Miep, and others, through *intercessory prayer*. It's a powerful tool, an extremely powerful tool. It gets God's attention. You're not talking about yourself. Prayer is important; it's how we communicate to God. In Bible study God speaks back to us and in meditation and fasting.

But intercessory prayer is a different category, a different connection with God. You don't have any vested interest in it; it's not going to come back to you other than that you love one another and you want to see the best for them. That gets God's ear. He stands up and listens to that.

James talks about the problems that go on that are natural; James 5:1: "Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that *are* coming upon *you*! Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth for *the* last days" (vs 1-3). Hoarding!

It's kind of the mentality that we see around us; the carnal nature. I'm sure that it was that way in Germany or Amsterdam at that time in 1943-45. By the way, Anne lasted until two weeks before they liberated that camp.

Verse 4: "Listen! The wages of the workmen who harvested your fields, which have been withheld by you, are crying out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of *the* Lord of hosts. You have lived in luxury upon the earth, and *you* have lived in self-gratification; you have nourished your hearts as in *the* day of slaughter. You have condemned *and* you have killed the righteous, *and* he does not resist you. Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord. **Consider the husbandman who waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the* former and latter rains"** (vs 4-7).

We are the fruit of the earth, the husbandman is the Father and Christ is the vine. Be patient, there is a reward coming.

Verse 8: "You also be patient. Strengthen

your hearts...” That’s where the work is being done (Eph. 2:10); it’s in you, in your heart. That’s what God is working on. He wants us to see examples like this and put them within our heart.

We’re going to see several examples that God gives us to look at. They’re so much stronger than Miep Gies. They have God’s Holy Spirit and God put them in the Bible. But I thought that her example was unusual because it was a carnal example, and she puts some of us to shame.

Verse 10: “My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of *the* Lord *as* an example of endurance *in* afflictions and of steadfastness.” That’s not something that’s going on today. That’s something that has gone on through the history of mankind.

Verse 11: “Remember, we call those blessed who endure....” Matt. 24:13—those who endure to the end will have the reward. Hang in there, he’s saying.

“...You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *servicing* the Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies” (v 11).

If we have God’s Holy Spirit in us, we’ll have that character trait. Just as Miep Gies had a tender, compassionate attitude, we can have that, as well. God sits on a throne of mercy and comfort.

Verse 12: “But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, neither *by* heaven, nor *by* the earth, nor *by* any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and *let* your no be no, so that you do not fall into hypocrisy. Is anyone suffering hardship among you?... [sick or in some sort of trial or temptation, or suffering] ...Let him pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing praise. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (vs 12-14). That oil is representative of the Holy Spirit.

The way God works today, as back then, is through men/people. He says to go to the people that He has appointed and they will intercede for you. This is a picture for us of Jesus Christ, what He does for us. He says to hang in there, wait; I know you’re going through suffering, and if you’re sick here is the process. Someone will intercede for you and I will hear.

Verse 15: “And the prayer of faith... [another very important ingredient] ...shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” That’s what our High Priest does. He is a propitiation for us before our Father. The atoning blood forgives our sins and washes us clean.

Verse 16: Confess *your* faults to one another...” Just mention the fact that you have faults. It’s very important the attitude that James is developing here. There’s a formula and attitude that you need to have in this process of interceding and intervening; being a mediator, a propitiation and an advocate for another person. Your attitude is very important here.

“...and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective” (v 16).

That’s going to get God’s ear! The righteousness is not of the individual and their own individual works; it’s God in you, Jesus Christ in you, the Holy Spirit in you. That Holy Spirit in you goes to the Father.

Romans 8:26: “Now, in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses because we do not fully understand what we should pray for...” Have you ever just been so tired, sick or stressed out that you just don’t know what to say? That you just can’t talk to God because you’re just so flustered and worried?

“...according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession... [intervenes] ...for us with groaning that cannot be expressed *by us*” (v 26).

Verse 34: “Who *is* the one that condemns? *It is* Christ Who died, but rather, Who is raised again, Who is even *now* at *the* right hand of God, *and* Who is also making intercession for us. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” (vs 34-35). These things are not going to separate you from the love of God. We are

Verse 37: “But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.” The point is that the [power of the] Holy Spirit also goes to the Father and intervenes and is also an advocate for us and for those whom we are praying for.

It’s very important that we have that attitude of faith! We see that God wants us to go to Him for other people, through intercessory prayer on their behalf as they’re in need. Maybe they’re knocked off their game and they’re powerless to do anything about the situation that’s confronting them. It confronts us, as well, because we’re all in this together. It’s a unit, a body, a oneness, and when one part of the body is hurting the other part hurts. That’s how the love of God in us is affected by somebody else hurting.

You want to see that person healed, or the situation taken care of. If you have the love of God in you, you can’t help it, it’s going to motivate you to

pray.

There's a reason for us to get together on the Sabbath Day. It's important for us to know why we're here. It's all part of the game plan. There's a reason for everything that God does.

Hebrews 10:23: "Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess..." Remember what Paul said, 'Hang in there, people, it's coming, your reward is coming.

"...for He Who promised *is* faithful; and let us be concerned about one another, and *be* stirring up *one another* unto love and good works" (vs 23-24). The Holy Spirit in us is what creates that good work. That's what God sees. That's the righteous man that He sees. It's a good work that Holy Spirit creates in us or causes/motivates us to do. It's not ourselves, nothing we do. Christ said, 'Why do you call me *good*, there's nothing that I do that is *good*.'

Verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together even as some *are* accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging *one another*..." Talking about the problems that we have. You don't have to go into detail. As a matter of fact, it's probably a good idea *not* to go into detail. But just that you have a problem and you'd like somebody to pray for you and help you out.

"...and all *the* more as you see the day drawing near.... [all you have to do is look at the news] ...For if we willfully go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries *of God*" (vs 25-27).

There is a reason for us to be together. God wants us to come together and talk to one another, encourage one another, inspire one another. With an attitude of faith, a sincere conscience—having your heart clean—trying to do what you know is right. You're not going to do it perfectly; we're going to sin. But you have an attitude that you're trying to do it. With that attitude and a clean conscience Paul tells us:

Hebrews 4:14: "Having, therefore, a great High Priest..." What was the high priest's job? *He went into the Holy of Holies one time a year*—he was the only one allowed to go in—*that represented going before the Father for a atonement of our sins!*

"...*Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*" (v 14)—keep your eye on the goal, hold fast, 'hang in there.'

Verse 15: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One*

Who was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet, *He* was without sin."

Because of all of this—even though you're going through all these problems, even though you have all these difficulties—Christ is there at the right hand of God the Father and the temple veil of the Holy of Holies was split in two and you can now go personally to the Father... Christ says, 'Don't ask Me, go straight to the Father in My name' and He will hear you (John 17) Because of that:

Verse 16: "Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace..." All of that that goes out from God's love to you, the heavenly things that come down to you; they're all their for you.

"...so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (v 16). That's everyday need, everything that goes on in our lives: every concern, every suffering, everything that happens. He tells us to come before Him *boldly!* If we see someone in need, or if we hear of someone in need, if we have God's Holy Spirit we can make a difference, and we want to make a difference because they're part of the body, the group.

Psa. 133—this is how God sees this group of people who are pulling together. He sees them in a certain way. He's excited about that, about the fact that we pray for one another and we think about the problems we have. He says that we're going to be in the world. 'Don't take them out of the world, but leave them in the world, but don't let them be part of the world. Hold Satan's hand back from destroying them' (John 17:9-11).

Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" As one!

John 17:21: "That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us..." The Father, Christ and us! in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. In other places Christ talks about the Body being one in unity.

Psalm 133:2: It is like the precious ointment... [picturing the Holy Spirit] ...upon the head that ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the hem of his garments; like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the LORD commanded the blessing, **even life forevermore**" (vs 2-3)—eternal life!

He's excited about the fact that we dwell together in unity. If you're praying for one another, you can't be upset with them. You can, but you're probably not going to be mad at them. Your heart is

going to go toward them; you're going to be tender toward that person.

If you don't pray for them there's a possibility of having a different attitude toward them. It doesn't build unity. **Intercessory prayer does build unity!** Christ showed genuine love and compassion, and He is our example.

1-Peter 2:19: "Because this *is* acceptable: if, for *the* sake of conscience toward God, anyone endures sorrows, suffering unjustly." Okay, here it comes; here comes a trial. You didn't do anything and it's not something that you feel is just. You just found yourself in this, you may be being persecuted for righteousness sake.

Verse 20: "For what commendation *is there* if, disobeying and being beaten, you endure it? But if *while* doing good you endure suffering, this *is* acceptable with God; for to this you were called... [here's the reason why, what our goal is, and why this intercessory prayer is so important] ...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps" (vs 20-21).

If you read Isa. 53, that describes the Passover/crucifixion in detail. It's amazing when you really get your mind around what Christ went through **as our example!** None of us have gone through that!

Verse 22: "Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return..." (vs 22-23). Christ said when He was on the cross, 'Father, forgive them for they don't know what they do.' Stephen had that same spirit:

Acts 7:60: "And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice, '**Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.**'..." That's the attitude that they had, they reviled not! That's the attitude that we'll develop as we grow in grace and knowledge.

1-Peter 2:23: "...when suffering, He threatened not, but committed *Himself* to Him Who judges righteously; Who Himself **bore our sins** within His own body on the tree, so that we, being dead to sins, may live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed" (vs 23-24). We have a promise that because He did this we can be healed! We can go boldly before the throne of God and Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and claim this promise in an atmosphere of faith, love, unity and pulling together.

- Christ hears that!
- Christ stands up and listens!

Verse 25: "For you were as sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."

It's amazing how intercessory prayer is! If we can think about it and get our minds around what is happening, when we get on that spiritual plane, when we think through the Spirit and our spirit—the Holy Spirit intercedes/intervenes and goes to God the Father on behalf of someone else—what's happening?

Christ talks about doing for other people; showing compassion and love for other people. Rev. 3 talks about the Laodiceans and we all know what kind of an attitude they were in. 'Who cares? That guy is suffering, I've got everything I need, who cares?' Kind of a flippant, who cares, attitude! Selfish and self-centered, and that is actually coveting and is also idolatry. You're making yourself out to be an idol. That's the way the world is.

Matthew 25:34—Christ is talking in a parable: "Then shall the King say to those at His right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from *the* foundation of *the* world.'" That's everyone who is doing what Christ is talking about here. The ones that aren't are on His left hand. We want to make a difference and be on the right hand.

Verse 35: "'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed *You*? Or thirsty, and gave *You* a drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and took *You* in? Or naked, and clothed *You*? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You?' And answering, the King shall say to them, Truly I say to you, **inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it to Me**" (vs 35-40).

A principle that anyone that we see in this spot, we need the same thing. Sometimes people don't want to take, but they want to give. But it's hard for some people to take intercessory prayers.

When someone says, 'I'll pray for you,' how do you take that? Do you say you don't really need that? Are you feeling that way, or do you say, 'Thank you, very much' because you understand what intercessory prayer is all about, where it's going and how it's connected to the Spirit, the Father and Jesus Christ? And you're thankful for that.

Genuine love makes a difference. It's not a natural thing that we do, it's on a *spirit plane!* We still have carnality in us, so when we hear these things, receive the lists and hear of the problems that people are going through, do we take time? Our life is time.

Miep Gies sacrificed her time, effort, physical/material things, and she risked her very life to make a difference for eight people, to intercede on their behalf. A physical/carnal example, but look how that translates to us today, *to us*—the Body of Christ—with God’s Spirit.

- Can we do the same thing?
- Are we willing to do the same thing?
- Do we do it because we’re motivated, because the Spirit in us is motivating us to do that?
 - *That is how it should be!*
 - *It should be natural!*
 - *It should be something that we do because it touches on the very love of God, the true ‘agape’ love!*
 - ✓ spirit plane
 - ✓ spirit characteristics
 - ✓ spirit building
 - ✓ building the character of God—Holy, righteous character —to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2)

That’s how we grow; these are the steps to that development. We’re to be imitators of Jesus Christ. We’re supposed to follow our big Brother Jesus Christ. He set the example for us.

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators... [followers, or to mimic] ...of God, as beloved children.”

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.**”

Verse 16: “...we are *the children of God.*”

John 3 talks about that we are the *sons of God*. We are in a family relationship. If you knew that your physical brother was hurting, you’d do something for them. Spirit is stronger than blood. You may not think that, but Spirit is stronger than actual blood. It talks about loving God before your family; you might have to give up your family physically, but you gain a spiritual family.

Ephesians 5:2: “And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us... [it’s a *walk* that we have] ...and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice...” —His time, effort and everything that He had; His blood shed and He died for us. We don’t have to die for someone when we intercede for them, on their behalf to the Father.

But here’s what it is, “...to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (v 2). What would we compare that to? You can have little incense sticks and they smell of spices and cinnamon and different things. That’s sweet smelling. It’s like what goes up to God. That’s what He smells when we do this. We’re connecting

with Him in a strong way.

John 15:13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends”—or a brother. We think about that as time and all of that, but would you actually give your life for someone.

In the *Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Darnay actually gave his life for another person. The point is, carnally we wouldn’t do that. It would be the Holy Spirit in us to lead us to do that, because it is the love of God that does that and generates that kind of connection with people, the Body and our family: our Father and our brothers. It’s strong and that’s what God sees. He sees that and loves it.

Christ stood up and reached His hands out when Stephen was being stoned, and Stephen said, ‘Don’t lay this to their charge.’ Christ was standing watching that.

Romans 12:1: “I exhort... [strong] ...you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. Do not conform yourselves to this world... [man’s society] ...but be transformed... [change] ...by the renewing of your mind... [Christ in us] ...**in order that you may prove what is well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God**” (vs 1-2). We’re supposed to follow Christ, be transformed and give our bodies/our lives as a living sacrifice to Him.

In the old system in Israel they would take a calf and kill it because they had sinned. God didn’t really like that—Christ was the God of the Old Testament—but that was the system for the carnal man. But when it came to a new system, a New Covenant, there was a different mindset. We are connecting on a different level. We are connecting from the heart and the mind. So, our sacrifice wasn’t going out and killing a bull or goat and showing the blood. Christ had died for all of us *one time!* Today, what is our sacrifice to be like?

Psalm 51:16: “For You do not desire sacrifice... [the physical system] ...or else I would give it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are **a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure...**” (vs 16-18).

Isaiah 66:1: Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD. **‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’**” (vs 1-2). That’s what God looks to.

Proverbs talks about God resisting the proud; this Laodicean proud world, and being like a

magnet drawing to the humble, the contrite spirit. In that attitude, you get God's Spirit; that's what gets His attention.

What about those who reject you? Your enemies? *Christ said that you 'pray for your enemies! Pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you!'*

There's a good example in Samuel. There are several examples throughout the Bible. Moses interceded for Israel. Abraham intervened for Sodom, for his nephew Lot; it actually was for all the people in Sodom. Look at what Esther did; she saved a whole nation. She put her life in jeopardy with Haman.

Here's a situation where Israel is coming, they see the kings around them in other nations and they want a king. They don't want God anymore, or Samuel anymore.

1-Samuel 8:7: "And the LORD said to Samuel, 'Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for **they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me**, that I should not reign over them.'"

It wasn't Samuel they rejected; **they rejected God!** This is a sin! Now they get the point; they know they've done something wrong and they come to Samuel:

1-Samuel 12:19: "And all the people said to Samuel, 'Pray for your servants... [intercede for us, for the nation, intercessory prayer] ...to the LORD your God so that we will not die, for we have added evil to all our sins to ask a king for us.'" They realized that it was wrong and they wanted Samuel to intercede for them, to be the mediator, the advocate, to go before them like Christ would go before the Father.

Verse 20: "And Samuel said to the people, 'Do not fear... [here are the conditions]: ...You have done all this wickedness. Yet, do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. And do not turn aside to go after vanities, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain, then the LORD will not forsake His people for His great name's sake because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people'" (vs 20-22). We are His people, and it's pleased the Lord to do that for some reason. He reached out and called us, but we don't know why. He's put us together and made us His Family.

Verse 23—this is how important intercessory prayer is: "Also, I, **far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD from ceasing to pray for you.** But I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great

things He has done for you. But if you shall still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away" (vs 23-25).

It's sin for me to not pray for you, to intercede for you! That's pretty strong stuff! If it was a sin for Samuel to not pray for them, what about us when we understand something? *To him that knows to do good and doesn't do it, it is sin!* We have a responsibility to do that.

You should want to do it because you have the love of God in you. But, even those who reject you, don't like you—or you *think* don't like you—or those who are your enemies, we are to pray for them. This is tough to do. The attitude of love and concern and intercessory prayer for anyone—in or out of the Church, the Body of Christ—and the attitude of humility and faith is extremely important.

Luke 7:1: "And when He had finished all His sayings in the ears of the people, He went into Capernaum. Now, a certain centurion's servant, who was cherished by him, was ill and about to die. And after hearing about Jesus, he sent *the* elders of the Jews to beseech Him to come and heal his servant. And after coming to Jesus, they... [the group of Jews] ...besought Him earnestly, saying that he was worthy to whom He should grant this.... [here's the reason why]: ...'For he loves our nation,' *they said*, 'and he built the synagogue for us'" (vs 1-5). That why they thought this guy was okay.

Verse 6: "Then Jesus went with them; but when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him..."

Look at the attitude here. This is the attitude that we need to have. This is what gets Christ's attention, this attitude. By the way this was the attitude that Miep Gies had. She said, 'I'm not a hero, anybody would have done this; I just did what I should have done.'

"... 'Lord, do not trouble *Yourself*, for I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; therefore, neither did I count myself worthy to come to You...' " (vs 6-7).

Here's this attitude of humility and just a humble contrite spirit. Yet, he was a centurion over a hundred soldiers. He was a mighty soldier, but he was humble.

"...but say *the* word, and my servant shall be healed.... [here's his thinking]: ...For I also am a man appointed under authority, having soldiers under myself, and I say to this *one*, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this," and he does *it*"" (vs 7-8). This just blew Christ away! Just set Him back!

Verse 9: "And when He heard these things, Jesus was **amazed** at him; and turning to the

multitude following Him, He said, **‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.’**... [at that moment]: ...And when those who had been sent returned to the house, *they* found the sick servant in good health” (vs 9-10). God intervened immediately, in that atmosphere. Very critical and important; healed immediately!

Christ today is our Mediator. A mediator is *someone who sits in between, in the middle, two parties, whether they be at odds, whatever!* We’re at odds with sin; we’re at odds with weakness, all the things that are trials and troubles before God. Christ steps in as a Mediator to mediate between. In that atmosphere of faith, love and humility, He’s our Advocate.

- Mediator (1-Tim. 2:5)
- Advocate (1-John 2:1)

An advocate does the same. Have you ever let your little brother go up to your dad, because he liked the little brother better, and the little brother asks, ‘Can I have this ice cream, can you get some for Johnny over here.’ So, he’s advocating, going on your behalf to get something.

High Priest and Propitiation, continuing atoning, continually on the mercy seat before God for us! For those who pray for others, Christ is our sacrifice.

The other thing is that Miep Gies stayed with the eight until the end. She hung in there. With us, do we stay with our intercessory prayer to the end? A lot of times we don’t hear. We hear one time and we don’t hear about it again. That’s a shame because we should hear throughout the problem or suffering. We should get updates, or we should try to find out and stay with that person until the end, until it’s over. That’s what Christ does, and that’s what Christ in us does;

- He’s our Example
- He makes intercession to the Father
- He’s our Advocate
- He’s our Mediator
- He’s our Propitiation

Do we make a difference today? *We really do if we do that on behalf of our brothers in Christ’s Family!* We call the Father ‘Abba, Father’—Daddy. We make a difference if we do that, if we tap into those things. Think about it and go to God with intercessory prayer on their behalf.

How important are all those prayers? Paul talks about praying instantly, or constantly, without ceasing for the churches. Peter prayed. All the prayers of the saints, are they important to God, or do they just fall out into the never-never land, into the dark hole of space? What happens to your prayers? Where do they go?

John saw in vision, Revelation 5:8: “And when He [Christ] took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having harps and golden bowls full of incense, **which are the prayers of the saints.**” Your prayers are in heaven; they go to the elders before the throne, before the Lamb!

- Are we making a difference? *Yes, we are!*
- Does intercessory prayers make a difference? *Yes, it does!*

Just as Miep Gies made a difference in the lives of Anne Frank and her family and friends; she stuck in there and she sacrificed her time and was concerned, tender hearted. All those things that a human would do, that a carnal mind would do.

We have God’s Holy Spirit and as we do it, it makes so much more of an impact; so much more valuable. ***Our prayers do make a difference!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ezekiel 22:30
- 2) James 5:1-8, 10-16
- 3) Romans 8:26, 34-35, 37
- 4) Hebrews 10:23-27
- 5) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 6) Psalm 133:1
- 7) John 17:21
- 8) Psalm 133:2-3
- 9) 1 Peter 2:19-23
- 10) Acts 7:60
- 11) 1 Peter 2:23-25
- 12) Matthew 25:34-40
- 13) Ephesians 5:1
- 14) Romans 8:14, 16
- 15) Ephesians 5:2
- 16) John 15:13
- 17) Romans 12:1-2
- 18) Psalm 51:16-18
- 19) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 20) 1 Samuel 8:7
- 21) 1 Samuel 12:19-25
- 22) Luke 7:1-10
- 23) Revelation 5:8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 2:10
- Matthew 24:13
- John 17:9-11
- Isaiah 53
- Revelation 3
- John 3
- 1 Timothy 2:5
- 1 John 2:1

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Joy* (Steve Durham)
- Book: *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

SD:bo

Transcribed: 10-19-15

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