

Happy Father's Day! The 11:15 a.m. service was one of our most impacting in a long time! Wow! God showed up today!

Love you much!

Pastor Heard

Part 14 – Feel the Passion!

Texts:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message) - "Seize life!"

Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV) - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

- A. These verses remind us that God's supernatural power can be released in our lives.
 - 1. Not only can we enlist God's help in our lives, I believe it is God's desire that we *rely* upon Him!
 - 2. These verses are not restricted to receiving spiritual help. Since we are God's children, He wants to bless every area of our lives: our marriage, family, finances, health, business and all that affects us.
 - 3. In our discussions, the big question has always been: how do we move God to act on our behalf so that His limitless resources become available to us?

4. Throughout the Bible, we read of people who did exactly that! They moved God to use His unlimited resources which enabled them to go far beyond those who do not know Him.
5. My thesis is this: they moved God because of their great passion. In fact, their passion prompted them to act in what we call an *extraordinary manner*. In turn, their extraordinary efforts convinced God to act in an extraordinary way. The rest is history, or as we say, "His-Story."
6. Last week we spoke about Rizpah moving the king with her extraordinary intercession. Apparently, she also moved God to the extent that her story was recorded in His book, the Bible, so that it would benefit us.
 - a. **2 Samuel 21:10 (NKJV)** - "Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night."

Part 11 – Incredible Keys to Incredible Breakthroughs

- B. Fulfilling your purpose in life and completing your destiny means, at the very least, that you never lose what God has entrusted to you.
 1. This is Father's Day. As fathers, we are particularly charged with the mandate of watching over our most treasured possession, our families, to make sure they are safe and successful.
 2. Now, all of us men know about keeping what we feel belongs to us. We don't want anyone trying to take our woman, borrowing our tools without asking, telling our kids what to do, or messing with our money! Am I right, guys?

3. We try to hold on to what we've got; we want a say in what belongs to us. Now we might give something away, but we don't want anyone taking things—or for that matter, losing them.
4. I believe that one reason for being that way is because our role in life requires us to be responsible for what God has placed in our charge. That's the way He made us.
5. And it's much better to keep things of value that God has given us than to spend our lives trying to get them back. What I mean by 'things of value,' are: our marriages, our children, anointing, ministries, and even our legacies, among other things.
6. **Joke:** Speaking of not losing things of value, Boudreux and Thibodeaux were on a trip from Gueydan to New Orleans and they decided to stop for a restroom break. Now, Thibodeaux was known to be a real tightwad. Since it was winter, ol' Thibodeaux had his hands in his pockets. As he walked up to the stall, he took his hand out of his pocket and accidentally dropped a quarter into the water. He looks at it, and Boudreux looks at it. Now Boudreux is wondering what Thibodeaux will do because he knows there is no way Thibodeaux is going to leave that quarter. Then Thibodeaux reaches back into his pocket, takes out a ten dollar bill and throws it in with the quarter. Boudreux asks him, "Mais, Thib, why for you throwed dat ten dollar in der?" Thibodeaux looked at him and said, "Boudreux, you don't tink I'm gonna put my hand in der for jus' a quarter, do you ?"

C. **Key No. 11** - Rizpah moved God because of EXTRAORDINARY INTERCESSION!

1. Last week we spoke about the execution of Rizpah's two sons for the sins of their father Saul and her refusal to go home for five months. Instead, she remained by them to prevent the wild beasts and carrion birds from desecrating their bodies. This picture of refusing to lose her sons is an amazing example of what intercession is.

2. To intercede means to 'stand between' for the purpose of protection, benefit, preservation or reconciliation.
3. When King David heard the story of Rizpah protecting the bodies of her sons for five months, he was so moved, he sent men to remove their bodies and give them a proper burial.
4. Rizpah illustrates what an intercessor does. Since her sons were a gift from God, she refused to allow wild beasts and other creatures to devour what He had given her.
5. As stated, we must also protect what God has given or promised to us. The enemy wants to steal His promises, destroy your home and marriage, ruin your children's lives, impair your health, devastate your anointing, sabotage your ministry, and prevent the fulfillment of God's purpose for your birth.
6. We too must stand between the enemy and his destructive tactics. That's what intercessory prayer does. It is the prayer that comes between.
7. Just as King David was moved to respond to Rizpah's need, we too have a heavenly King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who can be moved to act on behalf of our marriages, our children, health, finances, ministries and destinies!

D. At first glance, you may wonder why I've chosen this story about a woman for Father's Day. But that will all be fixed before I'm done. This is an appropriate text for two significant reasons.

1. The truth is, Rizpah's role of protecting her family and being an intercessor fell upon her shoulders because of an absent husband. Rizpah was forced to be an intercessor because King Saul wasn't there to intercede for his family.
2. It was Saul's poor choices that caused the death of his sons. Because of his insecurities, he tried to please the people rather than God. Rebellion

against God led to his tragic climax of self-destruction on a battlefield along with the death of his sons.

3. A sad tragedy in the church is that intercession is now viewed as the work of women. The fact is, if anyone is responsible for protecting the family, the home and the nation, it should be the men. We have a God-given assignment to stand between the enemy and our families so that no harm befalls them.
4. The absence of fathers in the home has had a devastating effect upon the children.
5. Just this week, one of our members informed me that after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012, there have been 74 school shootings.
6. Intercessory prayer is standing between the enemy and what is dear to us—or at times, between God and a loved one when judgment is what they actually deserve! Those prayers should be offered from both men and women. Never think that task is just for the ladies.
7. A good example is from a pastor friend who was awakened one night by a loud noise downstairs. Thinking someone may have broken into their home, he and his wife both jumped out of bed and headed for the stairs. But she quickly realized something was wrong with this picture. Her husband was behind, pushing her forward. "Wait a minute!" she said. "You belong here—with me following you instead of you following me!" He had been perfectly willing for her to go first. Fortunately, the noise was caused by their dog knocking something over. It's a good thing it wasn't a break-in. I'm not sure if his wife would have forgiven him if a thief had actually been in their home!

- E. One of the earliest recorded intercessory prayers was by Abraham.

1. In Genesis, chapter 18, God went to see if the evils of Sodom and Gomorrah were as bad as had been reported. If so, He was going to bring swift judgment for their wicked choices.
2. As mentioned last week, an anthropomorphism is when God describes Himself in human terms to help us better understand His holy and exalted nature.
 - a. God didn't need to "see" Sodom to know what was happening. He already knew.
 - b. Similar verses record: "the Lord remembered Noah"; "the Lord was sorry that He had made man"; "the Lord stretched out His hand"; and "the arm of the Lord is not too short to save."
3. Now, let's examine that story a bit more. Notice that Abraham's act of intercession was for family members in the city of Sodom who were about to lose their lives.
4. Family will make you pray! The enemy continually tries to rob us of what matters most in life by stealing our families.
5. Because Abraham is known in scripture as the 'friend of God,' the Lord had actually come to reveal His plans. Since friendship implies a close relationship, the most effective intercessors are those who are closely related to God.
6. It would be very difficult to intercede for a special need if you and God are only casual acquaintances—or even worse, total strangers! But why would anyone wait to develop a relationship until they desperately needed His help? Trust me, the day is sure to come when you will need God's intervention for a member of your family!
7. In our topsy-turvy world, there's too much that can and *will* go wrong in your marriage, finances, or family. Don't wait until things fall apart to seek for God's help—if you haven't regularly attended church for years!

F. Abraham began to intercede with God on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah because his nephew Lot and his family lived there.

1. As explained last week, Abraham began by asking if the Lord would spare the city if 50 righteous people were there. Then he lowered the number to 45, then 40, 30, 20, and finally 10. Why did he stop at the number 10? The reason is that at least 10 people were in Lot's family.
2. If Lot had assumed his number one responsibility of being sure his family was saved, Abraham felt safe in stopping at the number 10.
3. Isn't it strange that the dads of our day make sure their kids have the latest brands of clothing, go to the right school, play all the right sports, and attend a Texan's game every now and then? Yet how seldom do they care for the greatest need of all—to strengthen their children's faith! That was also Lot's mistake—and it cost him the lives of his family!
4. I salute those fathers who have made an unshakable commitment to never neglect their family's spiritual needs.

G. Having a better understanding of anthropomorphisms not only helps us relate to God's divine nature, but also provides a powerful meaning of intercession.

Failing to understand can hinder our prayers.

1. One very important area of proper understanding is to reject the notion that prayer can change God's mind.
2. Many believers actually feel that the reason we pray is to convince God to act on our behalf, even though we're not sure He wants to.
 - a. Nothing could be farther from the truth! God wants to help us! If we who are so flawed can give good things to our family, how could we ever believe a perfect God would do less for His children?
 - b. **Matthew 7:11 (NKJV)** - "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

3. So do we pray to change God's mind or force Him to act on our behalf when He really doesn't want to? No! Jesus addressed this in Matthew's Gospel:
 - a. **Matthew 6:7-8 (NKJV)** - "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."
 - b. What Jesus said is that pagans literally believe they can talk their gods into doing something, much like the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.
 - c. Jesus rejected this type thinking; it should not be our theology concerning prayer.
4. It is the enemy who constantly seeks to undermine God's plan and will for our lives. He is the one who doesn't want us to be blessed—not God!
5. The enemy is like the wild beasts and vultures Rizpah fought to prevent them from destroying the bodies of her sons. What a picture of intercession!
6. Why do we believe that our prayers are meant to "persuade" God? Could it be that we do not fully understand the heart of God?
 - a. That discussion will be for another day. But trust me when I say that the enemy not only wants to harm you and your family and destroy the good things God intended for you, but he also wants to blame it all on God by saying, "Don't you see? God doesn't care about you at all!"

H. Other examples of intercession.

1. Moses often stood between the nation of Israel and God's judgment. On four different occasions, Israel would have been destroyed had Moses not boldly proclaimed: "If you destroy them, You might as well destroy me too!"

- a. **Exodus 32:32 (NKJV)** - "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."
2. Esther successfully interceded with King Ahasuerus for her people when Haman plotted to destroy them.
3. I personally know about the power of intercession through my grandmother's prayers for me.
4. My own experience as a prayer intercessor after a vision of a weeping Oriental woman whose husband had been imprisoned for their faith.
5. The vision and intercessory prayer of Roger Mara when the plane I had boarded out of Amsterdam was hit by lightning.
6. The story of Larry Flenniken.

I. What happens when there is no intercessor?

1. That's a scary thought! For a while, it may appear as if the enemy is having his way until judgment comes, or someone boldly says, "That's enough!"--and they grasp God's promises and pray until His purposes are manifested.
2. If judgment does come, after God has spoken His Word (and His Word cannot return unto Him void or empty), another generation will someday reap the promises and blessings God intended for our lives. But judgment is always God's last resort—not His first. His plan is for intercessors to pray His will into existence.
3. **Ezekiel 22:30-31 (NKJV)** - "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. [31] Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God."

J. Life Application Points:

1. Intercessory prayer is enabled by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. **Romans 8:26 (NKJV)** - "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."
2. Intercession is necessary because the enemy opposes the good things God has purposed for our lives.
3. Effective intercession clearly sees and understands that God's heart is good and He is for us. It is the enemy who seeks to harm our lives.
 - a. If you see God as the problem, you cannot effectively pray for difficult situations that demand His intervention.
 - b. Intercession is not meant to persuade a reluctant God to grudgingly act on your behalf. Rather, it is to **stop** the enemy!
4. If put into practice, intercession can and will change the outcome of a situation.
5. Intercession works best when based on a strong relationship with God.
 - a. Abraham, the friend of God, pleaded for Lot and his family.
 - b. Esther approached her husband, King Ahasuerus, on behalf of her people.
 - c. Intercession is most successful when founded on a solid relationship.
6. Anyone can be an intercessor! While it's true that some are specifically called to a ministry of intercession, anyone—even a child—can stand in the gap as an intercessor.
7. God's will, not our preferences, should be the basis of our intercession.
8. Intercessors are greatly needed today! Our families need intercessors; the church needs intercessors; our city needs intercessors; America needs intercessors; the world needs intercessors. For too long, God's purposes have been subverted by a lack of intercessors!

9. A prime example of our city's need for intercession is the recent ordinance the mayor has tried to shove through, even though 89 % of Houstonians are opposed to it!