

When Your Prayer seems unanswered or the answer is “No.”

by William Mark Bristow

Last Tuesday night one of our youth received notice that a dear friend was seriously injured in an automobile accident and was perhaps dying in Emergency at that very moment.

We stopped everything and all began to pray fervently. For those who understand “travailing prayer” - our intercessors began to storm the gates of heaven. Suddenly I was aware – in the spirit – that one of the prayer warriors was seeing the injuries and praying a real Spirit-led prayer.

In those moments I did everything I knew to do. God says, “Remind me of my Word.” I quoted the Word regarding His rewarding His children in their request.

We proclaimed the Word. We prayed the Word. We battled the enemy. And I believe prayed in the Spirit.

Yet a teen – 17 years of age – died – as we prayed. Why?

There are those who believe that God in His Sovereignty demands we pray, “Thy will be done,” in every circumstance. Yet the Word of God clearly demonstrates prayer – prayed in the affirmative – in fact – prayed as a command, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Acts 3:6 KJV).

Peter said God was, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9 KJV) Yet, every day men perish without God.

Healing Evangelist, Kathryn Kuhlman, a woman of great reputation, said, when asked why some are not healed, “Only God knows, and who can fathom the mind of God?”

There are some things we can discern and understand. Other things we must evidently leave in the hands of the Almighty.

One thing for certain – should someone interrupt a meeting with the same announcement of impending death – I would stop and pray just as fervently – with my whole heart. What did we have to lose?? He was dying! Praying for life – for a miracle can't hurt a thing! And what if God does grant our request . . .

Mary and Martha prayed and wept – and Lazarus died (John 11) – but Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!

The world will call me a fool for praying in such hopeless circumstances. And yes, many – many are not healed. Many die.

But what are we going to do with those who ARE healed? We have them in every service -- Medically documented healings. These are the results of answered prayer. These are the results of the Power of God.

Kenneth E. Hagin was once asked, "What do you do when you pray for someone and they are not healed?" He answered with one word, "Next!" (Calling the next one for prayer.)

At no time is it yours or my responsibility to heal. I am not a healer. As a believer – you are not a healer. Christ alone is The Great Physician. My responsibility – your responsibility is to pray and perhaps to lay hands on the sick and dying.

The results are up to Him. One of my friends always says, "If God gets the glory for the successes, He also gets the responsibility for my failures."

Let's look at those failures. Jesus chided His disciples for their lack of faith when a child was not delivered and healed. "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." (Matt 17:16) Then He said, "Bring the child to me," and the child was healed.

There is another element. Jesus said, "**I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.**" I don't know about you, but I don't always hear that well. I want to – I try to – but sometimes I just miss it.

So perhaps my faith isn't exactly where it ought to be. Or I'm praying for something I want so badly – I think it's what He wants.

I remember reading of Smith Wigglesworth when his beloved wife died. He stood the corpse against the wall and commanded her to LIVE! She came back for a few moments, then slumped lifeless. Again, "LIVE!" For a moment she returned, then slumped. Smith was about to repeat his command when the Lord spoke to him, "Smith! I'm trying to take her home." And he relenquished his beloved to the Master's care.

One things for sure. If we're going to see the dead raised – all these wonderful miracles – someone is going to have to believe God – to step out boldly and pray!

When Michal, King David's wife, called him a fool for dancing before the Lord until he danced out of his kingly cloak, he answered her detraction with, "And I will yet be more vile than thus. . ." (2 Samuel 6:22) God rewarded David and smote Michal with barrenness. (verse 23)

It still breaks my heart to see the death of that 17 year old teen. I think of the agony his parents are suffering. I see the sorrow of his friends. I ponder what could have been.

Volumns have been written regarding *faith* and volumes more have been spoken. No one yet has answered the many questions arising from such as this.

You can be sure we have a Savior who understands. On the cross, Jesus cried, "My God! My God! WHY?!!" He asked the same question we ask – and there was no answer from

heaven for the Son of God.

Years ago, preaching along these lines, I shouted out, “We don't understand!” And from the audience, an old retired Methodist preacher of more than 50 years in the ministry shouted, “But HE understands, and we can trust HIM!”