



The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR
WINTER 2020

Remembering God's Faithfulness

The Magazine About Prayer



My Prayer

BY JEWELL JOHNSON

“I want to know Christ.”

Philippians 3:10

I want to know you, Jesus,
go deeper in Your love,
to be more like You—
loving and kind.

I want to know You, Jesus,
to feel what you felt
when you wept over Jerusalem,
the love that touched ten lepers
and made them well.

I want to know You, Jesus,
the power that spoke peace
to a troubled sea.
I want to know You.

Jewell Johnson is a mother of six and grandmother to nine children. Her articles, poems, and devotions have appeared in the Breakthrough *Intervessor*, *Live*, *God's Word for Today*, *Decision*, *Chicken Soup* books, and other periodicals and books. She has also published four devotional books for women.

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR

WINTER 2020

Vol. 41, Issue 4

Founders Catherine Marshall
Leonard LeSourd

ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH

Board of Directors

Chairman Michael Smith
Vice Chairman Brian Wells
Secretary Diane Atkison
Treasurer Elizabeth Smith
Members Claudette Ammons
Alfred Archer

Staff

Ministry Director Delouis Pace
Prayer Coord. Jeannie Ryan
Facility Care Virginia Payne
IT Support Larry Bohlayer
John Felts
Stanley Milton

Production

Managing Editor Claudette Ammons
Acting Editor Elizabeth Russell
& Designer
Editorial Committee Jami Dittmeier
Elizabeth Smith
Anna Soltis

Contact

Office Address P.O. Box 121
Lincoln, VA 20160
Phone (540) 338-5522
Prayer Fax Line (540) 338-1934
Email breakthrough@
intercessors.org

- 2 My Prayer
Jewell Johnson
- 5 From the Chairman
J. Michael Smith
- 8 A Purposeful Prayer
Johnny L. Wooten
- 10 Duty to Delight
Barbara Gordon
- 12 God Answers Prayer
Roy A. Borges
- 14 Here I Raise My
Ebenezer
Nicole Horsch
- 17 A Prayer of St. Francis
St. Francis of Assisi
- 18 You Prayed For Me
Sheila Smith
- 19 Prayer for Consolation
Thomas á Kempis
- 20 Faith and Fear
Elizabeth Russell
- 22 The Touch of Faith
Peter Marshall
- 27 Troubled Times
Kathleen Fessler
- 28 Answers to Prayer

Our Mission:

Bringing together anonymously those needing prayer and Christians willing to pray for them; calling, equipping and encouraging people for this work.



Our Mission

Breakthrough Intercessory Prayer Ministry is here for anyone who wants prayer. Prayer requests may be sent to us by mail, phone, email, fax, or through our website. Your prayer request is sent anonymously to six of our nearly 4,000 intercessors around the world who agree to pray for 21 days for each request they receive. (Prayer requests are identified by first name only, and are never sent to intercessors in the same geographic location as the prayer requester.) You will have your own prayer team of dedicated intercessors holding your needs up before the Lord. People often report an increased sense of peace during the prayer period. As you read this magazine, you will learn about many prayers that have been answered.



Catherine Marshall was given the inspiration for Breakthrough over 40 years ago. She was a best-selling Christian author who became concerned about the many prayer requests sent to her by her readers. At the same time, other readers were writing to tell her that they longed to be used by God but had no idea what they could do. God gave Catherine the vision of matching these two groups of people: those with prayer needs and those Christians who wanted to be part of a ministry. Thus Catherine and her husband, Leonard LeSourd, began the Breakthrough ministry.

The 21-day prayer period was chosen based on the story in Daniel Chapter 10. Daniel prayed for three weeks before the angel of the Lord was able to come and help him. The angel had been detained by spiritual forces from the first day of Daniel's prayer. Our intercessors may receive scriptural insights from God for the prayer requester. Those messages, in the form of Scripture verses, are sent to the office and then forwarded to the person requesting prayer. In turn, prayer requesters send their answers to prayer to the staff, which are then forwarded to the intercessors as encouragement for their faithfulness in praying.

We want to hear from you. Pray about becoming one of our intercessors. It is a small expenditure of time compared to how greatly it will impact your life and change the lives of others. As you read this magazine, think of your own stories of answered prayer that you would like to share. Our editorial committee will consider them for publication in *The Breakthrough Intercessor*. Remember also to send us your prayer requests. It is our privilege and joy to pray for you.

From the Chairman

Brothers and Sisters, it is a privilege to be able to communicate again with you.

In this issue of the Breakthrough *Intercessor*, many of our articles focus on remembering God's faithfulness and answers to prayer. For us here at Breakthrough, one of the testaments to God's faithfulness over the years is your continued prayers, support, and partnership with us.

As Chairman of the Breakthrough board, I want to use this privilege of corresponding with you to share how much we appreciate what you do to advance the cause of Christ around the world.

Breakthrough is an intercessory prayer ministry. Intercessory prayer is a tool of God to advance His church because it ministers to the body of Christ. Believers in Christ make up His body, which is His physical presence here on earth. Breakthrough is a ministry made up of prayer warriors, volunteers like yourself, who sacrificially pray for others you don't even know.

As I was preparing to write to you, God brought to mind a verse of Scripture that I believe describes who you are and what you do:

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)

When you placed your trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, you became a "masterpiece" of God's! What's more, you have been re-created to do the good works that God has planned for you. The motive for these good works is love. This love occurs because of your gratitude for what God has done when He saved you.

Praying for others is one of those "good things" that God has planned for you to do. The Bible commands it – yet you are to do it, not because of the command, but because you love Christ and His body.

Not only does praying align your heart in obedience to God's command, it also has far-reaching effects. As a result of your prayers, the body of Christ is strengthened, healed, encouraged, motivated, blessed, and rejuvenated to do the work God has called them to do. Your prayers also bring others into the body of Christ. Did you realize the powerful impact you have on the advancement of the Kingdom of God by praying for others?

In addition to giving to the Lord through your prayer ministry, many of you also give financially to Breakthrough, which makes it possible for us to be the conduit for you to receive the prayer requests. Without your generous gifts, Breakthrough would not exist – and the body of Christ would be without one of the most powerful prayer ministries in the world.

This year has been hard for all of us. Our nation, and our world, need prayer – perhaps more than they ever have before in recent memory. So many people are hurting, broken, angry, or afraid.

But we believe that God is doing powerful work right now, using your prayers to do amazing things in the lives of people all over the world. Whether

you see answers to prayer right now, or not, be assured that not one of your prayers is powerless! Not one has gone to waste.

Dear friends, when we all see one another in the new heavens and earth, when God's kingdom has come in all its fulness, how glorious it will be to see the effects of our prayers! God is able to use even a few minutes of intercession to bring about a hundredfold harvest of joy and blessing.

Thanks again for all you do to advance the Kingdom of God through your intercessory prayer and financial support.

Truly, you have been sent by God to Breakthrough as His masterpiece to advance His Kingdom through prayer.

May God continue to bless you as you bless others.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Michael Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

J. Michael Smith, Esq
Chairman of the Board



Thank you for faithfully supporting our ministry!

Breakthrough's financial statement is available
upon your written request to
The Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs,
P.O. Box 526, Richmond, VA 23218

WAYS TO GIVE

Gifts of Stock

Maximize tax-deductible contributions by making a charitable stock donation with an account you have owned for at least one year. You won't pay capital gains tax and will receive an income tax deduction for the asset's full fair market value.

Transfer Securities

Wire transfer to Breakthrough through our broker at Fidelity Investments (1-800-544-6565), account ID number X37-243558, DTC 0226. Please notify Breakthrough of your intentions so your gift can be tracked and properly received.

Leave your Legacy

Consider leaving Breakthrough a gift in your will to ensure that our ministry can continue calling, equipping, and encouraging people in the work of faithful intercession.

Include the following wording: "I give, devise, and bequeath to Breakthrough, Inc., tax identification number 23-7423474, P.O. Box 121, Lincoln, Virginia 20160 (insert amount, percentage, or nature of gift, or remainder of estate) to be used for its ministry purposes."

Q. How can Breakthrough maintain a network of nearly 4,000 intercessors who pray faithfully and individually for each request they receive?

A. Your support.

Thank you for your support.

A Purposeful Prayer

BY JOHNNY L. WOOTEN

In Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Moses speaks what will become one of the most famous and resonant statements in all of Jewish literature. It is a prayer called the Shema, and is the foundation of a Christian's spiritual walk, a covenant between God and all believers - past, present, and future.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:4-5).

When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus quoted the Shema. Why did he quote the whole Shema? Because loving God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength means that I have to acknowledge God as first, foremost, and most important in my life.

God has always been faithful to His children, even when they have strayed and failed to live up to this standard. The Israelites violated the old covenant with God time after time.

Yet still, He made a new covenant to reconcile us to Himself. He wrapped the old covenant in flesh by sending His son, Jesus Christ, to fulfill all of the old covenant requirements in our place.

Because Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law through His life on earth and paid for our sins through His death, the law of God is now written on our hearts and minds instead of on stone tablets (Jer. 31:33). Now, we have the Holy Spirit to help us to desire to obey that law.

God told Moses to speak the Shema to the Israelites to let everyone know that there was one true God, and that He was making a covenant between the people and Himself. And in this era, I, as a new Testament believer, can also be in covenant with God - by accepting Jesus as my Savior, and choosing to keep Him first and foremost in my life.

When we enter into covenant with God, it means that we are in a relationship with Him. A good relationship always takes communication. We have to be willing to come before God in daily communication so that we can have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).

The Shema further explains this covenant. By emphasizing the word “love,” it implies that my covenant with God is more about relationship than mere cognitive affirmation.

This covenantal relationship is one that goes beyond legal obligation, demanding intentional mindfulness of God and His presence in my life. If God isn't first in my life, if I focus on other things and people, then my relationship with Him will be lacking.

Unfortunately, because I still live in a mortal body and struggle against sin, my relationship with God is lacking on my part because of my lack of faith and communication with Him.

Thank God, it's a process of drawing closer to Him in increasing fellow-

ship through prayer - and our relationship will be perfect when the process is complete.

Sanctification, growing more like Jesus, is a process that God is in charge of - like a Master Potter molding the clay. But being able to recognize and acknowledge His primacy in my life, like the Shema says, is significant.

God will keep His end of the covenant, but if I want to grow more like Him, I need to keep my end of it through the help of the Holy Spirit. I have to love Him with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength. Not just a part of it, ALL of it!

That means that I have to purposefully take time out of each day to be with Him. I love the chorus of the old hymn *In the Garden*, where it says:

“And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own.”

God wants to be in covenant with us and talk to us, because He loves us and calls us to be holy, to be His. When we accept Christ, the Holy Spirit is our guarantee that God will keep His end of the covenant. So let's make it our purpose to do as the Shema says and keep our end of it.

Johnny L. Wooten is incarcerated in the Eastham Unit in Lovelady, Texas. He is the Unit Reporter for the ECHO Newspaper, a facilitator in the HONOR mentoring program, and has written for *The Dead Beat*, *Redeemed*, and the *Intercessor*.

Duty to Delight

BY BARBARA GORDON

Gripping my covers, I held back a scream when I realized that the person leaning on my bedroom door frame was indeed real, not a nightmare. A huge breath of relief escaped when I heard the whispered words of Granny. “Help her to stay healthy and happy and always love You.”

I drifted back into sweet, refreshing childhood sleep, as my grandmother stood in my doorway and prayed for me.

Now, almost sixty years later, praying for my own grandchildren usually fills me with joy and satisfaction. However, praying for them is sometimes difficult. My tendency to become impatient creates feelings of duty and burden when I pray. Anxiety and what-ifs can create negativity rather than joy when I intercede.

American author E.M. Bounds wrote, “Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty.” A shift to that mindset allows me to exchange duty for delight.

Philippians 4:6 provides a pattern for praying for our grandchildren. Paul says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (NIV)

This verse reminds me not to worry. The news blares stories of kidnappings, sex trafficking and childhood cancer. If I focus on earthly issues, obsessive thoughts consume me. Paul’s directive is to worry about nothing. Clearing my mind of doubt by focusing on the One who can overcome all adversity is a first step in joyful praying for my grandchildren.

When contemplating problems related to my seven grandchildren, I can become easily overwhelmed. Henry has a broken collarbone, Bryce itches because of an unexplained rash, and Hadley is anxious about starting high school.

The Philippians verse invites me to ask God to meet all of those needs. “In every situation” means nothing is off limits for discussion with my Heavenly Father. My pleas for a child’s salvation, his physical ailments, or his sick turtle all matter to my Heavenly Father.

Thanking God for what He has already done fills my heart with joy and fuels continued intercession. This week I praise God for blue and white ribbons at the fair, for sweet songs of praise from a three-year-old and for FaceTime visits. Lovingly, I name each child and express gratitude for divine intervention in his or her life. Listing the unique characteristics of each child makes me smile as I ask God to help my grandchildren use their one of a kind gifts from Him.

For me, turning duty into delightful petition comes when I apply Philippians 4:6. I stop worrying, ask God for specific needs, and focus on being thankful.

Sometimes I forget. I can easily fall back into my old pattern. When my joy wanes, I reread the verse and remind myself that praying for my grandchildren is an honor, not a mere duty.

The next verse in Philippians notes the results of applying these verses in our lives: “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). Praying for our grandchildren impacts our future generations with the added benefit of peace in our hearts.

I am the recipient of countless blessings due to my Granny’s relentless requests on my part. With a thankful heart, I strive to pass on the same legacy to my grandchildren.

Barbara Gordon began freelance writing when she retired from teaching and school administration. She writes monthly for the Christian Writers’ Fellowship of the Four States newsletter, and has been published in *Live*, *The Secret Place*, *Keys for Kids*, and *Pray* magazines.



God Answers Prayer

BY ROY A. BORGES

Another day begins in my mundane world of concrete and steel. A pigeon flies by my window. I look down to watch it land on the ground below. I watch as it searches for something to eat.

I can see the whole street from my vantage point, and I watch with curiosity. Back in 1989, when I owned a paint and body shop, I could have told you the make and model of every vehicle.

But that was before I came to prison with a long sentence. Now I don't know what any of them are.

I stare out the window of my cell for hours, watching the people as they go about their business. I do long to be part of that world again; my heart is so heavy and troubled. I miss so many things...life is passing me by.

I'm waiting for the arrival of a young woman. She and her two boys come to the corner bus stop every day. She reminds me of my daughter, though maybe a little taller. The boys who walk beside her look about the same age as my grandsons.

I've never met my grandsons, but I know their names and I have faded pictures of them. Every night I ask God to make a way for me to be part of their lives. I haven't given up hope.

Finally, the young woman and her two boys appear. She turns the corner, holding their hands as they walk to the bus bench. I see a youngster on rollerblades, speeding down the sidewalk. He's heading straight for them.

The woman's watching the traffic; she doesn't see the skater. I start banging on the window to warn her, but she can't hear me - I'm on the seventh floor. I feel so helpless.

"God, help them," my heart screams. The mother flinches just in time. She tightens her grip on the boys' hands and jerks them out of the path of the skater. The collision is avoided. "Thank you, Lord," I whisper.

They look tired. "She needs a car," I say to the Lord.

The smallest child walks to the curb and peers down the street. The mother motions for him to sit beside her. He obeys.

She ruffles his curly black hair and gives him a big hug. Embarrassed, he pulls away. I picture her pretty smile and her sweet laugh. My heart aches with fond memories of my daughter, always smiling.

An unexpected tear rolls down my cheek. I wipe it away and watch as the bus arrives and takes the lady and her sons away.

Alone in my cell that night, I read Jesus' words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). They remind me that whether in prison, a hospital, a wheelchair, or anywhere discomfort lives, believing in Jesus brings peace.

I remember that Jesus knows my troubles. He sees my tired frame; He holds my tears. He knows my needs and those of the lady. Our needs are no

match for His love and grace.

His presence, His promises, and His word are life to me.

The next day, I watch again from my window. The bus arrives, but the lady and her children are nowhere to be found.

“Where are they, Lord?” I wonder. Then I see them.

She pulls up in a beautiful red car, to the spot the bus just vacated. The boys sit next to her, seatbelts wrapped tightly around them. They click their fingers and bob their little heads to the music in their world. It’s a beautiful sight.

I smile. It doesn’t matter that I don’t know the make or model of her car; I know all I need to know - God is good. He cares for us all. He hears our prayers and meets our needs. I praise Him from my window as the woman drives away.

Roy Borges’ stories have appeared in many Christian publications. He won AMY Foundation awards in 1998, 2002, and 2003. Roy’s book *Faith and Love Behind Prison Fences* was published in 2002.



Here I Raise My Ebenezer

BY NICOLE HORSCH

I'm part of a running group who gets together to exercise on Saturday mornings. Each week, we meet at a different location.

We are blessed to live in a beautiful part of Virginia. Sometimes we run along the Potomac River or on back country roads where cows and horses stare as we amble by. A favorite location is Ebenezer Church. It's located in a very rural place. Since we live in the fastest growing county in the country, we rejoice in rural.

The humble little country church sits on a hill overlooking beautiful Virginia farmland. A sleepy cemetery sits behind and to the side of the church. There are huge oaks that have surely witnessed history. Sometimes cows can be heard crooning for their breakfast, but most of the time it's quiet.

This place is a sanctuary. The name of the church begs us to consider, "What's an Ebenezer?"

If you've been attending church for any length of time, you've likely sung the hymn "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." It's so popular that modern Christian musicians continue to record the song.

One particular line says, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home."

Raise my Ebenezer? As a kid, I could only think of Ebenezer Scrooge, but knew enough to realize that the hymn could not be about a Charles Dickens story.

1 Samuel 7 tells of the time that Samuel judged Israel, calling on the people to to put away their false idols and return to God. The people then gathered together, and Samuel prayed for them and dedicated the repentant people back to God.

But their fierce enemies, the Philistines, heard the people of Israel were nearby and sought to make war. God sent thunder that confused the Philistines, and the Israelites pursued and routed them.

Only with God's help were the enemy Philistines defeated. In recognition of God's help, Samuel set up a stone at the place of defeat and called the place Ebenezer.

An Ebenezer is a stone or monument that means, "only with God's help." I love how throughout the Old Testament, God's people set up stones, altars, or monuments wherever and whenever they received a miracle or victory.

We don't really do that anymore. Sadly, we have to be reminded to put down our idols and turn back to God. We often forget where our help comes from.

Have you overcome enemies in the last few months? Did you have a task that seemed insurmountable? Take time to recall and remember the victories of the past few months, even the very smallest. You may be in a very dark season and have to look further back.

Set aside time to give thanks to God for what only HE can do. Set aside a place and raise your own Ebenezer - maybe a stone in a garden or a beautiful vase on a table with fresh flowers.

Every time you see your little monument, you can confidently join with the Psalmist in Psalm 121 and say:

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

This article was originally printed in the Fall 2016 *Intercessor*.

Nicole Goodfellow Horsch lives in Round Hill, Va., with her husband and three beautiful daughters. At the prompting of friends, she began writing “Another Blog About Jesus” (found at www.anotherblogaboutjesus.com) where she shares insights from the Word. She also recently authored her first book, *Sermon on the Mount of Messy*.



Are you a writer?

The
Intercessor
welcomes
submissions!



Has God taught you about prayer?
Do you want to share your
story of answered prayer?
Do you write poetry about prayer?

Send in your submissions for consideration!

Guidelines:

Articles should be 500 to 1,000 words. Poems
should be at least 12 lines.

Topic must focus on prayer: an experience or teaching supported in Scripture.

Authors give Breakthrough permission to edit
material for length and content.

Email: editor@intercessors.org

Mail: Breakthrough Editor,

P.O. Box 121, Lincoln, VA 20160

A Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born

to eternal life.

Amen.



You Prayed For Me

BY SHEILA SMITH

You prayed for me days twenty-one
You prayed to the Father in the name of the Son
As you positioned yourself to pray
The Holy Spirit told you what to say
You were given a list of those you do not know
Sometimes you prayed quickly, other times an hour or so
I know you prayed for me
For over my trial I have sweet victory
I sent my prayers with tears on my face
Through your whispered prayer I received His grace
Sometimes you rose before the sun
Sometimes you prayed long after day was done
You prayed for me
I know you prayed when my son turned away
He gave His life back to Jesus one day
You pray in the Spirit when you have no word to say
You pray, Dear Father, have thine own way
You pray with words, you pray with song
You pray to show the Enemy that he is wrong
You pray standing, you pray on your knees
You pray when you are tense, you pray when you are at ease
You pray when you doubt, you pray when you believe
You pray because you trust that you will receive
You know only my need and my name
You pray everyday never quite the same
You pray knowing the Father hears every word
Even in silent prayer you know that you are heard
You pray in the day, you pray in the night
You pray when all seems wrong and when all is right
You prayed for me
Because you have prayed, I am free
You may never meet me this side of the celestial sea
But I am forever grateful that you prayed for me
You prayed for me.

Sheila Smith began writing in her teens to fill an empty place in her life. At first, she wrote to express her feelings and pain, but now her current writings are guided by the work of the Holy Spirit. She is also the author of a book, *SHINE*.

Prayer for Consolation

BY THOMAS À KEMPIS

O most sweet and loving Lord,
you know my weaknesses,
and the needs I endure.

You know how many evils and sins I am involved in;
how often I am weighed down, tempted,
and disturbed by them.

I ask for your consolation and support.
I speak to you, for you know all things,
to you all my inward thoughts are open,
and you alone can perfectly comfort and help me.
You know what things I stand in most need of.

Behold, I stand before you poor and naked,
calling for grace, and imploring mercy.

Refresh your hungry suppliant,
kindle my coldness with the fire of your love,
enlighten my blindness
with the brightness of your presence.
Do not let me go away from you hungry and dry,
but deal mercifully with me,
as you always deal wonderfully with your saints.

Thomas à Kempis was a German-Dutch spiritual writer of the late medieval period and the author of *The Imitation of Christ*, one of the most popular Christian devotional books.

Faith and Fear

BY ELIZABETH RUSSELL

It was a dark and stormy night.

My nine-year-old self huddled in bed, trying not to hear the crashing thunder and hiding my eyes from noon-bright flashes of lightning. As the wind came whistling around our house, timbers creaked, and I felt a quick stab of dread race through me. In my mind's eye, I could see black clouds mixing with the wind, twisting, spinning into terrible tendrils that soon touched earth and headed straight for our house. The tornadoes would destroy it and hurt us all.

I was petrified.

In reality, the storm was far from dangerous. But what could turn a summer thundershower into a life-threatening tornado that might sweep us away at any moment? What awful power could distort my mind and hold me captive, powerless?

Fear.

Mine was not a healthy fear—the sort that keeps you from jumping off buildings or putting your hand in the fire. The fear that squeezed my heart and petrified my bones was mostly irrational, and often debilitating.

It held me back from enjoying life and the adventures set before me. I was terrified of waterskiing and hesitant to embark on our family's boat. I spent much of our family ski trips plagued by nightmares or frozen at the tops of steep slopes, afraid to move. I set the boundaries that defined my comfort zone (easy ski slopes, for example), and was afraid to cross them. Afraid to fall. Afraid to fail, or experience some mishap beyond my control.

And there's the heart of the matter. I did not trust.

I knew that God and my family loved me. I knew of God's providence. I didn't want to be trapped by my own fear. But I did not believe, truly, deep inside, that there was grace for all my failures—that when I fell, Love would catch me and set me right again.

My healing started with a verse.

My mom and I are cut from the same cloth, and she saw in me the same fear of failure that had once held her, too. So she taught me the verse she'd learned to yell while barreling down ski slopes:

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

The truth and beauty of that verse seeped into my mind and heart each time we said it to one another. Relief washed over me. And slowly, my tears and frozen muscles were replaced with confidence, laughter, and adrenaline as we sped down the slopes together.

God has not given us a spirit of fear!

His Holy Spirit is with me. He has not made me to cower away from the adventures and challenges of life. He has given me the power to press on, to face my fears and overcome them. He gives me His everlasting love and renews my mind that I may know His will and trust His ways.

The Lord knows my weakness, and He supports me with His promises. Scripture is full of reminders of His care and power and love!

I won't say that I'm now fearless, by any means. There are still moments when I pause at the top of a ski slope and wonder if I really can do it, when my heart quails at the thought of possible tragedies and trials, when I forget the height and width and depth of God's love.

But fear does not hold me now. Nor can it keep me from enjoying the adventures, challenges, and experiences that God has set before me. For He did not leave me lamed, trapped, terrified. He helped me to grow, to begin living and internalizing the truths I already knew in my head, but that had not yet worked their way into my heart.

I can now enjoy life for the wild and wonderful journey it is. I love seeing God's awesome display of power in thunderstorms. I eagerly look forward to our family ski trips, boating on the lake, and waterskiing. I've tried so many other things that I once feared (like rappelling!) and loved them!

Most of all, I hold on to the truth that I am a servant and soldier of the King, and fear has no claim on me when I am wrapped in the strength of His love.

"I called upon the Lord, and he answered me. He delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:4).

Our God is a God of deliverance.

Call out to Him. He did not leave me, and He will not leave you, trapped by your own sins and failings. His grace, compassion, and love are great enough to forgive you, change you, and make you whole.

Elizabeth Russell is the Editor of the *Intercessor*. She has been part of the Breakthrough team since January 2020 and is currently earning her degree in Journalism at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Va. Her writing can also be found on her blog, madeforjoyblog.wordpress.com.



A full-page background image of a dense evergreen forest. The trees are dark green and appear to be covered in a light layer of snow or frost. The upper portion of the image is shrouded in a thick, white mist or fog, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The lighting is soft and diffused, typical of an overcast day in a wooded area.

The Touch of Faith

by Peter Marshall

“And His disciples said unto Him, ‘Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, ‘Who touched me?’” (Mark 5:31)

That is an electrifying question when you realize who asked it, and under what circumstances. You cannot escape the thrill of it - the tingle of excitement that grips you when you think of Christ stopping in response to the touch of a poor nameless woman.

The words of this question are not cold, abстракт, inanimate words. They do not form a hook on which one could hang theories or finely spun philosophies. No, they are too vital for that. They march into the vestibule of your heart and knock on the door...

The setting of this text is a vivid picture - colorful, appealing, and of absorbing interest. The incident takes place in a city street. It is a narrow, twisted street packed with a crowd of gesticulating, excited people, surging past its bazaars and pavement stalls with all the noise and confusion of an Eastern marketplace.

A murmur of conversation grows louder as the procession pushes its way through the narrow street...they are caught up in the infection of curiosity, and walking along in their very midst, wedged in the tightly packed procession, is Someone...

This one who walks like a king is named Jesus. They called Him the Nazarene or the Galilean. He called Himself the Son of Man...

Any outcast could tell you of Him. There are women whose lives have been changed who could tell you of Him - but not without tears. There are silent men - walking strangely as if unaccustomed to it - who speak of Him with lights in their eyes.

It is Jesus whom they are crowding to see...His look seems to sing of tomorrow - a new tomorrow - in which there should be no more pain, no more suffering, nor persecution, nor cruelty, nor hunger, nor neglect, nor disillusionments, nor broken promises, nor death.

At the request of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, He is on His way to restore to complete health a little girl. He is on a mission of restoration, and the crowd is following Him in order to see Him perform this miracle...

There is in the crowd another face - the face of a woman...There is so much in it - pale, pinched, and wan. Great lines of suffering mar its beauty and sweetness, and even now her lips are drawn in a thin line of agony. The face is streaked with pain. Her body is racked with acute suffering...

For twelve years she had suffered, and twelve years is a long time. Her malady seems to have been a pernicious hemorrhage or a form of bleeding cancer. She had gone to many physicians and was none better - but rather worse. She had spent all that she had, and every new day was another hopeless dawn. Every sunset was stained with the blood of her pain.

She is typical of human despair - not only physical despair, but spiritual despair as well. For her the world could offer no healing - so she represents all the people who look everywhere for peace of mind and heart, for hope

and comfort, and find none. She represents them all - whatever their wants, their fears, their hopes, their pains...

Now, this woman had heard of the Great Teacher, of His wonderful works...Surely He had the power to bring into the haven of health the lost explorers of the vast treasures of pain! Surely He had the power to lift from the dust of disease the flowers whose stems had been crushed or withered in the mildews of human misery!

As this thought burned itself into her mind, her faith was curiously stirred as it wrestled in the birth-throes of a great resolve....There came to the woman the assurance that if she could but touch Him - even only the hem of His garment - she would be healed of her awful malady...

"It would be enough - just to touch the border of His robes. I *must* touch Him. I *must* get some of that power."

Thus reasoning, she pushes her way through the crowd and with the pertinacity of despair she struggles in that dense throng, nearer and nearer, pushing and crushing...

Now just a little farther. He is drawing nearer. Now she can almost reach Him - another moment - at last, just as He passes, she is able to reach out her hand, and with the tip of her finger touch His robe. It was enough! She had actually touched the Great Doctor!

...Like an electric shock, there surged back into the shrunken veins, the panting lungs, the withered muscles, and the bloodless flesh the rich glow of health and vitality. Once again a body had been redeemed and given life.

She had touched Him with secret and trembling haste, and, thrilled with the change that had come to her, she retreated back into the crowd unnoticed - she thought. No one had noticed her - no one but Christ!

Recognizing the one magnetic touch of faith amid the pressure of the crowd, He stopped and asked that terrific question - "Who touched me?"

The question seemed absurd to those who heard it. Impatiently, brusquely, almost with sarcasm, the disciples asked, "How should we know? There are hundreds of people here - pushing all about you. Look at the crowd - and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But, looking around Him, Christ stood still - His kind, but searching, glance fell at last on the face of the woman who had done it. His gaze held hers... then He answered her: not in scorn at her action, not in resentment, not in anger at her presumption, not in ridicule at her faith, not in indignation at her audacity, but in the sympathetic tones of understanding love.

"Daughter, thy faith has made thee whole. Go in peace...and be healed of thy disease."

This is the record. These are the facts. It is a matter of history. She had no money - only faith. She did not meet Him in a house of worship. She met Him on the street. She had no private audience with the Lord. She touched Him in a crowd.

She touched Him in faith - in desperate, believing faith, and He stopped!

The touch of one anonymous woman in a crowd halted the Lord of glory. That is the glorious truth of this incident. *She touched Him. So can we.*

Let us take it into our apathetic hearts, let its glorious significance thrill our jaded souls.

...“Oh,” you say, “that’s impossible. God is not interested in me. What does He care what happens to me - one tiny individual in all this creation? Who am I, or what am I, that God should take special notice of me?”

Well, there is the record. There you have it in black and white that, stopped by the touch of a sick woman, He turned about - He who conquered death, He who defeated Satan, He whom all the legions of hell cannot stop, He who is King of Kings - He stopped just because a sick and nameless woman touched the hem of His garment.

We need to touch Him - O how much we need to touch Him!

Most of us are thronging Him - just like the crowd...it is easy to throng the Lord and never touch Him. A great many people in the churches, and perhaps a great many outside the churches, are thronging Jesus - seeking Him, coming close to Him, but never actually touching Him.

In this matter of eternal importance, coming close is not enough. It is like missing a train. You may miss it by one minute - and that’s pretty close - but you have lost the train...it is gone, and you are left behind...

One can feel close in the crowd in the crowd without touching the Lord. And that is exactly the trouble with most of us. We are following the crowd, thronging the Lord, but not many of us are actually in touch with the Master.

And because we are not in touch, there is no vitality in our spiritual life. There is no thrill in our prayers, no tingle of contact with the infinite resources, no flush of reality about our religion.

Because we are out of touch with the Lord, we are lost in the crowd, have become separated from the Master.

We preach the immanence of God. Our creeds set forth our belief that the Lord is with us, near us, in this very place. The Old Book records for us some amazing promises...if we would only believe them.

He promised that we should have *power* - to do amazing things; *grace* - to do unnatural things, such as to harbor no grudges and forgive those who hurt us, to love even those who treat us unjustly or unkindly, to pray for those who give us pain and grieve us, to confess our own private and secret sins, to try to make right situations that have been wrong, even if it means humbling ourselves, swallowing our pride, and risking a snub or a slight.

We can have grace to do those things, and we know perfectly well that it takes a lot of grace to do them!

He who made these promises is here with us now.

But you may ask: “How can I touch Christ?”

It was one thing for that woman long ago, for she saw Him with her eyes, and could touch Him with her fingers...

How can I, today, touch Him with the same results?

Some of you may seek healing of body or mind or soul. Some of you may seek guidance on some problem. Some of you need faith to stand up under the tension and suspense of life. Some of you seek forgiveness and a new beginning.

All of us need to touch Christ for some reason or other...Perhaps I can make some suggestions which will be helpful.

First, give God a chance. Take your problem, whatever it may be, to Him in prayer. Tell Him all about it - just as if He didn't know a thing. In the telling be absolutely honest and sincere. Hold nothing back.

Our minds are sometimes shocked when we permit our hearts to spill over, but it is good for our souls when we do.

If we would only have the courage to take a good look at our motives for doing certain things, we might discover something about ourselves that would melt away our pride and soften our hearts so that God could do something with us and for us.

Then the second step is to believe that God will hear you. Remember that He heard the poor woman who only touched the hem of His garment. Believe with all your faith that He cares what happens to you. You must believe it. You can't doubt it when you look at the cross.

Next, you must be willing to wait patiently for the Lord...Then when He speaks to you - as He will - do what He tells you. He may not tell you audibly... you may not see writing in the sky or have any unusual experience. God could, if He wanted, send you messages that way, but that is not His usual method.

It generally comes through your own conscience - a sort of growing conviction that such and such a course of action is the one He wants you to take. Or it may be given you in the advice of friends of sound judgement - those who love you most.

God speaks sometimes through our circumstances and guides us, closing doors as well as opening them. He will let you know what you must do, and what you must be. He is waiting for you to touch Him.

The hand of faith is enough. Your trembling fingers can reach Him as He passes. Reach out your faith - touch Him. He will not ask, "Who touched Me?" He will know.

Excerpt from *The Best of Peter Marshall*, by Peter Marshall, edited by Catherine Marshall. Used with permission from Marshall-LeSourd LLC.

Troubled Times

BY KATHLEEN FESSLER

O Lord, our hearts are heavy.
Our days are filled with woe.
Our eyes look up to heaven.
Your peace on us bestow.

We come to you today,
As you're still on the throne.
Stay close to us we pray.
We trust in You alone.

We wait now for our Bridegroom
And search the Eastern skies.
Expecting you'll come soon.
In glory we'll arise.

Kathleen Fessler is a member of the Fountain Hills Christian Writers Group in Fountain Hills, Arizona. Her articles and poems have appeared in magazines such as *The Christian Journal*, *Christian Devotions*, *The Lutheran Journal*, *Gem*, *Live*, and others.



Answers to Prayer

My husband had been ill for seven weeks with chronic appendicitis and an abdominal abscess. He was facing serious surgery. I requested prayer, and the surgeon was able to do a less invasive surgery, and the intestines looked fine with no sign of disease. We attribute this success to prayer.

- Janet

God has answered one of my heart's desires...I will be ministering to a rehab/nursing home with a hundred people. This is a good chance to make disciples of all nations!

- Anonymous

My husband found a new job with a five-minute commute! His previous commute was five hours.

- Karen

Praise - my brother and his son made a public profession of faith in Jesus and got baptized!

- Steve

M found out that they misdiagnosed the lung cancer. She actually has pneumonia. We praise God that she does not have lung cancer!

- Linda

I received your card saying that the Holy Spirit had picked my name for prayer. During those days of prayer, our eldest son went into acute alcoholic shock and nearly died. He is now doing better and in a Christian recovery program. It is truly a miracle story. I believe strongly in the power of intercession. Praise God!

- Roberta

One of our sons is director of a ministry, and the enemy has fought so hard against him. But God has answered your prayers and is helping souls to be won through him.

- Dixie

After several years out of our lives, my brother was finally able to spend a weekend with us, and we had the chance to share the Gospel of Christ with him.

- Michelle

My son no longer binge drinks, and he is becoming interested in going to church!

- Nancy

My heart is full of joy and thanksgiving. Thanks for your prayers during the long months of struggling and despair and depression and hopelessness, when I was so discouraged that I literally longed to die. I praise God for how He ministered to me through your love, your compassion, and your prayers. Above all, I thank the Lord. God has blessed me so abundantly!

- Shelley

I had asked for prayer for B to get a job. I thought that would have to be a miracle, because he has a felony on his record. He repented before God and learned from his mistake, but getting a good job would be hard. But now I want to praise God for answered prayer! B got a good job. God is a God of second chances!

- Rhonda

Recently, we requested prayer for healing for our daughter, and the recent tests show NO cancer! Praise God for His faithfulness.

- Jeanne

My A/C needed attention, and my husband's brother came to check it out. He and my husband had hardly even spoken to one another for three years. I witnessed reconciliation between brothers - praise the Lord!

- Miriam

I asked for prayer years ago for my 95-year-old father's salvation. He came to Christ at 96 years old, and entered heaven a few months later. We had prayed for his salvation for 71 years. Praise God for His astonishing and beautiful grace!

- Tia

I received a prayer card that stated my name had surfaced for that period of intercessory prayer. I came down with bad pneumonia and was so thankful for prayers!

- Judith

One morning, before a medical test that always scares me, I awoke with an astounding sense of well-being and calm. I went to the test unafraid, and it went quickly and easily and the results were perfect. Suddenly, it dawned on me that perhaps Breakthrough intercessors were praying for me...to my stunned surprise, the prayers had begun that very morning.

- Sylvia

I am 83 and had a triple bypass, and God has been my strength throughout a long lifetime of numerous health problems! He is so good! Thank you so much for your prayers!

- Anonymous

My daughter has been clean from heroin for over a year now!

- Pamela

We found out that 10-year-old A had a tumor in her spinal cord which was most likely cancer. We were devastated. We asked the Lord to heal her. When the surgery to remove it was over, they found that the tumor was actually a benign tumor called a schwannoma, not a cancer-causing blastoma tumor like the radiologist had said! I believe she really had her own miracle. The neurosurgeon told us that this was the best possible outcome!

- Loralei

A son's friend is finally beginning to show progress after a terrible stroke. He can now move his head and arms.

- Janet

My left eye has been healed with no surgery required!

- Betty

Found an affordable daycare program close to home. Transportation is provided. What a breakthrough! We prayed for doors to be opened.

- Anonymous

My sister-in-law was recently in the hospital for her lupus, and the doctors thought they had discovered that she had an aneurysm, which was threatening her life. But after we prayed, she was able to go home! She feels better and is now able to go back to work.

- Anonymous

Update on D, whose hand was severely injured - amputation will not be necessary! They were able to save his whole hand... praise and thank God!!! He has had mercy on His servant.

- Marcy

Winter 2020



P. O. Box 121
Lincoln, Virginia 20160
www.intercessors.org

Address Service Requested



Find Breakthrough on Facebook
([www.Facebook.com/
BreakthroughIntercessors](http://www.Facebook.com/BreakthroughIntercessors))