

A Word for Pharisaical Christians Who Think They're Prophetic

My congressman, Steve Scalise, faced death last year. He is a walking miracle.

Here is what he said about the National Day of Prayer, "On this 'National Day Of Prayer', I'm reflecting on the powerful role prayer has played in my life—both in good times and bad. Prayers inspired me and got my family through some incredibly tough days as I recovered from my injuries. Whatever you're going through: lean on prayer."

On this day in the Rose Garden, something special happened.

After worship music set the tone, the vice president said, "In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln, from these very grounds, urged Americans to pray so that, in his words, 'the united cry of the nation [would] be heard on high and answered with blessing.' The Bible tells us to be faithful in prayer, and that the 'effective and fervent prayers of a righteous [people] avails much.'"

Then the First Lady, a lady born in another country, read the Numbers blessing, "The Lord bless you; the Lord keep you .. .and may He grant you His peace." While watching her, I thought to myself, "I bet she's proud of America." But I won't go there.

The president said, "Our nation's honored tradition of prayer has sustained us and strengthened our trust that God will continue to watch over and accompany us through the best of times and the darkest of hours. May we, as Americans, never forget the power of prayer and the greatness of our Creator."

One of the president's guests was the courageous Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein of the Poway Synagogue. Missing fingers, with his hand still wrapped in bandages, he spoke his heart, "My life has changed forever, but it changed so I could make change ... we need to go back to basics and introduce a moment of silence in all public schools."

The chuckle of the day came when the rabbi, referring to his burgeoning relationship with the president, said, "I'd like to thank our dear honorable Mr. President for being, as they say in Yiddish, a *mensch* par excellence."

Then, the president, after giving a report on the fight against opioid addictions, acknowledged Ashley Evans and her miraculous deliverance. She beamed and said, "Finding God saved my life. It's been incredible."

To which the president replied, "Prayer works miracles, and prayer saves lives!"

During the prayer time, periodic "Amen's" and joyful praise sounds could easily be heard on the White House video feed. It was a camp meeting at 1600!

It was a grand experience. One of my friends called me and said, "Wow! I feel like I've been to church!"

Truth is, we had.

I moved on, thinking, "This was great! Who can have a problem with this?"

But before an hour had passed, I was soon met with a few "not so fast" moments. But not from the usual suspects in the MSM and elsewhere.

We live in a hostile time, and the predictable response from detractors to discredit and intimidate anything "religious" is just a part of life in an America swathed in carnality and political correctness.

Specifically, the name that really lights up the pagan peanut gallery? The Lord Jesus Christ.

We've learned to expect such hysterics while reminding ourselves about our "wise as serpents, harmless as doves" marching orders. You expect it from them. But from inside the tent of believers?

Soon after the Rose Garden gathering, political news outlet, The Politico, tweeted, "The White House is celebrating National Day of Prayer with a Christian band playing worship songs in the Rose Garden."

Attached to this simple sentence was a brief video clip of Jonathan Cain (the writer of Journey's classic, "Don't Stop Believing," and an unashamed Man of God), who was joined by a group of worshippers from Dallas' Prestonwood Baptist Church. They were singing,

*You give life, You are love/ You bring light to the darkness.
You give hope, You restore/ Every heart that is broken/ Great
are You, Lord!*

*It's Your breath in our lungs!/ So we pour out our praise to
You only!*

That's a far cry from the filthy lyrics of Beyonce and Jay Z that have pulsed through the White House air on more than one occasion.

I soon saw a retweet of this with a question pinned to it, "Curious if American taxpayers are footing the bill for this. Does anyone know?"

This wasn't from one of the expected cynics.

It came from a professed believer; a talented man who has written some insightful things, but many times with the intentional "stick in the eye" shock value against that which

might be deemed too conventional or too traditional, and almost always to an underlying drumbeat of inclusion.

Sure, it might sound cute sometimes, but after a special moment for the other believers in America, why such a silly comment?

Oh, the band of followers considered it such a brave question!

My question, why?

The brave question should perhaps target another grand Rose Garden gathering, such as one that honored an admitted traitorous combatant against America. The brave question could be, was money was paid? Were criminals released? Just asking.

Today's Rose Garden participants are safe targets of bluster. Write what you want, and I'm pretty sure they won't strap a bomb full of nails to one of their kids with the orders to blow up the place. No, that wouldn't cross the minds of those who were busy "Pouring out praises."

Sadly, we have a growing group of those who are quick to embrace their new ministry of self-anointed hall monitors to "keep the church in line." But don't dare confront the other beliefs. "We can't do politics. It's not inclusive."

The Family Research Council statement regarding today was perfect, "On this National Day of Prayer, Americans have an opportunity to set aside partisan bickering and the politics of division to unite in prayer for their nation, leaders and local communities." And based on the swill of mischief and anarchy of the last few years, we all need to stop and pray.

Let's pull together. We need all the help we can get.

Jesus clearly warned, "If the world hates you, remember that they hated me first" (John 15:18, NCV). I understand that. I can live with that. But the shooting from inside the tent?

It seems more pharisaical than prophetic. {eoa}

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Exclusive Behind-the-Scenes Look at Evangelical Influence in the White House

My invitation to the National Day of Prayer event in the Rose Garden at the White House came from Mr. Todd Lamphere, who works with Rev. Paula White and the faith and opportunity initiatives at the White House.

After I arrived in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday afternoon, I had dinner with directors for faith and opportunity initiatives in different government departments such as HUD, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Commerce. One of their roles is to create faith-based liaisons between their departments and the communities they serve.

Upon entering the White House, I met many evangelical leaders representing different denominations and faith-based ministries, among them Dr. James Dobson and Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A large constituency of Jewish, Muslim and Hindu leaders was also present.

The prayer event included worship led by Mr. Jonathan Cain, former band member of Journey, along with a small choir from Prestonwood Baptist Church from Plano, Texas. Vice President

Pence spoke of the role of prayer and faith in U.S. politics from the country's foundation, stating the different times in American history that U.S. presidents have called for national days of prayer.

He mentioned that Mr. Trump has called for more days of prayer than any prior president. His focus was primarily spiritual, talking about how faith and prayer play a role in the Trump administration in every department of government.

President Trump and his wife, Melania, came through the west wing doors. The First Lady opened the event with the prayer of Moses from Numbers 6:24-26, speaking God's blessing over the people. After that, President Trump thanked the department heads and the spiritual leadership who were present for being the true heroes and the voices of moral conscience for our nation.

President Trump also noted that because of his administration's actions, people of faith can now boldly state what they believe.

The president also talked about the situation in Venezuela and how the United States was ready to step in and help with the aid for the people there. He also mentioned the opioid and drug crisis in America and how his administration's efforts to eradicate this have resulted in a decline in opioid use.

President Trump introduced a young woman who shared her story of faith, healing and sobriety, and asked her to come up and speak. In fact, he characteristically went off script several times and invited people to come up and share right on the spot.

Several of these speakers noted their gratefulness for being able to talk about their faith, thanking Mr. Trump for his willingness to encourage and celebrate people of faith in our nation.

Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein from the Chabad of Poway Synagogue in California spoke movingly on his experience during the shooting that took place last week on the final day of Passover. He quoted a famous rabbi who said that the way to overcome evil is with kindness. Goldstein told of his choice to either run from the shooter or to stand up and face evil.

He decided to stand up and fight for victory, and in the process, his finger was blown off, and Mrs. Lori Kaye died protecting him. His bandaged hand was clearly visible as he was talking.

President Trump then had many different faith leaders lead out in prayer, including Mr. Ralph Reed, who repented on behalf the church and the nation. Prayers of blessing and protection over our president and his family and our spiritual leaders were also made.

Rev. Paula White closed the prayer meeting with a powerful and bold prayer of faith, declaring victory and blessing over our president and our nation. It was well received by most in attendance.

Although the National Day of Prayer was inclusive of many different faiths, it was evident that the evangelical community had the majority representation. One of the striking things about this prayer event was how boldly and publicly many people prayed and thanked Jesus. I was struck by the common thread of thankfulness for a president who is so open to the spiritual and faith community.

I was told that every Cabinet meeting in the White House is opened in prayer, and that prayer is common all over Washington in different government offices and departments. One man acknowledged that God's hand was clearly responsible for how many active people of faith are involved in our government's leadership.

These people recognize that they have a short window of time

to see the faith community and the evangelical cause become firmly rooted in the political arena. They are keenly aware that strong spiritual and political forces are working against people of faith and moral causes.

They have a strong sense that a large contingent of people is strongly opposed to what they are doing as they push back against the agenda of socialism and the extreme leftist agenda in the area of human sexuality.

I left with a heightened sense of my responsibility as a leader in the faith community to pray for our leaders and to teach and communicate a biblical worldview from a Christ-centered perspective. According to one well-known Christian leader I spoke with, the role of faith has never been more prominent in Washington's history than it is today.

People of faith have a voice in the government in Washington now. Although it is easy to bemoan the darkness, I believe that the bright light of the gospel is shining in our nation's capital today.

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This Is Why You're Not Experiencing God's Promises

Have you ever wondered if something is holding you back from experiencing the promises of God in your life? I remember a time when I was hearing about all the promises of God but never actually experiencing them.

I heard about peace, but I didn't have any. I heard about joy, but I was unhappy all the time. I could see God's promises in His Word, and I believed them, but something was missing. As I spent time studying God's Word, I came to realize that the root of my problem was found in the wrong mindsets I was living with.

Identifying Your Mindset

The story of the Israelites is a good example of what a difference our mindset can make. In Exodus 13, we read about how God called them out of Egypt to possess the promised land. But what was supposed to be an 11-day journey ended up being a 40-year journey through the wilderness—all because they didn't know how to think right (see Deut. 1).

One wrong mindset the Israelites had was, "Please make everything easy for me because I can't take it when things are too hard." When things got hard for them and they had to fight their enemies, instead of turning to God, they started grumbling and complaining about their situation. They thought their enemies were the problem, but it was really their thinking.

So instead of moving forward and experiencing the good things God had planned for them, He had to take them the long, hard way through the wilderness in order to prepare them to possess the promised land.

Walking Through the Wilderness

Like the Israelites, sometimes we're not ready for all that God has planned for us, so we spend a little time in "the wilderness" growing up and learning how to trust Him. I know what this is like from personal experience. There was a time when I had an "it's just too hard" attitude and mindset about things I needed to face.

When God spoke to my heart that I needed to completely forgive

people who had hurt me, it seemed impossible to me. But realizing that He didn't expect me to do it in my own strength gave me the courage to take a step of faith and choose to forgive, trusting that God would change my heart and set me free from the misery of bitterness and unforgiveness.

It wasn't easy, but the peace and joy I now have is so much better than living with the bitterness and resentment of unforgiveness. And I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today if I hadn't obeyed God's direction in this area of my life.

God sometimes has to bring us through hardship to test us, humble us and to see if we will keep His commandments in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 8:2 (ESV) says, "You shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not."

God wants to help us learn how to obey Him in the wilderness because if we don't keep His commandments when life is hard, we won't keep them when everything is going our way. He wants us to be strong enough and mature enough to keep moving forward in His plan for our lives.

Setting Your Mind in the Right Direction

Instead of having the mindset that says, "It's just too hard!", the truth is that with God's help, you can do whatever you need to do in life. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

So, when the enemy starts to tell you that your circumstances are impossible, you'll never make it, and you should quit, you can be confident knowing this promise from God: I can do whatever I need to do through Christ who gives me strength. You can look to God for the strength you need to deal with whatever life throws at you.

Once we adopt a right mindset to replace a wrong one, we must be determined to keep our thoughts headed in that direction. Colossians 3:2 (AMPC) says to “set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth.”

You do that by focusing on the promises of God in His Word, choosing to trust what He says more than what your circumstances look like, what others say or how you feel. The truth is God loves you, He has wonderful plans for your life, and He wants you to experience all He has for you.

Instead of letting your mind get stuck on the hard things in your life, think about all that God has helped you through and all He has in store for you. Set your mind on Him and follow His lead through the wilderness to your promised land!

Your Never-Fail Beauty Treatment

We all want to look our best. And we do our best to achieve it.

And if you're like me, you've tried various products, hoping that the promise on the bottle will prove true.

The latest one I tried had this instruction: “The best time to apply skin care products is when you are fresh out of a warm shower or bath. Not only is your skin clean, but it is also thoroughly moist and will better absorb anything you apply to it.”

Instructions followed for the product but not for my life.

I followed this instruction. But blushing a bit, I confess I failed to do the same when it comes to my life. When spots of insecurities appeared, when blotches of worry and blemishes of resentment, past sin, guilt and unfulfilled dreams remained, life wasn't pretty.

A clean-up job was begging. But instead, I covered it with the busyness of life, hoping no one would notice the blemishes that stained inside.

But God noticed.

He had the washcloth of His unconditional love and the lotion of His grace to wipe away any unsightly blemish in my heart, all the dirty of past mistakes, the nagging regrets and the self-doubt.

And when I stood in front of the mirror, I saw it all. I took a deep breath, drew in courage and confessed to Him, "I'm in Your presence as I acknowledge all I see. I will be still for you to clean all that keeps my heart, my attitude and my thoughts from radiating the beauty You know I should have."

One by one He wiped away, leaving my heart fresh and free. And He added the perfume of His instruction:

"So flee youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).

Let's Pray

Father, it's a pure heart I pursue and it's a clean life I long for. Help me to be still as You use Your supernatural cleanser that I still need. In Jesus' name, amen.

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This article originally appeared at .

To hear more about true beauty, even in the midst of brokenness, listen to the podcast included with this article.

Prophecy: God Is Looking for Those Who Will Double Down Now

The Lord spoke to my wife and me at the beginning of this year that the first 90 days of 2019 would be a time of fast-paced building. We felt that those days were a time where the Lord would lay a foundation we could build upon for the rest of the year in the body of Christ. As the first 90 days have come and gone, I believe that meant the foundations God wanted to establish in people's lives and everything they put their hands to. But I also believe God is now calling us to double down and reinforce our foundation. If you double down in this season and focus on establishing a firm foundation, you will be able to build something for the kingdom of God that will last.

We may first go low and do the necessary things that may not seem as flashy or important in the world's eyes in order to move forward and build high. When an architect designs a high-rise building, he has to double down and lay a foundation just as deep into the ground going down as he will build above.

In 2 Kings 18, we find out that Hezekiah became king at the young age of 26. Hezekiah was a great king and was successful because Hezekiah understood the principle of doubling down.

The Bible says this about King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:3-5, "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to everything that David his father had done. He removed the high places, broke down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherah poles, and crushed the bronze serpent that Moses had made. ... He trusted in the Lord God of Israel. Afterwards, there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah or among those who were before him."

What made Hezekiah so great? Because Hezekiah knew how to double down. As soon as Hezekiah became king, the first thing he did was go into the house of God and remove the high places, tear down the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden images and break the golden serpent into pieces. Hezekiah's first move as king was to clean out the house of the Lord from all of the idolatry that had been defiling it for so long. He did these four things and went low to do only two things to go high, to build and to plant.

God is looking for those who understand the importance of doubling down and working on the foundation of their lives before they build or plant what God has placed in their heart to accomplish. If you build a beautiful house with the best materials on a poor foundation, it will not last! God wants to sow seed into good ground. God is raising up those who will double down with no toleration for idolatry and those who will value their foundation in God more than anything they may be destined to do. Doubling down is spending time in prayer, choosing to fast and allowing the Lord to process us and keep our hearts pure and our character and integrity strong.

I want to challenge you today, double down and become like King Hezekiah who went low, tearing down what needs to be torn down and breaking what needs to be broken so God can move and do something new that will last! {eoa}

Joe Joe Dawson is the founder and apostle of ROAR Apostolic Network and ROAR Church Texarkana. Joe Joe is married to the

love of his life, Autumn Dawson, and they have three children: Malachi, Judah and Ezra. The Dawsons live and teach a lifestyle of revival and awakening. Their desire is to see every believer fulfill their God-given destiny and live life to the fullest in God. Joe Joe is also the author of Living Your God-Sized Dream and Recipe for Revival. To connect with Joe Joe or for more information, visit .

This article originally appeared at .

Former Yoga Instructor: A Demon Tried to Suck My Soul out of My Body

When people think of witchcraft, few think of the New Age. Yet former Kundalini yoga instructor Mike Shreve says that's exactly what the New Age and yoga are.

"My guru taught us that yoga was really [white] witchcraft," Shreve says. "He called it witchcraft and compared it to other forms. ... Black witchcraft is for evil purposes. Red witchcraft is for selfish purposes. But then, manipulating the life force within you in order to achieve God consciousness and become an influential, positive person in the world was called white witchcraft."

But Shreve soon discovered that yoga opened him up to the demonic. And when Shreve surrendered his life to Jesus, the devil was not happy.

Shreve recalls one night when the enemy attacked him in his room.

“I looked up and saw this gray ball,” he says. “And it came through the wall. ... It was throbbing like the pulsation of a human heart. Then, all of a sudden—I knew intuitively it was a demon spirit—it rushed across the room, slammed into my forehead and started trying to suck my soul out of my body. And immediately, I realized this was the demon I had yielded to when I did meditation.”

Listen to the interview to find out what happened next.

Final Conscience Rule Will Protect People, Orgs From Providing Abortions

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a final conscience rule that protects health care individuals and entities from providing and participating in services such as abortion, sterilization or assisted suicide procedures that violate their religious and moral beliefs.

President Donald Trump made the announcement Thursday during a speech in the White House Rose Garden to mark the National Day of Prayer.

The conscience rule will be effective 60 days from its final publication and enforced by the agency’s Office of Civil Rights. According to the HHS, the rule requires hospitals, universities, clinics and other institutions that receive funding from federal programs such as Medicare and Medicaid to certify that they comply with 25 laws passed by Congress that protect conscience rights in health care. Those laws allow health providers and entities to opt out of providing,

participating in, paying for or referring for health care services about which they have personal or religious objections.

The final rule fulfills President Trump's promise to promote and protect the fundamental and unalienable rights of conscience and religious liberty, a promise he made when he signed an executive order in May 2017 protecting religious liberty. In October 2017, the Department of Justice issued guidance encouraging other Departments, including HHS, to implement and enforce all relevant religious freedom laws. As a result, in January 2018, following the launch of its new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division, HHS announced the proposed conscience rule.

"I commend President Trump and the administration for protecting the sanctity of human life, the rights of conscience and religious freedom today on the National Day of Prayer," said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. "This rule ensures that health care entities and professionals will not be bullied out of the health care field because they decline to violate their conscience by taking a human life," said Staver.

This Could Be Hindering Your Prayers, but Pastors Aren't Preaching About It

You've prayed the same prayers to no avail. You become discouraged praying and often wonder if God hears your prayers. But are we following the biblical way of praying? Are our pastors and leaders instructing us to pray Jesus' way?

There are many different ways to pray. We know for a fact that prayer works! What about the times we pray continually and don't see any progress? Could there be, not a better way, but a more effective way? I don't want to say praying one way is better than the other. I do believe God hears all prayers. However, when we look at the way Jesus prayed, should we be following His example.

I've been to several different churches and tried many different denominations in my young-adult years. Except for one church, I never heard a message preached on praying audibly or the power of our words. As I minister around the world and pray out loud, and decree and declare, people look at me as if it is foreign. They are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with it. They haven't been taught to do it.

When we look at how our Father God created, He spoke to things. Jesus, when healing and delivering spoke aloud to the spiritual atmosphere, demons and health conditions. He prayed out loud. He modeled how to pray. David in Samuel cried out and called out, which is with an audible voice. As we search Scriptures further when they prayed to God, we find action-audible words such as "say, "said, "cried," "called" and "spoke."

In the Bible, prayer was audible. However, we haven't been taught to pray audibly, and if we have, we are intimidated because our prayer might not sound as good as another person's; therefore, we hold back.

What if the missing element to your prayers being answered is that you aren't, "Speaking to your mountain (Matt. 11:23) " "Calling things not as though they are (Rom. 4:17)" or knowing that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21). What if your prayers started getting answered by you speaking to your situation and praying audibly as Jesus did? Would it hurt to at least try something different?—not better, as I said before, but could there be a more effective way to

pray if we followed Jesus' example? In my book, *Speak Out*, I give biblical grounds for praying audibly. I am not saying we can never pray silently or connect spirit to Spirit with the Lord in prayer. I am saying there is much scriptural proof that Jesus, His disciples and many people in the Bible prayed audibly, so why shouldn't we try it? {eoa}

Kathy DeGraw is a prophetic spiritual warfare strategist releasing the love and power of God to ignite and activate people, release prophetic destinies and deliver people from the bondage of the enemy. She is the founder of *Kathy DeGraw Ministries* and *Be Love Outreach*. She is the author of several books, including *Speak Out*, *Discerning and Destroying the Works of Satan*, *Identity Invasion*, *Who is Speaking?* and *Warfare Declarations*. You can connect with Kathy on Facebook, or visit .

What Happened When Chonda Pierce Tried Online Dating

When it comes to comedy and faith, Chonda Pierce is unashamed.

Her bold, tell-it-like-it-is style has audiences begging her for more stories, and she delivers in the new documentary, *Unashamed*, in theaters May 7 and 9.

"It's interesting, my life right now," Pierce shares in a new interview. "I have my third documentary, and I'm still alive. You know, usually they do documentaries for dead people."

As for the documentary, "It's a lot of fun and frivolity in between some very serious conversations with others about what it's like to stand up for the cause of Christ," Pierce says.

The film features Pierce's own interviews with major faith players like Mike Huckabee, Danny Gokey and the Benham Brothers.

But it's not all serious.

Pierce, who is widowed, opens the documentary with horror stories about online dating. And in this interview, she gives even more details about the men she encountered on the world wide web.

Take a listen!

Why All of Israel Stood Still on Thursday

All of Israel—the tiny democratic nation tucked in a sea of chaos—came to a complete standstill for two minutes Thursday in honor of the six million Jewish people massacred during the Holocaust.

The stunning moment of silence began when sirens blared across the Jewish nation, according to a report from CBN News.

Robert Dunn, who is from Philadelphia, was visiting Israel. He told CBN Thursday marked the first time he had been in the country on Holocaust Memorial Day.

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