

Dr. Michael Youssef Calls for Prayer, not Fear, as Response to Escalating Ukraine Crisis

As current events draw our world more and more into panic mode, we know believers must respond in faith. Rather than allowing the headlines to move us into fear, Dr. Michael Youssef says, we must look to Scripture for answers—and turn our end-times concerns into prayer for the nations.

The alarming events in Ukraine don't surprise him, Youssef, renowned Bible teacher and host of *Leading the Way With Dr. Michael Youssef*, says in a recent *Strang Report* podcast interview. "This is one dictator who's imposing his will on another nation. And he's been telegraphing about this for weeks and months. And the sad part about this is what Ronald Reagan warned us about: Weakness invites war. And now we're seeing this. The weaker America becomes, the more wars there are going to be. This is just the beginning ... because they have tested the will of the United States and found it wanting."

He adds that believers must first see these events as an opportunity for prayer. "There are godly Russian believers who love the Lord Jesus, and there are godly Ukrainians who love the Lord Jesus, who are packing the churches and who are crying to God, and they're praying for each other," he explains.

Youssef calls on believers in the U.S. to join the prayer movement, noting that he sees a genuine end-times component to these events. "I honestly believe that Satan is preparing the world for the Antichrist," he says. In an upcoming book, he will point readers to Jesus' words in Matthew 24, where He says the world will be surprised at His return. "But for believers, it's like a childbirth," Youssef says.

“The intervals between labor pains—when they get closer and closer, the baby is about to be born,” he says. “And that’s what Jesus said in Matthew 24: Wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes—all these things have been with us for a long time. But when you see them coming in fast intervals, you know that the baby is about to be born.”

Youssef reminds believers that Paul says there is a special crown for those who “loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8b). Believers who eagerly await Christ’s return, he says, “realize that these things are not by happenstance; they’re not accidents; there are things that are serving the Lord’s purpose ultimately. And of course, Satan is trying to get in the middle; he knows his time is getting near, so he’s intensifying his persecution of Christians.”

He says what he sees in the church today also moves him to prayer. The current deconstruction movement, with pastors and worship leaders in the West turning their backs on Christ, combined with thousands coming to Christ in the Middle East and North Africa, where persecution is rampant, “convinces me that the Lord is beginning to gather his sheep together,” he says. “He’s separating the sheep from the goats—and that is very exciting for Christians.

“When we see these things, we need to be praying for the believers in Ukraine, in Russia, in the Middle East, in China and elsewhere,” Youssef adds. “Because you know, we are one church—we’re going to be together in heaven for all of eternity, from every language, tribe and nation. The church of Jesus Christ in America needs to start praying for the church worldwide.”

“We should never be afraid of whatever happens; fear is the instrument of the enemy,” he says. “The Bible calls that fear by name. It’s a spirit, and it’s a spirit from Satan. He has no right or any hold upon the Christians, and that needs to be fought with every ounce of spiritual energy. ... I tell people

all the time, if you are dependent upon Wall Street for your prosperity; if you are dependent upon the Dow Industrial Average for your prosperity, then you're in trouble. But if you're depending on God, and He's your provider, and you've been faithful with God, you have nothing to fear.

"The psalmist said, 'I have been young; now I'm old, and I've never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging for bread,'" Youssef reminds us. "So this is not a time to fear, but to lift up our heads, because the day of our redemption is drawing nigh."

So how can we pray? "First of all, we need to pray for the believers worldwide," Youssef says. We must pray specifically for the believers in countries in the news: Russia, where believers are in trouble for speaking out against Putin; Ukraine, where believers have some freedom but still struggle; China, where believers have been tortured; and Pakistan, where people are paid to testify against Christians.

"We need to be praying for the persecuted church," he says. "Persecution has been going on. In fact, there are more martyrs who died for Christ during the 20th century than the first century—in fact, the first three centuries. And so we need to be praying for the church worldwide, because that is the body of Christ. This is the body of believers, these are the brothers and sisters with whom we're going to be spending eternity.

"That's the first thing we need to do," Youssef says. "Then we need to pray for an awakening so that the lost can come and know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and believe in Him and place faith in Him, especially in these times when people are fearing."

Youssef says that in these times more than ever, we need to live our lives as a witness of Christ to the world. Listen to our *Strang Report* interview for more details on how you can

pray for believers in Ukraine, Russia and other key parts of the world, and subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts and your favorite podcast platform for more stories like this one to inform you of current events while inspiring you in the power of the Holy Spirit. {eo}

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