

Andrew Brunson's Miraculous Release Is Proof That Prayer Really Works

Frankly, I was not surprised when Pastor Andrew Brunson said that praying and knowing people were praying for him kept him sane and hopeful after being imprisoned in Turkey.

"When I was arrested, and it kept going on and on, and it seemed there was no way out ... I lost a lot of hope," Brunson said. "What helped me—I began to see that there was value in my suffering, especially as time went on. I saw that many people around the world began praying for me. And I began to see that God was involved in this."

How could he know people all over the world—including me—were praying for him? The Turkish authorities allowed Brunson's wife Norine to visit him about once a week, for 30 minutes. The two of them would speak over the phone through a glass window, and in those precious moments they could share together, she made sure he knew people were praying for him.

"She would bring encouragement to me and tell me that people were praying for me. And as I learned that, I began to see that God was involved in this and that God was going to do something with my suffering that had value," Brunson said.

If there has been one constant truth in Pastor Andrew Brunson's tumultuous journey to freedom, it has been the power of prayer. In fact, when the Brunsons learned that they would be seeing the president of the United States, their reaction was to pray they would have the opportunity to pray for him—and they did.

On live TV and in the presence of the secretary of state and cabinet members, Andrew Brunson—who 24 hours earlier had been

sitting in a prison cell in Turkey—knelt down and prayed for President Trump in the Oval Office.

“Lord God, I ask that you pour out your Holy Spirit on President Trump. That you give him supernatural wisdom to accomplish all the plans you have for this country and for him,” Brunson said, before concluding, “May he be a great blessing to our country. In Jesus’ name, we bless you. Amen.”

As I watched Pastor Brunson pray over President Trump, it suddenly struck me that we were not only celebrating Brunson’s release; we were also celebrating the power of prayer. Behind the tense negotiations between the U.S. and Turkey, inside the Oval Office and even within the chambers of the Turkish court that finally freed Brunson, God was at work, using the president, vice president and countless men and women to orchestrate the miracle we witnessed this past weekend. Rep. Mark Meadows, who was one of Brunson’s greatest advocates, recognized this fact.

“You had dozens and dozens of advocates. You had one champion in the president of the United States. But he was the answer to millions of prayers that went up on your behalf and the behalf of your family,” Rep. Meadows said to Brunson and the crowd gathered in the Oval Office.

At a time when there are so many reasons to be worried or anxious, the reminder that God listens and responds to our prayers is encouraging news. He might not always answer them the way we want him to, but he will listen to us and will not leave or forsake us.

Pastor Brunson’s release is a great victory for international religious freedom and a testament of President Trump and his administration’s commitment to defending it. Religious freedom is a bipartisan issue we can all agree on. Every human being has the right to worship—or not worship—without the threat of abuse or persecution. Under President Trump, we have made

great advances to protect this right at home and abroad, and for this I'm grateful

This past Saturday, exactly 1,183 miles away from the White House, sitting in our home in Springdale, Arkansas, my wife and I celebrated this great moment for religious freedom and Brunson's return home. It is a good reminder to each of us in America and across the world, if God can set Andrew Brunson free from Turkish imprisonment, God can do anything in your life today. Never forget: All things are possible with God. {eoa}

Ronnie Floyd *is senior pastor of Cross Church and president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. He is the author of Living Fit: Make Your Life Count by Pursuing a Healthy You. Follow him @ronniefloyd.*