

Dutch Sheets Asks, 'Do Our Prayers Really Matter?'

"The quest of Jesus Christ on the earth is greatly crippled by wrong notions of the sovereignty of God." –Jack Hayford

I first heard Pastor Hayford say this 25 to 30 years ago and was greatly impacted. I have never forgotten it. The implications are serious and multifaceted. The underlying premise is that, due to their concept of God's sovereignty, many Christians believe God always gets what He wants and that His desire will always be accomplished, regardless of our actions. This belief controls most believers and is manifested in many ways, not the least of which is passivity and complacency.

A read through the Bible and a tour of history easily dispels this erroneous belief. God's will is never for Satan to accomplish his stealing, killing and destroying. Never. As believers, we have a part to play in God's victories, turnarounds and the working together of things for our good (Rom. 8:28). They do not occur simply because He desires them to, nor do they occur for us just because we are Christians. Actions, prayers and decrees, faith, endurance, obedience and more are necessary in order for us to receive the fulfillment of God's will and promises.

This is why Satan tries to "wear down the saints" (Dan. 7:25) through discouragement, hope deferred, confusion and more. He cannot stop God ... unless he stops us. He cannot defeat God but he can, at times, defeat us and thereby thwart God's will. So he tries to make us weary and cause us to lose heart (Gal. 6:9). He also endeavors to distract us through the cares of life, busyness and, as we said to begin this post, by giving us a false sense of assurance through a misunderstanding of

God's sovereignty.

To be clear, God is sovereign. The word "sovereignty," however, means "all authority," not the control of all that happens. The American Constitution is sovereign in our nation but is only manifested when enforced and obeyed by honest and willing people. And so it is with God's sovereign will on earth.

This brings me to two important exhortations for today's post. First, I am exhorting and appealing to intercessors: Do not grow weary and slack off in your prayers. I know praying and decreeing often over the same situations can be frustrating and even draining. I also realize that the fight of faith is most challenging in its enduring facet. But our prayers are transforming a nation and shaping history. The hard work will be worth all of the effort and sacrifice.

Whatever you need to do to infuse fresh determination and commitment into your prayer life, do it! Speak with someone and allow them to encourage you. Read a motivating book. Spend time in God's presence. Meet with some friends and pray over one another for strength and encouragement. Bind the devil. Kick a chair. Whatever it takes, do it!

My second exhortation and appeal is to spiritual leaders around this nation. This is not a time for "business as usual." It is not a time to "stay the course" of normality. No, we should not panic and react emotionally; but we must take action.

Babies are still being killed on a daily basis, some *after* heir botched abortion; millions of our tax dollars are paying for it.

Kindergartners are being encouraged to change their gender and attempt to change their bodies—kindergartners! Parents are being prosecuted for trying to stop this.

Leftists and socialists have made great progress in their attempt to take over our nation. Our history is being rewritten so that our future can be controlled.

Because of this administration's decisions, America is becoming weaker and weaker militarily. The deterrent of strength is gone. Evil dictators around the world no longer fear us. Only by the grace of God will the world survive another three years of weak leadership.

Our economy is a mess, hanging by a thread. To say that things are precarious is truly an understatement. Inflation is out of control, spending is completely unbridled.

I could say more, which I'm sure you know. My question is, if we believe in the power of prayer, why are not more churches and leaders praying? If you do not have time for 10, 15, 20-30 minutes of prayer for America and the world when you gather as a congregation, then you have fallen prey to the mindset Jack Hayford lamented.

Do we really believe our sermons are more important than the prayer of agreement? Do we really believe that creating an atmosphere of fun and fellowship is more important than travailing over our situation, our future? Do we really believe that "inconveniencing" Christians with services that last more than an hour on a Sunday morning is asking too much? Sadly, for many, the answer to these questions is yes. I fear that we are fiddling while our nation burns. We have already reached the point where only a miraculous, divine intervention will save us.

Leaders, make a statement to your people. Don't preach this Sunday—pray!

Have 5, 10, 15, 20 trusted people ready with a one or two-minute prayer. Line them up, give them the microphone and let this be the sermon. Are things not yet to the point in America and the world that we shouldn't change the schedule for some

crisis intervention? Wouldn't heartfelt tears combined with effectual fervent prayer be in order at this time? Some of those sitting in our pews have *never* seen this type of prayer in action. Why?

If we don't wake up now, our alarm clock could be World War III. If we don't take action now, another generation could be lost. Do not hang your hope on an imminent return of Christ. Occupy until He comes! Do not hang your hope on a false concept of the sovereignty of God. He is waiting for us to take action and partner with Him. Let's do this.

Finally, let me say that I know I am preaching primarily to the choir. You probably would not be reading and/or listening to these posts if you weren't already praying. And I thank you. Please consider sending this post to someone who might be impacted by it. A friend. A family member. Your pastor. Help us spread this message. Thank you for considering this. America shall be saved ... as we do our part. {eo}

Dutch Sheets *is an internationally recognized author, gifted teacher and conference speaker. He travels extensively, challenging believers for passionate prayer and societal reformation. Seeing America experience a sweeping revival and return to its Godly heritage is Dutch's greatest passion. For more information on Dutch and his ministry, please visit .*

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