

The Prayer Class

Purpose: *To encourage greater participation and joy in prayer*

The Prayer Class meets in God's Throne Room 24/7

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence Ephesians 3:12.

Teacher: Abe Funk

Date: September 5, 2024

Lesson: *Turning Devastation into Triumph*

Welcome to The Prayer Class:

Loving Father, we long for the day when we will be complete and perfect as you made the first people. But they, like I do, and we all keep failing. Show us how our devastations can turn to triumphs, how we can live victoriously now while we wait for that perfect day to come. In Jesus' powerful name, Amen!

Bible Reading:

 Romans 7:15-25

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Key Verse: *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out 7:18.*

Background and Lesson:

Six years ago, Jacob Wasserman was an aspiring junior hockey player, with a dream and talent to play in the NHL. When a novice trucker ran a stop sign and crashed into the bus carrying Jacob and his team on the way to play another hockey game—16 young players and coaches died, and 10 players were injured. Jacob was paralyzed from the waist down for life. With his dream to play hocked over, how would he live the rest of his life? What could he do now? With help from family and friends Jacob took up sculling, single rowing. He worked hard and soon won the national gold that qualified him to go to the Paralympics in Paris. He came in last to the roar of the crowd who knew his story. He was not discouraged, as he competed with men who had rowed for two decades. He learned a lot and plans to compete again in Los Angeles. Everyone of the Paralympians have similar stories of overcoming a handicap, and enduring the discipline of training. Jacob turned his devastation into a triumph.

I'm really enjoying the Paralympics; I can identify better with these athletes than the Olympians who seem so healthy, with strong bodies that it's hard to imagine how I could compete with them. The Para-athletes have all experienced trauma and hardship. They have not only endured the rigors of training, but they also overcame a handicap like the loss of a limb, and a physical or mental injury. To even get their mind past their loss to try competing was a giant step for them. Many people simply give up; it's too hard, too much pain, and too long. It's just not worth it they think. Many cannot turn their devastation into a triumph.

Paul tells us about his handicap, that he too was a wounded follower of Jesus, and he's very open about it. *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out* 18. Like a Paralympian Paul describes himself as a helplessly wounded "athlete". He describes his situation as hopeless, except for one thing. *Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! 25a.* Paul tells us that Christ turned his devastation into a triumph.

Paul's story is the story of all humanity, and the story of every Christian. We are sinners by nature and by our actions. I freely admit that I too identify with Paul, and his handicap is my handicap too. I too am a sinner by nature and by my actions. Like a Paralympian I struggle to overcome the old sinful nature. It tends to draw me away from what I want to do, especially when it's time to get up in the morning to pray. In myself I am hopeless to do what I want to do. But, when Jesus came into my life he forgave my sin, gave me a new nature, and with his resurrection power—the power of the Holy Spirit, I can rise above my handicap, my sinful nature, when I choose to let him fill and guide me. Jesus has turned my devastation into triumph. He can do the same for you!

In last week's lesson I described our position in Christ. This lesson is about living that life and the struggle we still all face as Christians. Some would describe this as *this is where the rubber meets the road*. How wonderful that God has provided everything we need for this life and godliness in Christ Jesus 2 Peter 1:3. Paul's story does not end in Romans chapter seven. For the rest of that story read chapter eight. I'll get you started with this teaser... *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death* Romans 8:1-2. This is how Christ can turn our devastations into triumphs!

Quote: *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness... 2 Peter 1:3*

Think About This:

In what way can you identify with a Paralympian and Paul's story? Write a paragraph about that.

A Prayer for You:

Thank you, loving Father that *in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us* (Romans 8:37). Thankyou for turning our devastation into triumph! Amen!

My Notes and what To Pray for:

Add your prayer requests here: yourself, family, church family, missionaries, & leaders in government

Note: All Scriptures are from the NIV Bible unless otherwise indicated

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful Colossians 4:2

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