



A ministry of Revitalizing Churches, Inc.

P.O. Box 30177 Phoenix, AZ 85046

www.stoptoprayer.org sara@stoptoprayer.org 602-992-8808

December 2022

Forgotten Prayers

by Gene Beekman



"Have you ever felt as if the Lord had forgotten your prayers? I have. I am particularly prone to feel this way after I have prayed for something for an exceptionally long time and seen no apparent answer from the Lord.

During this Christmas Season, the Bible reminds us in the Gospel of Luke 1:5-14:

"In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

*Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "**Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth.**"*

There are a few things I think are especially important for us to understand from this account:

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth were elderly and incapable of having children because Elizabeth was barren and both she and Zechariah were beyond their child-bearing years.
2. As the years rolled by, their dream of having a child slowly disappeared. Praying for a child seemed pointless as their bodies grew older.
3. When the angel announced that his prayer had been answered, I can imagine Zechariah asking himself what the angel was referring to. But before Zechariah could answer his own silent question, the angel stunned him with the news that he and Elizabeth were to finally have a child!
4. The Lord had not forgotten the years Zechariah and Elizabeth had prayed for a child. They may have forgotten all the praying they had done for a child, but God had not forgotten!
5. All along the Lord had intended to give this godly and faithful couple a child who would be a great joy and delight to them. But in addition to bringing them great personal joy, the Lord also had in mind to give them a son who would cause many to rejoice because of his birth. This very special child would announce the coming of the Lord Jesus! Had God answered their youthful prayers when and how they expected Him to, their son probably would have grown up to be a fine Jewish man who lived a good and productive life, but who would have been quickly forgotten by the world. By having to wait for God's perfect timing, Zechariah and Elizabeth were given the forerunner (John the Baptist) to the Savior of the world. The world has never forgotten John or the Messiah he proclaimed!



We must not interpret God's silence to our prayers as divine forgetfulness. He has promised never to forget us or our prayers:

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" Isaiah 49:15

Zephaniah 3:17 reminds us that: ***"He will take great delight in you, The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."***

Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, won't you discover anew this Christmas that the Lord is with you; he is mighty to save you; he takes great delight in you; he quiets you with his love; he rejoices over you with singing regarding the many ways he will graciously, creatively, and unexpectedly answer the prayers you thought he had forgotten!"

May these thoughts from Gene encourage you during this Christmas season, especially if you find yourself in the "waiting room" as it relates to your prayers. ***"Faith in God includes faith in His timing. Trusting Him between the promise and the fulfillment."***

My cancer was such a blessing . . .

. . . those words grabbed my attention and I wanted to hear how God had been working in Cathy's life. Thirty-eight years ago, Cathy and her family were our next-door neighbors, they moved, and we lost touch for a season



Cathy's story . . .

"My cancer was such a blessing in that it gave me a wonderful chance to turn to Jesus and get to know his amazing love. I always admired your faith Sara, and it has been an inspiration to me. Your light shines bright.

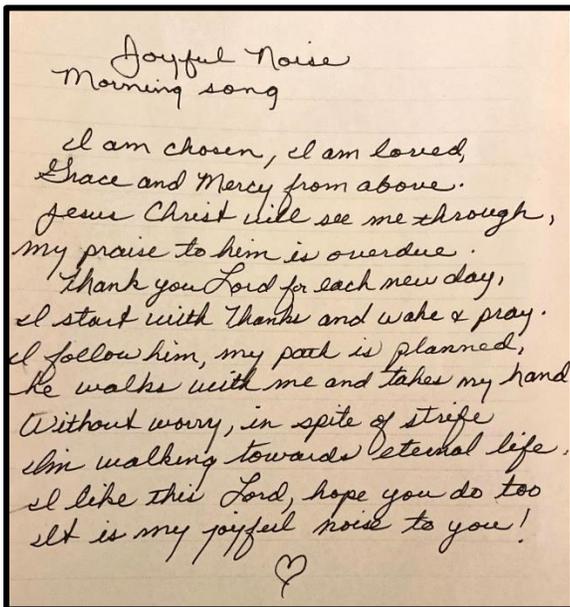
I truly have found Jesus to be in my heart. I went through a rough period. My cancer diagnosis was not good and the surgeries overwhelming. I had spent a lifetime wondering how people have such crazy faith and how do they get there. I had never gotten there and feel terrible I found these people annoyed me a bit actually. I went to church and taught Sunday School, but I knew I didn't have what they had.

During this low time, I met a Christian who knew where she was going. I wanted what she had, and she encouraged me to invite Jesus into my heart, and I did.

I have many miracles and so much to be grateful for. I do not know how I got by without knowing this great love from God. I now know where I am going and continue with his purpose for me to be here. I was excited to also be baptized!

I pray and study his Word each day. I think in one of your letters you said **you can't go back and start over, but you can start now and have a different ending.** Amen! Thanks Sara." Cathy is an incredible inspiration to me, and I was blessed as she shared from her journal some of the things God has been teaching her.

"A big lesson God has taught me is to be content where I am with what I have. That he is everything I need so be humble and thankful; God calls me to reach out to those he puts in my path to lead with love and kindness; All things come together for good, so I rejoice and find a blessing in this illness; Prayer takes me right to God's heart; I see difficult circumstances from a divine viewpoint.; I ask for strength and wisdom; The question is not do I have faith, but can I stand confidently in the faith I have been given."



I love spending time with Cathy and when Jennifer is in town, she makes time to see her too. Oh, how we love Cathy! On November 20th at 2:30 in the morning the Lord gave Cathy the words to a song "Joyful Noise" which she now sings to the Lord every morning. I cried when she first shared this song with me.

She had never written a song before and said she doesn't sing, but graciously sang it for me to the tune of *Jesus Loves Me* and then we sang it together - such a sweet blessing! Prior to the Lord's prompting to record these words, Cathy kept hearing and reading the words: **Joyful Noise!**

We should be as passionate about our relationship with Jesus as Cathy is! Sometimes we who have known Jesus for a long time forget how it felt when we first came to know Jesus. "Any long time Christian who does not still find God's grace "amazing" needs to take an honest look at his or her own sinfulness. We need to consider what our lives would be like if it weren't for Jesus. Spiritual veterans need to fill a sheet of paper finishing this statement: If it weren't for Jesus . . ." - Ron Hutchcraft

Cathy has passed the 5-year mark of having ovarian cancer, which in itself is a miracle! "I've been given discouraging news, unending complications, many surgeries, but I just continue to feel blessed, purposeful, and joyful knowing that I'm on God's plan and on His timetable."

Jesus truly changes lives! Cathy has touched many lives and continues to shine brightly for Jesus. Please pray for her on this journey.



Once upon a time the world was dark and dreary. . . and then . . . Jesus. THE END.
 "Don't let God's only begotten Son become God's only forgotten Son." - Laurie

May our focus shift from what we are hoping for to Whom we are hoping in. The believers at Colossae had not seen Jesus, but they loved Him and believed in Him: **"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy . . ."**



Nothing gives me greater joy than telling others about my Precious Savior - whether through speaking engagements or just as I'm doing life . . . going to the store, the Post Office, traveling and/or flying, waiting in an airport, and yes, even taking an Uber! ☺ People all around us are hungry to know Jesus.



Hope Has a Name - Christmas Luncheon at Shiloh Community Church - Nov. 12

*The room was breathtakingly beautiful! Women volunteered to host a table, decorate it, and bring their own China and silverware. The men did the cooking, serving, and cleaning up. The meal was delicious!! This is always a very popular event, and 259 women attended this year. What a privilege it was to be invited to speak on **Hope Has a Name!***



Kathy Duran has been very instrumental in giving leadership to these luncheons every year for the past 19 years. I've always appreciated her walk with Jesus, her passion for prayer and her humble, caring, servants' heart! It was a joy to be involved in the LORD's harvest field along with Kathy and all the men and women who gave so freely of their time to make this luncheon possible! I was touched by Kathy's text and rejoiced in all the Lord in His infinite grace chose to do. **His Word does not return void without accomplishing that for which it was sent forth.** (Isaiah 55:11) To Him be ALL the Glory! Thank you for praying.

"Okay so I knew I love you, have been inspired by you and encouraged by you. Today I was reminded why I could listen to you for hours. I saw laughter and tears in me, my table and those around me. God was smiling on you my friend, and He was more proud than ever of you. Thank you!!!!"

Many women in the response card saying in essence "Hope! There is always hope and Sara reminded us it is available always through Jesus." 2 ladies made a commitment and 17 made a re-commitment to Jesus Christ." - Kathy

Amy Groeschel beautifully expresses the passion of my heart: *I am convicted and compelled to help those around me see, know, and put their HOPE in our Redeemer's forgiving, merciful and unfailing love.*



May we eagerly, willingly, and gladly lose our lives to know and proclaim Christ, - Platt

Sara

An Encounter with God on the Moon: Astronaut Jim Irwin: As I travel around, I tell people the answer is Jesus Christ; that Jesus walking on the earth is more important than man walking on the moon.