

praying AT HOME & TOGETHER

santa barbara community church



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

PRAYING THE BOOK OF HEBREWS (7) - Hebrews 12:28-29

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our 'God is a consuming fire.

Prayer and Awe

Here is a sobering item in the biblical view of time: One day, everything that can be shaken will be shaken; and that "everything" is all things in heaven and earth (26,27). All that can be shaken will be removed, and all that will remain is what cannot be shaken. God is a consuming fire. The only unshakeable reality is the kingdom of God. Another way of saying this is: "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 Jn 2:17). To be in this unshakeable kingdom is to be "part of the permanent."¹

So what things keep you from prayer? Know this: that whatever they are, they are always shakable things that will pass away. Don't let the impermanent keep you away from the permanent.

Instead, be thankful and filled with reverence and awe that you can pray. That is part of what it means to "worship God acceptably" (28). Gratitude is what must follow grace – like thunder follows lightning. What an incredible grace we have been given, to be in a kingdom that is eternal. Neither death nor calamity nor demons can separate us from our King and our place in his kingdom (cf. Ro 8:31-39). So be grateful and pray; for prayer is the first, and most important act of gratitude.²

Awe and reverence is what you feel when you know how enormous are the stakes involved. The kingdom is a matter of life and death, heaven and hell. You have been saved as one snatched from certain death. Pray as one who knows this. The way to God has been opened to you; enter boldly, but don't swagger in, or saunter as one who has forgotten the gravity and greatness of the gift. And pray for others to be rescued from their attachment and slavery to the things that will be shaken, and be brought into the kingdom that cannot be shaken (Cf. Col 1:13). When you gather to worship, remind others that God is the lover of our souls, a tender father, but also a consuming fire – not a God to trifle with.

(Taken from *The Prayer Devotional Bible*, Ben Patterson, editor)

¹ J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), p. 502.

² *The Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: CRC Publications, 1988), question 116.

PRAY

Using the 4 “Rs”, pray Hebrews 2:17-18 into the Church and the world:

- Refect: What does it mean?
- Rejoice: What gives me reason to thank and praise God? A good way to think about thanks is being grateful for what God does. To praise him is to say “Wow” for who God is, his holy character and goodness.
- Repent: What in this text sheds light on sin in my life? Confess your sin.
- Request: Based on what I see here, what may I ask God to give and do? In the Church and in the World. Then ask!

STAFF

- James Asselin – Pastoral Assistant – Worship
- Caleb Bagdanov – Youth Ministry
- Claire Bergthold – Children and Family Ministries
- Benji Bruneel – Lead Pastor
- Paige Chase – Children and Family Ministries
- Mario Cobian – Facilities
- Mandy DuPar – Youth Ministry
- Deana Gilman – Church Administration
- Brittney Grimshaw – Preschool Director
- Joanne Herdrich – Women’s Ministry
- Karen McLean – Executive Pastor
- Jim Nelson – Visitation, Pastoral Care
- Erin Patterson – Homegroups
- Carolee Peterson – Technical Administration
- Kathy Roberts – Accounts Receivable
- Katie Shara - Pastoral Assistant – Youth and College
- Donna Sugano – Children and Family Ministries
- Mike Willbanks – Lead Pastor

CHURCHES

- Iglesia Pentecostal Unida Latin Americano - Pastor John E. Toro
- First Ukrainian Baptist Church
- First United Methodist Church - Hilary Chrisley, Alan Strout
- Foursquare Gospel Church/Nueva Vida – Jaime Ramirez
- Cliff Drive Free Methodist Church – Colleen Hurley-Bates, Doug Ranck, Danielle Garcia, T.J. Breshears, Jake Elliott, Helen Rhee

MISSIONS

THE SUFFERING CHURCH: MALASIA

Most people are expected to be Muslim – Every ethnic Malay is expected to be Muslim. Whoever deviates from this is viewed as not just going against the Constitution, but also against society at large, their family and their neighborhood. Roman Catholics and Methodists are watched by the authorities and non-governmental organizations, but non-traditional Protestant groups are more often targeted, as these tend to be more active in testifying about their faith.

How Christians are suffering – Christians from Muslim backgrounds often hide their faith and meet in secret. If discovered, they could face rejection from their family, or be forced to divorce their spouse. Occasionally they may be sent to a re-education camp, or simply disappear. The fate of Pastor Raymond Koh, abducted in February 2017, is still not clear and the country's human rights commission in its final report declared that the Special Branch of the police was involved in the abduction. This reality sent chills into the Christian community. Churches are monitored by the government, and it is illegal to share the gospel with Malay Muslims.

Examples – All children in state-run nursery and elementary schools are required to attend Islamic education. In state schools, Muslim pupils (including Christians with a Muslim background) are required to attend Islamic classes. At the university level, Islamic courses are also mandated. In February 2017, Pastor Raymond Koh was abducted in broad daylight. The country's Human Rights Commission has attempted to investigate this incident but has been preve