

Malvern Mashal 146



Anointing and Authority in Prayer - [Click here to listen](#)

We have seen that Patmos, which is a place of great grief and loss and exile can also be a place of extraordinary courage, devotion and revelation.

The seventeenth century Spanish writer Cervantes warned *he who loses wealth loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; but he that loses his courage loses all.*

Hold on to your courage

That's what the enemy is really angling for during Patmos times, because loss of courage paralyses faith and initiative. Nothing of worth is accomplished without courage – and people who are on the front line for the Lord experience serious hostility. Wicked angels, demonic powers in other words, are constantly on the lookout to stir up serious trouble against them. These entities may not have physical bodies but they are by no means lacking in intelligence.

You must have seen those Second World War movies in which courageous airmen fly straight into enormous quantities of flak? What courage it took them to keep going – and what courage it takes us to do same when the enemy tries to lure us into a subliminal, subconscious pact something along the lines of 'You stop troubling me and I'll stop troubling you. Just hold back a bit. Do a bit less. A bit less prayer, a bit less willingness to reach out to people in need . . .'

Less, less, that's always his intention! He doesn't spell it out quite as crudely as this be-

cause we would realize what he was up to, but that's what he's angling for and that's what's going on at a subliminal level – which, after all, is the level that fuels most of our actions.

The Lord redeems *all* our lives, including our subconscious, which is the vast repository of every experience we have ever had, and which records every *emotional* reaction we have had to those experiences. May the Lord fill the depths of our subconscious, that it may be the wellspring of inspiration rather than a sink of something faith sapping.

It is right to ask the Lord to come into these depths, lest the devil press certain buttons to goad us into responding in ways that are not the ways of faith and love.

If the devil can succeed in reducing our willingness to go the extra mile, a very large number of good things will never come to pass, because it is so often by going the extra mile that the Lord does His best work. Seek the Lord with all your heart.

"I was in the Spirit"

Being in the Spirit isn't just about singing in the Spirit and having words of prophecy, wonderful though that is. It's about living, as Jesus did 'in the spirit' and living as his friends.

There are millions in the world today who have been granted visions of the world to come, as John did on Patmos, and who can tell us at first hand more about the realities of heaven and hell.

There was a Buddhist monk who was pronounced clinically dead but who went on to receive the clearest out of the body experiences possible which made the reality of both heaven and hell overwhelmingly clear to him.

The Lord instructed him about them and then sent him back to this world, where, guess what? he didn't go on being a Buddhist monk! He became an utterly single-minded and dedicated Christian evangelist to Burma.

People who have had such experiences typically carry a heavenly fragrance with them that keeps their hearts questing for the eternal homeland, and focused day by day by day away from trivia, on the things that really do matter.

When I reached Holland, courtesy of the man with the credit card whom I mentioned earlier when I was standing in the queue to buy my ticket (thank you Lord!) I stayed with a Dutch pastor who, as a young man, had been an impoverished missionary in Indonesia. One day he didn't even have enough money to buy food to put on the table for himself and his family.

Almost for the first time he let himself have a good moan: "Look, Lord; I've given up a really good job at Shell to come here to Indonesia to be a missionary for you, and see where we are now. Is this how You are rewarding me?"

He stomped off down to the Post Office to get his letters for the day, hungry and seriously upset – to find a letter waiting for him with a cheque for over a thousand pounds in it. (And this was many years ago.) There and then, and in front of everyone in the Post Office, he got down on his knees, and said "Sorry Lord!" More than that he said, "From now on, Lord, I'm always going to praise you."

Hans has kept that promise – and continued to live and model it, with the result that his congregation reflects that same spirit of gratitude. A missionary in Livingstone's day who was going through incredibly difficult circumstances wrote, "**I'm learning not to be disappointed but to be grateful.**" What an inspiration and a challenge to lift up a shield of praise over the things we are currently finding difficult!

People will be much less inclined to leave our churches if our flow of praise and gratitude is ever fresh. It will often contain a note of laughter and joy because, as Mary Poole put it, '**He who laughs, lasts**'!

Scripture tells us that Jesus *ever* lives to make intercession for us: as we enter into this great ministry and *use* the authority the Lord has given up to lift up those who are broken or bowed down, we really are entering into the ministry of Heaven.

It makes all the difference in the world to be prayed for. Prayer can cross any bridge, cross any distance in a twinkling of an eye. As Mark Twain pointed out, it's the only product that enters our country without being taxed!

There is so much good that we can do for each other in prayer. 'My house will be a house of prayer for all nations', the Lord declared – but we need to know who is suffering and in need of prayer and reach out to them.

A poem from a Labour Camp

Listen to this poem that Irina Ratushinskaya wrote from a Soviet labour camp in 1986, in conditions every bit as bad as anything that John would have been facing, and let her testimony of how the power of prayer helped her during her ordeal encourage you to pray from the heart for others.

*Believe me, it was often thus:
In solitary cells, on winter nights,
a sudden sense of joy and warmth
and a resounding note of love.
and then, unsleeping, I would know
a-huddle by an icy wall:
Someone is thinking of me now,
petitioning the Lord for me.
My dear ones, thank you all
who did not falter, who believed in us!
In the most fearful prison hour
we probably would not have passed
through everything - from end to end,
our head held high, unbowed -
without your valiant hearts
to light our path.*

[*Believe me*, from 'Pencil Letters,' Bloodaxe Books, 1988.]

It is as we seek Him with all our heart that He sends His answers. But we have to accept that the Lord answers in the way He chooses to, and not necessarily as we had hoped that He would. He doesn't always explain His workings to us – but He does trust us not to get into a strop and be offended.

May our study of the whole Patmos experience teach us to cultivate such an attitude too. Pray for God to raise up such fervent and single minded people, for whom eternity is a living reality.

I love the phrase that John used 'I was in the spirit.' Let's draw the series to a close now along the lines of prayer and praise that keeps us in the flow of God's Spirit.

As we have hinted before, the early church historian Eusebius tells us that John was released from Patmos under the emperor Nerva, and God will find ways to release us from every wilderness that we are pushed into or that we stumble into.

He is who He is, the First and the Last and He can rescue us from the dullness and the grey-ness of every Patmos time – and He is trusting us to keep going through even the deepest darkest times.

A prayer for greater authority and anointing in our lives

Well, we've covered a vast amount of ground in this extended meditation on the theme of Patmos times. I thought it would be good to end by praying that we are able to live more fully in the power of His Spirit.

You see every time Christians get together, we share matters that are prayer-worthy. Someone is sick, someone is looking for a job, someone is something and something is in need of prayer! We will serve the kingdom of God greatly by doing this. May the Lord help us to harness the information that we hear and to turn it into prayer and take actions in faith that bring about His purposes.

Don't be afraid of the cost. God is not perverse: He's our Father who wants to lead, bless and use us. However much He has done already, He has more in mind for us.

So where unbelief has robbed us of the fruit and joy of walking in Your Spirit, rebuke our unbelief. Where our gratitude has shrunk to the size of a pea, and you would have it as a glorious shield, restore the shield of praise. And where we have allowed giants to loom too large in our thinking, may the Lord forgive us we pray.

Now let's just ask and receive for a moment:

I pray Father, that You will entrust to us now a greater measure of authority in prayer. Nothing that we hype up – but simply that when we pray for the sick, and those in need, more will be healed, and more fully.

When we petition for loved ones nearby or far away, that they will receive more of You, and that our spirit may hear their call for help that their spirit sends up, Lord, and we may come alongside in prayer.

Release that flow in our lives, both corporately and individually, so that we can bring thousands of people and topics to You as the years go by – and may we live to see many Patmos times open up into something wonderful for the Lord.

Anoint every part of our life, let there be no no go areas in our lives. You are King and we yield every part of our lives to You.