

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"

**Matthew 6:6**



**Christians are more to blame for not being revived than sinners are for not being converted.**



#### **PARADISE PRAYER**

I love to laugh and have fun! Some may think it is wrong to laugh and have fun with the Lord, but I don't. Last night, at my prayer time, the Lord had fun with me and it was wonderful! I started praying and it was one of those times where I just didn't know what to pray for anymore so I simply said, "Let's talk about You Lord. How was your day?" And immediately, without missing a beat, it felt just like He said, "Oh, just another day in Paradise!" I laughed out and I could feel Him laughing too. I laugh every time I think about that. Thank you, Lord! I needed that!

*"God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me,"*  
Genesis 21:6



The Prayer Chain newsletter is published monthly as an encouragement for prayer. Names are rarely provided so that God can receive all honor and glory for article content.

# *The Prayer Chain*

**Vol. 21, No. 8**

*"Ye have not, because ye ask not"*

**August, 2009**

## **PRAYING FOR A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IN AMERICA!**

It must be stated that the U.S. is sinking deeper and deeper into spiritual bankruptcy. Where once this great nation was a beacon of biblical light to the world it may now be on the precipice of destruction if God is not pleased to intervene in a very fundamental way in America's affairs.

Throughout history there have been times when God has given spiritual revival to his people. What do we mean by that word revival? The word itself means to renew or revive to life where evidence of life is absent. For there to be revival there had to at one time been life present that is fading toward death. Biblical revival has to do with the renewing or reviving of a withering relationship of the people of God with their God. Is there a need for a spiritual revival in America? The answer is without question, yes.

It is depressing to consider the deplorable moral and spiritual condition of America. But, praise the Lord, there is an answer. But, the answer will not be found in Washington, D.C. The answer certainly will not come from Oprah or Dr. Phil. The answer for our nation is a God-sent spiritual revival that must begin in the churches of America. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, wrote in Psalm 85:6, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" David, the king, was crying out to God for revival of the nation of Israel. Take note that it is a good thing when a nation's leaders look to God for help. Israel was the Old Testament people of God. They were to be the light of God and a blessing to the heathen nations that surrounded them. The Lord Jesus Christ in the sermon on the mount (a portion of scripture mocked by one presidential candidate), called upon his disciples to "let their light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The call upon God's people has not changed in this age of grace. They are to be his light to the sinful world in which they live.

Bible-believing churches must be broken over sin and seek the face of God for his mercy. May Christians cry out to God, "Revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2). The God of the universe is a merciful and gracious God and he may once again revive, renew, and restore his people so that his people might be a beautiful and brilliant light to the world. Many say it is too late for America. That is nonsense, God often determines to do great things at the darkest of times. The reluctant prophet Jonah was sent with a very simple message to the wicked and violent city of Nineveh, "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." A mere 40 days and Nineveh would be destroyed, but the entire city, from the king on down, sought God with fasting and prayer in the hope that he might spare them. In response, God gave revival and a gracious 100-year reprieve to an entire city.

It is the responsibility of God's people to obediently tell the truth. They must warn that if things do not change in America judgment may well be ahead. Why should it be expected that God will spare judgment here that he has poured out upon other nations that have forgotten him? It is not a popular ministry to warn and exhort people to turn from sin. People want to hear pleasant messages that make them feel good. But what is more important, to feel good on the way to destruction or to repent, find God's mercy and experience a powerful reviving of his work.

One last thought about what revival does. Revival is not really a matter of taking the spiritual climate to something special. Rather, it is God returning the spiritual condition of his people to the normal. Revival is restoring the people of God to what he initially intended them to be. Dear reader, when God's people are spiritually what they should be, they will be a powerful impact wherever they are found. They will be his salt and light to the world.

## *Is Prayer Important To You?*

James 4:7 says, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" But the devil knows that we will not be able to resist him if we do not enlist God's help through prayer. Therefore, he wants us to refrain from praying, and he trembles every time we pray. That should make you pray more!

## DONKEY LESSON

When my husband Clint and I traveled to Bauchi State one day for a couple of tasks, I enjoyed the opportunity to get out of town and see the countryside. I love watching people. Here in Nigeria I especially love watching people go about their daily lives - the way they do things and overcome obstacles. We saw a Fulani man who was migrating to a new area with his cows and a donkey. Now that the rains have started, the Fulani (who are herdsmen) are moving again. This Fulani man had his goods tied on the back of the donkey and one of the cows. The donkey was being uncooperative. The man was wanting to go one way and the donkey clearly had another idea, so she was proceeding in the other direction along with her load. I could just see the little donkey's attitude coming out in the way she was walking. The Fulani man was smiling and gave us a big wave. God must be as patient as that Fulani man with us when we puff up and go our own way, even when He is trying to send us in a direction that is for our own good.



Faith, and hope, and patience and all the strong, beautiful, vital forces of piety are withered and dead in a prayerless life. The life of the individual believer, his personal salvation, and personal Christian graces have their being, bloom, and fruitage in prayer.

## PRAYER IS GOING TO CHANGE IT!

People know the difference in right or wrong. Or, shall I say, people know the difference in sin and righteousness. They choose "wrong" or "sin" because it feels good.

I was sitting in a waiting room recently and overheard two men talking. One said, "...he's got a wife and she's got a boyfriend!" The second man asked him to repeat it and he did, he said, "...he's got a wife and she's got a boyfriend." They sat quiet for a minute and the second man asked, "Are you a priest?" Meaning, are you their judge? The first man replied, "No, but I know the difference in right and wrong. And, I read the bible once in a while."

Christians know the difference in right and wrong yet they choose to live in sin and as a result America is on a downhill slide into the pits of hell. God will have to destroy America, like He did Sodom and Gomorrah, if the people in America do not repent and forsake their sins. Lying, cheating, homosexuality, pornography, drugs, alcohol, gambling, and all the filth of America are sins - from the government to the church house - it's sin that must be confessed and forsaken if God is to send revival!

We are in a spiritual war. It is more evident everyday. Just when you think nothing could be worse, something worse happens! I am tired of it! Something happened recently that just broke my heart. In fact, I am a heart patient and I had chest pains about it. Things have got to change. I went to God crying and begging Him to send revival back to America. I don't like the way things are here and prayer is going to change it.

## NO WONDER PRAYER

I believe the Bible is the word of God from cover to cover. I believe that the man who magnifies the word of God in his preaching is the man whom God will honor. Why do such names stand out on the pages of history as Wesley, Whitefield, Finney and Martin Luther? Because of their fearless denunciation of all sin, and because they preach Jesus Christ without fear or favor.

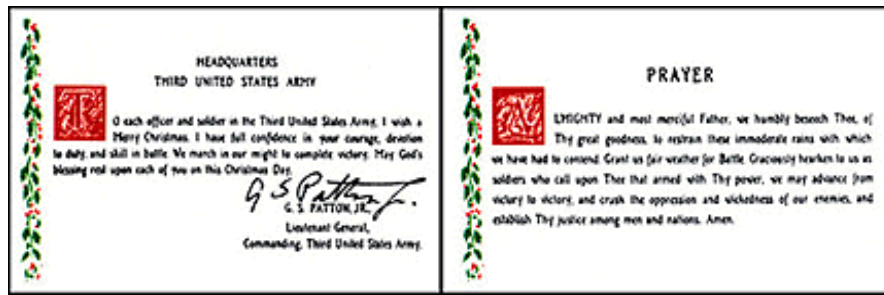
But somebody says a revival is abnormal. You lie! Do you mean to tell me that the godless, card-playing conditions of the Church are normal? I say they are not, but it is the abnormal state. It is the sin-eaten, apathetic condition of the Church that is abnormal. It is the 'Dutch lunch' and beer party, card parties and the like, that are abnormal. I say that they lie when they say that a revival is an abnormal condition in the Church.

What we need is the good old-time kind of revival that will cause you to love your neighbors, and quit talking about them. A revival that will make you pay your debts, and have family prayers. Get that kind and then you will see that a revival means a very different condition from what people believe it does.

Christianity means a lot more than church membership. Many an old skin-flint is not fit for the balm of Gilead until you give him a fly blister and get after him with a currycomb. There are too many Sunday-school teachers who are godless card-players, beer, wine and champagne drinkers. No wonder the kids are going to the devil. No wonder your children grow up like cattle when you have no form of prayer in the home. - *Billy Sunday*

## PRAYER DID IT

Three weeks ago an eight year old girl in my Sunday School class, Hannah, was not being the sweet little girl she had always been. I asked her who she had been hanging out with to make her act that way and she bluntly said gothic girls. I told her they were devil girls and to stay away from them. I then began praying and asking God to save those girls or keep them away from Hannah. I told the devil he could not have her or any of my kids in the name of Jesus!!! The very next Sunday Hannah was Hannah again. She hugged me and told me that she told those girls she wasn't going to hang out with them anymore. **PRAISE THE LROD!!!** Prayer still works in 2009! Don't let satan have your kids either! He is out there - seeking whom he may devour! I Peter 5:8.



# The True Story of The Patton Prayer

by Msgr. James H. O'Neill

(From the Review of the News 6 October 1971)

Many conflicting and some untrue stories have been printed about General George S. Patton and the Third Army Prayer. Some have had the tinge of blasphemy and disrespect for the Deity. Even in "War As I Knew It" by General Patton, the footnote on the Prayer by Colonel Paul D. Harkins, Patton's Deputy Chief of Staff, while containing the elements of a funny story about the General and his Chaplain, is not the true account of the prayer Incident or its sequence.

As the Chief Chaplain of the Third Army throughout the five campaigns on the Staff of General Patton, I should have some knowledge of the event because at the direction of General Patton I composed the now world famous Prayer, and wrote Training Letter No. 5, which constitutes an integral, but untold part, of the prayer story. These Incidents, narrated in sequence, should serve to enhance the memory of the man himself, and cause him to be enshrined by generations to come as one of the greatest of our soldiers. He had all the traits of military leadership, fortified by genuine trust in God, intense love of country, and high faith in the American soldier.

He had no use for half-measures. He wrote this line a few days before his death: "Anyone in any walk of life who is content with mediocrity is untrue to himself and to American tradition." He was true to the principles of his religion, Episcopalian, and was regular in Church attendance and practices, unless duty made his presence impossible.

The incident of the now famous Patton Prayer commenced with a telephone call to the Third Army Chaplain on the morning of December 8, 1944, when the Third Army Headquarters were located in the Caserne Molifor in Nancy, France: "This is General Patton; do you have a good prayer for weather? We must do something about those rains if we are to win the war." My reply was that I know where to look for such a prayer, that I would locate, and report within the hour. As I hung up the telephone receiver, about eleven in the morning, I looked out on the steadily falling rain, "immoderate" I would call it -- the same rain that had plagued Patton's Army throughout the Moselle and Saar Campaigns from September until now, December 8. The few prayer books at hand contained no formal prayer on weather that might prove acceptable to the Army Commander. Keeping his immediate objective in mind, I typed an original and an improved copy on a 5" x 3" filing card:

*Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations.*

I pondered the question, What use would General Patton make of the prayer? Surely not for private devotion. If he intended it for circulation to chaplains or others, with Christmas not far removed, it might be proper to type the Army Commander's Christmas Greetings on the reverse side. This would please the recipient, and anything that pleased the men I knew would please him:

*To each officer and soldier in the Third United States Army, I Wish a Merry Christmas. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We march in our might to complete victory. May God's blessings rest upon each of you on this Christmas Day. G.S. Patton, Jr, Lieutenant General, Commanding, Third United States Army.*

This done, I donned my heavy trench coat, crossed the quadrangle of the old French military barracks, and reported to General Patton. He read the prayer copy, returned it to me with a very casual directive, "Have 250,000 copies printed and see to it that every man in the Third Army gets one." The size of the order amazed me; this was certainly doing something about the weather in a big way. But I said nothing but the usual, "Very well, Sir!" Recovering, I invited his attention to the reverse side containing the Christmas Greeting, with his name and rank typed. "Very good," he said, with a smile of approval. "If the General would sign the card, it would add a personal touch that I am sure the men would like." He took his place at his desk, signed the card, returned it to me and then said: "Chaplain, sit down for a moment; I want to talk to you about this business of prayer." He rubbed his face in his hands, was silent for a moment, then rose and walked over to the high window, and stood there with his back toward me as he looked out on the falling rain. As usual, he was dressed stunningly, and his six-foot-two powerfully built physique made an unforgettable silhouette against the great window. The General Patton I saw there was the Army Commander to whom the welfare of the men under him was a matter of Personal responsibility. Even in the heat of combat he could take time out to direct new methods to prevent trench feet, to see to it that dry socks went forward daily with the rations to troops on the line, to kneel in the mud administering morphine and caring for a wounded soldier until the ambulance came. What was coming now?

"Chaplain, how much praying is being done in the Third Army?" was his question. I parried: "Does the General mean by chaplains, or by the men?" "By everybody," he replied. To this I countered: "I am afraid to admit it, but I do not believe that much praying is going on. When there is fighting, everyone prays, but now with this constant rain -- when things are quiet, dangerously quiet, men just sit and wait for things to happen. Prayer out here is difficult. Both chaplains and men are removed from a special building with a steeple. Prayer to most of them is a formal, ritualized affair, involving special posture and a liturgical setting. I do not believe that much praying is being done."

The General left the window, and again seated himself at his desk, leaned back in his swivel chair, toying with a long lead pencil between his index fingers.

Chaplain, I am a strong believer in Prayer. There are three ways that men get what they want; by planning, by working, and by Praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning, or thinking. Then you must have well-trained troops to carry it out: that's working. But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat or victory, success or failure. It is the reaction of the actors to the ordeal when it actually comes. Some people call that getting the breaks; I call it God. God has His part, or margin in everything, That's where prayer comes in. Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, no epidemics. This is because a lot of people back home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy. Simply because people prayed. But we have to pray for ourselves, too. A good soldier is not made merely by making him think and work. There is something in every soldier that goes deeper than thinking or working--it's his "guts." It is something that he has built in there: it is a world of truth and power that is higher than himself. Great living is not all output of thought and work. A man has to have intake as well. I don't know what you it, but I call it Religion, Prayer, or God.

He talked about Gideon in the Bible, said that men should pray no matter where they were, in church or out of it, that if they did not pray, sooner or later they would "crack up." To all this I commented agreement, that one of the major training objectives of my office was to help soldiers recover and make their lives effective in this third realm, prayer. It would do no harm to re-impress this training on chaplains. We had about 486 chaplains in the Third Army at that time, representing 32 denominations. Once the Third Army had become operational, my mode of contact with the chaplains had been chiefly through Training Letters issued from time to time to the Chaplains in the four corps and the 22 to 26 divisions comprising the Third Army. Each treated of a variety of subjects of corrective or training value to a chaplain working with troops in the field. [Patton continued:]

I wish you would put out a Training Letter on this subject of Prayer to all the chaplains; write about nothing else, just the importance of prayer. Let me see it before you send it. We've got to get not only the chaplains but every man in the Third Army to pray. We must ask God to stop these rains. These rains are that margin that hold defeat or victory. If we all pray, it will be like what Dr. Carrel said [the allusion was to a press quote some days previously when Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the foremost scientists, described prayer "as one of the most powerful forms of energy man can generate"], it will be like plugging in on a current whose source is in Heaven. I believe that prayer completes that circuit. It is power.

With that the General arose from his chair, a sign that the interview was ended. I returned to my field desk, typed Training Letter No. 5 while the "copy" was "hot," touching on some or all of the General's reverie on Prayer, and after staff processing, presented it to General Patton on the next day. The General read it and without change directed that it be circulated not only to the 486 chaplains, but to every organization commander down to and including the regimental level. Three thousand two hundred copies were distributed to every unit in the Third Army over my signature as Third Army Chaplain. Strictly speaking, it was the Army Commander's letter, not mine. Due to the fact that the order came directly from General Patton, distribution was completed on December 11 and 12 in advance of its date line, December 14, 1944. Titled "Training Letter No. 5," with the salutary "Chaplains of the Third Army," the letter continued: "At this stage of the operations I would call upon the chaplains and the men of the Third United States Army to focus their attention on the importance of prayer.

"Our glorious march from the Normandy Beach across France to where we stand, before and beyond the Siegfried Line, with the wreckage of the German Army behind us should convince the most skeptical soldier that God has ridden with our banner. Pestilence and famine have not touched us. We have continued in unity of purpose. We have had no quitters; and our leadership has been masterful. The Third Army has no roster of Retreats. None of Defeats. We have no memory of a lost battle to hand on to our children from this great campaign.

"But we are not stopping at the Siegfried Line. Tough days may be ahead of us before we eat our rations in the Chancellery of the Deutsches Reich.

"As chaplains it is our business to pray. We preach its importance. We urge its practice. But the time is now to intensify our faith in prayer, not alone with ourselves, but with every believing man, Protestant, Catholic, Jew, or Christian in the ranks of the Third United States Army.

"Those who pray do more for the world than those who fight; and if the world goes from bad to worse, it is because there are more battles than prayers. 'Hands lifted up,' said Bosuet, 'smash more battalions than hands that strike.' Gideon of Bible fame was least in his father's house. He came from Israel's smallest tribe. But he was a mighty man of valor. His strength lay not in his military might, but in his recognition of God's proper claims upon his life. He reduced his Army from thirty-two thousand to three hundred men lest the people of Israel would think that their valor had saved them. We have no intention to reduce our vast striking force. But we must urge, instruct, and indoctrinate every fighting man to pray as well as fight. In Gideon's day, and in our own, spiritually alert minorities carry the burdens and bring the victories.

"Urge all of your men to pray, not alone in church, but everywhere. Pray when driving. Pray when fighting. Pray alone. Pray with others. Pray by night and pray by day. Pray for the cessation of immoderate rains, for good weather for Battle. Pray for the defeat of our wicked enemy whose banner is injustice and whose good is oppression. Pray for victory. Pray for our Army, and Pray for Peace.

"We must march together, all out for God. The soldier who 'cracks up' does not need sympathy or comfort as much as he needs strength. We are not trying to make the best of these days. It is our job to make the most of them. Now is not the time to follow God from 'afar off.' This Army needs the assurance and the faith that God is with us. With prayer, we cannot fail.

"Be assured that this message on prayer has the approval, the encouragement, and the enthusiastic support of the Third United States Army Commander.

"With every good wish to each of you for a very Happy Christmas, and my personal congratulations for your splendid and courageous work since landing on the beach, I am," etc., etc., signed The Third Army Commander.

The timing of the Prayer story is important: let us rearrange the dates: the "Prayer Conference" with General Patton was 8 December; the 664th Engineer Topographical Company, at the order of Colonel David H. Tulley, C.E., Assistant to the Third Army Engineer, working night and day reproduced 250,000 copies of the Prayer Card; the Adjutant General, Colonel Robert S. Cummings, supervised the distribution of both the Prayer Cards and Training Letter No. 5 to reach the troops by December 12-14. The breakthrough was on December 16 in the First Army Zone when the Germans crept out of the Schnee Eifel Forest in the midst of heavy rains, thick fogs, and swirling ground mists that muffled sound, blotted out the sun, and reduced visibility to a few yards. The few divisions on the Luxembourg frontier were surprised and brushed aside. They found it hard to fight an enemy they could neither see nor hear. For three days it looked to the jubilant Nazis as if their desperate gamble would succeed. They had achieved complete surprise. Their Sixth Panzer Army, rejuvenated in secret after its debacle in France, seared through the Ardennes like a hot knife through butter. The First Army's VIII Corps was holding this area with three infantry divisions (one of them new and in the line only a few days) thinly disposed over an 88-mile front and with one armored division far to the rear, in reserve. The VIII Corps had been in the sector for months. It was considered a semi-rest area and outside of a little patrolling was wholly an inactive position.

When the blow struck the VIII Corps fought with imperishable heroism. The Germans were slowed down but the Corps was too shattered to stop them with its remnants. Meanwhile, to the north, the Fifth Panzer Army was slugging through another powerful prong along the vulnerable boundary between the VIII and VI Corps. Had the bad weather continued there is no telling how far the Germans might have advanced. On the 19th of December, the Third Army turned from East to North to meet the attack. As General Patton rushed his divisions north from the Saar Valley to the relief of the beleaguered Bastogne, the prayer was answered. On December 20, to the consternation of the Germans and the delight of the American forecasters who were equally surprised at the turn-about-the rains and the fogs ceased. For the better part of a week came bright clear skies and perfect flying weather. Our planes came over by tens, hundreds, and thousands. They knocked out hundreds of tanks, killed thousands of enemy troops in the Bastogne salient, and harried the enemy as he valiantly tried to bring up reinforcements. The 101st Airborne, with the 4th, 9th, and 10th Armored Divisions, which saved Bastogne, and other divisions which assisted so valiantly in driving the Germans home, will testify to the great support rendered by our air forces. General Patton prayed for fair weather for Battle. He got it.

It was late in January of 1945 when I saw the Army Commander again. This was in the city of Luxembourg. He stood directly in front of me, smiled: "Well, Padre, our prayers worked. I knew they would." Then he cracked me on the side of my steel helmet with his riding crop. That was his way of saying, "Well done."

*(This article appeared as a government document in 1950. At the time it appeared in the Review of the News, Msgr. O'Neill was a retired Brigadier General living in Pueblo, Colorado.)*