



...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



September 22, 2009

Dear friends,
Greetings again in the name of Jesus! We are honored that you would take time to read our letter and pray for us. We hope, through the following thoughts, that you will also be prodded to pray without quitting for many people and many situations!

When in Ukraine in July, I watched pastor Galina pray for a crippled young lady for a long time during the leaders' conference. Finally this young lady was using her legs to walk like she could not do before the prayer. (We wrote this testimony in last month's letter.) As we watched her walk without her walker across the front of the church, pastor Galina leaned over to me and whispered, "We've got to be more stubborn in prayer!"

Turn Your Face to the Wall

"In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos came to him and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'

Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and said, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Thy sight.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying 'Go say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of you father David, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.

And this shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that He has spoken; behold, I will cause the shadow on the stairway, which has gone down with the sun on the stairway of Ahaz, to go back ten steps.' So the sun's shadow went back ten steps on the stairway on which it had gone down." Isaiah 38:1-8

How would you react to a word from God that said you were about to die? Would you accept the fact, assuming it couldn't change, since God said it? Like Hezekiah, you might weep bitterly, for few of us want to die and leave our loved

ones. Perhaps you would, like Hezekiah, "turn your face to the wall" and pray with all your heart!

Something unusual happened when Hezekiah "turned his face to the wall" after hearing his death sentence. Even though God seemed to have already determined his death, Hezekiah "beseeched" the Lord. (Beseech means to entreat, ask earnestly, or to beg.) He begged the Lord to change His mind and let him live.

Remember, Hezekiah was not only dealing with a word from God about His death. He was mortally ill — sick to the point of death. Could a man be brought much lower than this, to be deathly ill and also have a sentence of death from God Himself? Could a situation be more hopeless than this? What use would there be to pray in the face of such obstacles?

The picture of Hezekiah with his face to the wall is certainly a fitting image. He was facing the biggest "wall" of his life. Death was at the door through sickness and the word of the Lord. When he turned his face to the wall, he was facing the greatest challenge, the deepest valley, the most impossible situation of his life. As he looked at that hard and impenetrable wall in front of him, he was facing the impossibility of his circumstances and the force of God's word to him. And in turning to the wall, he was turning away from people, realizing that there was no person who could help him.

Hezekiah seemed to know something beyond his wall of impossibility; He knew God Himself. Though the word had come to him from God through the prophet, he did not resign himself to this fate. He turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord. He did not accept as unchangeable the word of judgment that he had heard from the Lord. Something he knew about God made him press through, with bitter tears, to seek the Lord Himself. His heart reached through the blackness and finality of the situation and he got hold of God.

Wonder of wonders, God heard Hezekiah's cry! He changed His mind about the death sentence, and

added fifteen years to Hezekiah's life! Furthermore, God responded to Hezekiah beyond what he actually prayed for. God promised to deliver the city from the Assyrians!

This is a reminder of Ephesians 3:20: *"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think..."* God did for Hezekiah far beyond what he asked for. He had pled for his life; in hearing his prayer and seeing his tears, God also gave deliverance for his city! God even set aside the astronomic laws to give a sign to Hezekiah! He caused the sun's shadow to back up ten steps on the stairway. (Did He reverse the earth's rotation???) How majestic was God's response to a dying man's weeping prayer!

Hezekiah knew when to "turn his face to the wall" and pray to the Lord. Do you? He knew God well enough to hold on to Him even though He had pronounced a judgment of death. You can do the same thing. He knew that he could appeal to God's justice and mercy, and present his case before the Throne. So can you!

God loves to respond to our entreaties and intercessions. He longs for someone on the earth to appeal to His love and mercy, even when judgment is deserved.

Such was the case with Moses, who interceded on behalf of Israel when God ran out of patience with them. It is likely that the many years that Moses spent on the backside of the desert were in preparation for that day recorded in Numbers 14, when God was ready to destroy the whole nation.

God told Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? I will smite them with pestilence -- and make you (Moses) into a nation greater and mightier than they!"

Moses response was to "turn his face to the wall" of this impending judgment. He pled with God to pardon the nation; He appealed to His character, His mercy, His covenant, and His glory. And the Lord said, *"I have pardoned them according to your word."* God changed His mind!

God's judgment is righteous and good, and His judgments are in the earth all the time. His judgment causes men to reap what they sow; it causes nations to groan under the oppressions arising from their own rebellion against His ways. However, God's heart is for redemption. He longs to be merciful, and desires to show compassion.

His redemption and mercy is available because of the great reconciliation He provided for all through the blood of Jesus. This mercy is administered through His servants who pray out His

Word and plead the blood of Jesus over people and circumstances, who stand in the gap where the wrath of God is due and overdue. His intervention comes as people "turn their faces to the wall" in times of desperation, crying out to God for their own lives and for the lives of others. God longs to move in power and love, but someone needs to pray it out!

In the face of unpleasant circumstances, like Hezekiah's impending death, or Moses' leadership of a stubborn people, you can "turn your face to the wall" and get through to God. Like Hezekiah, you might begin with only tears and desperation, but you can learn to cry to Him boldly and without shame, because you are anchored in His love, His word, and His blood bought redemption!

Hezekiah did not have the knowledge of the blood of Jesus, and only knew to plead his case from his own efforts to please God. *You have a more sure foundation to plead your case with God.* Your foundation for prayer is the blood of Jesus which has cleansed you from all sin and given you bold access to God. Your plea in prayer is the righteousness of Christ, not your own righteousness. You plead your case in the wonderful name of Jesus and boldly ask for mercy and grace because of what Jesus has finished on the cross!

The walls you face may seem too high, too impenetrable for your prayer to make a difference. Remember how God answered Hezekiah's plea abundantly above what he asked for! Remember that God interrupted the very laws of creation to give Hezekiah a sign of His love. He is just as ready to be merciful to your entreaties. He is ready to pour out His compassion, ready to bare His strong arm of deliverance in response to your prayer!

Back to Ukraine in November...

Please agree with us for John's travel to Krivoy Rog, with plans to leave November 5. If you would like to help with travel expenses, please mark that with your gift.

Thank You...

We are grateful for your friendship, and for your prayer as the Holy Spirit leads you. Thank you for supporting us financially. We remain totally dependent on your giving for our personal support as well as for the needs of the ministry.

God's mercy and grace are more powerful than any wall of circumstance that you face. His faithfulness is eternal and His promises are sure!

With love,

John and Jackie