

# Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

September 2007

## PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

I notice there are times when I sit down to watch the news or indeed read the local newspaper, that you can find yourself slipping into a negative mindset or at worst into a sense of depression about the condition of the world. One of the things that can happen out of this is that, we don't see much to praise God about and yet as we read through the Psalms there are a number which have the idea of praising God no matter what the circumstances or the situation that we find ourselves in. So it is with this in mind that Psalm 65 is written to praise God for His salvation and indeed for His providential working in our lives day by day and moment by moment.

So there are three divisions here that we can break this Psalm up into as we meditate on it for a while.

**Firstly** we can see **God in the temple verses 1-4**. The writer of this Psalm is David and he declares to the Lord that praise is waiting in Zion. That is probably really code speak for the fact that when his people go into the temple, or in more modern parlance when people go into His church e.g. a building, then it should be marked by the fact that Christians are keen to praise the Lord. I think it is also important for us to see that David is really trying to bring across the need for worship day by day rather than just necessarily going into a church on Sunday only. David's great desire is that as he worships the Lord he is consumed by praise and thanks to the God who has done so much for him in His providential care and love.

We need to also see that out of this need for worship develops a heart of praise. I wonder if you have thought about what you can praise the Lord for each day as you climb out of bed. Think for example the reason you get out of bed is because God has been faithful in maintaining the universe the way it is and the earth in its existing orbit, on its present angle and in its condition, day by day and moment by moment. Then we can be like the Psalmist in Psalm 90 and verse 12 that says "teach us to number our days so we may gain a heart of wisdom".

When we take time to praise God it is amazing what can happen in our own lives and in our own outlook on this world. We can thank the Lord for our families, we can thank the Lord for the every breath that we breathe and continue to thank the Lord for every meal that we enjoy and on it goes.

Then we see in these opening four verses that there is the prayer of confession where David is willing to honestly come before the Lord in confession of his sin. David like so many of the biblical writers was so aware of the fact that if he was not right with God then it was not possible to praise and worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Of course this prayer of confession first of all requires us to develop honesty with our own heart and attitude and then out of that God is able to reveal His convicting power and bring us back into that right relationship. This then brings us to the joy of forgiveness. In Psalm 32 David declared what was happening to him in his life when he said that his heart had been turned into the drought of summer and that the Lord's hand was heavy upon him. But then he was able to confess his sin and know that he was forgiven and as it were he was able to shout out with joy for being forgiven.

Then lastly as we look at this point of God in the temple we see the blessing of fellowship that comes from our confession to God and forgiveness of God for our sin. It may seem strange to you who are reading this devotion that there are many who come into a church week in and week out and be a part of the congregation, but never really become a part of the fellowship that is such an important part of what we do as Christians. One of the main reasons this happens is that they have never understood what is means to pray a prayer of confession and then to experience the joy of forgiveness for their sin. So my prayer is that if you fit that category that God will speak to your heart right now and encourage you to get right with Him.

**Secondly** we not only see **God in the temple verses 1-4**

but we also see **God in the world verses 5-8**. This is what one would call a character study of the Lord in that we see first of all His righteousness in a dark world. Going back to my opening comments about watching news or reading the local newspaper, it just highlights more and more to me the huge contrast between the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. I am at times amazed at how some of the television programmes can present an incredibly distorted view of what is right and wrong. We seem to live in an age now where the value that we knew to be right, is now considered out of style. I am glad to recognise that the word of God is not open to the trends and vagaries of this world but instead they stand firm in declaring the righteousness of God in a dark world.

Then we can see that the Psalmist declares his confidence in God in a dark world. I am sure there are many things we see and experience that may cause us to question whether God is at work in the world. As I get older I realise that we worship a heavenly Father who is always with us and never leaves us nor forsakes us. Just this morning I was reading through my devotions in the book of Genesis and reading of Joseph's testimony in Egypt where the writer says and the Lord was with him. When Joseph was in jail wrongly accused the Lord was with him. When Joseph was in Potiphar's house after being sold off as a slave the Lord was with him. It appears to me that Joseph was one of those men who could keep his focus on the Lord rather than on his circumstances.

Then we can see in these verses the light of creation in a dark world. There are many who question the reality of God and whether there is a God to speak of at all. But David as he writes this Psalm declares the light of creation in a dark world. In a world that is so adverse to the things of God the Psalmist says to look upon creation and its awesome design and power and that is all you need to see God in a dark world. Then lastly on this point we can see the power and authority of God in a dark world. This is pictured for us as the Psalmist talks about the noise of the sea as the waves crash and that He has established the mountains by His strength and that He is clothed with power and authority. You maybe tempted at times to think that God is not aware of your situation or that God is not listening to your heart cry, but I think it is fair to say that this Psalm should be an encouragement to you to know that God's righteousness, confidence, light, power and authority are present in a dark world. They are present because God uses them to encourage us that He never leaves us or forsakes us even when the opposite seems to be the case.

**Then thirdly** we see **God in the harvest verses 9-13**. God is sovereign in the harvest in bringing the rain, providing the harvest and also the abundance of that harvest and combining that with an expanding flock of sheep. I know that in this country right now there are many who are experiencing incredible drought and I am sure they are wondering where God is in the midst of all of this. May be we are experiencing drought because God is trying to get our attention in terms of getting things happening the way they need to happen in our lives. Sadly it is not until we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place that we get a listening ear for the voice of God. Also I think there are many in this country of Australia who think God is not sovereign in bringing the rain or providing the harvest, but as we are seeing at the moment I think it is fair to say that God is absolutely sovereign and that He alone reigns supreme. My prayer is that as many people are struggling with the drought that they will indeed respond in the right way by seeking God with a genuine heart and commit their lives genuinely to the Lord, so then they can truly worship God in spirit and in truth. It is then that they can genuinely praise God for who He is and all that He does.

*(Please turn over)*

## Prayer:

*We would greatly value prayer for the work of Challenge newspaper both here in Australia and overseas. There are a number of sub points we would like to present in relation to this and I hope you are able to find time to pray for each of these items:*

1. Please pray for the distribution of Challenge here in Australia which has remained rather stagnant over the last two to three years. Please pray for a couple who are seeking the Lord's will in terms of coming into the work to take on the promotion and development of the Australian edition of Challenge.
2. Please pray for a replacement editor for Carl. We have another couple who are thinking and praying about this and we would value your prayer for them as they think it through in their own minds and seek the Lord's will for their lives.
3. We would really value prayer for the ongoing development of the work overseas. It seems that wherever we go we are being met with great enthusiasm and we would really value prayer for the Lord's wisdom in how we deal with all of these particular needs.
4. Please pray for our Southern African edition of Challenge. At this stage we are looking at a significant increase in our printing costs at the end of this year and we are asking the Lord for a doubling of our funding for the Southern African edition of the paper. We are also praying that in South Africa we can raise up more support and sponsorship for the paper so it can become self sufficient and indeed then become a sending nation. We have just been negotiating the possibility of printing the paper in Zambia for both Zambia and Malawi and once again we would value prayer for finances to do this. At this stage we are only starting small with 10,000 for each country but we know that those 10,000 can achieve a great deal as the Lord would use them.
5. Please pray for our Kenyan edition of the paper as Pastor Paul Dondoh is endeavouring to use the paper for ongoing church plant work. We would really value support for bibles for new converts, bicycles for people who are delivering the paper and evangelists who are using it, and for the ongoing need of a Toyota Hi-ace van for the pick-up and delivery of the paper to various distribution points. The Hi-ace van cost around \$6,000AUD.
6. Please continue to pray for our South American edition of the paper as we prepare for another print run. We will be producing 25,000 copies of the paper for Argentina and Uruguay. We would value prayer for the finances for this and for the support we are giving to folk who are helping us in the production and distribution of the

paper. We need around \$12,000 to \$15,000AUD per year just to fund this South American edition of the paper.

7. Continue to pray for our United States edition of the paper where we will be producing both an English and Hispanic edition. At this stage our print run will be considerably less than the last one. We anticipate doing a print run of around 10,000 papers in total. Once again we really need prayer for finances to continue what we are doing and be able to expand it.
8. Please pray for all of the partner organisations that we are working with in getting out these editions of the paper overseas. Partnerships are not always as straight forward as one would hope, they need constant prayer and adjustment as we endeavour to achieve the goals we would like to see happen.
9. Please pray for the need of finances for new staff members as we really want to be able to fully fund the new positions of promotions person and new editor for early next year.
10. Please pray for the team here at Challenge who do a great job and many of whom have served the Lord here for many years in an honorary capacity or indeed receiving a very modest stipend. Without these sorts of people nothing could be achieved in terms of getting out the various editions of the paper.
11. Please pray too for our board who have a very responsible position in overseeing what is an expanding work. They would value your prayer for wisdom and insight in directing and leading this work.

## Praise:

1. Praise God for a very successful Impact Africa mission trip where we saw God working in all sorts of ways both in the squatter camps and prisons and elsewhere.
2. Praise God for the way He is growing His work both here and overseas. The feedback we are getting from the papers being used in Africa is very encouraging indeed and we are trusting the Lord for great things in South America, North America and elsewhere.
3. We praise God for opportunities coming up to continue expanding the work of Challenge into countries like India, Nigeria and Egypt. We really want to praise God for the open doors He is representing and we trust Him for great wisdom as to when we step through those doors.
4. We praise God for the way in which he has raised up people who are giving generosity to the work of Challenge for which we are enormously grateful. We do praise God also for the farmers who are giving sacrificially through the wheat bin here in Western Australia to further the work both locally and overseas.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



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