

When the Quick Fix Won't Cut It

Recently my family went through a very painful experience that did not turn out as we thought it would. We were praying for a specific outcome. We had some "world class" intercessors praying as well. But a shocking outcome came none-the-less. Like typical humans who believe in God, we are trying to make sense of it. What is God doing? Did we not have faith? What's His "all things work together" outcome? It makes you dizzy.

As I have been thinking and praying through this ordeal, I landed on Jesus' interaction with Peter which presumably took place at the last supper or just after it. Besides Himself facing something horrendous, Jesus knew that Peter was going to go through the wringer as well. He said to Peter, "Simon, Satan is going to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32).

Notice that Jesus does not say, "I prayed for you Simon. I am praying that this sifting will not happen. I have come against Satan, declaring that he cannot touch you. You will be okay, Peter." Unlike Jesus, I would probably pray for the fix. I would come against the evil one who wanted to sift me. Not Jesus.

Something was going to happen to Peter, and rather than try to pray it away, Jesus prayed for the process of Peter's going through it. This was going to be a strengthening test for Peter. It was going to shape him and refine him for something in the future. He needed to go through this.

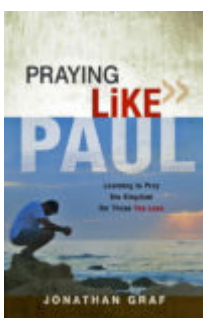
In my own situation, I am working on praying for the process. "Lord, use this situation to shape myself, my wife and daughter and son-in-law. Teach us; grow us. Make us into

followers who can strengthen others. Let this painful circumstance draw us closer to You, deepen our faith, experience Your presence in richer ways.”

And at those times when the thoughts come, the “what ifs,” the “why didn’t this happen” moments, I am relying on Philippians 4 – rejoice, share my anxieties with Jesus, and with all kinds of prayers (short, long, in between, on my knees, in the car, at my desk while working) I remember and am thankful for all Jesus has done in the past. I am experiencing the truth of verse 7 “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

If you are in some of those wringer times, I encourage you that He is preparing you for deeper things. Cast it all on Him. Surrender to His working in your life. Remember all He has done in the past. Let His peace rule in you.

If you are praying for a friend who is going through tough stuff, I challenge you to pray for their spiritual well-being. Pray that their walk with Christ would deepen through the circumstances. That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t or can’t pray for the quick miracle, but let a lot of your praying be along the lines of Jesus praying for Peter.



NOTE: If you want some help in learning to pray beyond quick fixes, consider getting a copy of my book Praying Like Paul. Available through local Christian bookstores or in online outlets plus through prayershop.org, where you can receive a 10% discount with code **JGN814**.