

A PLEA for PRAYER – April 5, 2014 - No. 135

We would appreciate updates on the location of our military because of continued unit movements.

Note: This list and plea will be updated and expanded as God gives information and grace. While this prayer plea is posted on the Internet, every effort is made to keep information appropriately private and with minimum information on mission, units and location. All requests, news and update information should be sent to the editor at: Coie.1@opc.org

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).

The request continues. Please pray for our OPC men and women, sons and daughters who are in harm's way, about to be in harm's way, and who support those in harm's way. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16b). Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).*

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.' And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How soon is the fig tree withered away!' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 18:18-22)

Prayer focus: Faith and Prayer for Divine Fruitfulness - Here Jesus promises us as His disciples that God will answer our prayers made in true faith. He offers this promise in the context of His cursing and subsequent withering of the fruitless fig tree. Note briefly:

First, as a true Man, Jesus knows our weakness and hears our prayers when we offer them with true faith. (cf. Heb. 4:14-16). For thus we read that *Jesus suffered hunger for fruit from the fruitless fig tree that God had made to bear fruit (v.18). Then, As Almighty God, Jesus curses the tree with withering word of judgment as God. (v.19-20).* Christ effectually speaks in judgment curse upon fruitlessness and in salvation blessing unto fruitfulness (Psalm 80; Isaiah 5; Micah 7; Hosea 2; Mt. 21:33-46; Heb. 7:24-25, 12:25). His true humanity encourages us to approach Him. His full deity encourages us to trust the power of His Word of curse or blessing. Finally, we read of *Christ's Promise: He bids us pray with promise of an answer given to true faith (v. 21-22)* Because of Christ's promise to respond, we expect to grow in ever-greater fruitfulness through believing prayer, and thus attempt great things for our prayer-answering God. (cf. John 14:13-14; 16:24)

Application: So as we prepare to pray for our warriors, we confess first of all that our warriors have real human needs for which we should pray that Jesus also understands as a man. We should pray for their safety, for their health, and for their protection. We should intercede for them lest they fall prey to the temptation to cowardice in the face of danger and death in war, or even when confronting peer pressure or a commander compelling them to sin. We should uphold them in prayer against despair when their comrades in arms are wounded or killed in

battle. We should persevere in prayer for them and not faint, lest they fall perhaps prey to lust when lonely and separated from their loved ones. We should pray for these and many other distinctive human needs that especially beset our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Guardians.

Likewise, our prayer focus text begins with a very human need - hunger. Though Jesus was and is the perfect Man, the Second Adam, the Last Adam - yet Jesus was hungry. This is a very human need - as we have come to expect from the man Jesus Christ. We know from the Bible that Jesus was human through and through, with all needs - mentally, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually - which man has. This is because he had a human body and a human soul - and still has, now "in beauty glorified." He has not merely become like the order referred to as "man", nor has he just "played" man! His human needs were not faked. His emotions were not "voice acted".

This should encourage us as we pray for those who protect us. Christ has conquered "all his and our enemies" precisely by living perfectly through the entire scope of human need, and by suffering all the sufferings and especially the death that is common to man.

How then does knowing this help us pray for those who defend us? In just this way - when, we hesitate to pray because we are tempted to think in our weariness and weakness that God either does not sufficiently understand us or the trials of our warriors, when in our distraction we forget that He personally cares intimately for them and for us, then we need to be reminded that Jesus the man was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 52). This is the One who is our merciful and faithful high priest! He can be touched by our infirmities and can sympathize with our warrior's weaknesses, because He has been tempted at all points even as we are, and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Are we too tired, troubled, or torn to pray? Even then should we should say with the hymn writer: "Approach my soul, the mercy seat, where Jesus answers prayer. There humbly fall before His feet, for none can perish there." For by the power of His indestructible life, "Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost all those who draw near to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:24-25).

Please pray for all in authority over us and in particular those who serve to protect us as ministers of authority under God and our chaplains as ministers of God to those serving in a lost and dying world.

Please pray for our valiant men of war to call out to God continually for strength to enable victory over the enemy and that they will continue to be well equipped for battle. And please pray that our nation will be led by humble leaders who call on the name of the Lord and rule righteously that we might have peace. Please pray that God will *shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*. Pray that they will fear only God and not man and be of a good courage. Pray that they will be bold as a lion and that the wicked will flee. (Prov. 28:1)

Pray as we battle forces both foreign and domestic in our long war; plead with our God to make a way of escape from defeat, from losing heart in the battle and that in doing so, God will restore us as a nation to His righteousness. Pray for the gracious and needed gift from God of genuine national repentance; especially from the iniquities of abortion, supporting homosexuality, the widespread disregard of the fourth commandment and rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Continue to pray that we will recognize the true nature of the enemy. Be not weary in hoping, praying and waiting to see the salvation of our great God whose new mercies come every morning! Pray that the Gospel may continue to have free expression. Pray that the culture of death will be defeated and that our nation will stand united and will endure in the defense of freedom. Please continue to pray for the spouses, children, parents and siblings of our warriors. Pray for the families of the fallen and for the wounded that they may all endure and come to rest and trust in Christ. May they defend our nation's liberties as guaranteed by our Constitution with stalwart hearts and minds!

May we be **“animated to pray by the certain hope of obtaining our requests.”** Calvin

We have lives precious to us in harm's way: Andrew (two), Bowe, Brett, Bryan, Chris, Christopher, Daniel, David (two), Doug, Douglas, Gabriel, Isaac, Jack, Jim, John, Nicolas, Noah, Paul (two), Rachel, Ray, Robert (two), Scott, Sebastian, Stephen (two), and Timothy. New deployments are shown in bold. Please pray for Chaplain David DeRienzo deployed in harm's way.

- From Bowe's family – The Bergdahls continue to rely on their faith in the Sovereign God who sustains us by His Providence in history. May our lives be a testimony to this SDG, DV. [Bowe has been a prisoner of war since June 30, 2009. Please continue to pray for his return to freedom and his family!]

- CAPT Bryan J. Weaver, CHC, USN – Please continue to pray for Bryan and his family while he continues testing and procedures after his surgery in late January to remove a cancerous brain tumor at the Medical University of South Carolina located in Charleston. Bryan has been at peace with this providence in his life and testifies to several remarkable opportunities in conjunction with this illness to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ. Please pray for his wife, Shelly, as she is his primary caregiver and chauffeur. Shelly and Bryan give thanks for the MUSC medical team and their primary Navy doctor who is their next door neighbor at MCAS Beaufort. The Weavers are truly grateful for all the support they have received from the OPC and Marine Corps families.

- [03/1/14] From Pastor Steve - I have one to add: SOC Sterling R., USN

- [03/07/14] From Pastor Bob - Last night I received permission to include SGT Brett R., USA on your list. He is presently stationed here in... in the Army recruiting office, and living with his wife... [nearby]. Brett and [his wife...] are regular attenders at worship and Wed. Bible study and prayer meeting.

- [03/24/14] From his dad Mark - Bob Needham made me aware of an OPC prayer list for members who are also members of the military. I have a son, Corey S. who is a 2LT in the Army. I would like to have his name added to the OPC prayer list. Thanks for your help and service to the Lord in this.

- We have learned that CAPT Larry Burt USN, naval aviator has retired. Thank you brother for your exceptional service!

- We ask that you pray for Ginny Wisdom, wife of Chaplain Chris Wisdom. She has a degenerative joint disease causing sever and recurrent pain which is only beginning to get

treatment. Please pray for healing amidst Chris's second retirement and return to the States and that this move will not hinder help and healing for Ginny.

- The revision of DADT presents difficulties for many Christians, both those serving in line positions and those serving as chaplains. Therefore we urge you to pray:

1. For all who serve in our military who name the name of Christ,
2. For all Christian chaplains who serve not only the military but also their churches under creedal statements of faith and belief,
3. That the implementation of this legislation will be just and righteous,
4. That the heretofore moral standards of our military will not be severely denigrated by those of good moral character leaving this godly calling,
5. That the Committee and Commission will have wisdom in order to protect those who serve. Praise God that the Commission has adopted additional protections for our chaplains. Please pray that God will grant a powerful and sustained protection for our chaplains from this revision.
6. That our military, which has taken an oath defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, will not be diminished or perish,
7. That this trial will not also in time descend on the pulpits of our land.

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Chaplains' Reports:

With all of our military might, the greatest weapon we have in the long war against Islamic terrorists is the Sword of the Spirit utilized in the proclamation of the Gospel and empowered by the sovereign Lord of evangelism. The church wields this weapon best when the expectant prayers of His people accompany it. Pray the Lord of the harvest for the success of the Gospel and for more laborers for the harvest, specifically for more chaplains. Plead for a corps of reformed chaplains sufficient to fill every available opening and sufficient to minister to all of our own deployed warriors. Great petitions to Him bring!

CAPT Bryan J. Weaver, CHC, USN, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC (Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania)

[This note is now dated as Chaplain Weaver is currently on medical leave. Please continue to pray for him and his wife Shelly as well as his command in his absence.]

In the second decade of the 21st Century, our country and our military has sanctioned with the force of law homosexual unions and marriages. The agenda of our nation's cultural elite and politicians has entailed the reversal of Christian ethics and deliberately chosen ideologies and national policies that cast aside moral decency and embrace sexual misbehavior. Pray that our Chaplains and Christian military service members will remain faithful to their Lord in this environment. May our military leaders and service members see the truth of the Gospel in our lives. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Pray to our Triune God for revival and reformation to sweep through our nation. May our reformed and evangelical military Chaplains be bold in preaching the Gospel and not fear man. Pray for my ministry at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island.

Email: bryan.j.weaver1@usmc.mil

CH (MAJ) Earl W. Vanderhoff, USA, March Reserve Air Base, Riverside, CA (Presbytery of the Northwest) As the assignments are considered for our last rotation (before retirement)--we hope to be assigned to Ft. Lewis. Wisdom and grace are needed for ministry in the diverse pluralistic culture. The atheists have recently sought to broadcast on AFN. Our youngest son is engaged and plans the wedding for next May. Please praise the Lord with us! **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Pray for the assignment of God's providential choice. My promotion board meets

in January. May the Lord bring favor. I continue to work through health issues, may the doctors have wisdom.

Email: earl.vanderhoff@dma.mil

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Pray that President Barack H. Obama, will guide us as a nation in righteousness that is according to God's Word, and that he will *be just, ruling in the fear of God* (II Sam 23:3b). Pray for those who lead our warriors, from those in the cabinet to the NCO in the field, particularly for all those who name the Name of Christ.

Pray for those who serve us, that their courage, strength and wisdom will not waver or fail, that their actions will be swift, victorious and *bold as a lion* (Proverbs 28:1), that God will grant them safety and bring them home to their families. Pray for their wives and families, that as they are without their loved ones, they may endure and support them. Pray that we will minister to the families in the stead of those who serve. Pray for their testimony to the lost. Please pray both publicly and privately.

Pray that our **chaplains will be bold** in the ministry of the Word – that precious Word that not only tells how we can have life eternal, but also instructs how we are to live! Pray for all our members who serve, that the light of the Gospel will burn brightly in their lives.

In His hands, Robert M. Coie, for the OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel with the Prayer Theme by Col. Christopher H. Wisdom USA Ret.