

PRAYING DANGEROUS AND CHALLENGING PRAYERS

Lord God thank You for Your Anointing over me by the Power of the Holy Spirit that I may deliver Your Word for You Alone are the Truth, the Way and the Life, In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen

Recently I launched a re-print of my book, *'Malta during the First World War'* and many people kept asking me or remarked: why, as a Christian I write about war in my books and research. They challenge me and want to make me feel that what I am doing is inadequate or outright worthless. At first, it was quite a challenge to answer such statements.

But in life we are always given challenges and even when we try and keep tight to our comfort zone and get laid back, still challenges come.

In a country like Malta, where we have the privilege to enjoy peace and freedom, we find our island becoming a centre of refuge for peoples who are seeking solace on our shores. Some people will try and test you by saying wars are avoidable and blame one country or another country and a tendency for animosity starts to creep in the discussion.

My only answer to these statments is Jesus' Words:

Mark 13:7 ►

New International Version

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. WW3 will take place and the world has to pass through the tribulation.

The end times prophecies in the Bible speak about the Third World War that is brewing on the back-burner of history.

Since Jesus said 'such things must happen' we have to accept them as the reality of the situation and try and help those who are victims of war. We

also need to be reminded about Malta's past where the Island always responded to the call of history and propesy and excelled in this area when it was used as a hospital and convalescent depot, a place of refuge and shelter for those seeking solace and healing. In fact, the Apostle Paul in A.D 60 (see Acts 27:27-32) was one of those who received shelter from the storm when he was shipwrecked on the island and left his imprint amongst us to follow the example which he gave us in healing others as he healed the governor of the island and many Maltese who sought healing. **History often reminds us of God's prophetic calling on our individual lives and that of nations.**

This brings me to the topic of today

People challenge us to test our Biblical knowledge without their knowing. God tests us because He knows it will serve us for our own benefit to change our lives for the better.

Are you willing to pray challenging prayers?

Summary: Are you willing to pray a prayer that if God answered it, it would change you? Are you willing to pray a pray that could transform your life?

Scripture: Romans 12:1-12:2 Proverbs 3:5-3:6 (add scripture)

I start with a question:

ARE YOU WILLING TO PRAY DANGEROUS PRAYERS?

What do I mean by dangerous?

- Are you willing to pray a prayer that if God answered it, it would change you?
- Are you willing to pray a pray that could transform your life?

Listen to the words of **Romans 12:1-2:**

“Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:1,2)

Are you willing to pray and ask God to change the way you think and transform you into a person who lives in a holy and sacrificial way?

- When we pray for ourselves we may pray:
- Lord Bless me, Lord protect me,
- Lord provide for me, Lord be will me,
- Lord help me

A high percentage of our prayers are probably ‘Me’ centred. The focus of our prayers is often on what we want, on what we need, on what we would like.

This morning I want us to consider five ‘Me’ prayers that could radically change and transform us.

Five Me prayers that can lead us closer to God.

1. SEARCH ME
2. BREAK ME
3. STRETCH ME
4. LEAD ME
5. USE ME

These Five Me prayers are dangerous for us to pray if we really don't want God to answer them.

You see theses Five Me prayers really challenge us to be totally submitted to God's will for our lives -

to become a living sacrifice used by God for His purpose and pleasure.

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1. SEARCH ME - That was the prayer of King David in Psalm 139:23-24

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." (Psalms 139:23,24)

Search Me... dare you pray that dangerous prayer? God already knows who we are at our core,

no matter how hard we may try, we can not hide anything from Him. We make fake, or try put on a mask

All of us have at one time or another have probably done something that we know is not right in God's sight.

- Maybe right now some of us are involved in things that bring no glory to God. We think we can solve our challenges without God's help.
- Maybe we do them because we enjoy them,
- Maybe we do them because everyone else does them,
- Maybe we simply do them because its a habit we have never tried to not do.

Have you ever stopped to consider if some of the things you say or some of the things you do are offensive in God's sight?

If you search your own heart this morning - what is hiding in there that should not be?

When King David prayed "Search Me, O God" he was determined to follow God.

David knew anything and everything in his life that was an offense to God must stop.

Are there areas of your life that you need to fully surrender to God?

If God Searched your heart right now, what would be revealed?

A heart for Jesus, or a heart that is being drawn away from the things of God? Are we putting ourselves on a pedestal and idolise ourselves, our career, our hobbies, personal ambitions, our work and leaving that small tiny bit of leftover for God. Our God is not a God of leftovers.

A heart that is hindered from worshipping and glorifying God or a heart that is sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit?

If God searched your mind right now, what would be revealed?

Thoughts on the things of God or thoughts of worldly things?

Is your mind occupied by turmoil or trust?

Is your mind occupied by conflict or commitment?

Listen to the words of James in **James 4:8-10:**

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honour.

If we pray 'O Lord Search Me', may God find pure and humble hearts dedicated to Him.

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2. BREAK ME - another dangerous prayer.

As Christians, as Born again believers, we now live in the Grace of God but that does not give us a licence to wilfully sin.

God hates sin, and we must never misuse the grace of God as a cloak for our sin.

Sin needs to be confronted and dealt with, we need to recognise Sin for what it is and allow God to deal with any Sin that is present in our lives.

God loves us, God wants to be in relationship with us, but when we willingly embrace sinful desires and behaviours we willingly damage our relationship and intimacy with Him.

Maybe this morning you can feel and recognise the presence of God.

You are in church this morning, you have sung in worship to God, Bible verses are being quoted,

you are listening to a sermon, for around an hour and a half you will be involved in the things of God.

But what happens, when you are not in Church?

From Monday to Saturday do you allow yourself to be so involved in the things of the world that you cannot feel or recognize the presence of God in your everyday life?

From Monday to Saturday do you allow your mind to be filled with the things of the world or the things of God?

Do you allow your heart to become dull and hardened to Sin?

From Monday to Saturday is your priority to draw closer to God or do you willingly participate in things that damage or get in the way of your relationship with God?

Is your priority your hobbies, your TV programmes,
your work or social events

- What priority do you place on prayer, on reading your bible, on serving God, on coming to any of the small groups?

Your priorities Monday to Saturday may be misguided, they may be wrong, they may be sinful in God's sight.

- Do you need to ask God to help you break the chains that bind you to wrong priorities?
- Do you need God to help you break down the wall that you have built between Him and you?

Sin can cause us to build a wall between us and God and not realise it.

Sin separates us from the presence of God. If we spend most of our days separated from God, we will not sense the presence of God in our lives.

A heart that is in love with Jesus breaks when it knows it has offended Him.

- Do you need to pray Break me this morning?
- Do you need to humble yourself before God this morning?
- Are you willing for your heart to be emptied of selfish desires or agendas?
- Are you willing to pray: O Lord, Break me, that my heart may be free to worship you, free to serve you, free to love you, free to live a holy life, free to bring honour and glory to you.

3. **STRETCH ME - to be stretched means to be brought beyond our existing limits.**

If we want to become what God intends us to be, we need to be brought beyond our self imposed limits.

To prepare for their role many sportspeople, actors, popstars and others have to change their diet and workout routine to bulk up. Following a high-protein diet that requires seven meals a day to aid muscle growth.

To take on the role they are cast in they have to make a long term commitment - to train, to work, to feed, perhaps to experience some degree of pain.

This preparation for the role has no quick fix.

It is similar for us in the spiritual realm.

If spiritual growth and maturing in Jesus Christ is our goal, we must be stretched, we must be brought beyond our limits. For us to be stretched our diet must change.

Our food, our daily bread, must be the Word of God not the things of the world.

The word of God nourishes us, it sustains us, it strengthens, we can not fully function without it.

To build a Godly life, the Word of God must be our foundation. Is it your foundation every day?

How much time do you spend throughout the week reading God's Word"?

The answer is probably "Not enough."

The Bible, the Word of God, is where we can draw strength during times of trial, temptations and testing.

King David in **Psalm 119:11** says:

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

David was in love with the Word of God. He longed to hear the voice of the Lord through the written word.

David understood it's ability to teach truth and guide him into the things and ways of supernatural and eternal life.

Psalm 119:103-105 : "How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey. Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."

God can use the Bible to stretch us.

- We need to be stretched.
- We need to be brought beyond our limits.
- We need to know His word, know how to walk in it and know how to live it.
- We must have his heart and give God our undivided attention.

Are you willing to pray Stretch Me?

Stretch me with your power that I will not fail you. Stretch me beyond my human capabilities that I may bring glory to your name.

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4. LEAD ME - Are you willing to ask God to take your life and use you however He wants to?

Do you believe that God's plans for you are better than your own?

Jeremiah 29:11-13: For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

Are you willing to surrender to His plans for you?

Are you willing to allow God to guide you?

When we pray for God to lead us, He brings us to Himself.

In every problem, in every situation, when we pray for divine leadership the Holy Spirit will lead us into the presence of Christ.

Psalm 25:5

Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me.

All day long I put my hope in you.

- Are you willing to be led by the one who has already saved you?
- Are you willing to be led to serve?
- Are you willing to be led to live sacrificially?
- Are you willing to be led to humble yourself in the presence of the creator of the universe?

When we pray "God Lead me " we are acknowledging His way is the true way,

His precepts, His commandments are the truth.

- Lead me in your truth,
- Lead me that the world may see you through me. Lead me that your love may flow through me.
- Lead me to keep me away from temptation.
- Lead me and teach me what I must do and how I must act for your honour and bring glory to your name.

Proverbs 3:5,6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.” (Proverbs 3:5,6)

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5. USE ME - Are you willing to make yourself available to God?

For God to fully use us we need to go through the process of searching, breaking, stretching and leading.

To be used by God we need to be willing to surrender to His call on our lives. God is the potter and we are the clay.

To serve Him we must allow Him to shape us, to mold us, to take out every imperfection and repair every crack and flaw. We have been created to bring God glory, and in everything we do, we are to do it for His glory.

- Are you willing to allow God to use you?

To be used by God requires you to be involved, to be committed.

- Are you willing to be led by the Holy Spirit to be used for the glory of God?
- Are you willing to pray that Christ will really be the focus, the centre of your life?
- Are you willing to be used by God so that you are more than just a hearers of the Word?
- Are you willing to become a true doers of the Word?
- Being used by God is more than turning up here on a Sunday morning?
- Being used by God may requires a willingness to take Jesus beyond the four walls of this building.
- It's taking the Gospel to the hospitals, the homeless the prisons, the workplace, the school, your own homes.

- Being used by God may mean someone calling you in the middle of the night for prayer and help.
- Being used by God may mean taking every opportunity to tell others about Him.
- Being used by God may require you to speak about Sin and its cure.
- Being used by God may require you to speak of the need for repentance and holiness.

Are you willing to be used by God?

As I draw the message to a close, let me start as I began by asking:

ARE YOU WILLING TO PRAY DANGEROUS PRAYERS?

May God SEARCH US, BREAK US, STRETCH US, LEAD US and USE US for His glory and honour.

I had mentioned my book in the introduction of this preaching. If anyone is interested in having a copy do tell me as I have copies.