Praying for workers

"He saw there was no one. He was appalled there was no one to intercede." (Is. 59:16)

The command of the Lord Jesus is that we should, ***"Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field."*** (Mt. 9:38)

In terms of mission there are three sorts of workers:

- **National workers** in their own country. They take up the burden of evangelism and discipleship of their own culture.
- **International workers** – i. e. **cross-cultural** workers where the number of disciples are few. Reaching Muslims in the UK would be a part of this.
- **Intercessors** who give themselves to spend a definite time in **intercessory prayer**.

All three of these are necessary. But, in a sense, the intercessors are the most important because they are working at the root – the foundation – of the harvest. Their faithfulness in prayer determines the success of the other two types of workers. So an intercessory worker is a worker who doesn't leave his/her culture, but is called by God and set apart to pray for specific details of the ministry of national/international workers.

So where does the intercessory worker work? Answer: in ***"the realm of the heavenly places/realms"*** (used 5 times in Ephesians). It is in this ***"heavenly realm"*** where we see the titanic conflict between God and the powerful spiritual forces of evil. In this realm God is working out His eternal eschatological purposes. We have union with the exalted Lord Jesus in this realm. In this heavenly realm we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. The Lord Jesus has been exalted above all powers and titles in this realm. When we ***"were made alive with Christ"*** (Eph. 2:5), we too were lifted into this realm**. And it is in this realm that we fight against the terrible evil spiritual forces that war against God in heaven.** So intercessors can live anywhere and fight for spiritual breakthroughs anywhere.

The necessity for intercessors – why?

1. Eph. 6:10-20 speaks of, ***"Principalities, powers, rulers of this darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness"***. All these are invisible to us but we must war against them. Dan. 10 mentions some by name: the ***"Prince of Greece"*** and the ***"Prince of Persia"***. The Lord Jesus called the head of all these kingdoms ***"the Prince of this world"***.

   What about God's forces?
   We read of the ***"horses and chariots of fire"*** around Elisha (2 Kings 6:17)
   The Lord Jesus mentions, ***"Twelve legions of angels"*** (Mt. 26:53)

   So intercessory prayer is warfare – waged to rescue living men, women and children from the kingdom of darkness.

2. Prayer based on God's Word and His promises is the **only** weapon we can use to attack this invisible spiritual enemy. We can't go to Mecca to preach at the time of Hajj, but we can battle the "Prince of Arabia" etc. in the heavenly realms where Christ is ever living to make intercession. We can cry out to God to reveal Himself.

   In Eph. 6:18 we read, ***"Pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests … and always keep on praying for all the saints ... and also for me."*** (Paul)

   We can think of Moses, Aaron and Hur in intercession on the mountain resulting in victory for Joshua and his army fighting Amalek.

   The Lord Jesus could have called on 12 legions of angels but no, He asked His disciples to watch and pray while He fought the invisible foe in the Garden.

3. Workers here in the UK or overseas cannot do His work alone. Workers are like divers in the deep sea. Someone has to supply them with oxygen and light and pull them out from time to time. Without support workers they would soon die. There is a difference between being at the bottom of the sea and being in the air or on the land it's much more dangerous at the bottom of the sea, so workers suffer badly if intercessors fail to pray:
    - The lost are not found and perish. Ezek. 33:1-16 says their blood is on the hands of those who did not do their part.
    - Disciples who start well begin to fall away.

What should we do?

- Recruit intercessors into this war.
- Solve disunity among workers by prayer.
- Pray by name for individuals to be saved.
- Pray that disciples will be raised up and trained to be national workers and take full responsibility for the work.
- Pray that revival will break out and harvest time will come in many barren places.
- Pray that workers will be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the health, spiritual vision and mental strength of workers.
- Pray for isolated workers to be full of joy and a spirit of singing.

How to be an intercessor

- Deliberately decide that this form of intercession is a regular binding duty.
- Set fixed times to pray. These must have precedence over other things.
- Begin humbly and the Holy Spirit will guide you.
- Wait on the Lord of the harvest for directions how to pray.
- Learn people's names and pray for them specifically.
- Don't pity workers in tough places; rather give them help through prayer.
- Write to workers. Don't ask them to send all the great stories, but rather to tell you what they are finding tough, dark and discouraging or are they just worn out.
- Ask God to impress on you the things you should pray for. Not many words are needed. Wait upon the Lord. We don't know how to pray as we ought to and so we must let the Spirit Himself make intercession.

Remember: no war is sweet and gentle and now you are warring against Satan the most horrible of all possible enemies. Never be tempted to give up thinking it is useless. Satan will try and deceive you into thinking you are wasting your time. Toil on – even without apparent results.

A Reward?

You will receive 100 fold – i.e. 10,000%! It was the joy that was set before Him that enabled Jesus to "endure".

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" are discovered by all three types of workers:

cross-cultural – own culture – intercessors.