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2018

**PRAY, PRAISE AND GIVE THANKS: VOICES OF APACHE MEN IN WAR**

*Rejoice always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

World War II raged in the Pacific and in Europe. Men were called to arms. Nearly 300 Apache men enlisted and went off to war. During the War years, Missionary Edgar Guenther and his wife, Minnie, faithfully corresponded with over 100 Lutheran Apache servicemen. “By mail, they counseled, cheered and strengthened the faith of those young men so far from home” (R. Kessel 1991:8). They sent Easter and Christmas packages and gifts “overseas” to the men. The Apache men in return wrote hundreds of letters back to the Guenthers relating their experiences and thanking them for sending *The Apache Scout*, the Lutheran Mission publication. One central theme expressed by the Christian Apache men in war was prayer.

The Guenthers corresponded with Lee Harvey and sent him *The Apache Scout* and some pinion nuts. Lee wrote back (December 2, 1944):

**I didn’t believe myself eating pinions way out here some where in Marianas Islands…**

**We had quite a battle here with the Japs, and as I remember I was praying to the**

**Lord in my fox hole one night when the Japanese heavy artillery were putting up a barrage of shells in our area, and the big shells were landing right close.**

Junior Dazen another soldier stationed in the South Pacific wrote the Guenthers on January 11, 1944. **Thanks to you both for the nice Bible, Prayer Book, Stationaries etc, which I always wanted, above all I’ll never forget it … Thanks to Lord Jesus, that I’m fine maybe it’s because I pray to him each night before going to bed, and each morning when I wake up.**

FredrickDeclay was the first Apache soldier to leave the reservation for overseas duty. On August 12, 1943 he wrote: **I had already spent eighteen months on this Island** [in the South Pacific]**.** He noted that when he read *The Apache Scout* **it seems that I have been all over the reservation again. I know that you are preaching our people on the reservation to be Christian and that you are praying for us that are serving in the Armed forces so that we could all return to our folks again some day… Please keep on praying for us.**

Ray Keys wrote on May 14, 1945. **I’m now somewhere in Germany and also I’ve seen plenty actions. Thanks to our Lord who has protected me through the dangerous life. He is with me so now I have nothing to be afraid of.**

Byde Josay wrote on June 21, 1944.

**Really Rev. Guenther, I am really glad indeed; an also appreciate the things your**

**race of people did when they raised me. Also I’m glad I have found the right way**

**to pray praise and give thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was wondering**

**an worrying for quite a long time, where I would be now hadn’t it been for the**

**Lutheran church to adopt me… Wishing you the blessing of God our Father and of**

**our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

And THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS

**QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. How well did the five soldiers illustrate biblical prayer?

2. Which of the soldiers praised God?

3. Which of the soldiers expressed his thanksgiving?

4. What would be a perfect prayer coming from the lips of a soldier?

**THE SECOND COMMANDMENT**

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name

to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call

upon God’s name in every trouble, **pray, praise, and give**

**thanks.** (Luther 2006, emphasis added)

**FOXHOLE PRAYERS**

Picture this. A soldier in the bottom of a foxhole looks up and says, “God, if you are up there, if you can hear me …” Then consider this often quoted statement—“there’s no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole.” Let’s evaluate these statements (Kessel 1986).

1. Read Isaiah 59:2, Proverbs 28:9 and Romans 10:14. Does God hear the prayer of the unbeliever? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In fact, God says such prayers are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and consider #1 above. Is prayer a means by which a person comes to faith? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read Proverbs 15:8, John 9:31 and Romans 8:15. For whom, then, is prayer intended? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PRAY**

1. Read Psalm 19:14. What then is prayer? Prayer is the communication from the heart of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read 1 Timothy 2:1, Philippians 4:6 and Matthew 6:9-13.

a. Short answer. For whom and for what can and should the Christian pray? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Itemize your prayer requests. I can pray for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and Ephesians 6:18. How often can you pray? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If God commands us to pray without ceasing does he tire of hearing us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does God answer the prayers of the Christian?

a. Read Luke 22:42. Sometimes God answers prayers by saying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Read Matthew 8:2-3. Sometimes God answers prayers by saying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. Read 1 John 5:14 and Luke 22:42. We should then pray, “Your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be done.”

**PRAISE**

1. Psalm 103:1-5. It has been said that praise begins with gratitude. To whom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

and for what? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read 1 Peter 2:9 and Isaiah 43:20-21. Gratitude to God results in outreach. Explain. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read Luke 17:11-19. In true praise, who is emphasized—the one doing the praising or the one

worthy of praise? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Discuss the tragedy of turning praise into “I this” or “I that” or “I feel” or “I bring”…

**GIVE THANKS**

1. Read Psalm 118:1. Why does a person thank God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Read Psalm 9:1-2. How well is the thought of this passage captured in these word? “Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev’ry-one what he has done. Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name. He renews his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanks-giving. Alleluia! Alleluia!” (Christian Worship, p. 36).

**QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED**

1. How well did the five soldiers illustrate biblical prayer?

a. Were they Christians speaking from the heart?

b. Did they pray without ceasing?

c. Did they believe that God answers prayer?

2. Which of the soldiers praised God?

3. Which of the soldiers expressed his thanksgiving?

4. What would be a perfect prayer coming from the lips of a soldier? How about this?

*I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen* (Martin Luther’s

Morning Prayer, Christian Worship, p.139)

CLOSING EXERCISE

Sing Hymn 478, “With the Lord Begin Your Task”

(Christian Worship, Hymn 478)

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