

## Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

### Seeing The Light Before We Open Our Eyes

“Are any among you suffering? They should pray ... The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up ... The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective...”

—The Epistle of James

By Ken Woodley

Life can sometimes make us feel as if we've suddenly been caught in an avalanche or a collapsed mine shaft.

We're buried miles away from our former happiness.

Our former understanding of the world.

Perhaps even our faith, as we remember it.

We're nearly suffocating in the darkness and the doubts.

Unable to reach the light of day.

Despair and a sense of helplessness toss dice to see which one wins us for its own.

But we are not helpless and should not despair for longer than it takes to find the gleam of truth in our souls.

Nor are we abandoned and alone.

Prayer is the tool we can use to dig our way out.

Every prayer.

Each day.

All of our spoken and silent words of prayer can tunnel through the layers of darkness that cover us just as if we'd literally been trapped in an avalanche or a mineshaft that had given way.

“The Lord is my shepherd...”

And we penetrate a little further toward the light.

“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

And we dig ourselves a bit closer to the fresh air that we were breathing only yesterday.

“I will fear no evil...”

And now the Holy Spirit can feel us praying.

“Because you are with me...”

God knows where we are and what has happened, and why would we ever think that God doesn't pray? And Jesus too.

Digging down toward our words of faith.

So we must keep praying so they can reach us.

Praying and believing that they will.

It is too easy for some people to dismiss prayer as merely a ritual. And, truthfully, mindlessly repeating the same words over and over every day does rob them of their power.

True prayer can be far more than that. And it can be all of one single word. Faithfully repeating “Jesus” can both calm my inner storm and connect me with the Holy Spirit. Pick a word or phrase of your own and use it to hammer upward toward the light.

The words in the Epistle are powerful reminders of the true power of real prayer—the prayer, as James tells us, “of faith.”

James is speaking to us as a compelling first-hand witness of what the early church experienced through faith-filled prayer after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

There is no avalanche too heavy.

James knew this.

And no mineshaft too deep.

Do we understand everything about prayer and how it works? No, not at all. I suspect we never shall.

But that is what makes the prayer of faith so powerful. It is all about faith, rather than possessing the blueprints about how everything works.

Faith that taps into the deepest recesses of our soul and connects us to the power of God’s love and grace.

When that happens, the light finds us before we even see it with our eyes.