

spend money, it is good to have some people around who know how to make wise decisions with money.

Congressman Miller: So it's good that the people of North Carolina, again, sent us a banker to provide us a reading from the Holy Scriptures, Senator Kay Hagan.

59TH NATIONAL PRAYER
BREAKFAST—PART II

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2011

Mr. AKIN.

Senator Kay Hagan: Thank you and good morning. If I wasn't here, and I was actually back in my home state of North Carolina on a Wednesday morning, I would attend a prayer breakfast with a small group of women at my church. And I have asked them today to pray for you and to lift all of you up in prayer and to pray for peace. I do want to read from the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 40 verses 28 through 31.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youth will faint and be weary and the young will fall exhausted but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint."

Congressman Miller: Sometimes as busy people we say that we are buried in our work. Our next presenter knows the literal meaning of the term. Along with 32 other miners, he endured 69 days half a mile underground in a Chilean mine. The world marveled at the technological achievement of their rescue.

Congresswoman Kirkpatrick: Our guest today brings us the story of how God protected and encouraged them until their rescue. Please welcome the man who led those miners in worship and prayer throughout those dark and fearful days, Jose Enriquez. Translating for Jose will be the chaplain of the President of Chile, Reverend Alfred Cooper. [Applause]

[Mr. Jose Enriquez]

Mr. Cooper translating for Mr. Enriquez: First of all, greeting to President Obama and all present, government authorities and church authorities. My name is Jose Enriquez. I thank God for being in this place. I have come to give a testimony of what God did in that mine of San Jose. On the 5th of August, we were surprised by a rock fall and an explosion, and we had to organize ourselves down there to face this crisis. We had many difficulties, but we were able to overcome them. Organizing ourselves into a democratic community, we voted 50 plus one for every major decision and we went along with it. We realized, however, that we only had one alternative and that was God, himself. We were different creeds and different churches, so I got them all in a circle and began to teach the miners how to pray with participative prayer. We made sure that each one, in his own way, could pray and participate. And as we prayed, we began to know the presence and blessing of God among us down in the mine. We were strengthened and our spirits were revived.

We had some serious problems. We had very little food—for three days only, we had no water and we had to sort out the jobs like repairing the electrics and the piping. So we decided that, unless we prayed and God did a miracle, there would be no way out. And that became our daily hope and comfort as we

began to pray—that He would do miracles among us and solve our problems.

The first 17 days were the worst, with no communication with the outside world. But we kept preaching the word of God. And God was with us and among us and he began to deal with us and teach and speak to us. He began to reconcile the inevitable tensions that occur in such a situation. And so in this democratic, not secular democratic but praying democratic, community God began to reconcile us together. And so we would get the one with the other and force them to shake their hands and to become reconciled and we maintained the peace and the community spirit down there that way. And then we had the great miracle where the second drill, the first one had passed us by, glanced off a rock and broke in at exactly the right level, at exactly the right angle to enable our rescue. And then of course you know the rest of the story—52 days of surviving down there but now in touch with the outside world. At last we were able to eat. We got our beef steaks that we wanted, and we got all our medication. And then, this was the greatest blessing of all that came down that small pipe, small Bibles, because those fitted. They came down, and I then had a Bible to speak from, and I could preach more powerfully and profoundly from the very word of God. There was one Bible for each man with his name on it.

There is so much to tell you, dear folk. And finally that day came when we were rescued. And even before we went up, I encouraged them to get on their knees and pray one final time. Some wanted to dive into the capsule and get out immediately. But we said, no, hold it, wait one moment: we're going to pray first. We had that final time of prayer together. I said to them, brethren, we pray to our God in a desperate situation, and he answered our prayers. So now we wish to pray and thank God and bless God for all the help from all over the world. We blessed the capsule and thanked God for the work that so many had put into it—the many authorities, politicians, our very President who committed himself sparing no expense or effort to make sure we were found. And then came that great day when we began to come up one by one—which it seems all of you saw, and the whole world was watching. We felt the best way to express what we were feeling was to wear this t-shirt that we sent to be made, it said: "Thank you God. Thank you Lord Jesus. Thank you for having saved us." And then we came out to hug our wives and loved ones. Glory to God!

Congresswoman Kirkpatrick: We know of course that the President does not run the government alone but draws the greatest talent from the 50 states to serve the people. Tom Vilsack previously served as the Governor of the State of Iowa and serves our nation as our Secretary of Agriculture.

Congressman Miller: To pray for the leaders of the world, Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Secretary Tom Vilsack: Let us bow our heads and pray to the God who comforts us and watches over us. For our world leaders, our prayer is for them to remember and to live the beatitudes. Blessed are the leaders who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the leaders who are meek, for they and their people shall possess the earth. Blessed are the leaders who mourn, for they and their people shall be comforted. Blessed are the leaders who hunger and thirst for justice, for they and their people shall be satisfied. Blessed are the leaders who are merciful, for they and their people shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the leaders who are clean of heart, for they and their people shall see God. And blessed are the leaders who are peacemakers, for they and their people shall be called Children of God. Blessed are the leaders who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the

Kingdom of Heaven. Let us pray that our world leaders do justice, love kindness and walk the path according to God's plan. Amen.

Congresswoman Kirkpatrick: There may be no more potent or effective force on good earth than the power of story. There are those precious few gifted artists who can shape the ideas in histories of the human struggle into the form that touches and transforms us all. We have one such artist among us this morning. Randall Wallace has touched audiences around the world with his cinematic masterpieces such as "We Were Soldiers," "Secretariat," my favorite, "Pearl Harbor" and especially, "Braveheart," a tribute to his Scottish ancestor, William Wallace. We look forward to receiving the power of the words he has chosen to share with us this morning. Please welcome Randall Wallace.

Mr. Randall Wallace: Mr. President, Mrs. Obama, Mr. Vice President, members of Congress, international guests, all of you here today, it is a great honor for me to be with you.

An introduction like this sort of covers me with Hollywood glory, and whenever I am introduced that way I feel compelled to tell a story that relates exactly how glamorous I am. My first big break in Hollywood was when I was promoted to producer and sent to take over a television show that was in trouble. The ratings were low, the actors were unhappy, and unhappiest of all was a gorgeous young woman who had been Miss Universe. So, before I went out to meet them, I bought what I considered the essential piece of equipment for a producer: a strap to hold my sunglasses so they could dangle around my neck. My plan was to walk up, say, "Hi, I'm Randall Wallace," snap off my sunglasses, make my point, and then close with a dramatic flourish by putting them on again. I figured the actors would love it. So I walked up to Miss Universe, said "Hi, I'm Randall Wallace," snapped off my glasses and said, "I know you're not happy. You haven't been given enough to do. But I'm in charge of this show now—the writing, directing, everything. So if you have any problems, you come to me." And I snapped my sunglasses back on. But while I was talking, I'd been fidgeting with my tie, and I did this.

There is no fallback position from that position. A friend told me it may have been the first time in Hollywood history that an actress wondered whom she would have to seduce to get out of a job.

Movies are arguably America's most influential export—but guys like me don't seem the obvious choice to speak at a prayer breakfast. When I was directing "We Were Soldiers" at Fort Benning, Georgia, I found time one weekend to drive over to visit former President Carter's Sunday lesson at his home church in Plains. I asked a friend who knew the Carters to save me a seat, and when I arrived, I found the seat was right next to Rosalyn Carter. Apparently, Mrs. Carter, gracious Southern lady that she is, had wanted to be sure I felt at home. I sat down and Mr. Carter asked the congregation to open their pew Bibles to a passage that was the subject of his lesson. Now I grew up in Baptist churches, and I was familiar with the passage he was about to read. So I took the chance to open the hymn book to check on the lyrics of a hymn I was thinking of using in our film. And as I was thumbing through the hymn book, Mrs. Carter touched my arm and handed me her Bible, opened to the right passage. And I realized in that moment that Mrs. Carter had logically assumed

that since I was a Hollywood director I didn't know the difference between a hymn book and a Bible. And I have to admit, it did strike me that I had the perfect chance to steal Mrs. Carter's Bible. If anyone stopped me, I'd just say, "She gave it to me." It was worn with use, marked with joy and tears. Imagine what it would bring on e-bay.

To prepare myself, I've studied the speeches of those who have preceded me in this position in past years. The causes they've advocated from this podium are vital, and I have no way to compete with their accomplishments or their eloquence. So this morning I'd like to do something that as nearly as I can tell is unprecedented for a keynote address at the National Prayer Breakfast. I'd like to speak about . . . prayer. I'm not a philosopher. I'm not a preacher. I'm a storyteller. Like Jesus. As nearly as I can tell, that is my only similarity to Him. Actually there is one other: I too have cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?"

I've lived a life of tremendous privilege. I grew up just down the road from here, in Lynchburg, Virginia. Virginians are a righteous and sober people, too proud to tell a lie. But I was born in Tennessee. My father was born in Lizard Lick, Tennessee. The men in my father's family are Alton, Elton, Dalton, Lymon, Gleaman, Herman, Thurman and Clyde. They called Clyde, Pete. Nobody knew why.

When I was a child I suffered from attacks of asthma so severe that I couldn't breathe at all, and I had the real sense that if I panicked I would die. Grandmother would hold me in her lap all night long, and she would sing to me, and tell me stories from her childhood, and from the Bible. And she would look into my eyes, and she would smile. And I don't look at blue eyes to this day without seeing hers.

And as I grew older, I found her looking at me in a different way—quietly, distantly, and so I asked her, "Grandmother, why are you looking at me that way?" And she answered, "You remind me of Rufe." Rufe was her husband—my grandfather—who had died before I was born. Of course, I became hungry to learn about him, so I asked my father to tell me what he was like, and he told me this story.

During the Great Depression my grandfather, who was a farmer, decided to open a country store to feed his family. There was no wood to be had and no money to buy any, but he found a wrecked riverboat on the shore of the Tennessee River, and he salvaged that wood to build his store. But he needed cash to buy the stock to sell, and there was one place in town that paid cash for labor, and that was the plant where they froze huge blocks of ice, and men would pick them up with tongs and sling them up onto wagons so they could sell them to farmers whose homes had no electricity. My grandfather was the only white man who did that job; all the rest were what they then called "colored" men.

So his first day on the job, the supervisor, another white man, approached my grandfather and told him, "Listen, I just want you to know, all I got on this crew besides you is a bunch of . . . Colored men, and I cuss at 'em to make 'em work. So if I forget myself and I call you an S.O.B., don't pay me no mind, I don't mean nothin' by it, that's just the way I am." And my grandfather looked at the supervisor and said, "I understand completely. And I just want you to know that if you do forget yourself, and you call me an S.O.B., and I hit you in the face with a claw hammer, don't pay me no mind, I don't mean nothin' by it, that's just the way I am."

And in that one story I understood exactly who my grandfather was, and exactly who I

wanted to be. And I understood the power of a story.

My father, and mother, worked extremely hard so that I could go to school. He was a salesman who loved his customers, and he rose in his company, with promotion after promotion . . . until one day the family-owned company he had worked for twenty years was sold to a professional investment group who knew nothing about the business itself but who believed it would prosper if they fired all the old guys and hired cheaper younger guys. My father was one of the old guys. He was 38. I've always wondered if my father lived his life hungry for the father he'd never had; his own father had died before he was born—the grandfather he'd told me about was my mother's father, not his. He had never been fired from anything. The strongest and best man I ever knew, and he had a complete breakdown.

While he was in the hospital, my sister and I were farmed out to relatives. For awhile, we lived in a house that had no indoor plumbing. When I told my father about that he said, "Well . . . rich people have a canopy over their beds—and we've got a can of pee under ours." And that's when I knew my daddy would be all right.

The last sale he had made for his old company was for 90,000 dollars—in 1961. The first sale he made when he started his next job was for 90 cents. Working one hundred hours a week, he clawed his way back to success. God Bless America. And God bless my Daddy. He told me that I could go to college anywhere—something he and my mother had never gotten a chance to do. I chose the most expensive place possible—and he was so proud. But when I graduated, I didn't want to be a doctor or a lawyer, I wanted to be a writer. I wanted to tell the kind of stories that would let a young man know who his ancestors were, and who he might be. The kind of story that might keep a child alive through a long night.

59TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST—PART III

HON. PAUL C. BROWN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2011

Mr. BROWN.

My first job was in Nashville at a theme park, managing a live show that featured barnyard animals playing musical instruments. I'm not making this up. I had a piano playing pig, named Pigarace. I had a duck that played the drum named Bert Bachquack. You can imagine how proud my parents were.

I had my embarrassments and my setbacks, but I kept writing. I moved to Los Angeles. I got an opportunity in television. I married. We had two beautiful sons. I had purpose in my life, and I worked like I'd seen my father work, with pride and with passion. I'd won a multi-year contract with a thriving company. I bought an old home and remodeled it; I was promoted to producer. Except for an occasional mishap with my tie, life was sweet.

Then the Writer's Guild went out on strike, which caused the company I worked for to void its contract with me. The strike went on forever, and when it was over the company was barely there anymore. I was out of work, my savings were gone. No one would return my phone calls—I'm sure that's never happened where you work.

I kept trying, of course. I was always good at trying. But one day I was sitting at my

desk and I was staring at nothing, my stomach in a knot, my hands trembling, and I realized I was breaking down, as my father had. I feared I had failed my father, and my mother and my grandmother. And my greatest fear was that I would fail my sons. I was afraid they would see me come apart, as I had seen my father come apart, and it would be something they could never forget.

I got down on my knees; I had nowhere else to go. And I prayed a simple prayer. I said "Lord, all I care about right now are those boys. And maybe they don't need to grow up in a house with a tennis court and a swimming pool. Maybe they need a little house with one bathroom, or no bathrooms at all. Maybe they need to see what a man does when he gets knocked down, the way my father showed me. But I pray, if I go down, let me go down not on my knees, but with my flag flying."

And I got up and I began to write the words that led to "Braveheart."

Great writers like Robert Frost and Jane Austin have said that an ending that does not surprise the writer won't surprise the reader. When I wrote about William Wallace standing on a battle field ready to die for what he believed, I felt it and when I came to the end I wept.

Was that moment of prayer the single determining factor in the arc of my whole life? Of course not. My teacher and mentor in college, the great Thomas Langford, of Duke University, once told us in class that no decision in our lives stands alone; the trajectory of all other decisions we've ever made points our direction for the future.

Our lives are unfolding stories, they are moving pictures. If we took a freeze frame of Golgotha, on the day that Jesus was crucified, and showed that picture to anyone unfamiliar with the story and asked them to judge who the victor was in that scene, they'd be unlikely to say: "The one hanging on the cross in the middle."

It was from that cross that Jesus cried, "My God! Why have you forsaken me?"

That cry does not amaze me. What does amaze me is that while one of the two thieves hanging on either side of Jesus mocked Him, the other acknowledged the justice of his fate and asked Jesus for help; and Jesus, in the agonies of crucifixion, told him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." That does more than amaze me. It makes me believe that any power that could enable Jesus to say that, then, could do anything.

And it seems to me that Jesus' response is the answer to every prayer that thief never prayed. If God is God, then God knows our prayers whether we pray them or not.

So why pray the prayers? To me, it's not because God needs to know my prayers, but because I do.

Prayer sifts us like sand. Take any moment of our lives; take this one. Here, in a room resonant with power. Did we come this morning because we want to feel a closeness to power? Do we come before God because what we truly want is to use the ultimate power we imagine God has? Or do we fall to our knees to admit the truth of our weakness—and stand again, in the strength of that truth?

Jesus said the truth will set us free, and He said the truth is: God is love.

It seems to me that the prayer that comes from Love is the prayer that goes to God.

My father once told me a story of a man drowning in the ocean. He cried out, "Oh God! If you save me, I will spend the rest of my life in serving You!" A few moments later a boat appeared and he was pulled from the water, and on the way back to shore the man lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Of course You do understand that I meant 'in