

A New Beginning in Prayer (Video)

by Al Whittinghill

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of prayer, highlighting the importance of individual, family, and church-wide prayer. It shares powerful testimonies of answered prayers, illustrating how prayer can lead to revival, restoration, and miraculous interventions in various situations. The speaker urges the congregation to seek God's heart through fervent, effectual prayer, emphasizing the need for repentance, unity, and a renewed commitment to prayer in order to experience God's presence and power in their lives.

Scripture: Matthew 18:19, James 5:16, Acts 6:4, Luke 10:2, Ephesians 6:18, Mark 11:24, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Psalm 145:18, Philippians 4:6, Jeremiah 33:3

Topics: "Transformative Power of Prayer", "Unity in Prayer"

Description

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Transcript

You know, it's always special. We sang those words. I just wrote them down.

You are breaking new ground. We sang that today, brother. And often we don't go to new ground until we see the ground we've been walking on needs to be left behind.

You're breaking new ground. So I yield to you. That's what's got to happen.

And I trust in you. A vessel, an offering, heaven open over me. What does that mean? Is it just blessings flowing down or is there a communication going on? That's why the Lord gives you a hearing ear and a seeing eye.

And makes you aware of the cleansing blood that's afloat. Yes, you know, this to me, I am more looking forward to this day with you, honestly and truly, than I did to the conference. The conference was wonderful.

But I'm blessed and honored to be here with you because I sense that this church, this group of people, you all, God has something awesome. And I'm tired of that word a little bit because we use it about hot dogs and everything. I always say to somebody, that's awesome.

I said, you just don't know. You call the hot dog awesome? What's left for God? Well let's pray before we look into the word together. Lord, it is the proud heart that becomes a prayerless heart.

It is the self-confident who will not humble themselves before you. And we do that together here and we do dare to do what you, because of the flood of your precious blood overflowing us, even when we don't know it if we're yours, we come boldly right now together to the throne of grace. We sang about that.

And we ask that you would open our eyes afresh. Lord, we see you. Lord Jesus, the High Priest of the throne room, we see those scars we sang about.

They plead, and Lord we are listening too, to the multitudes the myriads of those around your throne who are saying, Thou art worthy, Lamb of God, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. We're joining in our loaves and fishes to that glorious perpetual, eternal praise around your throne. And may our hearts be anchored there.

May your atmosphere around your throne take the atmosphere of our heart and sweep through it today. And we hear something there at your throne and it is the voice of your blood speaking, the blood that speaks and says, finished, complete, cleansing, redemption, nearness to God, victory over the devil. Your blood says to us all those things.

And may we listen and hear and be changed by the glory of God. For your namesake we do pray. And Lord do something here today that causes us to truly almost whisper in the days ahead as we try to even recall what happens here.

Make every heart not just look for you to do something in others, but to really take what you're saying as their very own here today. And to receive. May we not worship at a distance, but may it be up close and personal and inner.

In the name of Jesus, amen. Well the pastor forgot to tell you one of the most very important things about me. We just celebrated our 40th.

I think it's going to work out! Hallelujah! It's been tough on her. But it's not easy to be married to a preacher. It's not.

God gives a special woman. We have five grown children and now two more coming, 18 to be grandchildren. Today's my son-in-law's 40th birthday.

And they're having a big party. I'm supposed to be here with you. Well will you turn in your Bible to Luke 10? I hope you have your Bible.

I hope you don't ever trust a screen to be your Bible for you or your tablet. But I hope you have a book that you write in and you can write in the margin. Ouch! When the Lord speaks to you or something like that, that you have your very own Ebenezer walking around in your hand.

It can make you a walking worship service. Well back in chapter 9 of Luke, the Lord called His 12 disciples together and He gave them power and authority over the all demons to cure diseases. And He sent them

out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

And you see them going out. And then in chapter 10, you see a lot went on in that last chapter, but after these things, verse 1, chapter 10, the Lord appointed another 70. So there must have been 70 the first time that He sent out also.

And He sent them two by two before His face, before He went, to every city and place where He Himself would come. And He then says to His own, the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest that He would send, and you might say thrust, forth laborers into His harvest.

And I'm sending you out as lambs among wolves. That's His heart's desire. To have a Spirit filled body that is burdened when you pray for far more than just getting your own needs met and just having your own problems solved, but that you have a heavenly heartbeat that from the heart of God comes and it animates your whole life.

It animates the body of Christ. Where there is no heartbeat, we are a corpse. And we have the heartbeat of the throne room of God.

So these precious disciples go out and they see indeed demons, power over demons. We see that some in America, not much, but it's there all over the world. It's awesome.

Change your life the first time you hear a man's voice scream out of a woman and run away saying, oh, I hate God. It will change your life because you realize who is watching you all the time and wanting to inroad. But they saw that and they came back rejoicing, Lord, hallelujah, praise God.

We've got power in Jesus' name. You can almost hear it like that. And He says don't be so excited over the fact that the demons are subject to you.

Here's where you should really rejoice that your names are written in Heaven. It's all about eternity and Heaven. Not just fixing things up on Earth.

It's about preparing for the greatest move into the days ahead and He can begin it now. And so you see this must have stunned them. And so you can imagine going out with 70 guys and you're going from city to city.

You must have been tired like after a conference times 10, you know. And so they come toward a place called Bethany after He gives them some serious words about loving your neighbor. Look at chapter 38.

It came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain village. We know where it is. It's Bethany.

And a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. Now we don't know how many men came. It may have been 40.

It may have been 70. It may have been 12. But when you know that the Lord Jesus is coming to your house for lunch.

I mean you guys here did an awesome job of hospitality for us this conference. And it was wonderful. We felt the presence of the Lord in your practical service.

Everybody commented on it. And we knew something about this fellowship even from that. And it says something about you.

But when Jesus is coming over in person to have lunch at your table I promise you it might put a little stress on you. Right Morgan? My wife loves to receive missionaries. And you know she uses the good stuff.

They come over just to treat them like the King's kids. And you know I can see her in the kitchen. Don't mess with her.

Because you know she's there. She's got it timed down. She's wanting to make it just right.

And this must be what Martha felt like. Martha wasn't it? Was a wonderful, wonderful lady. And she wanted to.

Can you imagine taking on feeding 70 guys? And so it came to pass. It says as Martha received Him into her house verse 39. She had a sister called Mary.

And here's her description. She also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word. How'd you like to have that on your tombstone? Martha contrast.

Precious Martha was weighed down or distracted is the word. With much serving. And she came to the Lord Jesus.

Here's what must have happened. She's in there under the pressure of it. Mary had been in there helping her.

But Mary put down everything and went in and sat down at Jesus' feet and was listening to His Word. He says you know if you're mine you'll listen to my words. You hear God's words.

And so Martha must have looked out and seen Mary in there and said slack her. Slack her. And so she came out.

She's a little miffed. You can hear it. She came out and said Lord don't you care that my sister has left me to serve by myself? That's a rebuke.

Do you realize that? Rebuking Jesus. Don't you care? You tell her to therefore help me. In other words tell her to get busy.

If she really was on target she'd be helping me in there with this serious business. And Jesus in that grace we sang about answered and He said to her Martha, Martha you are weighed down. You are careful, anxious and troubled.

You're distracted by many things. Could you say that? I can say that. Today there's a thousand pressures on every side.

And with 18 grandchildren I can't even remember all the birthdays. It's unbelievable. My wife, thank God for her.

And I'm just telling you there's so much going on when you have friends in different countries and you're trying to pray for all these. Your pastor loves you and he's a busy man. I can't even get him to call me back

from Atlanta.

He texts. And I appreciate that. I understand it.

I see it now. You are careful and troubled about many things. Can you imagine the disciples watching this? Because see when you're talking to someone it's often the people that are listening that God is talking to.

Not the one you're talking to. They're watching. And that's what's happening here.

Because He's given them a visible lesson. And He says but one thing is needful or necessary. He didn't say that about many things.

Matter of fact He didn't say that about anything. One thing is necessary. He said to the rich young ruler one thing is needful.

The one things are important. But He says one thing is needful and Mary has, get this, chosen. It's a choice.

It's not a time problem. It's an attitude necessity. I don't have time for prayer like that.

No, no it's an attitude not a time problem. She has chosen the good part which will never be taken away from her. This last what's going on here.

This is eternal. This is more than historic. This is more than just what's going on.

This is eternal. And in my old version the next word is and. It's in the first of this 11th chapter.

It says and. Now in some of the verses it says now. But it really is the word.

It's like it's following right along. Because these disciples are just staggered by what they've seen. Now it came to pass that as He was praying.

He's doing what He told them. Mary should choose the one thing needful. He was praying in a certain place.

When He ceased praying one of His disciples says to Him, Lord teach us to pray. Oh no. He's preaching on that again.

We've heard everybody preach on this. I can almost hear it now. We think we know this.

Lord teach us to pray. Like John. The one you said was the greatest preacher born from women.

He had a school of prayer too. This must explain something. And He says to them when you pray.

And He gives what we call the Lord's Prayer. Especially the Disciples Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is over in John 17 when He prays and He comes to His Father.

But here He's saying Lord teach us. They're saying Lord teach us to pray. Do you realize with all they needed to learn that this is the only thing in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit recorded that they ever asked Him to teach them? Why is that? One thing is needful.

Teach us to pray. Teach us to do it. It's the one thing needful like in your life and my life as well.

But yet it's the thing the devil hates and fears more than anything else. He tries to keep you away from these things because he knows he can cut off your supply lines. And if you can surround a city and cut off its supply lines he'd only have to risk attack.

He can just wait you out and you'll faint. You'll give up. You'll start running from counselor to counselor looking for man's answers.

Maybe God will give you an answer through a counselor. Praise God. But what you need is God's answer.

And that comes as you get on your knees before Him. You see the disciples saw the mystery of it. They kept seeing the Lord Jesus.

He had no sins to confess. He had no bad attitudes to pray about. He got up a great while before day.

He's gone. Where's the Master? He's out there praying. And He'd come back in the afternoon.

He'd leave 5,000 people and go into a solitary place and get by Himself with His Father. And He would be at nights. They'd wake up and it says nights.

Many nights He prayed before He chose His 12. He says it. I don't do a thing.

I don't say a thing. What you see is God the Father in action through me by the fullness of the Spirit. And so everything I do is directly from Him.

And He says, By the way as I was sinned so sinned I you. He got, I believe, everything He did and said as the perfect man, the incarnate Son of God from His Heavenly Father. So that when you've seen Me you've seen the Father.

And by the way it's the same way. The one who's in Me, He's been with you. But He's going to be in you because I'm going to send this mighty Paracletos from the Father.

And I'll be your Paracletos at the right hand of the Father. And it'll be like this. And you will be joined in that day, in that day, in that day He says.

You can ask in My name or whatever you ask the Father in My name I will do. So that you can have your needs met. So that you can, so the Father will be glorified in the Son.

Because your life, you see, your needs are met. You just don't realize how met they really are, you see. Listen, the Bible talks about the one thing of prayer.

And I believe today God wants to give every single one of us, me included, in this church a new beginning in prayer. A brand new beginning. When God does a new thing, you know what He does? He does it the same old way.

You say, well that's the way. You've always done it. That's your ways Lord.

It's the single most important ingredient. And I'm not minimizing the Scripture. But it's the single most important ingredient in your Christian life.

When you get along with Him and let Him give you His Word. And you're kneeling and you're standing or whatever you, but you're communing with Him around the throne. It's the surest way for any family, any church, any group of people to truly be blessed.

Is to start praying. It's the one thing needful. It's the greatest way to protect your loved ones and your children from a million voices and a thousand vices.

I asked Josh this morning where Northridge was. Because I wanted to go there and stand by it and say in the name of Jesus I rebuke that pornographic spirit that came from there. God sent an earthquake to you one time and blew everything out of it.

I don't know why I said that. But anyway. We're going to do it on the way to the airport tomorrow morning.

We'll be 60 miles away. But you know what? Prayer is like launching missiles from your knees. They go undetected and they go undefensible and they never miss and they're time activated at the right time.

So it's the best way to leave a legacy for your children brother. It's the key to church growth. It's the necessary foundation for all missions and all prayer and all discipleship.

Forget it without it. You'll be making proselytes after your own kind. If you don't really get it from heaven.

It's the unfailing way, he says, to be strengthened in trial. It's the unceasing way to be strengthened against temptation and in trouble. It's a dissolver of doubts.

It is God's best classroom. It's not only the sword of the Spirit. It's the balm of Gilead that the Lord takes in the Spirit of God.

Makes it breathe to you, your Bible, when you're alone with God. It's the single best investment of time that any businessman could ever make. Time spent with God is never wasted.

It's never wasted. It's a place of vision. It's a place of passion.

It's the place of discernment and wisdom. And it's the prerequisite before God ever moves in revival. You can always trace it to the hidden stream of real prayer.

Authentic prayer like we're asking God to begin afresh in each heart here today. Now I'm going to really ask you to pay attention. Because prayer is the outstanding characteristic of the church in any day when God is at work.

You can look around and look back and you'll be astounded by this divine call to spend time like it was this morning. I didn't make it this morning. I was at home praying for this message because I want to honor what the Lord wants to do here today.

God is on conquest here today. He wants to bring together what's been being put in place here for eight years as of September 25th. So the most urgent need in the world is a praying church.

America hadn't got it yet just quite. But it's the most needed thing in America. It's the only way America will survive if the church really goes to her knees.

Nothing is more dear to His heart. Nothing is more clear in church history and in the Word of God than God is calling the church to real prayer. And it's the one thing needful.

It's the most pressing need in your life and mine to get it right again. To get it right. To come back.

You see. And it's when they saw Him praying that they said Lord teach us to pray. And you see here I want you to just say today it's not looking back in history at Him praying only.

It's seeing what He's doing at the right hand of the Father today. It's His unfinished work. He says on earth it's finished but at the cross, at the throne it's His unceasing, unfinished work of intercession and He's made us a royal priesthood to labor along with Him together in prayer and you have the privilege of planting the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth and plowing in prayer through ground that's fallow and hard and then you go and you preach and you see He we're going to talk about tonight.

The one who sows in tears that will reap in joy. It's my most pressing need to know Him in real prayer. Have you seen Him? Have you seen Him on the throne? Have you seen what He's doing there and what's going on around Him and has that been a call to your own heart? Join in and offer incense now that He saves it in bowls and vials and He writes it in His book.

He's got books you know. God has books and He opens and He says that there's prayer in those things. Lord teach us to pray.

See prayer was the most conspicuous thing about the Lord Jesus. Of course you knew that didn't you? It wasn't His miracles. It wasn't all the rest because in the book of Acts they didn't preach about walking on water or multiplying bread.

They talked about the resurrection and the power of God. See Lord teach us to pray. You've got to settle that.

It's first Lord teach us to pray. He won't be your teacher until He's your Lord. And you see He's got to be your all in all as we sing so easily.

He had when He came He had 30 years of growing up in obscurity then 3 years of ministry. One passion of dying on the cross and being raised from the dead and now 1900 years or more what's He been doing? Never ceasing to pray for His own. Just like the theme in John 17 praying for His own.

That's what He's been doing. Lord reign in me. Teach me.

He can do that beginning today especially a new way. Teach. The word teach you see.

Who can teach like Him? The Holy Spirit who I will place in you. He will guide you into all the truth. He will teach you of all these things of mine and He will show you things to come.

He will be a witness in you. That's what He will do if He's there. Forget all the other stuff out there because in there is the real proof of it on the inside.

He knows how to teach us. How much time do I have brother? When am I supposed to stop? Teach us. So you see but to really enroll in this school you've got to have a sense of your own poverty.

Because you see more important than your ability is your availability and some of you are not available as you just heard. It's a matter of priorities. It's a matter of what we think is really lordship and important in our life.

He knows how to teach us and He taught His disciples how to pray like I used to pray for my kids. Lord if you can teach them to pray they can learn everything else from you. Well and I'll try to be your echo of what you're saying but you see it's what you learn after you know it all that counts.

My great aunt gave me a piece of paper with that on it but I knew that God had called me. It's what you learn son after you know it all that counts. That's nasty isn't it? Teach us.

You know the word saint is not even in the singular in the New Testament. It's always us, they, them, one another. God has a body and you don't have any idea what you miss when you don't come together in His presence and agree together in real corporate prayer.

That's not just individual prayer we're talking about. It's that I've given my church the keys of the kingdom. Martin Luther had a prayer ministry he called it the keys of the kingdom.

And it was where they learned with authority to get in on what God's up to and agree with His word and God's just been waiting for the church to agree with Him in what He says is true and right. He says He will do. He says that's the bridge I've been waiting for.

But you have not, ah young voice that said that. I love that. If you weren't young we see that as a compliment you sound young.

Learning to pray first begins with an act of will. Mary has chosen. And that's what you have to do you see.

After repeated sense of lack and failure there comes the confession we don't know anything as we ought. Lord teach me to pray. So teach us to pray not just how to pray.

It doesn't say how to pray. It says teach me to do what I've been told how to do over and over and over again. It's not information you need it's inspiration.

It's not methodology it's motivation. And it comes because it's not there because you haven't seen Him. Not like you want to see Him.

But today, today see He says how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him more than a Father giving gifts to you. But the context of that is in this chapter right here down in verse 13 where He says that but it's after He talks about keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking and He talks about it's the Spirit that prays I believe in this context here because it's not natural. In fact all prayer is supernatural even when you say Amen.

I go to a lot of churches different kinds, colors, shapes, sizes, good, the bad and the ugly. And I can tell you the stock prayer in a lot of them. I can tell you in the charismatic groups.

I can tell you in the different groups the Baptist groups. Lord it's so good to be here in your house today. I want you to lead, guide and direct us and forgive us of our many many sins.

I say you got to confess sin retail not wholesale brother. You got to come and be specific. But you see you can almost tell by what you, we learn to pray from men.

We go to prayer meeting and we listen to somebody else and we learn and there's part of that how you have the same accent as your parents. You do, that's true. But there's a sense in which you see you only learn to pray by praying.

And the Lord wants to teach us this and really bring us into this. Have you ever asked Him Lord give me the spirit of prayer, give it to me. Give to me the spirit of prayer and I'm tired of trying to carry on in my own strength.

Nothing is too big for His power nothing is too small for His heart. He wants you to know Him like that. So prayer is the great ministry the Lord calls us to ourselves.

It removes the veil of time and space and lets His discernment come and He teaches us His word and it's the promised land you see that He gives us in a picture there. It's the promises of God in prayer that you claim but you see unfortunately we leave them unclaimed and we allow the enemies to stay in the land. So prayerlessness, here's what prayerlessness proves in a church or in a family or in a people.

Prayerlessness moves proves that I have become unaware of the immediate presence of God. And people say be with us Lord He has never left, He's never moved. We've left Him in our kind of consciousness but I need you to say let me be with you.

It's a new beginning to be always moment by moment in your presence. And when you are prayerless you are bound no matter what you confess to the visible, practical, unexplainable and reasonable. You can't live, you see prayer calls us up, it places us at our disposal, the eternal throne of God, the eternal power of God and He will never, get this and remember this, God will never do apart from prayer what He's promised to do in answer to prayer.

What an uncomfortable statement. God will never do apart from prayer what He's promised to do when this church prays. When you really say that's priority number one, to lay hold of the heavens and God wants us to lay hold of Him, God wants us in revival but He's training you in an apprenticeship in time to reign with Him in eternity and He's trying to get you in on the way He thinks and the way He does and how He works things in prayer.

So the Spirit helps our weakness and we know not how to pray as we ought but God on the inside it says makes intercession for us and through us with groanings. You ever groaned? You ever, we're going to talk a little bit about that you see. But there's no experts in this school and there's no graduation but everybody can be a graduate as well.

It's a great mystery this thing called prayer, it's glorious indeed. If you abide in me and my words, my rhemas abide in you. You can ask what you will and it says God will generate it, that's the word generate it unto you.

Now that's not name it and claim it, that's not gab it and have it. I mean a lot of that's nonsense because they've never seen what God is saying to them. God is on your side as long as you're with Him.

But if you follow your own ways you will turn yourself into His enemy. So I want to talk about the priority of prayer for the person. Before I do that I want to say in Luke 18 verse 1, you'll see he keeps going back.

Luke is the gospel of prayer. It always zeroes in on the prayer life of the Lord Jesus. It shows Him as the perfect man.

Takes His genealogy back to Adam where the others don't and stop at the king Matthew the king and Mark the servant, no genealogy. Genealogy of Jesus in the deity gospel. John is, in the beginning was the word.

But in Luke you see, you see Jesus as a man of prayer. And so you see in Luke 18 he says, men ought always to pray and not faint, not give up. Because that's the two alternatives in the days that are coming that are harder.

Growing in prayer, learning to pray, a new beginning in prayer or fainting and feeling like I want to give up. That's going to happen to every single one of us in these days ahead. But he gives this parable to this little widow woman and there's a court judge.

How interesting. A judge and he's not a good judge. He doesn't fear God.

He doesn't regard man and she has drawn him and he's got her court case. And so he comes to him and she's, the picture is she's outside the courthouse every day like kind of what's happening now in Washington. Avenge me of my adversary.

Except she's doing it for the right reasons. Avenge me of my adversary. And he, she's always there.

And the Lord says, the unjust judge, he says, I'm going to do what this woman says lest she literally hit me beneath the eye. Like with her umbrella, boom. And the Lord says, listen to what the unjust judge who didn't fear God or care about people says.

How much more will the Heavenly Father give to His children what they ask of Him? I tell you He will give to them speedily, not quickly but speedily when the time comes. And He says He will avenge them. And it's like, but He says, nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, and that's soon, will He find that kind of faith on the earth? That kind of faith.

The kind that keeps on asking and keeps on seeking and keeps on knocking no matter what. Persistent, insistent, resistant coming and doing what God says. You see, it's awesome.

So the Bible is very clear about it. For every individual in this room, prayer is His priority. It's like the pulse of your Christian life.

If you want to know how healthy I am, you can take my pulse. My little eye watcher my kids gave me it always tells me my pulse. And it hadn't been a blessing.

Because I look down and say, ooh, it's too high. You know, it's just a nuisance. Or it's too low.

It's never really too low. I don't know why somebody said you'll be in Heaven if you don't overshoot it. Anyway, but I'm not trying to get there on my own so I'm not worried about that.

But you see it's very, very true for each one of us if you want to know how you really are you feel your pulse of prayer. It's right from your heart you see. It's not what you say not how much you can confess.

Not even how much Scripture you can rehearse to others. It's your prayer life. It's really the measure.

When a guy comes into your church you shouldn't just ask him about where he's been, where he's taught, and what he believes in. You should check the temperature of his heart, not just the size of his hat. So prayer is God's will for me.

I want you to say that. Prayer is God's will for me. Prayerlessness is the devil's will for my life.

Say that. Prayerlessness is the devil's will for my life. Now I'm not trying to coerce you, but that's what the Scriptures say.

The devil is concerned about prayer too, to keep you from it. So all success in spiritual things depends upon prayer. And somebody quoted Robert Murray McShane a little earlier.

He said this, What a man is on his knees before God, that is what he is and nothing more. You may think good things about this person or that, but what they are when they go down before God, that's who they really are. The credentials of men, all the other stuff don't mean a thing when you go in before him because you're welcome to come just as you are.

It says, Paul's writing to the Corinthians and they had a lot of problems in that church. He said, Listen, I've preached to you the Gospel. I've laid the foundation.

You take care how you build upon the truth of being the Lord's. And he says, Whether it's with wood, hay, and stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones, the day is coming that will test every one of our works as to what sort, not size, what quality, what dimension it is. There is a day coming when all of our life will go whoosh through the fire.

And he says some will be saved as if with the smell of smoke. Everything they've done, all the pots and pans, you may try to relieve a guilty conscience by serving a lot more, doing a lot more things. Busy like Martha in whatever kitchen you're involved in.

I'm not against kitchens here, just you understand what I'm saying. Busy is not the same thing as effectual. Busyness, I used to think that busyness produced barrenness and it is true in a certain way.

But I've come to see that barrenness can often be the reason for a lot of busyness. Trying to cover over and make it up to God in my own way for not heeding the call to the closet, to get alone with Him and to come to prayer with other precious people, you see. Well, I can tell you as an individual, God wants to do something wonderful and He wants you to build not with wood, hay, and stubble.

That's what you get after men are finished working in busyness and it's above ground and visible. Gold, silver, and precious stones are made in secret under heat and pressure. And that is a good picture, I think.

God has a who's who. He has books and He's got heroes. His hidden ones, He calls them in the Scripture.

I've met some of them. I wish I had time to tell you about some of them. A little Indian lady, I did a few before for 50 years, she'd been in a room praying for people her last 50 years.

They let me loose in her room, her children before the funeral that night. I almost couldn't leave it because I saw these little scraps of paper and books and hundreds and hundreds of volumes of things she's prayed for, for people all around the world. And her daughter got up at the funeral and said, Mother never wasted a second.

It was unbelievable. I could tell you of many, but I won't because I've got to get through this. God wants to teach you and me as individuals to pray.

It is His priority for us to learn as individuals to pray. But He also wants your families to learn to pray. Every husband, every wife.

In our men's accountability group one of the things we used to do, one of the things we said if we're going to be part of this group, one of those seven areas in which we are accountable to God and by that accountable for us to ask each other by choice, we have to be in the Word in a disciplined way and God can show you, but once He shows you, you tell us and we're going to help each other. You have to be in prayer. You have to pray with your wife.

You have to be part of a local body. These are just different things we do. And if you're not there, your brothers will lean on you and pray for you.

We do it together. We get three hours and we get down the last half hour. People weep for each other.

And one brother said, I'm just having a hard time praying with my wife. She says, it makes you feel nervous. You know why? Because he just walked all over her feelings for so many years.

And so he said, what do I do? And I said, David, do this. Don't make her pray. You say, we're going to start praying and you don't have to pray.

Just let me pray. And you put your hands on her and you thank God for her and all the things about her because when you pray, your spirit is becoming real to her. I mean, people get married for physical reasons.

That's the body. And they may get married for soulish reasons because we're such good friends and that's a good thing. But I'll tell you something.

Men don't think like women. That'll break down. Men don't have emotions as women.

Right, brothers? I can't believe you didn't say amen to that one. You gave that a chance. And they certainly it's just a big difference.

Men are like beep, beep, beep. Women are tick, tick, tick. It's a different frequency.

But when you pray together, you see, I heard a woman say one time, my husband is just so hard to understand, but he prays for me. You see, she had seen it. All the other stuff, oh, that's just men.

That's just men. But if you don't have that, you see, David said, honey, I just want to pray. And he prayed for her and prayed for her and after about two weeks of that, she said, I want to pray too.

She saw how safe it was and he hadn't missed a day since. I can tell you it's hard to do. It's the greatest prayer team on earth as a husband and wife.

But yet, that doesn't mean because you go here that you all are praying together as husbands and wives. I preached at a church called Bartlett near Memphis, Tennessee. And it's a big church.

And I walked in there and before I preached on the back wall, I always like to try to get a feel of where I am. There's this back wall with all these pictures of little old people on it, couples. And I looked closer and it was people who were there.

Now some of them had gone on, but they'd been in the church 50 years. 50 years. Pictures of these people back there.

There must have been 20 of them. And I just sat there and worshipped. I said, Lord, this is awesome.

And I just looked at each one and just prayed for them. And so that night after I preached, I gave an invitation. I talked about how that if I'm a man and I'm not praying for my wife, it's sin.

It's not just stupidity. It's sin. And that I have to make it a priority and I need to repent and vice versa.

And I gave them an opportunity to come to the altar, like I'm going to give to you so prepare yourself, to come to the altar and repent of prayerlessness as a couple and receive a new beginning in prayer as a family for your children. And I did that and the altar filled up. People cried and then they left and went home.

The next night after the meeting I was down front talking to people. We were having fellowship and I noticed this little lady here waiting to talk. And she's just like this, waiting to talk.

She's just so excited. A little white hair, little glasses like these. I've gotten old too now.

But this was a couple years ago. And she was like this and her husband was kind of behind her, kind of like this. Well, my wife wants to talk to the preacher.

And so she came up and she said, Mr. Whittinghill, Mr. Whittinghill, we just really want you to know we appreciate that word. Last night we did what you said. I said, what do you mean? We did it.

And I said, wait a second. Do I know you? And I remembered suddenly as I looked at her face, her picture I'd seen on the back wall back there. And I said, are you on that back wall back there? She says, yep, we're charter members of this church.

Been here 52 years. And I said, and you're telling me that last night you and your husband went home and you prayed together for real? She said, yep, we've never done that before but we'll never miss another night. And they were so excited.

By now he's going like this. And they walked out. They must have been in their late 80s.

And they're walking out swinging hands, walking out. I said, that'll do it. That'll do it, Lord.

That'll put them back together. And that's what he wants for every single person in this room that's married or that are going to be married. You've got to be willing to pray.

Not just that, but for your children. I remember for my children's earliest days, I would always get a map of the world and lay it down. I tried to find the one we had out there.

I was going to show you something like it. It's a big map. And I would read to them.

I mean, Jonathan was about almost 6. Elizabeth was 4.3, somewhere 4 and a half. Today she's, well I won't tell you how old she is, but she's in her mid-30s. I'll just say that.

She's the one whose husband is turning 40 today. And Elizabeth. And then Catherine was just a little crumbsnatcher.

She was just a little girl. And she couldn't really pray. She'd go bleh, bleh, bleh.

Or she'd say a couple of words, just kind of mutter it out. And so we'd get down on the floor. She could talk, but not real sentences.

And so I would tell them about a country from this book called Operation Whirl by O.M. Johnson. Anyway, it's a missionary book. It tells all about a nation and gives you prayer requests.

They're young. You say, they're too young. No, they're not too young.

I'd tell them about the country and I'd have them get their finger and put it on the country that we just heard about and we'd pray together. Well, years ago. You can figure how it is.

It must have been like 30 years ago, at least. We'd lay our finger on the map. I love this map.

It's got little spots from ear wax and spit. Only a father would appreciate it. Hey, your prayer map's like that with your heavenly father.

He loves it. It's precious to him. And I told them about Ethiopia.

The communists had made a thing around Ethiopia to keep the bread out and all the food. And they were starving a whole nation. And the world was talking about it.

I don't know if you remember that. But it was some time back. And I told them, I said, look, I told them all this detail and read about Ethiopia.

And I said, let's pray together for Ethiopia. And so we got down. And just before we prayed, Elizabeth looks up at me and she's just four, talking pretty good.

She had been saved. I'm telling you, she had wept over her sins. And we had prayed for them.

And she was a true little godly girl like you are. You probably were really young when you started praying. But I remember she looked up at me and she said, Daddy, doesn't Father God have all the bread in the world? I said, He does.

Well, why don't we ask Him? He will send bread to eat to Opa. She said, eat to Opa. And I said, yes.

I said, Elizabeth, you lead us. And so she went over. You have to know her.

This is the biggest cinch ever. We all laid our fingers on Ethiopia. And she looked up.

She said, Father God, Daddy says they need bread in Ethiopia. And you have all the bread in the world. Now, how does a dad feel on that, you know? I'm just crying my eyes out, just listening.

And I'm just running down the road of faith with her, nothing greater than your joy walk, your children walking and that kind of stuff. And all of a sudden, here's where I fell in the ditch. And she went running on ahead of me.

She said, and Father God, we ask you to do it right now. And as they'd say in the Baptist church, I said, if it be thy will. Probably not just the Baptist church, because that's sometimes a disclaimer we put on our prayers when we don't really believe God.

I don't really believe what I just said. And I remember after they prayed, I thought to myself, Lord, please protect her. She doesn't know these kind of things take time.

She doesn't understand like we understand. And I gave her a big hug. I said, Elizabeth, awesome.

I said that word then, and it was before it became weak, but awesome. Babe, what a wonderful prayer. Your daddy's so proud of you.

And she said, thanks, Daddy. And she walked off, and I was burdened as she walked off. It was 40 hours later that I was in a friend of mine's office, a doctor, waiting to have lunch with him.

We were going to have lunch. While he was seeing his last patients, I was reading. Can't forget to breathe.

I was reading a newspaper that he had there, and here's what it said. On page two, there was a black woman in this article. It said, largest shipment, it literally said, of bread gets into Ethiopia.

And I go, like this. And I said, no way. I said, no way, no way.

And the Lord said, yes way. And except you become, as a little child, you'll never see the nations changed. You'll never be able to believe God like those guys did when they prayed for laborers to the harvest.

You'll never see it. I was blown away. I told everybody.

It was just awesome. Well, fast forward to the year 2000. I was in South Africa on 9-1-1.

I was in a meeting like this preaching, and a lady runs in. It's in the morning there. I think, I forget what time of day it was, but she runs in and said, Mr. Whittinghill, Dr. Whittinghill, they're running airplanes into the buildings in America.

Now, we didn't have a TV. All we had was radio. We turned it on, heard live feed.

I thought it was every city in America. So did my brothers. We hit the deck, man.

We got down and prayed, and it was awesome. We were marooned there for a week because Europe gridlocked and everything shut down. We had good meetings and prayer, but a friend of mine and I, at that time, we got on our knees.

We prayed through the book of Isaiah for our nation. I mean, read the whole chapter and prayed our way through it. I learned more in that brief week.

I mean, I just can't even put it into words, but during a meeting I was there, and I was preaching, and I thought that I would tell them about Ethiopia because it's Africa, you know, and I would identify with them, and I shared that story I just shared with you about Elizabeth, and it had no small stir. After the meeting, I noticed this distinguished woman in a red dress walking down very elegant looking, and she came forward, and I went to shake her hand. She said, Mr. Whittinghill, thank you for sharing about Elizabeth's prayer.

I'm in the Ethiopian parliament today, and I want to tell you I was there, and it was like too many people praying. I'm not saying my daughter was the only one, but it was like this carton rollback one morning, and all these things started coming in, and I want you to go home and tell Elizabeth thank you for praying. I can't even tell you.

You never know when a word like that will change your life, or your life, or your children. It blew me away. I can tell you at missionary conferences where a couple stood up, they'd been married 39 years on the

mission field, and they stood up at the end of the conference, and they said, we've never really been praying, been so busy on the field for 39 years, but we've been praying all weekend, and we feel like God has saved our marriage.

What does it take to say something like that to the people? It's just incredible. Husbands and wives, the greatest prayer team on earth. I can tell you of young couples, old couples.

I've got to go. I've got to hurry and get through this. But the real priority that I'm talking about this morning, and preparing you to come back tonight, a new beginning in prayer for the church.

The church. You know, I could tell you of so many churches, but the early church especially. When Jesus built his church, he said, my Father's house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations.

That it will become, that's the definition. That'll be the most conspicuous thing about the church just like it was about me. That she will be called a house of prayer.

And it's not what we call ourselves, it's what they call us from out there. That's a house of prayer down there in Leona Valley. Those people pray together.

It's incredible that they're like that. When I went to the Brooklyn Tab and had the privilege of going there while I was there preaching, I got to talk to their prayer and ask this old brother, thank you so much sister. The Lord loves to have you try to figure a place to wipe your nose and eyes.

You just got to get rid of it. It doesn't matter. I'll tell you about one of those tonight.

Because he loves for genuine humility to take root in our heart. We're just old dust. Like he took Adam out of dust and breathed into Adam and Adam became a living soul.

The first man at Pentecost, pieces of dust, man of dust. He breathed into that waiting particles of dust and that church became a living body. The new man, the Lord from heaven.

That's what he wants to make here today. I can tell you that when Jesus built his church, it was a praying congregation and his blueprint was my father's house will be called by those out there. They'll see it, a house of prayer.

I will be in the midst of them. My eyes, my heart, my ears will always be open toward it. The early church understood the real battle for Leona Valley or anywhere you are is in prayer.

You've got things going on around here that maybe you've never sensed, maybe you do sense and forgot about because you're in church and God wants you to go out and take the land, the people of the land and share the gospel with them. I remember once in Murray Bridge, Australia, I was there and there was a group of 19 pastors and I said, if you really want to get serious about, here's what you can do. You come together and you meet as a church, go back to your church and have a meeting like you did this morning and pray for your thing and then get a clipboard and go out and knock on doors two by two like he did and you say, we're not here for your money.

We're not even going to ask you to church. We feel a responsibility for you to pray for you because you're in our area. Can we pray for you? Some people go, slam the door.

Others will say, my mother, pray for my mother and you say thank you and you write it down and you come back and you really do get down and you pray for her. Then you go back out and you say, look, here's a word. God will give you a word for it.

You give her a word and you know what? It'll just bless them and they'll see that's a house of prayer down there and the churches of those 19, I think six of them did this and all of them tripled in size the next year. All of them. In another place in Australia, in Melbourne, there's a church called Blackburn North.

It's the flagship Baptist church in Melbourne and they had a New Year's Eve service. I was speaking at a Keswick meeting the next week and so I was asked to speak on New Year's Eve and the pastor here, this church I found out he had had cancer. He'd gotten so weak there was squabbling going on.

Now you don't have that here do you? Anybody ever squabbling among each other? And the giving was being challenged and it was just church problems because there's unrefined flesh still in there. And so this was going on and the church was just really fragmented but it was a big, big church for Australia. Now not for here but it was there were like 1,000 people and like 800 came.

200 the FBI couldn't even find if they were looking for them. But that Sunday night we shared on a new beginning for this year in prayer. Kind of what we're doing here today.

And at the end I gave an invitation and 400 people at least came and wet the carpet with tears to do business with God and say, I repent of my prayerlessness. Change me oh God, teach me to pray. And I remember after as I was just standing here the pastor who was so weak he could barely walk he pushed me out of the pulpit and he said, I got to say a word.

And he said, I want to say this. Some of you here know me, my situation this may kill me. But we talked about prayer forever but we've never really done it.

I'm going to be in the sanctuary of this church every morning this week at 7 a.m. to pray and whoever can come to join me, you come. Now this is not putting you under anything brother. I'm not trying to put this on you.

God's design is for you separate, whatever. But for them that's what the Lord said to him and so as he went down, you could see how weak he was. Well I went on to Adelaide to preach there and at the end of that week I called back and said, how was it? He said, we had 40 people there every morning from 7 to 8 and it was so wonderful that we decided to go another week.

And so they went another week and at the end of that week I called back to the associate pastor as I was leaving and he said, awesome, we doubled in size. And we've had over 100 there and so we've just decided to go the rest of the month. At the end of the month from America I called to the associate pastor and he says it is so glorious.

We're just going to go the rest of the year. And we've added a half an hour on the front and the back. Two hours a day every morning they prayed in that place and at the end of the year the head of their elders wrote me a letter and he says, dear Al, I want to just say glory to God.

Praise him for changing our church forever through the recovery of his heart for prayer. Our pastor who was a dying man before our eyes has been totally restored just by the presence of God and praying and now he's a dynamo. We have to beg him to rest and slow down.

Our giving is up. Souls are being saved and it's all because his church is a praying church. Now, that's not just Australia.

I can tell you about Atlanta, a little tiny church that was about to split and everything. We had a great time in there and God broke them and taught them about prayer so much so that in 1996 when the Olympics were coming to Atlanta they took the leadership in all of the city of all the churches to lead the churches in prayer because God taught them about prayer and they learned about it. I have a feeling I'm about to go over here, right? Yeah, I am.

I need to quit. But what I want to ask you then this morning as you're here, how is it with you and your prayer life? Somebody said here, Shane said a prayer life is a life that prays. It may be weak, it may be growing stronger but you see the devil fears hysterically that anybody in here will really lay hold of prayer once again.

He doesn't care how many meals you have. I'm not minimizing. You hear what I'm really saying? I'm not minimizing any service but he doesn't care about the outward.

He cares about the things that really have caused him so much damage. You look in the early church and you see how the devil tried to get them with disunity and then get them with distraction. In Acts 6, 4 they're serving widows and orphans and that was a good distraction.

There's nothing better you can do but they say in Acts 6, 4, we've got to find godly spirit-filled men to do this work and we, the leadership, must give ourselves. It means to suffer together toward a target. We must give ourselves to the prayer, the kind of prayer that was upper room prayer and the diakonos, the washing of the feet in the Word of God.

And so you see they were serving tables but they were deficient in prayer just like Martha. One thing is needful, make the choice. Oh Dr. Jowett missionary out in the Pacific he said, I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.

Well Dr. Jowett you teach preaching. He did. He said, yes, yes but teaching and preaching as vast and wonderful as they are, they only reveal the will of God.

Only prayer, get this, can lay hold of it. Some of you have been window shopping. I've heard your pastor on the internet I mean I've listened to your stuff here.

You've gotten good food but you've been window shopping some of you. Oh like going to the mall, I love this. But you were not really going to go in there and get that.

You're just looking at it, you're admiring it, you're dreaming about it and that's how you've been approaching the things of God. But you see he says to you today, quit being a wisher and a hoper and a theorist and lay hold of it. Now just earlier today you all flooded the front and it was emotional, it was a wonderful time.

And you came to support your pastor. But I want you to be careful about coming when I do this next thing but not fearful but careful to be honoring to the Lord. Because I want to ask you if you are willing to say, Lord I realize that prayerlessness and not being taught by you is sin.

And I can't just try harder and fix it. The only remedy for sin is to confess it to you. So whether it's an individual who comes and kneels here and of course the conviction is there at first and you say oh God forgive me and to be showered with the flood of grace that comes and he says I love you now and receive and let's a new beginning and real communion with God, the communion of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Or it might be a couple who's here. Who you realize that everything is good on many levels but you haven't really been praying or with your children and you don't even know what you're missing. That's the sad thing.

You don't even know how glorious it could be. And you want to come. Why don't you take the other's hand and come up here and kneel down and repent together and kneel at the cross of Jesus by faith and say Lord teach us to pray.

Show us how to build a hedge around our family. Show us how to build part of the wall around this church. Make us part together of what you're doing.

And then there's leadership in this church who you've been giving yourself to many things and he would say to you be part of the prayer meeting or cut back. Take time to be holy. Quit thinking that results means anything at all.

I mean the Mormons down the street that I rebuked in Jesus name and said it smells like snakes around here. Sorry I shouldn't have. But I rode by them and I just said in Jesus name stop them.

It's like a pig with lipstick on. Sorry. It's a nice building.

I shouldn't say this brother. We need bended knees and it won't be long until broken hearts follow. Keep your heart before him and brimming eyes.

We'll talk about that tonight. And burning passion to go out and share with others what he's done and who he is in your life and in your church you see. Prayer will put you in the real arena.

Master why could we not cast him out? He wasn't talking about you need to fast and pray more. He was talking about that fast and pray open the door to the arena that you have to walk in and live in if you're going to deal with this kind of thing in spiritual authority. And some of you it's like those vagabond Jews.

Come out in the name of Jesus whom Paul told us about. Come out in the name of Jesus whom Shane has told us has authority. And the demons came out and leapt on them and they ran away naked it says and bleeding.

And they said Jesus we know. Paul we know. We hate Paul.

But who are you? I'm praying that you'll become famous in hell. That you'll become, that you'll embarrass the devil in Leona Valley. That you will be men who seek God.

Some of you guys here you need to put your big boy pants on. I'm sorry. And get down before God and become a leader.

God sent you such wonderful leadership in this church. But we didn't ever see you till this morning some of you. And I'm not rebuking you.

But I'm concerned. Just like your pastor. And it's time for a new beginning in prayer.

Individually and as families and as a church. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person who's been made clean through the blood avails much. He's looking for people who will come down together and see prayer as a conduit and a bridge and a pipeline of the will of God to come to Leona Valley.

And he will whisper secrets. I will give you the treasures of the secret place. I will show you what I'm doing.

And I'll tell you it's also, I gotta tell one more thing. I just gotta tell this. I'm sorry.

You know we had this hurricane coming down on North Carolina. And that's my home state. And so they kept showing this map of this big eye coming in toward North Carolina.

And I was in a pastor. There were pastors at a prayer meeting at an association. And these guys had been praying together for a while.

They're black. They're white. They're Korean.

They're different guys together. And as we were praying God showed us a picture of that hurricane coming. It was Category 4. And with the it was slow and big.

And it still caused amazing damage just as a Category 2. But it was coming in. It was gonna hit as a Category 4. And I remember we got down and we said, somebody said, in the name of Jesus we just speak a word to the eye of that hurricane. Diminish! Diminish! In Jesus' name.

And we, everybody was in it. We were in it. We were together in it.

And it said, we believe you Lord. If you could say to a mountain be removed we can say to a hurricane be diminished. And we left feeling very good about it.

Thank you Lord. Next morning I'm listening to Shepard Smith. And he is not the monikin of virtue.

He doesn't understand spiritual things. He's on the TV and he's looking at it and he says, I've been doing hurricanes a long time. I heard him say this.

And nobody in the meteorologists can really admit they were wrong. We can't really figure out what happened. But this hurricane has diminished.

He used the word diminish. And I remember I just raised my hands and I says, Hallelujah Lord. And then it came in as a Category 2. And all this flooding.

I said, we should have said stop the waters too. But we're learning. We're learning.

But I tell you, you know what it does in your heart when you see your children praying or you start seeing God answer you? Joy. Unspeakable. His joy.

That's why so many that are in the church live for happiness. Because they don't have His joy. And when you have His joy you can sing in jail.

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