

The Power of Prayer

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in becoming identified with God's purpose and the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us in our prayer life.

Duration: 1:26:38

Scripture: Exodus 33:18, Psalm 86:11, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16, 1 John 5:14

Topics: "Power Of Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer leading to action. He highlights the need for conviction to be carried into life and for decisions to be made based on those convictions. The speaker shares a powerful testimony of a church experiencing a deep visitation from God, resulting in conviction of sin and a powerful atmosphere of repentance and confession. He also mentions the importance of faith, but cautions against placing faith in oneself, emphasizing our desperate need for God's work in our lives.

Transcript

Long ago, O Lord, you spoke to your servant, not through the earthquake, or the wind, or the fire, but through that still, small voice. Father, speak to us through that still, small voice this night. Let's stand and we sing the hymn number 28, Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Saviour, Master, King.

Number 28. A blind man once heard of Jesus, and realized he was nearby, and he cried, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And people tried to get him to keep quiet, but he shouted more and more emphatically, and Jesus heard him, and said, Bring him.

And the man tapped his way to Jesus, as a blind man would, convinced that Jesus knew his need, and would immediately deal with it. But the Saviour asked him a most penetrating question, rather than just immediately take care of his blindness. He said, What would you have me to do for you? As we come to prayer tonight, I wonder in your heart of hearts, amidst all of your personal longings and wants, you would be able to tell Lord in this prayer time, the one thing you would like him to deal with.

Not that he'll just deal with one thing, but out of all of your mess, what's the one thing you would love him to touch tonight? Would you tell him as we turn to the Lord in prayer? Our great loving God and Heavenly Father, we don't have to ask you to be here. You are here. We acknowledge your presence.

We're thankful that you're delighted that we're gathering in your name, and that's through the Lord Jesus Christ. We're more and more aware each moment of the great thing that the Saviour has done in saving us from our sins. And now, O our God, we accept his gift of accessing to your presence to talk to you, knowing we don't have to shout like that blind man of old to attract your attention, for your ears are ever open unto the prayers of your people.

And as we bow in your presence tonight, O our God, our heart goes out to you. We seek you to be the sole answer to our special need. Father, hear the cry of each heart as at this moment they whisper in the depths of their being for only you alone will know the one thing they would like you to do tonight.

Tell him now. Father, thank you for hearing that. We thank you that tonight as you take up your servant, you will anoint him afresh, you will fill him with yourself, because it's your delight to meet the needs of your people.

Take that word, spoken and read, and make it truth in particular to people in particular, to meet that particular need. Father, have a good time in your people tonight. For Jesus' sake, amen.

There's one for the Keswick development. Now, if you haven't already been down to the hall, you won't know what we're talking about really, but there is someone here who I hope is going to be able to enlighten us all as to what the Keswick development is. We're glad to welcome Mr. George Hedger to our meeting this evening.

We're glad to. Come up, George. Mr. Hedger, you have had a long association with the name of Keswick.

Would you care to tell us something about that association? I first received Keswick teaching when I became a Christian 52 years ago. I first came to the Keswick Convention in 1959, and since then I haven't missed because I've brought year by year groups of young people to account. And for 11 years I became registrar of the convention, so I know a little about the convention and its project.

Now, there might be some people here who don't know how Keswick began. Would you care to enlighten us in that way? Yes. It's already been mentioned once that the vicar of St. John's Church in Keswick, Canon Halford Battersea, together with a Quaker layman from Cockermouth, had the inspiration of God to convene a meeting for the encouragement of practical Christian holiness.

And 600 people came to Keswick in 1875, not expecting to come back again. And since then the convention has grown until year by year we have 10,000 coming from all over the world, 60 or 70 different countries represented, young people, old people, and it's a tremendous thrill. It's good to be here, but when you meet this 5,000 people at once, and when you go to a missionary prayer meeting where 50 different nations are speaking the Lord's Prayer in their own tongues, you get a sense of the worldwide mission of the Keswick Convention.

Now, Keswick normally meets in a big tent, but there's going to be changes in the next few years. We are still going to meet in a tent, but whereas we've had a rather dilapidated wooden shack around the tent, and I've lived in Keswick and I've looked on this old concrete area, looks like an old iron yard almost, we're going to do away with that and we're proposing to build a purpose-built building that will not only house all our offices, the shops, tape rooms, tape recording rooms, but have accommodation for 40 people where the stewards and the staff will sleep during the Convention, but that place will be open throughout the year for Christians to come and use it as conference centre. So, how is this going to be financed? Where is the

money going to come for all this? The old Eskin Street tent that some of you know was almost ripped to pieces by a gale this year, which I felt was the Lord's hand upon it.

That tent's finished. We've sold the ground. The lodge is up for sale.

I left Keswick last Friday, and the Bordeaux's have ripped up all the concrete, torn down all the old buildings. I felt when Billy spoke this morning that we really have burned our plough and filled our oxen because if there's no building next year, there's no Keswick Convention, which would be shattering, so there is going to be a convention. We need to raise £620,000 by June of next year, and this has to come in by stages.

We've received £250,000. Now, four weeks ago, we only had £150,000. £100,000 has come in the last week, and only 1,800 people have given.

It was announced in the Convention that if all those who came to the Convention during the period of 10,000 would only give £50 each, we'd have the money. But actually, only 1,800 people have so far responded, and we're looking to the Lord's people to let the Lord search your heart. You've all read in the Word how the Lord said, if you bring your tithe into the storehouse, I will pour out a blessing, and I would challenge the Lord's people to be faithful to his command to bring your tithe, not maybe to Keswick, but to your church, to mission fields.

We don't give enough, and I'm sure if the Lord touches our heart that that money will come rolling in. This is a once-only. All that we ask is that folk bring their gift, no matter how small, no matter how large, and we're not going to ask you for any more.

It's not a year-by-year commitment as a missionary society. I was talking about just now that if only 10,000 people gave £1 a week for the next year, a lot of that money would come in, and by covenanting, the income tax people give you back £29 for every hundred that you give overall. I hate asking for money.

I never have been good at it, but as the Lord has laid this thing upon my heart, as I've known Keswick, as I've seen Keswick grow, as I've known in my own heart the blessing of the Keswick ministries, as I hear and see these tens of thousands of missionaries who've been sent out by Keswick, as I have the joy of coming to this convention, another daughter convention, of which we are the mother. It's a blessing to see people coming to hear the Word of God, to be encouraged to take our Bible, and not only to hear the Word, but to do it. That's what Keswick stands for, and I'm certain that the Lord will bless, and He'll bless all of us, as we're able to give as the Lord does it.

There are people here this evening who perhaps felt they would like to help in this ministry and this development. Where would you go? I have all the literature. I have forms that you can fill in.

If you wish to give me money or a cheque, you can give it to me, or I can give you a form, and I can give you an envelope, and it will go to the headquarters of the Keswick Convention in London. If any of you at any time during the day or in the meeting come to me, I can give you a form. I can receive anything you wish to give, or you can take the things home and think about it, pray about it.

That's what I'd ask. I'm sure that members of the Council here would say, lay this upon your heart. Let the Lord tell you what you should do.

We know that there's so much money to be raised by so many causes, and we're not trying to take away from others what the Lord wants to give, but if the Lord speaks to us, He will tell us what we should do. Thank you very much indeed. There is also a steel model of the development.

You can't see that properly, but that's an idea of what the building's going to be. But we've got a full-scale model in the Fisherman's Hall. It's a lovely model.

The children have been really enjoying it. They like to play with it, I think. But it's a perfect model of what is going to be built in nine months' time.

So come and see the model now, and if you can come to Keswick next year, you'll see the finished structure. Thank you very much indeed. We commend to you the Keswick development, and we give thanks to God for the ministry of over a hundred years now of Keswick, and the way in which that ministry has reached so many parts of the world, not only through other conventions, Keswick Inn Conventions, but through men and women who have heard the call of God to full-time Christian service within the Keswick Convention meetings.

And now let's turn again to our hymn books, 25. Hymn 25. Let's make it our prayer as we come to the reading of the Word of God.

Breathe on me breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do. Good evening, everyone. Thank you very much.

Before reading the Scripture, I would like to hear you sing a chorus. Not in the book, but Phil knows it. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about His lovely name? How many of you know it? Hmm. Two.

Now we'll reduce you. Let me hear you play the tune to us. And you listen, it's great.

I tell you, thank you, Jesus. Holy Spirit, more of us. And this chorus reminds us all as we sing it that we're set up to a miracle for anything worthwhile.

Only the Holy Spirit can teach us more about Jesus. Will you try it together? First, before you sing, it's absolutely essential, that's it, to clear your throat. Have a good cough.

And then take a deep breath and sing from your, what is it called? Diaphragm, that's right. Not from the back of your throat. All right, everybody together.

Know that He is God. As we expose ourselves to His Word, we expose ourselves to miracle. And the Lord is waiting to work a miracle in your life and mine tonight.

To make us less like ourselves and more like Him. Speak, Lord, in the stillness, while we wait on Thee. Hush our hearts to listen in expectancy.

Speak, O blessed Master, in this quiet hour. May we see Thy face, Lord, and feel Thy touch of power. In Jesus' name.

Amen. I enjoyed so much listening to Mr. Hedges speak to us about Keswick. But as the Keswick ministry has done such a lot in my own life, I owe so much to it.

Having had the privilege of ministering there on several occasions, and also at some of the Keswick conventions overseas, I've seen how it has extended throughout this whole world. And I am perfectly certain that the message that Keswick proclaims, scriptural New Testament holiness, is the message that church needs to hear. And the message that the country needs to know at this time.

So do pray about it. And may you have the privilege of having some little share in its support. Now, will you turn with me tonight, please, for our scripture reading to Psalm 86.

Psalm 86. I am reading this evening from the King James Version. But we'll be quoting quite a lot from the RSV.

Bow down and hear, O Lord, hear me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am holy. O Thou, my God, save Thy servant who trusts in Thee.

Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry unto Thee daily. Rejoice, the soul of Thy servant, for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer and attend to the voice of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee, for Thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord.

Neither are there any works like unto Thy works. All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and to its wondrous things Thou art God alone.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord. I will walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name.

I will praise Thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Thy name forevermore. For great is Thy mercy toward me, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. O God, the proud are risen up against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul and have not set Thee before them.

But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering and plentiful mercy and truth. O turn unto me and have mercy upon me. Give Thy strength unto Thy servant and save the son of Thy handmaid.

Show me a token for good that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed because Thou, Lord, hast helped me and comforted me. This is the word of the Lord. And during this opening weekend of this lovely convention I'm sure all of us have been very conscious of the authority of God's word coming through to us and the help it has been to all of us.

And I'm sure that every one of us has moved a stage further on in God's will for our lives. And a great sense of the touch of the Spirit upon the whole ministry of the weekend. It's been lovely.

Great privilege to be here. Great joy and a great blessing. Now as we move on through the week I'm assuming that all of you here make a real profession of faith in the Lord Jesus.

You've met him as your Saviour. You've been redeemed by his blood and therefore you're indwelt by his Spirit and you belong to him. But so often we're rather apt to think of the cross where we met Jesus as something we come to to get through.

But we only really come to the cross to get into it. To live at Calvary. And so in our lives to come into identification with Jesus.

To do his will. To walk with him. To know him intimately day by day.

And of course this is what prayer is all about. If we were honest I think all of us would say that prayer is the weakest part of our ministry and our service. And yet without real prevailing prayer we never get far.

Not realizing maybe that prayer is not simply to get answers. It's through prayer to become identified with God's purpose. Just a quote to you for one moment from the Epistle to the Romans.

A verse that you will know well in Romans chapter 8. Here it is. Likewise the Spirit also help us our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered or as one version has it with sighs too deep for words.

And he that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask him. And therefore the primary purpose of prayer is not just to get answers.

It's to be brought into identification with the will of God. And somehow as the years have gone by this little phrase has been such a help to me I know not what to pray for as I should but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with sighs too deep for words. It's not just saying prayers in a prayer meeting not simply being sure that we phrase our prayers correctly and don't offend anybody.

But it is the Lord himself who comes into us at that time and somehow there's a sigh too deep for words a burden, a concern. And it's the Holy Spirit expressing through you his burden for your life and for your heart. I wonder if in this opening weekend of the convention we've been very, very conscious of that.

A burden coming, a great deep longing we just couldn't express it. It's something that God wants to do for us. And therefore I felt very strongly more and more so as the hours of these last day or two have passed that we should look at this psalm for there are some fundamental lessons here on this great theme of prayer that we need to learn.

And we don't quite know when David wrote it and gave expression to it. Possibly it was when he was being hunted by Saul. Possibly when he was being betrayed by Absalom.

I'm not sure. But this much I do know. It was a time of tremendous crisis in his life of great perplexity of great affliction and trouble when he was being sorely tried and tested and it seemed that apart from a miracle he would be just overwhelmed.

He was really going through it. And it's how we react in a crisis like that in a situation like that about which all of us know something when we just haven't known which way to turn and what to do. It's at that time when God has something very special about two years ago my son-in-law, my daughter's husband was killed in Africa and before that he and I used to have great chats together sometimes and I had formed a habit of becoming known as a person who went round saying well hallelujah anyway.

I thought it was so spiritual. It sounded good. You know, you square your shoulders and you grit your teeth and say well no matter how tough it is, hallelujah anyway.

And one day as we'd been chatting with John I said something we'd been discussing oh well, hallelujah anyway. He said, Dad, you shouldn't say that. Well, I said, why not? I said it for 40 years.

Why not? It's fine to say that. Oh no, it's not hallelujah anyway, it's hallelujah because and I saw it. I was learning from the next generation not just squaring your teeth, not just pushing it all off.

It is thanking the Lord for every crisis because it's through that crisis he's been teaching us so many things. So let me just look with you a moment and as David turns to prayer and see how this situation is handled. He's a man of great convictions and those convictions are revealed in this psalm.

He wasn't a oh, I've learned a new word. He wasn't in a fainkel. I hope that's the right word.

He wasn't in a crisis. He was a crisis, but he wasn't in a panic. And he came to God with great convictions.

Convictions about God and convictions about himself. And these led to action as he prayed. This is not a prayer of intercession for other people.

It's a prayer of desperate need and petition for himself. No less than 35 times in this 17 verses we have the little phrase, I, me, myself. You know there's a place for a prayer like that.

Of course, we mustn't be selfish in our praying. But when you and I get to the place of recognizing the desperate condition of our own lives and our utter need, this is the kind of prayer we begin to pray. Just notice one or two things very especially in it, will you? And we're going to give you a bit of work to do.

Maybe I've noticed in these evening meetings and other times when the Bible says you're taking notes. So if you've got a pen and you like to have it ready, be ready for it, notice David's convictions concerning God. The person of God.

And in the course of this psalm, David uses three different titles which tell his convictions about God. Just look at them and mark them. And the first text, in verse 2, David says, Thou art my God.

Put a circle around that word God. In verse 10, Thou art God alone. Put a circle around God again.

In verse 14, O God, insolent men have risen up against me. Circle that word God. In verse 15, That thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion.

Circle the name God. In each case where we have that word God, David's using the word Elohim, the Mighty One, the Great One, the all-powerful God, the God who's never lost a battle. You remember it was by that name that God introduced himself to humanity in the Bible.

In the beginning, God. And in the hour of this man's tremendous need and great crisis and really in a terrific problem, he turned to a God who was absolutely omnipotent. How wonderful it is to have someone who is that.

At a moment like he was facing. Elohim, the Mighty God, the Omnipotent One. Then to begin at verse 1, David says, O Lord, answer me.

Put a little square around that word Lord. And verse 3, Be gracious to me, O Lord. Put a square around that word again.

Verse 5, For thou, O Lord, art good. Square there. Verse 6, Give ear, O Lord.

Again, another one. In verse 9, All nations shall come and bow down before thee, O Lord. And in verse 12, I give thanks to thee, O Lord.

And in verse 15, But thou, O Lord. And all those times when he uses the word Lord, he's using the word Jehovah. The God who never breaks a promise.

The God who is absolutely faithful. The covenant-keeping God who is absolutely dependable. He never breaks his word.

Don't you find in life, I have, that you meet people who have a reputation for being a bit unreliable. And if some people say to me, I'll give you a helping hand with that job, I'll be along tomorrow. Well, I believe that when they come.

Somebody says, I'll be seeing you. I'll call next week. I don't get excited.

But I'll get excited when they arrive. There are some people whose word you just have to take with reservation. But I'm telling you, God has never broken one word of all his promises to any of his people all through history.

If he did, I'd have to accept his word with reservation. But how wonderful in prayer to come to a covenant-keeping God whose word cannot be broken. Again, in verse 8, There is none like, among the gods, there is none like thee, O Lord.

Put a little triangle around that word, Lord. Again in verse 11, Teach me thy way, O Lord. Put one round there.

Verse 12, My God with my whole heart. Triangle there around the word God. Verse 17, Because thou, Lord, hast helped me.

Another one there. And the word is Adonai. Master.

Sovereign. Owner. Possessor.

I shall have something to say at the conclusion of my message this evening about his claim on that title. I just ask you to notice, in the meantime, the language of the 8th verse which says, There is none like unto thee, among the gods, O Lord. Lord, you're absolutely unrivaled in your deity.

And in verse 9, All the nations whom thou shalt come and bow down before thee, O Lord, shall glorify thy name. Lord, there's nothing, nobody can equal you in your sovereignty. David's convictions about God.

Omnipotent. A God who never breaks a promise. A God who's unrivaled in his deity.

Unmatched in his sovereignty. A God like that. And in his great need in that crisis, he came to that God.

Not only had he convictions about who he was, but he's a God of mercy and love. Verse 5. For thou, Lord, art good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all that call upon thee. Verse 13.

For great is thy steadfast love toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of hell. Verse 15. For thou, O Lord, art a God full of mercy and forgiveness, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

He wasn't pressing a panic button. He wasn't in a terrible stew about his situation. He knew he had no claim upon that God because of anything in himself.

He knew that. He needed at that moment, and needed desperately, a God who was full of mercy, absolutely patient and loving. I heard not so long ago about a young convert to the Christian faith who at one moment was falling, and the next moment confessing his sin.

One moment in the mountain top, the next down the valley. Falling, confessing, sinning, coming back, getting restored, and it went on for years. Until one day his pastor met him and said to him, My dear brother, God gave me a bucket full of patience for you, but believe me, it's almost empty.

I know a God for whom I, how thankful I am that I do, who is limitless in his patience. And that's the kind of God I need in my life, don't you? A God who's full of mercy, and there is no end to his patience and love. I don't know whether you agree with me in what I'm going to say, but I'll risk it anyway.

I have a conviction in my heart, that God's love and mercy to the sinner out of Christ is matched and even outmatched by his patience with his children, who ought to know better how to behave, how merciful he is to us all. Notice something else. His convictions about God's power, those ten, they are great, and those wondrous things, thou alone art God.

He came to that God out of the depth of his need. He came to a God whom he knew could work a miracle, and needed a miracle to save him. And I believe, my dear friend, there is nothing that the Church of Jesus Christ needs more today, and that we Christians need more today, than a new conception of God's power to work a miracle.

We need desperately these days a miracle-working God, for nothing less can deliver us in our country. We're far too prone to, how do I put it without being unkind, adhere to our puny little programs, and ask him to bless them, and forget, forget that he has a plan. His plan is working miracles.

It's wonderful to be shut up for a miracle, when you've come to the end of everything you can do, tried every idea, every plan you can think of, and you wait upon him. Many methods fail, but this one never does. David's convictions concerning God.

Omnipotent, dependable, sovereign, endless in mercy, a miracle-working God. That's the kind of God who is here now, to meet our need, and to speak with us. But will you notice in second place, David's convictions about himself? Verse 1, I am poor and needy.

I like the Living Bible paraphrase of that. I am deep in trouble. That's it.

I am deep in trouble. It's a very well-known and hackneyed phrase. It says, God helps those who help themselves.

But I want to tell you tonight, that God helps those who are absolutely destitute, and don't know which way to turn. Our scriptural authority is that. The 102nd Psalm, verse 17 says, He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

What an awful thing it must be to be destitute. What does it mean? Well, homeless, friendless, penniless, absolutely the end of everything. May I say that I honestly believe that one of the curses of twentieth century evangelical Christianity is you are not destitute.

We've become desperately self-sufficient. And indeed, so great is the craze these days, and I use such a word, for higher education, that we train young people to be self-sufficient. Of course, I wouldn't say anything about education.

Get the best you can. But to remind you that Paul, a man of outstanding education, said our sufficiency is of God. And two thousand years have gone by since then, and the situation is no different.

Our sufficiency, our hope, is not in a church program, not in a theological degree, but in God. Some time ago, I happened to pick up a copy of Reader's Digest. I noticed it was featuring the leading article and was headed, um, Ten Ways to Get Rid of Fear.

I was sitting in a dentist's waiting room at the time, so I thought perhaps that was a timely moment to read what he had to say. I guessed pretty well, sure enough, the usual sort of stuff written by a non-Christian psychiatrist. And the last reason of the ten, the last way of the ten, was have faith.

For a moment, I pricked up my mental ears and turned over and found he went on. Have faith in yourself. You've got through before, you've struggled through in the past, you'll get through again.

My brother and sister in Christ, that's the tragedy of our philosophy. The fact is that we're desperately poor and desperately needy and there's a sense in which I'm always wanting to ask God, please Lord, don't let me ever get away from the place where you can work a miracle. I'm only in the kindergarten.

I'm a very slow learner. But I think I'm beginning to learn that means that I must never, at any cost, undertake any Christian work which I cannot cover in believing prayer. For if I do, I'm on my own.

There were some people in the Old Testament times and I think 1 Chronicles 4 who worked among hedges and ditches. Nothing much glamorous about that. And there, they were with the king for his work.

I like that. Because I asked myself, now look here, I haven't read first. Are you with the king for his work or are you with the work for the king? For if you're with the work for the king only, you're sunk, you're beaten, it's doomed to failure.

But if you're with the king for the work, then you're drawing upon his resources, not your own. And he's always adequate. Never, Lord, let me do more work for you than I can cover in believing prayer.

Putting that sort of practice in my own life has meant in the last year the cancellation of quite a number of engagements. Lord, I am poor and needy, helpless. Hmm, there's something strange here.

Verse 2. I am holy. Huh? I am godly. How on earth can a man be poor and needy in the next breath? Holy, David, that's surely being spiritually arrogant.

Oh, it isn't. He's not being guilty of spiritual conceit. He knows.

He knows with absolute conviction that he's obeyed God's way of approach to the throne by a blood sacrifice of an animal, and therefore he's holy. And I know that I have come to him the only way a man, a sinner, can come. I've come to him on the ground of the shed blood of Jesus because I've come God's

appointed way.

I'm his purchased possession, and I belong to him, and therefore I'm holy. I'm desperately poor and awfully needy, but Lord, because of Jesus, I'm holy. That's why I come to my God in Jesus Christ, helplessly needy, and come to him on the only basis upon which anyone can come to him, the ground of his shed blood.

I can say, Lord, I'm your purchased possession. I belong to you. I'm holy.

Again in the same verse, David says, Save thy servant who trusts in thee. Lord, I'm trusting in you. That's the only ground and only foundation, principle of right relationship with God.

Without faith it's impossible to please him. I'm depending upon you, says David. Only you can deliver it, nobody else can.

I'm trusting in you. I find in my own life, I've got to learn to walk by faith. But it's so desperately easy to remove my faith from the only trustworthy object, Jesus himself.

Now look, my friend. Somebody beset with some immense problem, panic, trouble, crisis, tears, burden. Listen.

Here's a man who has come out of the very depths to a living God, the same God to whom you and I can come. And he has these deep convictions about God, unshapable convictions about his power and his faithfulness. And he's a God who always keeps his promise.

He's my master and owner. And David comes to that God with deep convictions about himself. But he's desperate.

May I say to you, on the authority of Scripture, that if anybody is coming to God and they're not prepared to take that position, they'll never touch the throne. Oh, how we've longed and said and prayed in this opening weekend, Lord, show me your glory. But, if I want that, I don't care who I am or what.

I know that if I'm really not destitute, and I'm still thinking that education, ability and talent will see me through, God has to bring me to that place where I cry with David, I'm poor and needy. Oh, the church, that the church might catch that note again. David had that conviction.

And he says, I'm holy. And I can say that by faith in Christ, God has imputed his righteousness to me. And you can say that too.

Therefore, we can come to him and trust and depend on me, O Lord. And that's the approach, not only for a sinner, but for a saint, so called. Not only for an unbeliever, but for a believer.

God, deliver you and deliver me from ever getting too big to come that way. When I was in Chicago, I had a phone call one day from someone in New Jersey, some 900 miles away. Indian.

He said, he was an elder of a church there. He said, we're looking for a new pastor. Do you happen to know anybody who might come to our church? So I thought a bit, and I mentioned two or three men.

And then it started, the most amazing composition went on for three quarters of an hour. He said, what college has he been to? What seminary has he attended? What degrees has he got? What education has

he got? And he asked me that about all three men. And eventually, at the end of it all, he said, oh, thank you, Pastor Ed Pryor, for sparing you time, but none of those men are big enough for our pulpit.

I said, hi. Just before you go off the phone, are you sure you don't mean they're not small enough? I think I said to you on Saturday that Stephen Alford in my presence at Columbia Bible College had a graduation service at which we were speaking. We were asked by three students who came to speak to us at the end of the service, and they all had enormous Bibles and huge pens and bigger notebooks.

And they looked at us and said, gentlemen, gentlemen, what's the key to Christian leadership? And Stephen Alford, of course, he got the first word in. You know him, and that's perfectly all right. I didn't need to say anything.

He said, I'll tell you. If you want to know Christian leadership in your life, it's bent knees, wet eyes, and a broken heart. That's it.

Lord, show me your glory. Bent knees, wet eyes. That's what it's called.

Of course, there's no use praying unless that leads to action. And conviction is no good unless it's essentially carried into life. Therefore, because of these convictions, David made the sins on which he acted.

I want you to notice these for a moment with me. What were they? Verse 2, Preserve my life, for I am godly. Save thy servant who trusts in thee.

Lord my God, be gracious to me, Lord, for I cry unto you all the day. Surely that's the man who is really casting himself utterly upon the mercy of God. I wonder if I could remind you of another Old Testament character who did that.

Do you remember the story of Hannah in the first book of Samuel, in the first chapter? How she longed for a child. How she was rebuked because she was barren. She was taunted by her neighbours and friends and relatives.

And one day, she went to the place, the only place where she thought her prayer might be answered in Shiloh, the temple. And there, she poured out her heart to the Lord. Indeed, she poured it out so desperately that poor old backslidden Eli thought she was drunk.

That's interesting to me because that's exactly what religious people thought on the day of Pentecost. When disciples were filled with the Spirit and were accused of being drunk. So desperate was this woman in prayer and so unusual was it to be so desperate that she was accused of drunkenness.

Ten times in this psalm, David says, O Lord, O Lord! Isaiah cried, O that thou would rend the heavens and come down! And Hannah in bitterness of the soul prepped, prayed and wept and said, O Lord, I don't want to be unkind but I want to be honest and I want to speak that God would speak to my heart and yours. I tell you friends, the O has gone out of our brain. The desperation has left.

The cry from the depths of our soul, O Lord! That's gone. The average, I'm very careful to say average, the average church prayer meeting. Oh, a few prayer requests.

Brother so and so will lead us in prayer and boy does he. By the time he's done everybody's had enough. He doesn't get anywhere.

Say, I'd just like to be able to chat to you personally about this, but I wonder if the Lord has taunted you about your barrenness? He has me. Has he spoken to you about it? The barrenness of your life? The fruitlessness of your testimony? The barrenness of your ministry? The trouble is that we lie down to it. Hannah refused to and she pleaded.

I was just preaching there, I won't tell you where, at a little church. I think the membership would be about 60, about that, in Scotland. Lovely place.

Lovely. And I said to her, now do you know something? Sixty members of this church. Supposing every one of those sixty reached one person for Christ in the next year.

And supposing every one who had been one for Christ won another. Do you know how many members you would have in ten years? 61,440. Don't get out of your calculator.

Take my word for it. Why doesn't that happen? Hmm. I would like to know.

David Watson in one of his lovely books says, What do you do when what you have been taught to believe no longer rings a bell in your experience? Either you change your theology to fix your experience and say, God is dead because your experience of him is dead, or you keep your Bible theology and begin to thirst for the living God. O thou who came as from above the pure celestial fire to impart kindle a flame of sacred love on the mean altar of my heart. Said Wesley.

Wesley, says David, had a strangely warm heart allied to a very cool head. Most unusual. If you only have a cool head, then you play everything safe.

You have convincing reasons for doing so, and you set up a commission and a committee, and have seminars. And you do anything except getting drunk with the Spirit and going out where the action is and leading people to Jesus. David cast himself on the mercy of God.

And when I listened to my dear brethren here at the end, both of them, I found myself saying, oh Lord, do that to me. I remember four years ago now at Moody Church, having very difficult time on certain issues of dispensationalism. That's a long word, but it meant that because I was preaching Sunday by Sunday on the Sermon on the Mount, I was accused of bringing the Church under law, not under grace.

And things were tough. And we called for a night of prayer from ten o'clock to six. And we said we'll continue having a night of prayer every Friday for seven Fridays.

So we did. First Friday I suppose about a hundred and fifty people came. And among them was one whose name I'm sure you know, George Brewer.

George was a student at Woody Bob Henson's at the time, and you probably heard him pray. I tell you that shakes the whole building. And somehow the inspiration of that encouraged me.

And we went on for six successive Friday nights, the crowd getting bigger. But nothing seemed to happen. And on the seventh Friday, I shall know it again.

I can't explain it, I can't tell you. All I know is that tears began to fall. And people began to move and say, I'm so sorry.

There was an apology. There was confession. Oh, it was like heaven on earth.

And you know that Sunday, I needed a grunt of a pulpit. The atmosphere was just absolutely tremendous. And at the end, I only spoke for about five minutes, it was so charged with the presence of God.

At the end of that service, many, many people, hundreds of them, were on their knees. And people got right with God. I cannot say that that went on like that.

But I do say it was a turning point. And in Moody Church, for the first time, the message of Keswick got through. And it lifted the whole fellowship up to a new level.

God wants to do that with you and with me tonight. I'll just ask you to notice this. As David prayed, he made decisions.

And he saw his own heart need. Verse 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. That last phrase. The Living Bible puts it, May every fibre of my being unite in reverence to thy name.

Ah, that's it. See, in the first ten verses, David has been asking God to do something for him. Now he asks God to do something in him.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. See what happened, and it always does happen if you pray like this. As he sought the Lord and cried unto the Lord, it seems that God spoke to him and said, Now David, I want to talk to you about this in your life and about that.

I want you to talk about this where there's been no complete surrender. In a place where you've felt the pull of other things. If you want my help, my power, if you want heaven to open upon you, I have something to do in you first.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. And when I come to the Lord in desperate need, his covenant keeping God, I recognise my position before him. He says, My child, what about this in your life? Do you want a miracle? But I only work through a clean channel.

Are you prepared for that? Do you want deliverance in your own life? Don't be afraid of praying, but remember to identify you with the will of one more thing before I finish. David claimed his throne right in God. Notice it, verse 16.

Turn to me and have pity upon me. Give thy strength to thy servant and save the son of thine handmaid. I wonder why he said that.

I puzzled over that quite a while. And I turned back in my mind to Exodus, chapter 21, verse 4, and I read this law concerning the slave. If his master has given him a wife and he hath borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her masters and he shall go out by himself.

The wife and the children of the slave shall belong not to the slave but to the master. And David is saying, save the son of thy handmaid. Lord, I am only the child of a slave, but therefore I am yours.

You are my master. You are my sovereign. You are my Lord.

Therefore, humbly and boldly, I claim my throne right. And I say to you, Lord, it's your responsibility to protect me and get me through. It's your responsibility to deliver me out of this situation.

I believe in coming humbly to the throne because I'm poor and needy and desperate. But I believe in coming boldly to the throne because I belong to you and you belong to me. And it's your responsibility in any crisis, in any situation, to take me through.

And David begins to praise. Oh, my brother and my sister, if you come to Jesus, I pray. You've become destitute apart from the grace of God.

Come like that. Come with that conviction that God has made you holy in Jesus. And he's absolutely responsible for seeing you through and he cannot fail.

Well, put these convictions into action and you'll refuse to bow down to the barrenness of your testimony. And from the place of prayer and God grant we may know something of that place as this week goes by. There will go out a man or a woman whose whole being and whole demeanor, whole character speaks of confidence of trust and absolute assurance that when we take it to the Lord in prayer he hears.

And as I close, I read something that's hit me very hard. It's the minutes from Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh where I was pastor for a few years. It was a full church.

I hadn't filled it. Other men before me had done that. But here's how it began.

The secretary is reporting. Listen. The gracious visitation reported last month has deepened as the weeks have gone by.

The marked features of it are a deep conviction of sin, even where the outward life has seemed blameless. Nothing has been so remarkable as the searching of heart and the revealing of hidden things. Many have been convicted of the unequal yoke of prayerlessness, indolence, wilderness, temper, bitterness.

A thing which may have in itself been perfectly lawful has been abandoned because it stood in the way of full surrender. Another feature is the prolonged intercession sometimes for hours. Our usual 7 a.m. prayer meeting on Sunday has begun at 6 and continued to that.

The 5.45 prayer meeting in the evening starts at 5.15. Such has been the power of God in the meeting. It's been impossible to get to the open air at the usual time. The upper vestry, the pastor's vestry and library have all been crowded with praying people.

And after the Lord's Day work is over, about 60 have gathered for prayer and remain till after midnight. The stream of prayer flows on unhindered and many who have never prayed before have found it easy to speak to God in the presence of others. Prayer at such meetings, at such times, is not a perfunctory exercise, cold and lifeless.

But a living bright reality. Here are men and women on their knees, filled with an intense longing. Some in bondage, crying for freedom and victory.

Some absolutely melted with the love of God, claiming victory by the power of the Spirit. A liberated church must precede the manifestation of God through the church to the world. Lord, help me to get that.

Help you to get it. A liberated church must precede the manifestation of God through the church to the world. Prayer is difficult because there's no agony in it.

We say we believe in prayer but how little place has it in our programme. When the church returns to the practice of intense, persistent prayer she will have the secret of victory. It's all been such a humiliating experience.

All has had more humility because we knew full well it might have been otherwise if we listened to the Holy Spirit earlier. Listen. Our sun was eclipsed.

The light had gone out of our lives. Our joy had fled. Our communion was disturbed.

Our hope was unsettled. Our efforts for God were weak and intermittent, possessing form but lacking power. What has happened we do not tell.

He, the tender shepherd knew. His eye had been on us, followed us in holy disobedient living, caught us in the thicket of some evil habit, struggling the bog of some sinful course. He saw it all.

Yet he sought us, found us, restored us, led us once more. And this has been a year of salvation, a year of victory. The church has been stirred like a mighty army, alive with martial music, the trump of fighting men.

Many have been converted. Many backsides restored. Colonies received.

That's it. What do I say to that? What can I do? Do I dismiss it as a lot of emotionalism? That's what many tried to do then, but they couldn't. One thing I must not do is to make my views of the sovereignty of God and revival escape both for my own indifference.

The question is, Lord, and I ask it on your behalf, am I willing to the price of it? If we are, we could see God move in Scotland, and particularly in this area, in a way absolutely unknown to our generation. But would we want it? The tears? The confession? The repentance? Let's pray. Dear Lord, drive us to our knees.

Bring us to an end of our weary, busy, ineffective, barren service. To the place where all of us can say, I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Lord, answer prayer.

For your name's sake. Amen. O breath of life, come sweeping through us.

Revive your church with life and power. The church is the body of Christ. The church is not a building.

You are the church. O breath of life, come sweeping through us. The hymn 164.

164. Amen. Here this evening.

Let us pray. Come, love of Christ, the fresh to winner. Revive your church in every part.

Wind of God, come bender, break us till humbly we confess our need. Then, in your tenderness, remake us. Revive.

Restore. O Lord, for this we pray.

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