

Prayer and Revival - Part 1

by Bill McLeod

Prayer is essential for revival as it unlocks God's power and leads to spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:07:23

Scripture: Psalm 34:1, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 6:15, 1 Timothy 2:8

Topics: "Revival Praying"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful testimony of a man from his church who experienced a deep conviction of sin during a revival. The man was overwhelmed by the realization of his past sins and cried out for forgiveness. The preacher and the congregation prayed for him, and he experienced a transformation, with a radiant expression on his face. The revival continued with testimonies of God's work in people's lives, emphasizing the importance of prayer and seeking God's presence everywhere.

Transcript

Well, good morning. You know, there was a time when I could come up those stairs two at a time, and now I just thank God when I get to the top, you know. I want to read just one verse from Ephesians chapter 6, and of course it's a very well-known verse, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

And Paul adds, and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as it ought to speak. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. I'll get to that in a few moments.

I'll not start right there. I moved from Winnipeg, or from Winnipeg to Saskatoon in 1962, I guess it was, and I pastored a small Baptist church, 175 members, and numbers of people in the congregation were Bible school graduates, was mostly young married couples and university students, and everybody loved evangelism and missions, but nobody did either. And they were a nice congregation, but they knew how to sleep, I mean spiritually speaking.

And they were kind enough to snore now and then, to let me know they weren't quite dead, but you know, they were nice, really nice evangelicals. And I wanted to get this church on the road, and so, first of all, I won't go into all the details why I did it, but I had five teams from the congregation, and one night we were to go out as teams in house calling. But I told the group, I said, now, if you don't feel you're quite able to

handle this, you just stay home and pray.

Well, everybody went back home and prayed for the people that didn't go out, because nobody stayed to go out. So I had to figure that out, and I said, well, I thought to myself, I know what the problem is, they just don't know how to do it. So we had eight weeks of classes on soul winning and so on, good attendance, good faithful attendance, and then another night we were to go out.

And so I told them, I said, now, if you don't feel that you can quite handle this, well, just go home and pray. They all went home and prayed, except for two, and they were both shaking in their shoes, you know. Canadians call it conservatism.

It's not, it's fear. Anyhow, at that point, I realized they didn't have a heart to do it. That was the real problem.

They never had a heart to do it. And I began praying for revival, and I began, apart from our own self, with a deacons prayer meeting on a Saturday night, nine o'clock. We prayed, I had ten deacons, and we averaged around seven or eight, and we prayed for revival.

That's how we started, about five years before the revival came. And then our weeknight prayer meeting, Wednesday night, we were running around 25 with 175 members, and I really pushed, oh, I prayed and prayed and prayed and talked about the prayer meeting and urged the people to attend. And I used to tell them, listen, you can miss Sunday mornings if you have to, and miss Sunday evening if you must, but don't ever miss the prayer meeting unless you're dead.

And you know, it began to grow. And it grew up to 50, we got to 75, we got to 100, and then we got to 150, and the odd meeting, we were up to 170 or more. We only had 175 members.

And it became the hottest meeting of the week. It wasn't revival, but it was certainly a step towards revival. When I saw they were supporting a prayer meeting well, then I suggested we'll have a children's prayer meeting too.

And so we'd have 30 or 40 children in a separate prayer meeting, with one or two adults looking after them. But the adults were told, now, you're not to lead the meetings for them, you're to train them to lead their own meetings. And the kids just loved it.

This meant a few more adults could attend because their kids were in the prayer meeting. And that was good. And then, praying about it, the Lord showed me to do something else, cottage prayer meetings.

So we started cottage prayer meetings. Saskatoon at the time was not a big place, 120,000. And so we had some cottage prayer meetings.

Then later on, now, if I put this on the people all at once, it wouldn't have gone, they couldn't have handled it. But there was a spirit of prayer developing. And the book of Zechariah talks about God pouring on his people the spirit of grace and supplication.

One translation says, the spirit of grace to supplicate. So there is such a thing as a spirit of prayer. Now, Finney made much of that.

He said if he ever lost the spirit of prayer, he couldn't converse with anybody individually or preach publicly if he ever lost the spirit of prayer. I know what he's talking about because God gave us a spirit of prayer.

And every new idea for prayer I gave the people, they just jumped into it.

I suggested, for example, why don't you at night, as you go to bed, why don't you pray and ask God to waken you through the night, to get up for a little while and pray for revival. And people started doing that, and I heard things like this. Brother McLeod, you know, I used to be prayed out in five minutes.

I prayed last night for 50 minutes. I could have prayed all night, you know. It was a supernatural thing.

It was not a natural thing at all. And then after a while, we tried something else, and we had a thing on the bulletin board, big circle marked off in 15-minute slots like pie-shaped wedges. And people were to pray about this and look at this thing and decide which time slot would they take to pray every day.

And pretty soon we had the whole 24 hours taken up, and in some cases, some of the wedges had more than one name. And so we did nothing but pray. I was talking one time to a missionary.

I mentioned our seeking revival. He said, why don't you invite Ralph and Lucifer? I said, who are they? He told me. I contacted them.

They couldn't come for several years, so that gave us more time, of course, to prepare. We didn't do any advertising about the meetings. We just figured that God's in this thing and we're going to trust God.

When they came, they brought a great big van. It was about three feet this way and eight feet that way. Had big words on it about revival, and they wanted to stick this up on the end of the church.

Well, we did. But that very night, we had a rainstorm and a big wind, and it blew it down in the mud, and we never, ever used it. God didn't even want that, you know.

So we're just waiting on God. You know, I used to walk, I lived a mile from the church, and I used to walk there every morning, try and get there at least by seven o'clock, and I'd have a couple hours and the phone wouldn't be ringing, and I'd just lay on the floor and pray. And prayer, people were always talking about what God was doing.

In the prayer meeting, we'd run it like this. We'd sing it. You know, there was a time when I'd preach for 40 minutes in the prayer meeting, and we'd pray for 10 minutes and call it a prayer meeting.

We'd quit that. I'd preach for 10 or 15 minutes, and then we'd pray for maybe 40 minutes. And we'd do things like this.

I'd say, now, have any of you haven't answered the prayer this last week? Please tell us about it. Never mind if it's a small thing. Just tell us about it.

And people began doing that. And then we'd put a chair out to the front, which, you know, if you have a personal need, you'd like us to pray for you, just let us know. Just come and kneel to a chair and we'll come and help you.

And this began to happen. And people began talking about how near God was, and how God was answering prayers like he'd never done before, and went on and on. And then on a Wednesday night, October the 13th, a Wednesday night, Ralph and Lou came.

First meeting, 150 people, and I think five stayed behind for prayer. By Saturday, we couldn't get the people into the church. The building was seated about 350.

We were packed right out. So we had to move to a neighboring Anglican church, like the Episcopalian churches, and the pastor, you can have it as long as you want. Well, it was only good for two nights.

It would seat 600. We had 700 there the first night. So then we had to move.

We moved to the Alliance Church, seating 1,000. That only lasted two nights. We had to move to a larger, the largest church building in the city would seat 1,700.

I'll never forget the first night in there. We were packed to the doors, people trying to get in, and the caretaker came running. He wasn't a Christian, and he got swearing and said, you've got to get some of these people out of here, or the fire marshal will close this place down.

So I went to the pulpit and asked my people to leave and go down to the Alliance Church, which was just a couple of blocks away. And I had a meeting with them there. But after they went out there, people in the street trying to get in, they still had the same problem.

But you know what happened? The caretaker got saved. And then he said, hang him on the legs, get him in there. It was great.

Well, then that building was too small, so we had to start having double services each night, and we did that. And then that got to be too small, so we engaged the Centennial Auditorium, which seats 2,200 or more. And we had to have double services there.

We had planned to go for a week and a half. We had to go for seven weeks altogether. And people started coming in from all over the country to see what God was doing.

That was an unusual time. I remember one time a ladies meeting. Eight hundred ladies showed up.

The meeting went on for hours, sharing, praying, going off to the prayer room for help. It was a marvelous time. And our song leader, Dr. Virgil Brock, some of you may know who he is.

He wrote the song Beyond the Sunset, Sing and Smile and Pray. He was our son, 85 years old. He was off key a little bit, but nobody minded.

He was so full of God, you know. Did a marvelous job. And I remember after that ladies meeting, he said, Brother McLeod, we have witnessed strange, strange things today.

We'd all agree to that. I mean, the things that were happening, the way God was working in people's hearts. At my own church, there were two young men, about 18, 19, very athletic, much involved in sports.

And they didn't want to go to the meetings, but their parents were after them. So the two of them were talking on the telephone one day, and the mother of one was listening in. She shouldn't have been, but she was.

And they promised each other, you're not going forward, right? No, we're not going forward. No matter what happens, I'm not going forward. So they planned just to sit there and turn off their ears, make their parents happy.

The one fellow sitting on the left side of the church got saved that morning. The other guy on the other side, the deacons brought him into my office afterwards and said, Phil, I don't know what's wrong. He's just saying something funny.

So I got him into my office, and we knelt there, and he was shaking his head, and he was saying, no way, never again, never again, never again. I said, Phil, what's the problem? He said, never again can I doubt the reality of Jesus Christ. He said, he tore my heart wide open.

He revealed himself to me, and he was saved on the spot, you know. Thank God. The other boys, a civil engineer in the Denver, Colorado area now, I checked them out a couple of years ago, doing fine.

Thank God. So a lot of things like that were going on. Many people, they just, they stayed away, and sometimes they couldn't stay away, and they'd say, I don't even know how I got here tonight.

I didn't want to come, but just had to come. And so every night there were people saved, and every night there were Christians revived. And you know, it seemed to start with the Christian, the Christian workers, pastors, evangelists, missionaries, Sunday school workers, and so on.

These were the people that first of all seemed to be responding. And naturally when that happened, the other people felt quite free to respond also. Ralph and Lou were a great couple.

They never pushed people. They just preached. And God worked.

And we prayed. We didn't stop praying when the revival began. We kept praying.

It was a wonderful, wonderful time of blessing. And then teams began going out. We visited every province in Canada.

I had crusades in every province except two small provinces in the east, and I made places in the states. A fellow from Portland, Oregon, he pastored a Baptist church. He showed up in the meetings I was holding in Winnipeg right after Saskatoon.

And he said, I have a great need in my life. I'm just not right with God somehow. And so we talked together, and we prayed together, and we knelt at a chair, and I led him in three simple steps of revival.

When he got to his feet, here's what he said. I don't feel one bit different now than I did before I knelt at the chair. But when I knelt at that chair, I gave God everything I am, everything I have.

I gave everything to God. He went back to his church in Portland, Oregon, began to preach, and a revival erupted. They had to have meetings for 11 weeks, 11 weeks.

They prayed with 3,000 people over that period of time. They set up a revival center in Portland. They sent teams into other neighboring states and so on.

It was just another revival in another place. And things like that were happening. God was so good.

And, you know, we get requests constantly from all over the country. Send us a team. Send us a team.

It got to a place where we never had any teams left. They were all busy. All the preachers were busy.

Some were preaching, you know. In one case, it was in the Denver, Colorado area. They wanted a team.

They said, we have 10 days. We've got a bunch of churches together. Please send us someone.

So we sent them two revived farmers. They were just farmers, you know. And they had wonderful meetings, revival meetings.

People were saved. People were blessed. And so things like that were happening, too.

The lay people got deeply involved in many of these teams. I thank God for what I saw happening. In my office one day, during those revival times, the telephone rang.

It was a man from my church who worked in the university. And he was crying. I couldn't make out what he was saying, except he wanted to see me.

I said, well, come. Fifteen minutes later, he ran into my office. He found his knees at my desk and put his head in the desk and just cried and cried.

I said, one of his kids has been killed or something terrible has happened. Then he told me what happened. He said I was sitting on my office desk and he said, well, all I can say is the spirit of God tore my heart wide open and showed me every sin I'd ever committed from the time I was a child.

He said, Pastor, it was like looking into hell. He said it was awful. He said I was familiar with a woman, not my wife.

I've got to go make it right with my wife. I falsified a workman's compensation form. I got thousands of dollars for something that didn't happen on the job.

I got some friends just where it happened on the job. I got all this money falsely. I've got to go to the government and confess this.

Then he said this. He said, I don't care if I lose my money. I don't care if I lose my wife.

I don't care if I lose my job. I don't care if I go to jail. But I've got to be right with God.

I can't stand this. And God gave him a great gift of counseling. Sometimes, you know, they'd be in, if I was in meetings where they could drive, they'd be there.

And they had a great gift for counseling. And one time he said, and they'd sit on the platform with me and I'd have them give their testimony. And he said, Pastor, do you know why I sit there smiling? I said, no, why do you? He said, because I know what's going to happen down there and they don't know yet.

And it was so exciting though to see God moving congregations and blessing certain people. So many pastors and Christian workers got turned inside out and just on fire for God. And people who had left the ministry came back into the ministry.

And many ordinary people became extraordinary people. And we saw that in meetings. I went to Woodstock, New Brunswick.

It's a small town, maybe 5,000 people. We have 50 churches in the area, came together for the meetings. And we had a wonderful time.

It spilled over. We're supposed to start in Denver, Colorado. We couldn't because we spilled over in Woodstock, New Brunswick.

And we had the same manifestations of the power of God in those meetings as well. One Sunday morning, I preached in a neighboring church about 20 miles away. And the pastor of the home church where I was holding the meetings, he said, Bill, you've got to be back here at least by 1130 because what are we going to do if you don't? So I said, we'll get back.

Don't worry about it. I almost didn't get back because of ice on the curve, but I made it OK. But when I got there about 25 to 12, there was about 30 people standing on the platform.

And what's going on here? And there were people who wanted to give their testimonies to what God was doing in their life. And many of them were old. It was an unusual crusade in this that you see old people coming down the aisle at the time of invitation.

They walk three steps and then hold on to a pew and get their breath. And then they walk three steps more and hold on to the pew and get their breath to get to the platform to give their testimony, you know. And then the pastor said, oh, see that girl coming down the aisle? A girl with flaming red hair.

So what about her? He said, she's the shyest person in the world. And she couldn't talk to herself in front of the mirror without blushing. I don't know what she's going to say when she gets up here.

And she got up there. I think it took her about 10 minutes. We usually stop people who gets to be too long.

We simply had to listen. She'd been so touched by God, so transformed. She was filled with the spirit of God and told us all about what a time.

And then I never got to preach until about 12 o'clock that day, you know. And you don't worry about things like that in the time of revival. You just, you move with what the spirit of God is doing.

In some cases, the odd case, we had no preaching at all. That wasn't normal. We, they usually had satirical preach 40 minutes.

If I preach, I preach 40 minutes at least, you know. And so some rumors were being spread abroad that there was no preaching in the revival. That was entirely untrue.

In the seven weeks, we only had two nights where there's no preaching. And because of the heavy sharing going on, people, we'd have people come for somebody, have a lineup from here. Where were they? The wall and over here.

And they had to do it as we invited them. We say, listen, be short. Don't tell your life history.

Get to the point. Two minutes. Try and be short because there's other people.

And we told them, if you can't find the landing field, we'll help you come down. And sometimes we had to do that, you know. It was such a great time, though.

I've heard, you know, 40 people giving their testimony one night, filled with the spirit of God, changed, telling you what God had done, what God had done. Not what we had done, what God had done. That's revival, you know.

It's Christians coming up to a New Testament level. That's all it is, revival, you know. And it was a marvelous time.

Well, we want to talk about all prayer. You remember that we have the text of Ephesians 6.18, but in 1 Timothy 2.8, Paul said, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, everywhere, lifting up holy hands and doubting. Do you pray everywhere? No, we don't do that.

I mean, two Christians meet, they talk about the crops, they talk about the latest sports event, latest political furor, whatever, you know. But we don't pray, no. I pastored a church years back in a place called Berto, Manitoba, and one day a lady phoned and wanted me to come and see her.

She was an older lady. She was born in Wales, and she, as a young girl, had seen a revival. And she said, in those days, I remember I'd be walking down the sidewalk, and here would be six or eight men kneeling on the sidewalk with their arms around each other praying.

And she said, oh, how those men prayed. And she said, I've known ever since, and I never had what they had, and I want to have whatever it is. I want to have it.

And she accepted Christ that day. Those men would never have known that the little girl walking past them was going to find Christ as a result of them praying on the sidewalk, you know. We were asked to come on the team from Saskatoon to Winnipeg, 500 miles, and we had five guys in the car, and people was a prayer meeting the whole way.

We didn't see that wonderful herd of black Angus cattle in the field. We didn't see some big outfit went rolling by on the highway, or some car, some home costing a million dollars. We didn't see any of that stuff.

It was all pray, pray, pray. I know a missionary. Oh, and they pray for him.

I know a fellow, and we pray for him. Whatever it was, went on and on for ten hours. When we got to Winnipeg, we got into a motel, and then we said, now let's have a prayer meeting.

So we had a great prayer meeting, and then we had a meeting, and the place was packed to the doors. And there's a fellow there who later on became my song leader. Six foot four, Howard.

His name was Howard Gardner. And he was quite critical. He said, when I heard that you, it happened in your church, I knew it wouldn't be emotional because you're not an emotional person.

So he felt it was safe to go, you know. That was his undoing. He was sitting there, and I was preaching on the text, let each esteem other better than themselves.

He said, at that moment, everything changed. It was like God was standing in front of me. He said to me, do you live that way? And he said, yes, Lord, I do.

And God said, what about George Bell? Now, George Bell was a fellow pastor. He couldn't stand. And he said to God, he's such a big windbag.

I don't know how you can bless him the way you do. That's what he said to the Lord. And so the Lord said, I want you to go to the altar.

And he, I see him coming down the aisle. I'm in the middle of a sermon. He's coming down the aisle, faces white as snow.

And I can't explain what he said. I can only tell you what he said. You'll have to figure it out.

He said, as I was walking down the aisle, Jesus Christ met me in the aisle, put his hand on my head, and reduced me to absolute zero. He said, when I got to the altar, I couldn't find myself. There was nothing there but God.

And he gave his life totally to God at that moment. He was such a beautiful character to work with. He prayed by the hour.

He wanted people to Christ. He had such a tender, loving spirit. We had a wonderful time.

And then later his health broke down and he couldn't be on the road. And so I missed his companionship very, very much. I don't know what happened when he walked down the aisle.

I can't explain it. But Christ met him in some way, and he knew it was the Lord. And things like that were happening.

We heard it again and again. I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, without wrath and without doubting, it says. Okay? Without doubting? You pray in doubt? You better quit praying in doubting.

All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive. And we certainly learned that in a powerful way in those days. What things, whatever you desire when you pray, believe that you have received them, you'll have them.

And you know these just as well as I do, and many others like them, telling us. Ask in faith, nothing wavering. Free the wavers like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Unbelief kills it. We have to pray in faith.

That means, of course, you have to be careful before you pray, that you're praying for something that is the will of God. I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, everywhere. Remember that word.

Then there's a word in Luke, or in Ephesians 6, 18, persevering, persevering. Christ told a parable, Luke 18, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. They asked George Muller one time, do you ever give up when you're praying for somebody or something? And he said, George Muller never gives up.

He prayed for two men for 40 years, that they might be saved. One was saved a year before he died, and one was saved something like a year after he died. Persevering, with all perseverance it says, that word all.

We read about Anna in Luke chapter 2, it says, she never left the temple. She served God with fastings and prayers, night and day. I'm sure that there were people that said, or at least thought, what's Anna doing in the temple all the time? Why doesn't she get out and help the poor? Why doesn't she get out and preach the word of God? What is she doing in the temple? But she was serving God, fasting and praying.

And God made sure that in the Bible, so we'd understand, there is this kind of ministry, and it's important, and we need it. Now the apostles said, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of

the word. We don't do it that way.

We give ourselves to the ministry of the word in a hundred different ways, and then if we have a little time left over, we'll pray. I mean, that's how it goes, right? That's what I see, that's what I hear, that's what I did myself at one time. We will give ourselves.

It means we'll just throw ourselves into this. Prayer is the first thing and the most important thing. If you remember the story of Symbola in New York, when he took over that little church, 20 members, couldn't make payments on the mortgage, no training for the ministry.

He said, I didn't know how to do anything, but I knew how to pray. That's how it started with 20 people, and today they have four services every Sunday. All of them are packed, apparently, 1,800 people.

I don't know how he does it. You should pray for him. We will give ourselves continually to prayer, to prayer.

People, we've got to get God into the picture, whatever the picture is. He's waiting. He's only moved by faith and holiness.

It is impossible without faith to please God. Impossible. So no kind of frankly activity will get it.

Let me give you an example. I was in a Southern Baptist church in Rio Hondo, Texas. Rio Hondo is about 1,200 people, and he was running about 500 Sunday morning.

The church would seat about a thousand. And five weeks before I came, he had an evangelistic crusade. He rented an auditorium, seating a couple of thousand, in a high school.

And then he did something he'd never done before. He invited a rock band to come so he'd get the kids in there, you know. So it was packed night after night for a whole week.

And they sent a record for Southern Baptist, apparently. They had 1,800 professions of salvation in that one week. Five weeks later, I was to come.

He had phoned me, talking about the wonderful things that God did. When I got there with my song leader, he met the plane. And he was one of the saddest looking people I'd ever seen.

And he said to me, I have a great need. And I said, well, come on. And he came into the motel.

He fell on the floor. He began to weep. Then he told me what had happened.

He hadn't baptized one of those converts. He never had one of them attending his church, even. Not even one.

And his wife was very angry with him, and almost destroyed their marriage, because she said, you compromise your convictions. I don't honor you anymore. She just almost walked out on him.

She didn't, thank God. But it almost came to that. See, God wasn't in that.

He was anxious to get a crowd in a worldly way. He got a crowd, no doubt about that. But he didn't get anything from it.

And we've seen things similar to this in Canada and other places, where they use methods to get a crowd that meant nothing. So we have to be careful. We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

Paul wrote to the church at Rome, among other things, Romans 15, 30. He called on that, he said, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. He called it striving.

And prayer at times will be striving. Your physique gets involved. You have to give it all you have.

And especially in times when God draws near, and you begin to see how empty you are, and how sinful you have been, and all of this. All right. Striving in prayer.

Striving. 2 Corinthians 1, 11 says, you also helping together by prayer. Now, there's a gift of helps in the New Testament.

It's not spelled out. It's just called the gift of helps. It's a gift that any Christian can have.

And we should be alert and aware to the possibility any day that God may call me to help somebody else, and maybe lead them to Christ. The gift of helps. And here he calls it, you also helping together by prayer.

You know, nobody ever convenes a conference where they're going to seek to get the gift of helps, right? You never hear of that. They convene conferences to get more of the Holy Spirit or something, you know. What about the gift of helps? They're never going to write a book about you if you have a great gift of helps, you know.

You'll never have anybody invite you to speak and share in a meeting, you know. The gift of helps, what did you do? Well, that's not important. What's important is the public thing that goes on, you know.

And oftentimes, I'm sure, as far as God is concerned, he's very unhappy. All right. You also helping together by prayer.

Paul said, travailing. Galatians 4, 19, my little children of whom I travail and birth again until Christ be formed in you. So he likens prayer to having a child, you know.

It's a painful thing. Travail. And it's used that way, I mean, in relation to prayer in a number of places in the Word of God.

It's work. The Bible speaks about fighting a good fight of faith. It's a faith.

It's a work. Faith is a work. It's a fight because Satan is opposing us.

He doesn't mind what we do, but he hates it when he sees us on our knees. And we need to shake him up more than we do. Pray, like it says, without ceasing in everything.

Give thanks. Travailing. Remember, Paul said, you did run well.

Who hindered you? One translation says, who drove you back? What happened here? When he left, the last he'd seen these people, they were doing well, walking in the Spirit, things were great. He comes back, and all of this is ended, and they're back in the flesh. He said, I'm afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor and vain.

You observe days and months and times and years. They were going back to the old Jewish ways, you know. Paul was greatly disturbed.

And so, the only way you can correct this is not by talking, it's by praying. There'll be some talking after prayer, perhaps, but prayer is the main thing. I prevail in birth again, which means he'd done it before when he was there, when the churches were established through his ministry.

Now he's doing it again to bring them back to where they should have been and were not. The Bible speaks about like, watch in the same, watch in the same with thanksgiving. He's talking about prayer.

In my church in Saskatoon, we had a fellow, he taught psychology in the local university. His name was Harold Kellman. He was a very faithful church attender, never said much, never did much.

Came to me one day and said, Brother Bill, can you recommend some book or books that would help me? I'm low spiritually. And I recommended the two books by Dallimore on Whitfield's life. Some of you have read those, I'm sure, powerful books.

And he read those books and he was absolutely transformed. He became one of the most powerful prayers I ever knew. Hours every day.

He was never in the service. He was always upstairs in the prayer room, praying the whole time through the service. If he said to you, would you like to pray with me a little bit? Make up your mind, it's going to be two hours.

And he'd say something like this, now, I'll pray, you watch. And he'd pray for maybe half an hour and then he'd say, now it's your turn, you pray and I'll watch. And pray and watch, pray and watch, it'll go on for two hours, perhaps.

He had a wonderful understanding of the will of God and power in prayer. He's still alive, I saw him not long ago. Still walking with God.

What happened? Something he saw, he said, when I saw, when I read those books, I saw the possibility of a Christian life that I'd never seen before. And I came to understand that prayer is the number one thing in the Christian's life. And of course, he had it right.

Watching, waiting. Mark 13, three times Christ spoke about watching, watching. Waiting, Isaiah 40, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they'll mount up with wings as eagles, they'll run and not be weary, they'll walk and not faint.

Wait on the Lord. Have you ever done that? Got alone with God, forgot about the clock, and just prayed? You don't have to be asking all the time. No, I like to spend the time just thanking God for who he is, thanking God for what he is, thanking God for what he's going to do, praising God.

I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth. And so many verses of this kind, especially in the Psalms. Prayer, watching and waiting.

Paul spoke in Colossians 4, 12 about a man, Epiphra, and he said about him, laboring fervently for you in prayer, laboring fervently. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Billy Sonny said, you know, some people, they pray like a jackrabbit nibbling at a cabbage.

You know, we say our little prayer and then we're up and away. That's not prayer. Laboring fervently in prayer, Paul said.

And we need that so much in our churches today. I don't know, you can't talk people into it. It's something God has to do, and we have to, whatever church we're in, we've got to believe God that he'll give us that spirit of prayer I mentioned a while ago.

Because when people have that, you don't have to beg them, they just love to pray. They're finding time through the day, wherever they are, whatever they're doing, just to pray. And it's wonderful.

Laboring fervently. Paul spoke about this same man, Epiphras, and he said that he has great zeal in prayer. If you heard about a Christian that had great zeal, what would you think about, what do you think? He gives out a lot of tracts, you know, he witnesses to everybody, means he's a real zealous Christian.

He's talking about a person who is zealous in prayer. We never think like that. Even if we knew a person was praying a lot, we probably would never say he has great zeal in prayer.

But this man had. Think about it. Writing to Timothy, Paul said, I remember you in my prayers, night and day.

And that phrase occurs in Psalm 81, 88, 1, and other places. Night and day, praying exceedingly, that I might see your face, and might perfect that which was lacking in your faith. I think that's 1 Thessalonians chapter 2. All right, this is part of the story.

Night and day. I have cried day and night before you, David said. And so, it's not, we cannot pray all day and all night.

They don't mean that, of course. It's a way of talking about the necessity to give quality time to prayer, not to make it an appendage we stick on sometimes. Making the main thing in your life as a Christian, to spend all the time you possibly can calling on God.

You know, when Wilbur Chapman first pastored a Presbyterian church, he hadn't been there long before the board had a meeting with him. They said, Brother Chapman, you can't preach with a hill of beans. How would you feel if you were told that? But they said, we're going to pray that God will make a preacher out of you.

They prayed so well, they lost him. He became a world-famous evangelist back in those times. They prayed, God answered.

And often we've prayed with people. I was in meetings in the Midland, in the Michigan, in Saginaw, and one morning we had a men's prayer meeting in a church in one of the other towns there. There was a, I don't know, maybe 80 men in this prayer thing.

Started at 8 o'clock in the morning, didn't end until 2 in the afternoon. And what a time we had. And men meeting with God.

Finally it was over, it was time to go home, and a man came up and said, Bill, I'm married to a witch. Would you come home and talk to her? I thought he meant she was into witchcraft. He didn't mean that.

He meant she had a witch-like nature, you know. So I said, I don't want to hear anything about your wife. I said, where are you at? Well, I'm doing okay.

I said, what do you mean you're doing okay? Well, I've got a few problems. What are your problems? I said, brother, listen, would you get on your knees and talk to God? And he did. And he broke.

He was committing adultery on a regular basis, and I don't know what else. He had a whole pile of things that were wrong in his life. He's calling his wife a witch, you know.

He got his life straightened up, and then he asked me to go home and talk to his wife, and I did. She said when she saw me in the car with her husband, she was frightened because she knew something must have happened to her husband, and she didn't know how to figure it out. Anyhow, he went in, grabbed his wife, hugged her, got forgiveness from her.

And then he had two daughters, and he called them, and their kids may be ten. He sat them on two chairs, and he sat there, and she and I were sitting just over about 20 feet, watching. And he asked these kids to forgive him for being such a rotten daddy.

He said, I haven't really been a father to your children, and I want you to forgive me. I'm a rotten person. And he really poured his soul out to the kids, you know.

They didn't know how to handle it. They just stood there looking at their daddy. He was crying as he talked to them.

And then she turned to me, and she said, I don't know what's happened to him. Can it happen to me? I said, yes, it can. Get on your knees.

So she got on her knees. You know, the first thing she said when she talked to God, oh, dear God, she said, you know what a witch I'd be. So I guess they had it right, you know.

And she met with God. And then they were leaving, this was a Saturday, and that day they were leaving on holidays, going up to Upper Michigan, which they did. And no, wait, they didn't go to Monday, because on Sunday, they gave their testimony in their local church, and the preacher never got to preach that morning.

There was just a revival broke when the two of them were finished. Wednesday, the following week, I was in the church in Saginaw. The telephone rang, and nobody was around at the moment, so I answered the telephone.

It was just a couple praying or phoning from Upper Michigan. And they told us what happened. They'd gone to the prayer meeting in the local Baptist church the night before, and they were asked to give their testimony.

When they did, a revival erupted. They said the whole church were on their faces crying to God, you know. And things like that were going on all across Canada, some areas of the states, then in foreign countries besides.

I must share something that happened. You believe, I'm sure, in the sovereign will of God. I was going down to Argentina, and I had a missionary friend, Lyle Eggleston.

He was a Kansas cowboy whom God had called into the mission field, and he'd arranged for meetings in Buenos Aires. So, in Argentina, there were six groups of Baptists, Southern Baptists and others, six groups. They met once a year, different places, for a weekend, and they compared statistical notes and all this sort of thing.

The year before, when they compared notes, they discovered that the average church of these six groups had only one, two people to Christ in the preceding twelve months. They knew that was awful. So, here's what they did.

They set up a committee to arrange for the following year. Now, they didn't know a thing about me. I didn't know a thing about them.

But they were told, you're not to call a speaker. We're all going to pray that God will send someone to us who knows what revival is, who's been in revival. So, they had a weekend.

I spoke in the Southern Baptist Seminary in Buenos Aires, and one of the professors came running up, and he said, Bill, what are you doing on this weekend? So, I got my book on. Well, I said, over the two months I'm down here, that's the only weekend I'm free. Why? Oh, he said, we want you to speak at this conference.

That's how God put it together, you know. What a time we had. In Rosario, the building would seat probably 12.

It was packed. There was people standing, people sitting in the aisles. I couldn't give invitations.

Nobody could move. It was too packed, you know. I had to preach to an interpreter.

I didn't know a word of Spanish except C. And so, I had to use an interpreter. I had a wonderful time. In the last meeting, I simply said, dear people, if you need to receive Christ as your Savior, if you're a Christian out of fellowship with God, if you want to change, just stay behind.

I guess there were 700 people staying behind. The interpreter got so excited, he was jumping off the floor. Can you imagine trying to counsel these people from the pulpit to an interpreter? That's what I did.

It was a sweet time. And one thing happened, among many other things. A Baptist pastor from Buenos Aires, who was at that meeting, he was there.

And God touched his life. And he immediately, somehow, he got a hold of this revival thing in a clear way. He went back to his church.

He had 500 people. And he said, I just made up my mind, by the grace of God, we're going to have a revival here. And he prayed by the hour, and prayed, and prayed, and a revival broke within two weeks.

Now, that's unusual. It swept the whole congregation. It was a good thing he did, because in the testimonies, one man confessed he'd been planning to shoot the preacher.

I didn't hear why, but they'd have had a dead preacher if they hadn't had a revival, you know. So, now listen carefully. Here's what happened.

The whole congregation was swept clean by the Spirit of God. And then, immediately on the end of that, God began saving sinners. And 200 sinners were converted in two weeks, with no preaching at all.

They were beating on the preacher's door, asking him to show them the way to heaven. And he had to call the previous pastor. The two of them began gathering in this harvest.

I was in the church a couple of weeks after that. They'd already baptized 80 of these converts. There were classes for the others.

But you see, God has no trouble converting sinners. His problem is getting the church right, so he can convert sinners. That's why revival is so sadly and badly needed, that we'd be right with God.

All right. We've heard already in the conference about Christ praying. That's a wonderful story all in itself.

All night long, before he chose the twelve, and on other occasions, rising up a great while before day, and praying. You may have heard of Abel, Clary, and Father Nash. Maybe not.

They were two godly men who lived in Finney's day. If Finney was going to some place for a crusade, they would go before he got there, ten days or two weeks. They would pray eight, ten, twelve hours a day for the upcoming meetings.

And Finney said, when I got there, the revival had already begun. And these men, for some years, they worked for Finney that way. Now, I'm well aware of the fact there's some problems with some of Finney's theology.

Somebody once said, though, if you're thinking in terms of raw spiritual power, you have to think of Finney. Who can duplicate what he once did? He walked into a factory. Eighty-five people were working in the factory.

He never uttered a word. He just walked slowly around, gazing at people and revival. People couldn't work.

They quit working and fell on their knees. They called some preachers in, and there was a real revival. He was certain he loved Christ, and he preached the gospel.

Anyway, Abel Clary and Father Nass prayed. Duncan Campbell told me about some men in Scotland. They called them the praying men of Barvey.

And here's what they did. These men, they come home from the job, have supper, and go to bed right after supper, and sleep till nine o'clock at night. They got up at nine o'clock at night, and they prayed until two o'clock in the morning.

And this was their program every day, five hours praying. Marvelous. He told me, he went to the Isle of Skye, Duncan Campbell did, to reopen a churchman dead for years.

He started on Sunday with five people. Monday, five people. Tuesday, five people.

Nothing happening. He got a message to the praying men, and asked them to take it on their heart. The day after, the first time they prayed, the church was packed to the doors, and Campbell told me seven or eight people got saved that night, and a revival erupted.

I can see that. I don't know how these men did this, how it all began. It would be a wonderful story to hear how they got into this.

But in the revivals in the Hebrides, it was born there, so we understand. You know, we think, sometimes I get to a church, and I say to the pastor, how did you prepare prayer-wise for these meetings? And he'll say something like this, well, Brother McLeod, we had three extra prayer meetings, you know. And I say, three extra prayer meetings? What are you talking about? So they had three extra prayer meetings, and they expect a revival, you know.

Back in the early 1800s, I remember reading a story about a Baptist church, they had a revival. You know what happened first? They had three prayer meetings a day for two years. Seven o'clock, and then in the afternoon, then in the evening.

Three prayer meetings a day for a year, two years, and then when the revival came, hundreds were converted. But that's how they prepared. So when somebody tells me they had two or three extra prayer meetings, I just go on.

They expect somehow I carry a revival in a pack sack or something? I don't. It's all prayer when we get right with God and get alone with God and make things right with other people and this kind of thing, restitution. It's always a big deal in revival when people begin making things right, sometimes with the police.

You know, the lady brought her husband after one of the meetings, and she said, he's not a Christian, but he said he'd come tonight. So I talked to him. He said, oh, he said, I'm not interested in this stuff.

I just came to please the old lady, you know. He didn't know what he was getting into, you know. I was preaching.

He suddenly grabbed his wife and he said, honey, I'm slipping into hell. She said, what are you talking about? Oh, hell, I can see the flames of hell. And he began to swear me a handstand to stop preaching so he'd get the altar and pray.

I didn't see him. There was a big crowd there, and I didn't see him. So I kept on preaching.

I see this guy coming down the aisle. He was really moving, man. He wasn't walking.

And he got the fontanel in his face and cried to God. In the book of Hebrews, there's a verse that speaks about us insulting God, you know. And he said, when you said that thing about insulting God, somebody showed me something happened.

I said, the whole thing I've been insulting the God of the universe. He was soundly converted. Strange how God works, things God does.

But he's able, if we're willing to pray, all prayer, all prayer. I just say it again. I will therefore let men pray everywhere, everywhere.

When you meet with other Christians, have a time of prayer. Somehow have a time of prayer. Sometimes in restaurants with God.

Now when you're through praying, everybody's watching, you know. And sometimes, I remember one case, this guy and his, it wasn't his mother, probably. He was maybe 30 or whatever.

It was no later. They were sitting here. And when they heard us talking, and then all this kind of praying, you know, oh, they turned on their seat and just stared at us, you know.

And so we got up to go. And I just walked over and offered him a gospel tract, and he said, thank you very, very much. So, you know, sometimes when Christians are talking together, if a sinner walks by, their voice drops down to a tiny little whisper.

They don't want him to hear they're talking about religion, you know. People are converted sometimes when they hear Christians talking. And one of my churches, this man, he was known as a dancer, and he was trained in that from the time he was four years of age.

And the army in Winnipeg, when they had a special event, they'd send a car. He never ever drove a car. They'd pick him up and take him, and he'd give him a shot of rye or whiskey or something, and he could dance by the hour.

And he could dance. And he said, anytime I heard Christians or anybody talking about religion, I stood as close as I could so I could find out how to be saved. Now, he had a brother who was a Christian who never talked to him about it.

Never said a word, apparently. And so he was 55 years of age when suddenly God moved in, and a young man who was training to be a druggist said to him, Jesus Christ means everything in the world to me. What does he mean to you? And he got mad and walked away.

And he thought to himself, that young kid talking to me that way, that was awful. And he couldn't get away from it. And all day long, what does he mean? Christ.

What does Christ mean to you? And that night he got saved. He called on God. He didn't know what to do.

He just dropped on his knees and started praying and found the Lord. He became one of the most faithful witnesses I've ever known. If you introduced him to somebody, he'd take ahold of them by the hand or by the lapel, and he'd start talking so sweetly about Jesus, you know.

He had a wonderful way. He was 75 going on 80 when he had inoperable cancer. And he had some people come in and they prayed and he was healed and lived for three or four years longer.

But he had such a want, and I thought to myself, what happened to his brother? And these other people that were Christians that he moved with sometimes in the work he was doing. Nothing to say. It's awful to think of it, you know.

Gospel? Go. That's the first part of a gospel. Go.

And we don't do it. I was in India and had some great times there. I was in an area where Praying Hyde had lived, and they were still talking about him.

You know, he prayed, apparently, eight, ten hours a day. He asked God for one soul a day, and God gave it to him. He asked for two souls a day, and God gave him that.

He asked for three souls a day, and he got that. I think he stopped at four. I'm not sure now, but it was something like that.

And he'd never go to rest at night till that last soul was saved for that day. But he prayed. If the dinner bell rang, he would pray, Dear God, do I go? God might say no, and he'd just stay and pray.

That's how he lived. But he gave himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Dear people, we started with this all prayer, Ephesians 6, 18.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all things. What are you going to do about it? Are you going to change your way to the glory of God? Are you going to get involved in it? Ask God to forgive you if you're being a prayerless person? Many of you probably have been that. Dear people, we have to get into this as God has indicated so clearly in his Word.

If we're not right in this area, we're just not right. God doesn't want a bunch of people roller skating to heaven having a good time, you know. We have to learn to prevail in prayer, to call on God, to ask him to give us, ask God to give you the spirit of prayer.

He'll do that if you really mean it, and get into it. I don't know of any problem in the church that can't be healed where people get into prayer. You know, we had two men before I closed, but two men in our church.

They were brothers, both in their 40s, both Bible school graduates, both musical. They used to sing duets. They hadn't sung together for 10 years.

I didn't know that when I got there. They hadn't spoken to each other for two years. I just heard about this before the revival.

Then the revival came. The older of the two met with God, and I said to him, Sam, you and Arnie have to get your heads together, get things straightened out. And so one Sunday morning--see, Sunday mornings, the people in the churches were all back in their own church.

All these other meetings in the evening were in large auditoriums, wherever we happened to be. So it was Sunday morning. I told the congregation, Arnie and Sam are going to try and make things right.

And so I said, you people pray. Now, Arnie was a tough guy. I didn't know that he'd been disciplined by an Alliance church on a very serious moral charge years ago.

He'd never made it right. And our church, before I was pastor there, had taken him in as a member because he had two brothers in the congregation. So we went downstairs.

I took a deacon with me. And Sam was standing there. He walked over to his brother and said, my brother, can you forgive me? And Arnie was sitting like this, and he said, yeah, it's about time you came.

And Sam said, I knew he wouldn't forgive me. So I unloaded a truckload of Bible verses on him. It didn't do a thing.

So I said to my deacon, let's pray. So we got down and we prayed. We ignored him.

We just said, God, break this man. Break him, God. Break him.

Break him. Melt him. And suddenly God began to work.

And he ran to the wall. People, he was beating the wall with his fists and kissing him with his feet, crying to God to have mercy on him. And then he began pouring out a fountain of wickedness and junk that had been in his life for years, you know.

And he began running around us, crying at the top of his lungs. We just kept praying. And finally, there was quietness.

And I looked. He was sitting there with the light of heaven on his face. And I caught his eye and pointed to his brother.

He ran to his brother and almost cracked his ribs. We went upstairs. And as we walked in, the congregation stood at the feet and turned around.

We were coming from the back end of the auditorium. And they were marching down the aisle arm and arm to the front, told what had happened. Their wives came running because the wives were in fighting too.

And the kids from both sides came running. And they all knelt in a big circle at the front of the church and had a prayer time. I was standing at the back, you know, my heart was going thump, thump, thump.

And I thought, boy, this would be a wonderful time to die, you know. Oh, it was so good to see. And I remember right after that, we were in the Alliance Church.

And Arnie had been a member there, remember? I said before he'd been a member of the Discipline and Morals Church. And he and his brother were going to sing a duet, but he had to make things right with the church, first of all. And he did.

He asked the congregation to forgive him for the person he'd been, what God had been doing in his life. And then they sang together. It was a difficult situation, but we were praying.

Prayer. God. It's not just prayer, it's God when we pray.

All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive. And let me add one thought before I conclude. There's a book called A History of Revivals of American Religion by Calvin Colton.

I got it in a secondhand bookstore. It was published in 1832. I got it for 25 cents in a secondhand bookstore.

I wouldn't trade it for \$50, but don't try 75. Anyway, in this book he was saying, we learn how to get God into the picture in revival. Fasting and prayer.

And then he said, we were never satisfied with what he called insulated conversions. We'd use the word isolated. It meant the same.

Ones and twos, finding Christ. That's fine. That's not revival.

He said we fasted, we prayed, we preached for revival. And then he said this, and we believed God for revival until the Holy Ghost came and took the work out of our hands and made the whole community aware of God. And then hundreds found Christ.

And then he said this, this kind of revival never came in our experience to a church that didn't believe it would come. And it never failed to come to a church that believed it would come. You know, Stoddard, who was related to Jonathan Edwards, he had five revivals in 35 years in his church.

Other churches were not having revival. Finally, pastors had a meeting with Stoddard and said, why is God blessing you and not blessing us? He said, brethren, let me tell you how we prepare. He said, we fast and we pray and we believe God for revival.

We believe God is going to do it. Now, you guys don't do that. You hope God will send a revival.

You don't believe he will. You hope he will. He said, that's just the difference.

Five revivals, 35 years. Other churches, no revivals. And so we have to remember, it's not just preparing.

It's a matter of believing God that he will come in power, in answer to faith. Let's pray. Father, you're being so good to all of us in this building.

If we're born again, that's a marvel. Father, your grace. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Father, what a truth. Thank you for remembering me. Thank you, Father, for all you've done answering prayer.

And thank you, Father, for the times you've faithfully rebuked sin in my life. Oh, God. And I pray, Lord, you'll continue.

I don't have to ask you to be faithful. I want you to help me to be faithful for your glory. And Father, I thank you again for that verse, all prayer.

And I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Father, you gave us that. You're waiting now for us to respond from our heart as individuals and as churches to get it straightened out, Father, so that we're not doing what we've always done.

We're waiting. Father, the Bible says, how little a whisper is heard of you. But God, you made the universe.

You're mighty and powerful. How is it that we're only hearing a whisper of you? We want to hear the shout of a king in the camp. And we're crying to you, Father, for that.

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. No tender voice like thine can peace afford. I need thee.

Oh, I need thee every hour. I need thee. Thank you for loving us and blessing us.

In Christ's name. Amen.

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