

Prayer and Unity in Revival

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon highlights the essential roles of prayer and unity in fostering revival within the church community.

Duration: 52:46

Scripture: Psalm 133:1, Acts 1:14, Acts 5:12-14, Romans 15:5-6, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11

Topics: "Revival Praying"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a heart that is open to others, regardless of their background or circumstances. He shares a story about a Christian man who never explicitly explained the way of salvation, but through his actions and kindness, he led someone to accept Jesus as their Savior. The speaker also highlights the need to be patient and faithful in sowing seeds of the Gospel, even when there seems to be no immediate results. He encourages listeners to receive and accept one another, just as Paul did, and to treat every person as a child of God.

Transcript

I want to deal with two things in this particular session. One is prayer, the place of prayer in spiritual awakening, and the other thing will be unity, the need, the necessity of unity in the local church for revival to come. Both of these are emphasized in the Bible, and we'll look at that from a historical viewpoint as well as from the word of God.

When I was first converted, I was converted through a booklet, an 80-page booklet by Reverend Clarence Larkin, it was on the second coming of Christ, and he was totally committed to a dispensational position, and of course I found Christ as my Savior, and I'm so thankful for that. But in the book, he was explaining that we could not expect revivals anymore. Revivals were a thing of the past, that the situation was going to get worse and worse in the world until everything fell apart and Christ returned.

And most of the books I read, David Cooper, Herbert Locker, and so on, back in those days as a young Christian, they were all saying the same thing, that revival was not possible anymore. There could be a few people saved here and a few people saved there, but we certainly couldn't have any revivals. That's not true anymore, of course.

I think pretty well everybody in the evangelical world understands, well, revivals are happening today in certain parts of the world, so no point in saying revivals can't happen anymore. But when you try to trace

down the beginnings of revival on the human side, it always has to do with prayer. Somebody was concerned and began to pray.

And sometimes, like John Schatz in Scotland back in the 1600s, I think it was, and he called his church to an all-night prayer meeting for revival, and they prayed all night. And 500 people were converted in the services the next day. I mean, a revival came instantly.

That's unusual. Sometimes people pray a long while. Do you know, on the South Sea islands, when missionaries first went, they labored for 13 years before they saw a convert, and they stayed with it.

And the people in the islands were all cannibals. They often saw people roasting over a fire, you know, this kind of stuff. And they had terrible, terrible times.

It got so bad, finally, the Sending Society in Scotland sent them a letter on a boat--that's what they used in those days, of course--telling them to come home, they're going to send them to a more fruitful field. But in the meantime, a revival had begun, and they had sent a letter to the Sending Society in Scotland, and the two ships passed on the way, and their letters came talking about what God was doing. And the revivals were so powerful.

One case, there were so many converts, they built a huge building, it was as long as a football field almost, and they had two churches in there, so one Pope at this end, one Pope at this end. There were two meetings going at once to handle the thousands of people that had found Christ as their personal Savior. But think of it, 13 years, praying, faithfully serving, serving, never seeing a soul saved, never seeing any interest, and then seeing the horrible, horrible things that were happening around them, and not a thing they could do about it, you know.

But they stayed there because they knew God had sent them, and they kept praying and praying. You know, it says in the Bible, in due season we shall reap, if what? If we don't faint. There'll always come a time, a reaping time, if you're sowing, you just have to be patient, it's God's time.

So it says in Galatians 4, when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son. Why didn't he do it sooner? It wasn't the right time. The phrase, the fullness of time, simply really means, at the right time, God did it.

We said something about preparation in Saskatoon prior to the revival there, and certainly as far as preparing is concerned, prayer is pretty well all we did, we did a lot of it. And many of our people were praying in the night, I was doing that, and it's a practice I do to this day. The odd night I may be too tired, I don't waken up to pray, but normally, I thank God for those times in the night when I get up to pray.

And so many countries come to mind, and so many Christian workers, and the telephone isn't ringing, the doorbell isn't ringing, and you can pray all you want, and it's a great experience. Alright. Zechariah 12.10, I mentioned this verse yesterday, I don't think I gave the reference though, where it speaks about God pouring out on his people the spirit of grace and supplication.

So there is such a thing as a gift of prayer, that God will give and does give to his children. And it's something we should be praying for, that we personally would have a spirit of prayer. And you know, I led a lady to Christ in Burnham, Manitoba years ago, she was from Wales.

She was attending our church, but not a Christian, and I had a chance to talk to her, and she told me that she was a young girl at the time of the Welsh Revival, she said, I was an Anglican. And she said, we used to see men, strong men, sometimes ten men, kneeling in a circle on a sidewalk, praying. And she said, I'd walk past these men, and I was frightened.

But she said, I always knew that they had something I didn't have, and they had something I needed to have. And all those years she'd been looking for this, you know, and we had the joy of leading her to Christ. But prayer certainly had a great deal to do, as a matter of fact, not only with the preparation for revival in Wales, all the revivals in Wales, but when revival came, then prayer was just accentuated, and people were praying everywhere.

You know, it says in 1 Timothy 2.8, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. So you know, when two Christians meet, we should pray. I mean, we talk about the weather, we talk about the political situation, we talk about the economics of the country, talk about our kids, talk about this, talk about that, no time to pray.

And the Bible says, I will therefore that men pray everywhere. In the same chapter, 1 Timothy 2.1, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. I was in church with 1,200 members.

So I asked, how many attended the prayer meeting? And the pastor said, well, about twenty-five. Oh, twenty-five. I said, how many were men? He said, about four.

So I said something from the pulpit to the effect that I understand that with 1,200 members in the church, you have around four men attending the prayer meeting. And so I made some remarks. And a bunch of ladies assailed me afterwards, and they said, we want you to understand that the men in this congregation are all of them very wonderful men.

I don't doubt they were, but they weren't praying men, and they shouldn't be. A friend of mine went to Ireland some years ago, and he taped some sessions he had with a pastor of a very fast-growing church in Ireland. Matter of fact, it's the fastest-growing church in Ireland, possibly in the British Isles.

The pastor, believe it or not, is a hyper-Calvinist, if you know what that is. Do you know what they do? Maybe twelve times or more a year, they'll have a week of prayer. And during the week of prayer, the people are instructed, this week of prayer, you're to ask God what he wants us to do next in the area of evangelism.

And they get clear guidance. God led them to rent some football field, stadium, or whatever, a seat about 5,000. And of course, they advertised as widely as they could.

They prayed and prayed and prayed. And it rained all day. And they thought, well, the meeting, nobody's going to show up.

But they went there, and people had come with their umbrellas and everything else, and the place was packed. And they preached the gospel, and 150 people accepted Christ as their Savior. Another time, God led them to rent some large auditorium.

The cost was prohibitive, but they went ahead and did it because God had made it clear they were to do this. And again, the place was packed, and I think there were 300 accepted Christ in that meeting. And the

pastor, I got this from the tape, of course, and the pastor was saying, if we have maybe a visiting choir come in, the crowd drops down to 200.

If we have a prayer meeting, the crowd goes up to 800. And prayer is the whole life of the church, you see. And they've just recaptured something that we should never have lost, which is the place of prayer in the work of God.

When Paul said, as he did say, and I quote it again, I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. Evangelicals in North America are not really praying people. In South Korea, they are.

It's not surprising. You know, a friend of mine was over there in South Korea preaching in numbers of churches, and he said he was never in a church that had less than 1,000 people. And he said, a lot of these pastors were apologizing to me because their church was so small.

I mean, a church of 1,000 members in South Korea is not a large church, you know. There's all kinds of churches with 8,000, 10,000, 20,000, 25,000, or more. And over there, everything is based on prayer.

The people cut holes in the hills, and they have a little stool in there, maybe a little kind of a table if they can. And any spare time they have, they're off in this hole in the hills praying, reading their Bible and praying. And prayer is everything to those Koreans, those South Korean Christians.

They're hoping by the year 2000 that 50% of the nation will be born again. You can't sit in a bus term or an air term in South Korea for 40 minutes, but somebody's going to come and ask if you're saved. I've been in a lot of countries.

This has never happened to me. I've never had a tract given to me in Canada. I've had tracts given to me in South America.

I remember I was walking down the street in Valparaiso, Chile, and I had a tract in my pocket here, just the top of the tract sticking out. You couldn't read it or anything. And a young guy's coming down the street and walks right over and he taps me on it, and he says, Christian? Just grinning from ear to ear, I said, see, ha! We had a great time.

He didn't know any English, I didn't know any Spanish, but we got along well, you know. I thought, hey, that was pretty neat, you know, Christian, ha! That never happens in Canada. So wherever you can trace the beginnings of revival, if someone had a passion, a burden for prayer, sometimes just one person, sometimes it was a pastor, sometimes it was some people in the congregation.

In the Hebrides Awakening, there were two ladies in their 80s. I think they were twin sisters. One was totally blind, and they used to spend two or three nights a week just praying all night for revival.

And that's how Duncan Campbell got there, because God had heard their prayers, heard their cries. When Moody first went to England, there was a lady in London who had been praying that God would send Moody to England. He didn't know this, didn't know a thing about it.

And this lady was not well, and she didn't get to church very frequently. Her sister went to church and came home and said, do you know what, there's a man called Moody from America. He preached in our church this morning.

And her sister said, what? Then revival is coming. And the first meeting, nothing happened. I think it was the second meeting, there were 400 people who responded to the invitation for salvation, and Moody had a tremendous time for months all through the British Isles.

And it was related to the prayers of this lady, this sick lady, who was calling on God day and night for revival in her country. And we need to copy these examples, and of course the Bible makes it clear. You notice it says of the early apostles, they said, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Now we reverse that. We will give ourselves continually to teaching and preaching the word of God. And if we've got a few minutes left over, then we'll pray.

And our teaching and preaching is ineffective because we're not praying the way we should. You know, that phrase, we will give ourselves, we will give ourselves continually to prayer. And then out of that comes the ministry of the word.

We talked about boxing yesterday, and how they pray to find the will of God. And they just fasted and prayed until the will of God was made perfectly clear. You know, when they went out in teams, they never had one extra person on the team.

They just had those people that God had indicated to them in their times of prayer. So they're praying for, they're going to go somewhere, they need a team, they pray and ask God who should be on the team, and they simply pray and wait until God shows them who should be on the team. And they always knew clearly who should be on the team.

The Holy Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work run till I have called them. And what does it say? They had also John. Why did they have John? The Holy Ghost didn't say separate me Barnabas and Saul and John.

So what happened? John didn't stay with them. He departed from them and went back to Jerusalem. He should never have been with them in the first place.

So sometimes we have people like that, we have also this or that, and God didn't really want it, we didn't really pray about it, we didn't get the mind of God on it, and we just do it because we think it's a good thing. And then we pay the price for our mistakes sometimes. And I could talk on that subject for a long, long time, mistakes we've made in Christian churches because we never prayed enough and found out what God really wanted us to do.

Let me tell you of one church in Michigan. They called a pastor and he said, well, I've got a great gift for preaching and what you really need is a large auditorium because the people are certainly going to come and hear me preach. So they went into debt and built a huge auditorium and he lasted about three years and the crowds got smaller instead of larger, so then he just pulled out.

You know, a preacher can lead a church into a building program and then they can't hack it, he just walks away. He's the one that got them into it, he takes no responsibility, he leaves and they're left with this problem, see. Well they called another preacher and he said, no, this is not really what you need, a big church, he said, what you have to really do is get involved in missions.

If you have a real missionary program, you'll have the blessing of God. So they went for this, you know, and he stayed about three years and his program fizzled and he left and there they were, you know. Then they called another pastor.

This actually happened. And he said, no, it's not missions, it's not a big church, it's not big preaching, he said, it's Sunday school, you've got to start getting kids in, we've got to get a fleet of buses, we've got to bus people in from here, and they started doing that and they bused people, you know, for three years and then that program ran out of fizzle, you know, and he resigned and left and they sat there looking at each other, what in the world are we going to do? And somebody said, why don't we start praying for a revival? And that's what they did. And they finally had a revival.

And the needs they had were met when revival came. And so, like God said, I will yet for this be inquired of by them to do it for them. God had said he was going to do certain things for Israel, but he said, I won't do it for them until they inquire about it, until they ask me about it.

Your Heavenly Father knows what things you have needed before you ask him, that's true. It also says, let your request be made known to God. Talk to God.

And to get alone, you know, be still and know that I am God. Just to kneel or whatever, sit there before God. David sat before the Lord.

I guess Jonah was horizontal when he prayed. I don't think the physical posture really matters as long as we pray and get alone with God and let him speak to us. You know, it's not a one-way conversation.

We often think prayer, you know, it's talking to God. No, prayer is partly God talking to me. And God has a lot to say sometimes, and we don't want to listen, so we talk a lot, and then we call it prayer.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. You know, the 1858 revival, some people think it was just a big, great big accident that somehow happened. No, it wasn't that at all.

For years before the revival, there were prayer groups springing up in America, almost every church, and it got to a place where there were thousands of these prayer groups meeting all over America, praying for revival, day and night, praying, praying, praying. And then a revival came. You can see why it happened.

But some writers have been totally ignorant of what went on in the churches in the area of prayer before the revival came. And so they assume it was just something that God did and man had really nothing to do with it. It wasn't that way at all.

As a matter of fact, even before the revival itself broke in New York City, there was revivals that started in certain churches in America and were powerful revivals. But when it hit New York, and this, you know, I don't think I made this clear before, maybe I did, but the 1858 revival in the United States started in Canada. Did you know that? In Hamilton, Ontario.

The Palmers, a couple, a married couple, who were evangelists, were holding meetings in Hamilton, Ontario. And the Holy Spirit was poured out and 400 people were converted. And Jeremiah Lamphie in New York City heard about it and he started this prayer meeting in his church.

And it was from there that the revival in America really began. So it started in Canada. It didn't end in Hamilton, by the way.

When it swept through the United States, it swept through Canada from coast to coast. The First Baptist Church in Winnipeg, they had meetings. The church would seat about 1,400.

They had 2,000 people packed inside and 2,000 people outside trying to get in during the days of those revivals. And so prayer. I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.

Whatever church you're connected with, your people push this, push it. If you can find someone else that will pray with you. We have to, after all, mobilize the resources we have.

Get your people into it if you can. I know, and I'm shocked by it, that many churches today don't even have a prayer meeting. They say, we need Wednesday night for club meetings, you know.

Do you know what happened in Saskatoon? We had a lot of meetings. We had so many meetings that one guy said, when I'm going out the door to a meeting, my wife's coming in from a meeting, you know. We had meetings every night of the week, including Saturday.

And some of our people were really concerned about this. I didn't say anything, when you come as a new pastor, you don't do anything about things like that. You let it go for about a year until the people get to know you, get to know the situation.

Then you gradually try to change things. I never really tried to change things. I just prayed some things out of existence.

And all of a sudden, here's a group, and nobody would take the chairmanship of the group, and so it fizzled. Here's another group, nobody would take the chairmanship, so it fizzled. And this kind of thing was going on.

We got down to the place where we had a young people's group, and we had Sunday school, and we had services, and that was it. We were sort of stripped, you know. And a lady from the congregation said to me one day, and she was in tears, and she was a good Christian woman, but she said, you know, pastor, she said, our church is falling apart.

We don't have any women's meetings, we don't have any ladies' meetings, we don't have any club meetings for the kids, we don't have anything. And I said, well, sister, I said, have you not noticed that the church is growing? Our Sunday morning attendance is larger than it has been, our prayer meeting is growing, our finances are good. Haven't you noticed that? But we don't have any club meetings for the children, and we don't have any ladies' meetings.

And she really complained, and so we parted on good terms. You know, sometimes God wants to strip us so we can do something for it. And sometimes the way up is down, you know, for churches as well as for individuals.

But I don't know how to say it, but I know this, that unless we know how to pray, we aren't going to see the power of God. If anything is made clear in the Bible, it's that. He works when his people pray.

That's true in our families, true in our personal life, true in our church life, our missionary outreach, everything. It depends on how we pray. Now I want to talk about unity.

Psalms 133, it says, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It's like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to

the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Where did God command the blessing? Where brethren dwell together in unity, is what it's really saying. That's where the blessing comes.

All right, let's go over to the book of Acts. Acts 1 verse 14, These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Please remember that Jesus Christ, after the resurrection, appeared to the twelve apostles for a period of forty days, and spoke of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

And while nothing is said about prayer, I am positive they probably had daily, had great prayer times, the twelve and Christ, for forty days. Then came ten days of prayer when they had the larger group of 120 people or so. But notice it says, They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.

Chapter 2 verse 1, When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. In the same chapter, further on, verse 46, And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they to meet with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily, Such as should be saved, that is, such as should happen to be saved.

Notice continuing daily with one accord in the temple. Chapter 4 verse 24, When they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God. And came this great prayer meeting, which issued, as we saw earlier, in a second Pentecost, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

They prayed with one accord. Chapter 5 and verse 12, By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. Of the rest, no man joined himself to them, but the people magnified them, and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.

Nothing is without exception. Churches that are being blessed by God are churches that are united, where the people are together. Turn to John chapter 17.

I think this is one of the most misunderstood chapters in the entire Bible. The Roman Catholic Church and the ecumenical movement generally. They all base their appeal on John 17.

And they feel, and the Roman Catholic Church makes a great deal of John 17, they feel that all the Christians have to be under one banner, in one church. Hyman Appelman's comment on that was this. Yeah, the devil would like that, because then he could get them all at one snap.

In John 17 it does not say that Christians should all be together in one denomination. There were no denominations in those days to begin with. So Jesus began to pray.

I think I found about 40 places in John 17 where he was really praying for the 12 apostles. He talks about they, them, themselves, they, them, themselves. I have manifested, verse 6, I have manifested your name unto the men which you gave me out of the world.

How divine they were and you gave them to me and they've kept your word. He says later on, none of them is lost but the son of perdition. He's talking obviously about the 12.

Can you imagine what would have happened had there been disunity between the apostles in those early days? I mean the possibility was there. There was vying for position among the apostles before this. And considering the fact that they were mostly, if not all of them, untutored, unlettered, unlearned, there was a great possibility of disunity between these men.

A fellow said to me, a non-Christian, he said, your Christ has no power. I said, why do you say that? He said, your Christ prayed that all the Christians should be one and there's 500 denominations. Your Christ has no power.

I was glad to be able to tell him that Jesus Christ never prayed for this kind of unity at all. What he prayed for was unity between the 12. That was absolutely essential.

And that prayer was wonderfully answered. They came near a division in the church at Antioch when Paul was stood Peter to the face because Peter was to be blamed because he practiced hypocrisy when he saw some Judah out here from Jerusalem in a congregation and he became afraid and he separated from the Gentile believers and all the Jewish converts separated with him. And here stands Peter and all the Jewish converts and the Gentile converts are left alone.

And Paul says, even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation, that is with their hypocrisy. And it's a good thing Paul was there. What did he do? Call a meeting in the board? The elders? No, no.

I said unto Peter before them all, in front of the whole church, Paul straightened Peter out. I once talked with a Roman Catholic and asked him if all the popes were in Phalabon. He said, yes.

I said, retroactive, right back to Peter? Right. Absolutely. He said, all of them were without error in their teaching.

I said, then why did Paul have to straighten Peter out from the church at Antioch? Your first pope. He stared at me. You know what he said? It must have been another Peter.

Yeah. Did Christ pray beyond the twelve? Yes, he did. Let's notice that in John 17.

20, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word. He's obviously talking about preachers here and those who would believe on Christ through the word of the apostles. Was that prayer answered? Yes, it was.

There was no such thing as sects or denominations in the days of the apostles. That never ever happened. The very thing Christ prayed for was answered, you see.

It's important to see this because otherwise his prayer doesn't mean anything. His prayer was certainly not answered if he was praying for all the Christians to be in one denomination, in one group. All right.

Let's turn over to Romans chapter 12, first of all, and then chapter 15. Verse 16, Romans 12, Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

Be not wise in your own conceits. Be of the same mind one toward another. And then chapter 15 deals with the same thing and makes it perhaps a little clearer.

Verse 5 and 6, Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, or after the example of Christ Jesus, as some translations say, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, receive you one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. So he wanted them to with one mind and one mouth glorify God, and the way was to receive one another.

Receive you one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. You know, sometimes a person walks into the church, they take a quick look around to see where Mrs. So-and-so is sitting. They just want to make sure they don't sit in the same pew, you know.

They're like, oh yes, it goes on. We've heard testimonies of that kind, you know. I was in a home in New Brunswick one time, we were having coffee, a bunch of us.

The doorbell rang, and the host said, come in, and a fellow walked in. As soon as he walked in, a fellow got up and walked out. And as these two men passed, I found that they were brothers, they hadn't spoken to each other for 18 years, and as they passed each other, he looked this way and this guy looked that way.

So this guy left, this guy came and sat down. Christians? What are they going to do in heaven, and how are they going to handle this? But it's this kind of thing, this spirit, you know, that people don't receive. Paul said, I have you in my heart.

How could he get the whole church in his heart? He just had that kind of a heart. He received everybody. He was open to everybody, had time for everybody.

I was down in the church in Argentina, and a lady came to talk to me. She spoke English haltingly. We could make ourselves understood, and we talked, and she obviously was very poor.

I mean, her dress was ripped and torn, and the clothes she wore, they were just, you wouldn't give them away. And we talked for probably 20 minutes or more, I forget the problem now, and shared together and prayed together, and the pastor sat over here watching. And after it was all over, he came to me and said, you know, I learned something from you today.

And I said, what did you learn? He said, I wouldn't have given that woman five minutes. She has nothing. She's nobody.

He said, you treated her like she was a queen. I said, isn't she a queen, a child of God's? She looked different in heaven, you know, but he just thanked me just the fact that I spent some time with this person. So Paul says, receive one another.

If there's somebody in your church you don't like, why don't you invite them in for coffee? A lady came one time, and she said, I've got a terrible problem. She said, I'm a Christian down at the office where I work. There's another gal who works there, and she smokes, and she drinks, and she curses and tells dirty stories, and she just drives me up the wall, she said.

I hate her. How can I fix this up? I says, by going to her and asking her forgiveness. She says, what? I said, yeah.

I mean, we're the Christian. She's not a Christian. You can't expect this from her.

Go to her. Tell her the bad attitude you had. Ask her forgiveness.

She gulped and swallowed, and she said, well, I'll try. A few days later, she came and said, hey, you know what? I did it. We're the best of friends now.

She doesn't curse when I'm around, doesn't smoke when I'm around, we eat our lunches together every day. She said, boy, that really works, you know, see. Receive you one another as Christ receives you.

I know there's certain people, their personality is horrible. I remember hearing, it was a true story, a pastor with serious back trouble, the doctors told him that eventually he'd be in bed, and that would be it. There's no operation that would help him, and so on, and he's praying for God to heal him.

If you pray for God to heal you, don't tell God not to do it, you know. So he's in a store one day, and this guy, by the way, from his church, he hadn't been attending long, and he had a big voice and a big mouth, and always blabbering away, you know, and people didn't like him. They were shying away from him, you know, and the pastor saw him in a store, and this guy saw him and hollers, hey, pastor, wait, don't run away, I want to pray for you.

And there's scores of people heard this, you know, and all the eyes are watching, and the pastor was just, you know, his face was flaming red, and here comes this character, and he says, preacher, get on your knees! And he didn't know what to do, so he got on his knees, and this guy laid hands on him, and he stormed heaven, and he was instantly healed, and you know, he's like, Lord, I asked you to do it, but not this way. Receive you one another as Christ also received us. In every church there are people like that, you know, that really are not nice people perhaps to be with.

You know what happened to me in Saskatoon one time? I'm glad it happened. I may have trouble telling you. I led a young couple to Christ, and they were always in church for about six months, and then my doorbell rang one night, and I went to the door, and here stood this young couple, and he had a hat in his hands, and he had it all, he was obviously very nervous.

I said, hi! And he said, you know, we've been attending your church for six months, and we don't really know anybody in your church, and nobody's ever invited us to their home, and we're really lonesome. Could we come into your house and see your house for a little bit? I almost started bawling, you know. And I invited this couple in who had a wonderful time of fellowship.

I said something about it from the pulpit the following day, you know. I think some people picked up on it, but they'd been attending six months, and nobody had invited them. I mean, they didn't have any money.

They lived in a little shack. They didn't have anything going for them. They weren't well-educated, so people just walked past them, you know.

And sometimes we do that to people that are as precious to God as you are, that mean as much to God. Like I say, I'm glad it happened, because it taught me a lesson, too. And on another occasion, we had a fellow who was not a Christian attending our church, and he told me, he said, Hey, I hear a lot of your guys go fishing and hunting.

I'd sure love to go fishing and hunting with your guys sometime. Would you tell them that? So I told the guys. So, months later, this guy came and said, Have I got some rare disease or something? I said, Why? And he said, Nobody's ever asked me, Did you tell the guys? I said, Yeah, I told them.

He said, Well, nobody's asked me to go fishing or hunting. And I talked to our guys. I said, When a sinner wants to go fishing and hunting with Christians, don't you understand this guy is seeking for something? I put our Namibian Bible camp in northern Saskatchewan one time, and one of the guys said, Can I bring a sinner along? We had a workday at the camp.

I said, Sure, bring all the sinners you can find. So he brought this sinner along. The guy got saved that day.

You know what he said afterwards? He said, He just blew me away. Everybody's talking about Jesus, and you're singing these choruses as you're working. I never heard anything like this.

So finally, he got a hold of this pastor who brought him, and he said, What's this all about? I'd like to be like these guys, you know? And sometimes we're so blind. Do you know what happened to a friend of mine? He was one of these do-gooders. He and his wife were loaded with good works, you know, always helping people out, carrying groceries to old people, shoveling people's sidewalks in the wintertime, loaded with good works.

But they never shared Christ with people. They did all these good works, but never talked about Jesus, you know. So one day, the lady from next door came over and got a hold of this fellow and said, My husband is sitting on the back lawn.

He's got a big knife in his hands, and he's driving into the grass, and he's muttering to himself, I don't know if he's going crazy or what. Would you talk to him? So he goes over and talks to this guy. Now he knew the guy well, because he helped him build his garage, helped him paint his house, helped him do this.

He's always helping his neighbors, you know. And so he sat down, and he says, Hey, Gordon, what's up? And the guy looks at him, and he says, What makes you tick? What makes you tick? He'd watched this Christian guy and saw how different he was from himself, and it spoke to him powerfully. But the guy never explained the way of salvation, and when he explained the way of salvation, the guy got saved sitting on the lawn, you know.

And so, people, we need to have a heart that's wide open to people, no matter where you are. And when it is, God will bring people to you, and sometimes in astonishing ways. Let me share just one thing that happened once, on a plane.

When I got on this plane, I saw about six couples sitting in different parts of the plane wearing red suits, you know, red hoods and everything. Nothing was sticking up but their face and their hands. Even their feet were covered.

I thought, What in the world is this? And I happened to get a seat next to one of these guys, and he must have weighed 250 pounds, a huge guy. His wife was the size of a mint sitting over here. And so, we got talking, said, Hey man, what's with the red suit? And he laughed and said, Oh, we're salesmen.

We work for the same company, and we were at a sales convention, and we were told if we would wear this kind of a suit to the meeting and back again, we could compete for prizes, and we won \$1,200 worth of prizes. These suits only cost \$28, so it was a good deal. I said, Yeah, that was a good deal.

Then I found out where he was going, and I realized we'd only be flying together for about an hour. And so, I said, Do you mind if I ask you a question? No, I said, Do you mind if I tell you how I became a

Christian, is what I said. He kind of looked, and he says, Well, yeah, okay.

He didn't look at me. And I told him how I became a Christian, and he never said a word. And the plane landed, and off into the gospel track, and he grabbed it like this, zipped his bag open, put it in, and zipped the bag shut, and just stared straight ahead.

And so, the plane stopped rolling, and I got up, and I stuck out my hand, and he grabbed my hand. And I said, I just want to say, Frank was nice to talk to me. We'll meet again someday.

And he just kept hanging onto my hand, and he wouldn't let go. And he said, You'll never know what you did for me today. You will never know what you did for me today.

And I couldn't get my hand out. I had my feet in the aisle, you know, and people were jammed up behind me, and I'm trying to get loose. And I finally got loose, and I got about six rows down, six seats down, and I turned to wave to him, and he jumped to his feet and hollered, You'll never know what you did for me today.

I've never seen him since, you know. But people have an open heart. That's what God is saying.

With one mind and one mouth, glorify God. Receive you one another. Then turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. He says, Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Isn't that a powerful appeal for unity in a local church? That's exactly what it is. All speak the same thing. No divisions.

Be perfectly joined together in the same mind, in the same judgment. That's 1 Corinthians chapter 1. In 2 Corinthians, the last chapter, you have an echo to that again. Let's look at that.

2 Corinthians 11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect.

Be of good comfort. Be of one mind. Live in peace.

And the God of love and peace shall be with you. You want God to be in your churches? Well, here's the way. Be perfect.

Be of good comfort. Be of one mind. Live in peace.

And the God of love and peace shall be with you. Then turn over to the book of Ephesians chapter 4. And we'll begin at verse 1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation with which you were called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

That means being patient with people, making allowances for people. Endeavoring to keep. The word means to guard.

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There's one body, one Spirit, even as you're calling, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith and one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. But verse 3 especially, endeavoring to keep the unity of the

Spirit in the bond of peace.

And then verses 12 and 13, for the perfecting of the saints. Well, verse 11, he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Turn over to Philippians chapter 1, a very powerful verse, verse 27.

Only let your conduct be as is worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries. In many of our churches, there may be unity, but it's a kind of a mindless unity. It's not directed properly.

And here, the unity he's talking about is directed to the preaching of the gospel. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. I had meetings in church.

The church was seven years old, down in Cumberland, Pennsylvania. They started with seven people. So I was there on the anniversary, the seventh anniversary of the time they started.

They were running around 300 Sunday mornings. They had 40 people in the congregation that were trained as evangelists, who went out every Saturday ringing doorbells. And then on Sunday morning, they told who got saved on Saturday, you know.

It's just beautiful to be in a church like that. And then the next church I was in, they were seven years old. The two churches were not connected, about 40 miles apart.

The second church, they were larger even. They'd been going seven years. They had 500 people.

And the same thing, they had people trained that went out ringing doorbells, winning people to Christ. So it says here, let your conduct be as is worthy, as it becomes the gospel of Christ. The weather I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs.

Let you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. So what happens? Pastors complain often. You know, we've got little cliques in our church, and the church doesn't stand together with one person.

One church, they told us, the pastor said, you know, the only time the church ever gets together, really gets together, is at a business meeting. And it always ends in a fight. It always ends in a fight.

And how can such churches expect the blessing of God? If you have someone in the church that's constantly making trouble, they can be labeled as a railer. They should be disciplined. The Bible says that.

I called at a church in Dryden, Ontario, while I was on holidays, and dropped in to see the pastor, whom I knew very well, and he says, well, Bill, I just resigned. Well, I said, you've only been here a couple of years, why did you resign? Oh, he said, every time we have a business meeting, we have this guy, he was a colonel in the Canadian Army, and he thinks he's a colonel in the church, and he wants to run the church. And he makes a great big fuss, and the thing ends in a crying time, and he said, I just can't act anymore.

I said, why don't you discipline this man from what you're telling me? He's a railer, and the Bible speaks about railers, they should be disciplined. So I showed him the Bible, he said, we'll do that. He called a business meeting, and they disciplined this man.

Now I was there, and so the man was there, his family was there, and one of his sons got up and said, why are Mr. and Mrs. MacLeod in this meeting? This meeting was called for members of the church. I said, I'm sorry, I didn't realize that, I excused myself, I went, he had an office in the basement of the church, and my wife and I went down to this office, and we waited. And all of a sudden, the bull began to tear, you know.

He was a hollering, and a shouting, and a stamping, and a roaring, and pounding, and everything. You could hear the whole thing a mile away, you know. And it went on, and on, and on.

But they stayed with it. They disciplined, they put him out of the church, with a provisional, of course, he couldn't come back in if he would humble himself and act as a Christian. He never did come back to the church.

I think he smelled a rat, and he came downstairs looking for me, and he came into this office. And I didn't do him the courtesy of standing to my feet, I just sat there. And I said to him, my brother, I said, you have a very serious problem which you need to deal with.

And he started blubbering, and flustering, and trying to say something, and finally he just took off and left, and that was that. You know what happened in the church? They went from about 150 to about 400 people, just in a matter of a couple of years. They've been struggling all this time, trying to take care of this guy, you know.

And I mean, look at what the Bible is saying, look at the verses we've looked at here. And Jesus was praying for unity between the twelve, for unity in the apostolic churches, and he got what he prayed for. We don't have that unity today.

And many of our churches, we're talking about two things, remember, prayer and unity, they have to go together. A praying church, and a church that's united before God, and concerned to get the gospel out as widely as they can. You know what happened down in Detroit? You know, we criticize the Americans a lot, but they know how to do things sometimes that we don't know up here in Canada, we're too conservative perhaps.

This pastor had a big church, 500 members or whatever, and he said to some of his men, he said, you know, I think God would have us start another church over here, let's pray about it. So he got a bunch of people praying, they prayed for some weeks, and came to the conclusion, yes, God wants us to start a church over here. So he resigned from this church, and he had about twelve people, and they made a covenant together that they would spend all their spare time talking to sinners, ringing doorbells.

At the end of one year, they had 400 members in their new church. And when I read about it, they had 10,000 members in the Gilead Baptist Church in Detroit. And they said, they had one visitation night a week particularly, and they said, sometimes we have visited in one night 10,000 homes in one night.

Now they had Philippians 1.25 pretty clearly, you know, began with unity and prayer, those two things, and then issued in a tremendous ingathering of souls. And I think that'll happen in any country where people give themselves to God in this way. Receive one another as Christ received us to the glory of God.

Might be a good thing, you know, to look for some person that's hard to get along with and just try and love them, and be nice to them, and invite them to your home, and encourage them, and never be a party. You know, when Gerald Splinter came to the Grant Memorial Church in Winnipeg, the church had been fighting for years. They were down, they were in a building seating 700, they had about 60 people Sunday mornings, and the church was just about ready to fold up.

They couldn't make their payments and all this kind of thing, and Splinter came as pastor. I was a Shantyman missionary, I was a member of the congregation, and it was a very distressing time. I remember the first meeting on a Thursday night when Splinter and his wife came as pastor, and he leaned over the pulpit and he said, I ask of you one thing only, no criticism for 12 months.

Well, we took in 100 members in 12 months, so who's going to criticize, you know. But we discovered he had a little black book, and when he heard that you had been gossiping, he wrote your name down on the book, what you had said, who you said it to, and what day this happened. When you had three entries in his book, he had a meeting with you, he called you into his office.

And I sat and witnessed one of those gatherings one time. He was very gentle and very nice, but he said, now on this day you said this to so and so, and what did you mean by that? That's gossip, you know. And then on this day you said this to this person, what did you mean by that? This is gossip, you know.

You are a tailbearer, and the Bible says that tailbearers wound people and hurt people. Now I want to ask you a question, I want an answer right now. Do you plan on continuing to do this? Because if you do, we're going to ask you to leave the church.

I'll tell you, gossiping quit in no time. He told me, Pastor Springer said, you know, I'd much rather have a half a dozen drunkards a member of my church than a half a dozen gossipers. Because the drunkards, people know where they're at, but the gossipers, you know, some gossipers, they have the happy or unhappy facility of being able, they know who to tell it to.

It's not only that they know what to say with the gospel, they know who to tell it to to get a wider audience, you know. And people, it just destroys the work of God. And everywhere you go, everywhere you go, you hear about these things.

Revival, much prayer, the spirit of unity, that's all God needs. He'll do it in your church. He'll do it anywhere.

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