

Prayer

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in revival, highlighting its role as a catalyst for spiritual transformation and growth.

Duration: 44:59

Scripture: Genesis 15:1, Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 34:26, Joel 2:28, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:17

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by discussing the state of the United States in the 1790s, where Christianity was being pushed out of society. The population was plagued by drunkenness, lawlessness, and immorality. However, during this time, there were also revivals happening in both the United States and Canada. The speaker shares stories of powerful revivals where people were deeply convicted of their sins and turned to God. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to earnestly seek God in prayer and to believe that God can bring about revival again today.

Transcript

I want to read a little bit from the Word of God, first of all, from the Ezekiel, the Psalms, first of all, Psalm 65, these are revival texts. You visit the earth and water it. You greatly enrich it with the river of God, which is full of water.

You water the ridges thereof abundantly. You settle the furrows thereof. You make it soft with showers.

You bless the springing thereof. And then over in Ezekiel, just one verse, 34, 26. And I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing.

And I will cause the shower to come down in his season. There shall be showers of blessing. And then the verse in Isaiah 44, I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground.

I will pour my blessing on your seed, on your children, and my blessing on your offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. And I'm going to do something tonight I have never done before.

I'm going to read some stuff. I don't preach that way normally. Tomorrow I won't be preaching that way.

I'll be preaching normally. I hope abnormally. Anyway, you're going to be humbled and challenged and I trust blessed.

Kenneth LaTourette was a historian in a certain time in the history of the United States in the 1790s. He made this statement, Christianity is about to be ushered out of the affairs of man. And here was the United States, then a population of 5 million, 300,000 were drunkards, 15,000 were buried annually.

There was a surfeit of lawlessness, a profession of gamblers, gangs of robbers and slave stealers, drunkenness was common and profanity prevalent. Immorality was increasing even as honesty and veracity declined. Drunkenness was indulged into a frightening degree to incredible excess.

Infidel clubs abounded. Christians were so unpopular that they met in secret and kept their minutes in code. Radical students got into churches and burned Bibles.

Students disrupted worship services with both profanity and spitting. They burned down buildings. They forced the resignation of college presidents.

Chief Justice John Marshall, a devout layman, said that the church was too far gone to ever be revived. While Bishop Samuel Provost of New York felt that the situation was hopeless and he simply ceased functioning. They had organizations called the Filthy Speech Movement and they met together and then they just spent hours trying to say the dirtiest filthy things they could say and these organizations were very popular.

And the historian felt Christianity is finished in the United States of America. The only weapon left to the church was prayer and they began to pray. In both Britain and the United States an unusual spirit of prayer was poured out upon believers.

People began to pray. The spirit, the power of God fell on them and they adjourned to meeting houses and continued to pray sometimes all night. They gathered again, it says, in the evening on the 9th of March 1782.

People prayed until past midnight. The preachers had very little to do with this awakening. John Wesley reported that this country is all on fire and the flame is spreading from village to village.

And so the nation was saved by a revival that God sent at that time. In 1786 the Baptists adopted a challenge for a concert of prayer and other churches joined in. By 1789 the Union of Prayer was operating over a very wide network of prayer meetings for revival.

The preachers were very strongly attached to these prayer meetings. This Union of Prayer in England preceded the French Revolution by about seven years. Prayer meetings abounded.

Services were packed out. One Baptist church attracted crowds of 800 afternoon and evening and joined with another Baptist church once a month for a united prayer meeting. The churches everywhere were now flourishing and adding members every month.

Some of the churches began to hold two prayer meetings a week. The answer to prayer was not long in coming. In 1792 and on a general awakening occurred.

Some churches started prayer meetings at five o'clock in the morning. One church had 600 converts chiefly in prayer meetings rather than in the regular services. In one area there were a thousand converts.

During the awakening churches everywhere were doubling and tripling and crowding in membership. Crowds swelled. One very ordinary preacher started with outdoor meetings and 5,000 people showed up.

This increased to 15,000 and 20,000 and the converts were multiplied. One Methodist pastor said, The almighty stooped still lower and was pleased to make use of simple prayer meetings which had been attended with an extraordinary degree of divine power. Everywhere poor illiterate persons had been the instruments under God of doing much good.

In many areas the primary factor in these revivals was spontaneous gathering for prayer often at a sacrificial hour. 5,000 meeting places for prayer became 10,000 places for prayer in a very short period of time. Houses of prayer are erected in every town and are filled with congregation.

In one place the doors of the church were scarcely ever closed for more than 10 weeks. And then it went on from day and night. Often a full congregation would be exiting while an equally full one would be trying to get in.

There were 900 conversions in one church. Regular preaching gave way to earnest intercession. In another area prayer groups multiplied in private houses and finally overflowed into local chapels with up to 400 praying in one church.

Many were converted in these prayer times. In one area a group decided to meet on the hill slope for prayer at 6 o'clock in the morning. The numbers attending increased to many thousands.

Many sinners were converted in one day. In another place a Sunday afternoon sermon was followed by many converted and in the evening the message provoked an outburst of congregational praying that went on until 1 o'clock in the morning. The next meeting on Monday a prayer commenced at 7 and an extraordinary concert of prayer.

The congregation remained until 2 in the morning of the following day. By noon Tuesday the auditorium was crowded with seekers and the minister in response went on all day and all night until 4 in the morning. In that area the family prayers of a godly family went on for hours as people round about flocked in necessitating a move to the church because the house was too small.

Phenomenal revivals followed in this revival as new converts experienced an endowment of the Holy Spirit and began sharing in preaching. In one area the Holy Spirit fell on many churches at the same time. This was followed by protracted prayer meetings throughout the week with great effect.

A phenomenal awakening occurred in the Sunday school. The island of Aron was a very dark place. Prayer meetings were begun and an awakening of great power followed.

Local revivals in the eastern United States produced many preachers who were mightily used and a general awakening followed. Local revivals eventually became widespread awakenings following a concert of prayer. In 1794 there was a great concern for prayer as a group of pastors sent out a letter inviting churches and pastors to engage in a time of prayer for a spiritual awakening.

Churches of every stripe responded to this call and thousands began to fast and pray for a general awakening. As Christians heard of the wonderful working of God they began all over the country to pray for a similar working and God answered. And eventually the whole land was in a state of revival.

Fasting and prayer were greatly used of God being followed by genuine revivals in many places. One New York minister experienced a revival in his church. His 200 members became 800.

One church grew from 80 to 700. In one area in New York a day of humiliation with prayer and fasting resulted in much blessing. Another revival in that area was marked by intercessory prayer of great intensity which fell on young and old, converts who were drunkards, infidels, apostates, children at Ulster's and some Negroes.

In the western states the churches come to spend the third Saturday of each month in prayer and fasting and was agreed to pray half an hour after sunset on Saturdays and at light time before dawn on Sunday to pray for a general awakening. This concert of prayer went on for three years and then there were so many converts the believers were kept more than busy praying with awakened sinners. They couldn't handle it, there were so many people wanting to be saved.

There was no competition between the various churches because there were so many sinners needing to be saved there wasn't enough Christians to go around to help them. In the southern states the concert of prayer was being carefully followed. Three young men at one of the colleges were so concerned with the evil around them they thought they were not converted that though they were not converted they got into a room to have a prayer meeting to ask God for help.

Some other students heard them praying, tried to break down the door and rough them up. The president's crew heard what was happening and invited the street to meet for prayer in his office and he rebuked the other students for interfering. A remarkable revival followed this and more than 200 students were converted and many of them became outstanding leaders in the general awakening that followed.

Meeting for fasting and prayer became very frequent in the south and great revivals followed. One man reporting what he had personally seen said, I have seen and heard things which no tongue can tell, no brush can paint, no language described of which no man can have a just conception until he has seen and heard it personally. And this went on and on all over the land.

There were also revivals in Canada during that time. One critic said, when religious feelings grow strong meetings go on for days and weeks. The whole church, indeed it seems as if entire communities were giving themselves up to the cause of salvation.

One preacher said, I can tell you all I have seen and heard before is small in comparison to what I am seeing now. Many meetings continue almost to midnight. Sinners crying aloud for mercy.

Some meetings have had to continue all night. People are walking miles sometimes to get to the meetings. One man reported, there is a great change in this place for the better.

So many of the young people who are subjects of the work of God were once loose in their principles but now they are new creatures in Christ. One can hardly go through the streets of the city without hearing the voice of praise or seeing the young men gathering for prayer. There were many phenomenal awakenings in the Maritimes in Canada.

Many colleges in the states were experiencing powerful revivals. About 50% of the converts in these colleges became gospel preachers. That was interesting.

The revival movement produced hundreds, thousands of preachers. Then we read something in England, an awakening followed times of prayer. There were two weeks of protracted prayer meetings and many, many were converted in them.

Finally, a thousand people were attending the prayer meeting and eventually it overflowed into other towns. The revival went on for a whole year. One meeting, one Monday, a prayer meeting started at five o'clock and lasted until midnight.

That's five in the morning until midnight. In other nearby places, the prayer meetings went on until one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning. In various places, churches would get together and agree upon prayer meetings and invariably this was followed by revival.

In one area, the spiritual tide was so low, the Sunday school director begged the people to spend their leisure time on Sundays in prayer for revival. A revival broke and spread all through Wales and England and thousands were converted all over the country. An intense revival broke out of a prayer meeting in one area in Wales and many of the most hardened sinners in the area were converted.

In Scotland, one area, more than 4,000 gathered in the open air for prayer. Meetings were held in barns and in woods and many entire families professed conversion and some areas scarcely a single family was left untouched by the revival. In some areas, a spirit of prayer would fall upon the people and whenever this happened, a revival would follow.

Later in the United States, the people of God needed no convincing of the power and efficacy of prayer for revival. An awakening began in Massachusetts at a sunrise service for intercession. A spontaneous revival followed and many were converted.

And by the way, in all of these revivals, very, very few of the converts ever went back. None of them, almost none failed. Finney had meetings one time, a revival, remember he had two men praying for him ten hours a day and there were 3,000 converts.

He was back in the area three years later and talked to the pastors. They didn't know of a single backslide of those 3,000 converts. I mean, they were converted by God.

What's going on in North America today, a lot of it, I think Tozer was right when he said that probably not more than 20% of the people in the evangelical church are really converted to God. I think he was right. It's a totally different story.

I remember being with a pastor one time. In a town of 1,200, he had 500 people, a church seating about 800. And I was with him when he talked to a sinner that understood why things were the way they were.

Sunday morning, the church was like 500 people. Sunday night was 150. Monday night there were 60.

And Tuesday about 40 and so on. So, he's talking to a guy in the Air Force and this is what he said. He didn't preach the gospel to them, nothing about heaven or hell.

He just said, Don't you feel it would be a neat thing if you were to pray this little bitty prayer, Jesus come into my heart? The kid says, Yeah, I'd like to do that. Well, go ahead and pray it. So he prays, Jesus come into my heart.

He whacks them up, now you're saved, you're a child of God. I don't think that kid was converted at all. There's a lot of that kind of stuff going on.

They're being invited to step over the line. They're not told Christ said repent and believe the gospel. Peter said repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin.

Anyway, these revivals were sent from God. They were very, very powerful. There's very, very little backsliding.

In New Jersey, 1817, a great revival broke immediately following United Prayer. Special seasons were appointed for prayer as well as a monthly concert of prayer which they were all involved in. 1825 appointed a day of fasting and prayer for revival.

It came and lasted for a whole year. Between 1815 and 1835, there was a total of five revival times in the churches in the United States. In 1824, a revival of a different kind was manifested.

People all over the city were smitten with conviction and went to the churches for help. This resulted in daily prayer meetings and counseling sessions where multitudes were converted. In some areas, eight or ten revivals occurred over a period of time.

I was just reading a book a while ago and the writer said, if you get through one revival in a lifetime, you'll never see another one. They're so infrequent. If you ever see one, you'll never see a second one.

Well, back in those days, they had eight or ten revivals maybe in ten years or whatever. It was a different story then. At the University of Georgia, seven young men who had been converted started prayer meetings for revival and they continued for five years until a mighty revival came.

A group of professors at Athens began a weekly prayer meeting to intercede with God for revival. Six years later, revival came in effect not only to the college, but all the churches in the area as well. 1827, revival rocola saw 140,000 added to the church of one denomination.

They don't know what the total was for the other denomination at that particular time. Missionary enterprises were sparked and driven by this conscience of prayer in ascending countries at home where they're praying for revival on the mission field. In Boston in 1836, there was a cloud of blessing resting on the city and several churches were engaged in days of fasting and prayer and a revival broke.

In New York, revival began with little groups of people praying not in the big churches, but in the houses. In 1830, revival began again in the states and became general all over the land. Many churches began having days of fasting and prayer.

Revival almost always followed these times of fasting and prayer. Fifty percent of the converts in one area went into the gospel ministry. That was amazing.

Some colleges had early morning and late evening prayer meetings. One church had a disappointing time with no converts, so they appointed a day of fasting and prayer and the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. Baptists gained much from those days and they attributed that to early morning and late evening prayer meetings.

In some of the Baptist churches they had two prayer meetings a day the whole year round. Can you believe it? I mean, these people were meant to pray and cry to God. And many of the Baptist churches

increased by 250 percent during these revival times.

Revivals occurred in Britain also in the 1830s. These revivals were not organized or planned except for prayer meetings. In some areas there were so many under conviction needing help that the churches held prayer meetings from morning to evening.

One church saw 600 members revived and 900 converted. Isn't it interesting to note that very few of the converts made as many revivals ever back then? Great revivals in Scotland in those days and many, many converted. And then here we have another thought.

The importance of prevailing prayer and spiritual power in the warfare of the saints. In Hawaii in 1830, 577 church members. Then revival came after prayer.

In five years one church received 7,557 converts. One church received over 1,700 converts in one day in that revival. People were gathering before daybreak to pray and sometimes praying all day, praying all night.

And in those islands between 1837 and 42 there were more than 27,000 converts. The church increased in one place from 315 to 609 in a single year. Korea and Japan remained closed to the gospel until God broke into these countries through worldwide concerts of prayer.

There were 180 denominational colleges founded in the west in the states and 144 were founded by men who had been in revival. Revivals kept occurring in many of these colleges. The great 1858 prayer revival has been regarded as the greatest, the cleanest of all revivals and it spawned evangelistic and missionary work around the world.

A.B. Simpson, the founder of the Alliance of Denominations, was converted in these revival meetings in Canada at that time. Sensational revivals were also happening in Newfoundland. It should be noted that prior to these revivals the churches have been reporting a loss of membership annually for some time.

After these awakenings it was a 60% gain reported all across the board in all the churches. A Halifax newspaper reported that a general revival of religion of unusual interest and power has been in progress for some time and it still continues, extending, he said, over almost the entire country. Please remember while there was much preached the most remarkable results followed layman's testimonies and witnessing in prayer meetings.

Prayer was the key to all of this and this was widely recognized. Prayer meetings were conducted daily for younger men at 8 o'clock, for businessmen 12 o'clock noon, with a general prayer meeting at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. This was day after day.

In many areas prayer meetings were simply held in home after home. In one area in Ontario a group of young people were engaged in a dance. A Christian woman who lived next door to this dance hall fell on her knees and began pleading with God to save these dear young people.

There were about 85 in the dance. One of the men while dancing that night noticed a piece of paper lying on the floor. He stopped dancing and picked it up.

It was a page from the Bible and he came on this statement, These shall go away into everlasting punishment. He groaned and fell on the floor and started praying. The dance ended.

All the kids got on their knees and they sent for a preacher and they had a revival and all those kids found Christ as their Savior. Things of this kind were happening. This was in Canada even back in those times.

A movement of lay people filled with the Spirit. One of the effects of the great revival among the colored people has been the establishment of a regular system of prayer meetings. Meetings are held each night of the week for prayer.

Many, many sailors were converted. Numbers of men would be so convicted as their vessels near the United States shores, when they landed, the first thing they did when they hit shore was try and find a place of worship where they could find somebody that knew God because they wanted to be converted. In many meetings, before there was any preaching, there would be as many as 40 or 50 people praying, one after the other, before there was any preaching at all.

One leader prayed thus in a public meeting, Descend on all the churches, renew Pentecost in our age, and baptize our people generally again with the tongues of fire. Crown this 19th century with a revival in pure and undefiled religion greater than that of the last century, greater than that of the first, and greater than any demonstration of the Spirit ever given to man. This prayer was literally answered in the 1858 Awakening.

It was greater than anything it had ever seen before. There were handboats distributed by the thousands. One prayer meeting had to be extended for 19 days, prayer every day for 19 days.

Revivals would be reported from every section of the country. One church seating 600 was crowded with a thousand, and this went on for weeks. One man reported so many being converted that there were very few unconverted left among them.

One group of churches was exhorted to examine themselves, to fast in secret, to enlist their neighbors' interest in spiritual things, to pray earnestly, and to seek the Holy Spirit's help in removing obstacles to revival. In many areas during this revival, churches held three meetings a day so people could come together just to pray, and most people were converted in the prayer meetings. I can't read it all, but there's some things that need to be listened to.

The greatest awakening in New York's vessel history was sweeping the city at one point and was such in order to make a whole nation curious. There was no fanaticism, no hysteria, simply an incredible movement of people to pray. The services were not given to preaching, but instead anyone was free to pray.

During these meetings, thousands were converted simply by getting up and asking for prayer that they might be saved. These prayer meetings were crowded to the extreme. Listen to this report.

In this city we beheld a sight which the most enthusiastic fanatic for church attendance could never have hoped to look upon. We have seen in the business quarters of the city during their busiest hours assemblies of merchants, clerks, and working men to a number of 5,000 gathering day after day for a simple solemn service, similar services we find in other portions of New York. A theater is turned into a chapel.

Churches of all six are open and crowded night and day. Before long there were at least 150 separate prayer services being held in New York. At that time it had a population of maybe a half a million, not like it is today.

So many sinners wanted to be saved that they finally had to start evangelistic services because there weren't enough Christians to take care of all the sinners who wanted to find Christ. Very shortly, 25,000 converts in three months. And there was a boy preacher raised up by God at that time who became a very successful preacher, great preaching and all, but it was mainly through the prayer meetings.

Lawyers were much slower than the general populace to take an interest in the movement. However, not only were they having daily prayer meetings in the Supreme Court chambers, but judges often preached from city pulpits. That was different.

The number of converts in one of the revivals reached about 50,000 a week. Every 10 weeks, half a million converts. We haven't seen anything like that here.

We said last night we've seen Christians being revived, but very little happening as far as the unconverted concerned. These revivals, it was mainly sinners finding Christ as their personal Savior. That's what we ought to be praying for.

For a period of two years, there were about 10,000 additions to church memberships every week. 10,000 additions a week. The influence of this awakening was felt everywhere in the country and not only captured the big cities, it also spread through every town, every village, and every country hamlet.

It swamped schools and colleges and infected all classes regardless of condition. A divine influence seemed to pervade the whole country. The hearts of men were strangely warmed by a power poured out in unusual ways.

Lacking all fanaticism was an unusual unanimity of approval to religion and secular observers. The fruits of Pentecost were repeated 300 fold in the population. The Baptists saw more converts than other groups during this awakening, but this was a tribute to the fact they started having two prayer meetings daily in their churches instead of just one.

Two prayer meetings every day. We don't do anything like that. We think that's going too far, right? That's how we feel seemingly.

Before this revival, the Baptists in New York had been losing 1,000 members a year for 15 years. After this revival, for some time they increased their membership 15% a year. The same revival spirit was felt everywhere.

In Philadelphia, the prayer meetings were considered to be the largest in the world. People were allowed to speak for five minutes at the most and then a bell would be rung and you had to sit down. People sometimes for the hundreds would call out their spiritual needs to the immense crowds and the whole crowd would start praying for whatever the need had been expressed.

The whole congregation would move to tears as they listened. Many would get up and ask for prayers that they might be truly converted, people who were members of churches. Many of these people asking to be converted were people who were members of churches, baptized members of churches, but they'd never been born again and they found out they were not a Christian at all.

You know, in 1905 there was a revival in Wales. You've heard about it. There were probably 250,000 converts and Wales was a small principality, I think maybe a million and a half people.

And this revival spread to the states. It got into Canada as well. Atlanta, Georgia was then in 1906 a city of 65,000.

Over 64,000 people were converted in that revival. They didn't know of more than 200 people unconverted in the city of 65,000. Can God do it again? Of course He can.

But people, we have to get with it somehow, fasting and praying, not one extra prayer meeting. I remember reading about a revival in Africa where nothing was happening. They'd had a very bad experience.

Big evangelistic meetings, thousands professing conversion, nobody walking with God. They didn't know what to do and so they began praying for revival. And revival came and when revival came, backsliders by the thousands were restored and people who professed conversion before realized they'd never known Christ.

We've had that happen. You know, my daughter Joanna, when she went to school, she used to carry a Bible on top of her textbooks and the principal told my wife and I we're glad to have her daughter in our college and our school. And I said, why? Well, I said, if there's any hanky-panky going on and your daughter finds out, she blows the roof off.

But you know what? She was a baptized member of the church, but she wasn't a Christian. And during the revival, she came to me one day and said, Dad, I want to be saved. I said, you're a backslider? No, Dad, I've never known Christ.

She said, I've heard you and Mom talk about evangelism and I know the language, she said, but I've never known Christ. And so she's a language and not know God. And I think that's a big problem in our evangelical churches today.

People aren't willing to deny self, give anything up, and do what God is maybe asking them to do. As far as giving is concerned, we're all afraid to do that for fear God might go broke. What's going to happen if God asks me to give all the money I have in the bank? Maybe He wants me to do that.

And sometimes that does happen. How do you handle that? What did God say to Jacob? No, pardon me, to Abraham. Fear not.

I am your shield and your exceeding great reward. If you don't have a dollar in the bank, you've still got God as your reward. You've got everything in Him.

We need to understand that dear people and pray. When you're thinking of revival, think in terms of revivals like these where they have to have two prayer meetings a day for months on end and the places crowded, praying, crying to God and everybody feeling the power of God. In some communities, there wasn't a home where there were people left unconverted.

And you read the record of that, that book, The Event of the Century, I tell people, if you haven't read that book, your education is not complete. You need to read it and see what God did then and God can do it again today. We don't have to mean business.

We're fooling around, taking it easy. Try to have a ticket to heaven. That's really all we want.

We don't want the preacher saying any more than that. Tell me how to be saved. That's all we want to hear.

I remember once dealing with a guy in revival meetings and it was incredible. He listened for a while, then he got up and ran out of the room. Later on, he told me what happened.

He wanted to get away because God was too close. So he ran home, but on the way home, he said Christ was running beside him and then he got into his bedroom and slammed the door and Christ was in the room and he said, I started to pray and Christ was kneeling beside me. I don't think he actually saw Christ, but he sensed the power of God.

He got his life straightened out and got saved. So God is working. We see this happening.

You know, Harry, Neville, and Titian, they travel with me sometimes in meetings. They're well known in Canadian revival circles now. Of course, he's in heaven.

She's retired living in Victoria, in B.C., I believe. Anyway, they were with me. It was a gathering of some Baptists.

Usually when they had an annual meeting of that kind, what they did was they would have maybe 70 people show up from the various churches in the area, one or two people from each of the churches. But when they heard a revival team from Canada was coming, the 500 people showed up. The church received 400.

So it was pretty crowded there. And Harry and Evelyn gave their testimony and I started to preach. And then all of a sudden, they see a lady coming down the aisle.

I'm preaching. She's dragging another lady by the hand. They come up from the platform and I stop preaching, of course.

And this one little lady in the front, she said, can I say something? I said, go ahead. So here's basically what she said. She said, I'm the biggest liar in the United States of America.

I lie about everything. I've been doing this all my life. I'm just one big liar.

If you heard me say something, it was probably a lie. And then she said, anything you heard me say about Becky here was a lie. Don't you believe it.

It was not true. I'm just a big liar. That's all I am.

And then she stood and said, Becky, can you forgive me? And they hugged a bit and cried in the platform. Then they went back to their seat and I picked up my sermon again. And then a little while later, I see two guys coming down the aisle, great big guys.

And they looked angry, you know. And they come up from the platform and I stood back. And they were rival contractors.

They were from the one church in that area, the same church. And they'd been running down each other's work. And God had spoken to them in the early part of the meeting.

They'd gone to a side room and got this all straightened up. And now they come to make it right to the congregation. So they finished and I picked up my sermon again.

And then I saw a man come running and he knelt right down here at the altar. And he started praying. And his son who was standing over here saw it was his dad.

He came running down to his dad. And they knelt there. And they forgot there was other people in the room, I'm sure.

And so they got to praying and talking so loud I had to quit preaching, you know. But you don't worry about that. God was really working.

So finally I realized there's no point. So the kids were saying, Hey, Dad, I was a rotten kid. No, no, Dad, it was me.

You were a good kid, but I was a bad father. Went on and on. They were trying to get it settled down there.

And so I said, If God has spoken your heart and you need to be saved, come and stand over there. And about seven people came and stood over here. And then the front of the church was crowded with people kneeling seeking the face of God.

We heard after that the things that went on in the home churches when these people got back in their churches. God is still doing it, but people were losing it somehow. And we're thinking in terms of getting a few Christians to feel a little better than they did, we're not thinking about the unconverted.

We've got to get into that. Let me give you a thought. Some of you may have heard this before.

I often repeat myself. My wife tells me that. That's one of the reasons we have wives.

Anyway, this was in Korea some years ago. There was an area in Korea where people were not being converted. So the people, the preachers, all met together.

I don't know how many churches were involved. And then they asked the Lord, God, what's wrong? What can we do? And God gave them a very simple plan which could be used in any church in Canada or the United States today. The plan was this.

January 1, everybody in all these churches was to start a prayer list of ten unconverted neighbors, relatives, or friends and start praying once a day for those ten people on their prayer list until Easter time. And at Easter time, they would try and contact these people and win them to Christ. In the first year, there were 7,000 converts.

Then they got a hold of something. So in the second year, there were about 10,000 converts. Within about seven years, they were seeing 25,000 converts every year at Easter time.

Is that a difficult program? Hard to understand? No, not at all. Maybe hard to do and follow through on. We don't love sinners enough to do that.

We haven't got that kind of concern. We're glad we're going to heaven. We don't care about the guy next door.

He can go to hell if he wants. Remember two Christian workers, preachers, they were kind of investigating each other. And one guy said, okay, aren't you a red-hot Christian? Have you witnessed to the guy next door? And the guy said, well, not really.

Have you? No, he said, I haven't either. And so this is how it goes. We really don't care because we haven't really met with God.

We've had some little bubbly feelings and stuff that doesn't really mean much because it doesn't carry through. You know, I preach. Pardon me for talking about myself, but you know, I preached in bush camps for years.

And I remember walking with a 30-pound pack on my back 25 miles in a day to get to a bush camp to tell guys about Christ, you know. And riding. I remember riding one time.

They had what they called go-down roads and go-back roads. And you had to go on the one road going in, the other road coming out so nobody would meet. You know, traffic.

And the ruts, there were two ruts. They had a rutting machine and they put ice in the ruts. And so if you met a truck coming down, he might be pulling three sleigh loads of green lumber or logs or something.

He couldn't stop in a mile because these rutted roads. Anyway, I got on top of one of those loads and I was going. It was 40 below.

They were doing about 25 miles an hour. I was freezing to death up on top of that bunch of lumber. And the devil said, you stupid fool, you could be at home, you know, sleeping in a nice bed.

Yes, I could be. That's not where God wanted me. And I threw the devil off my back that day.

Just thank God for the privilege of going to those places and talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll never forget one Sunday, I was going through a bunkhouse looking for people to talk to and there was a guy reading a Bible. I said, hey man, you sure got a good book.

He says, it must be good. You gave it to me a year ago. I didn't recognize the guy.

I said, so what are you doing with the Bible? He said, I read it every Sunday afternoon. I get the Bible out and read a couple of chapters. I don't understand it, he said, but I like reading it.

And I led him to Christ right there. He got on his knees before God and accepted Christ as his personal Savior. That was worth a lot.

You know, you could do a lot after that. Lots of walking and stuff and working with the guys in the bush. Anyway, people, listen.

God is calling each of us. We can't all be full-time workers, but all of us can be a full-time worker in another sense. Living for God.

We say, living for Jesus, a life that is true. In an afterglow one time, there was about, I don't know, maybe 300 people in this afterglow meeting sitting in circles, a couple of concentric circles. And a guy got up and he said, I'm a high school teacher.

And I sing that song, My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine. But he said, I don't think I love Him. I never talk about Him, he said.

I don't think I love Him at all. Would you pray for me? So we had him kneel at a chair. Some of our men came and laid hands on him and prayed for him.

And he got up and then another guy got up and he said, I'm like Him. I'm a high school teacher too. I sing that song.

I never talk about Jesus. I don't think I love Him either. Would you pray for me? Then his wife got up and said, I'm just like my husband.

So they put out two chairs. Some women came, some men came and prayed for these people. And then something happened.

There was a backslidden evangelist in that meeting. He'd been backslidden for 12 years. He'd gone right to the bottom of the pile.

He was in the meeting. I didn't know a thing about him. I didn't even know he was there.

But he was sitting here and his wife was sitting here and she gets up and walks over in front of her husband. I think she forgot if there was anybody else in the room. And it was something like this.

She said, you know honey, you backslid horribly, but God has shown me today that I was responsible for your backsliding because He used to criticize you so much and try to get you out of this. I never helped you at all. So she said to him, do you think you could find it in your heart to forgive me? And he burst into tears and jumped to his feet and he ran to the chair and knelt to the chair and started to pray.

And she ran and knelt to the other chair and she was praying to this other chair. It was really not exactly normal, you know, Birmingham or church meeting, but I'll tell you it was heavenly just to see what was going on. And he came back to God with all his heart that particular night.

But that's how it started. And I remember seeing a fellow who was a PhD, an old friend of mine. I didn't know he was around.

He was in these meetings and I said, what do you think of what you're seeing happening? And he said, I never thought I'd ever live to see. Anything like this among Christians in North America today. Well listen, it's time I shut up.

I'm going to quit. I don't know what this is to you. It says a lot to me.

And I have so many books in my library you read about these great awakenings among Indian people, Eskimo people, all around the world, in Africa, fantastic things happening there. South America, it's the same. And here in Canada, we're dead.

We're dead people because we, you know, it's the almighty dollar. That's all it is. That's the big problem.

We're thinking in terms of, you know, there's a guy named Milton Burke in Minneapolis. He used to get kids for Sunday school in his church there. And he'd wear a cowboy outfit.

He was a big guy, about 280 pounds and tall and he'd get a cowboy hat on, cowboy stuff and spurs and everything and go recruiting kids for Sunday school. And then he had a chance to quit his job in Minneapolis and go to Denver, Colorado. And he promised, he was promised by the company that his salary would be the same as the President of the United States in three years, \$250,000 a year.

So he said to his wife, honey, you pack and I'll pay. And so, you know, that's how we handle it, right? You don't pray about things like that. It's got to be right because of all the money you're going to get.

Then here's what happened. One night, he did a lot of selling at night. And when he had nothing to do, he went into the meetings.

He hadn't been in the meetings before. And just as he came in the door, I started telling a story about a guy who had a good job, was busy in a church, had a chance to earn about \$10,000 a year more. So he and his wife decided he has to quit.

That has to be the will of God. And this is what I was telling the story as he came in the door. And after he came up to me, he said, you rascal.

I said, why? What did I do? That story was told about that guy. He said, I can't go to Denver, Colorado after hearing that story. I'm going to have to stay where I am.

And he stayed where he was. He continued recruiting kids for Sunday school for the salary he was getting, you know. He did the right thing, did he? Yes, he did.

I'll tell you why. Because the company in Denver, Colorado went belly up two years later. He wouldn't even have a job, you know.

Listen, should I say this in closing? The last thing you should ever worry about is money. That should never be any concern to anybody in this building if you're walking with God. He told us.

Take no thoughts with him at all. Did he mean it or didn't he mean it? Why did he say that? Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things, house, car, stuff, you know, all these things will be added unto you.

And they will be added. He's promised you have to believe God. Because somehow people would have to let their God, the extent he's turned in our eyeballs, run our hearts or something, you know.

So we're walking with what he looks like.

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