

# The Breathing of the Soul

by Bill McLeod

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*Prayer is the key to a deeper relationship with God and spiritual growth, and it requires perseverance, persistence, and faith.*

**Duration:** 41:08

**Scripture:** Genesis 32:26, Isaiah 44:3, Lamentations 3:56, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:1-4

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of revival and awakening in the church. He shares personal experiences of how prayer and seeking God's presence can lead to a powerful transformation in individuals and communities. The pastor encourages believers to stop making excuses and to prioritize seeking God's revival in their lives. He also highlights the story of Jacob in the Bible, who found himself in a desperate situation and had to rely solely on God. The pastor concludes by urging the church to wake up and seek revival before the world continues to slide downhill.

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## Transcript

First we call the breathing of the soul, based on Lamentations 3.56. Hide not your ear at my breathing, at my cry. The breathing of the soul. Some Christians don't breathe very much, and then blame God for the little they see happening.

I want to read from Luke's Gospel, chapter 11, verse 1. And it came to pass, that as he, that is Jesus, was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, when you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven. Now we have the same prayer, as you know, in Matthew 9, only this is an abbreviated form.

It's interesting though, that in Catholic churches, I found out, because Zion is the kingdom, the power, and one Pope back in history didn't like that, because, so they used a shorter form, but we're using it here, because it's here. Thy will be done, as it happens on earth. Give us day by day, our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins. For we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

And he said unto them. Now remember, he's answering the query about prayer. Which of you shall have a friend? I think the friend is God.

And shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves. So we're going to God and asking. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend? And shall go unto him at midnight.

And his journey has come to me. And I have nothing to set before him. And he from a fit shall answer and say, Trouble me not.

The door is now shut. And my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give you.

It's something like the answer Jesus gave to the Seraphim nation woman. When she asked for help. And he said, To take the children's bread.

And to cast it to dogs. She wasn't offended. And she said to the Lord, It's a dog.

Eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table. And Jesus just said, Great is your faith. Be it unto you as you will.

So sometimes God may say no. When he really means yes. But he's just trying to faint somewhat.

So he from a fit shall answer and say, Trouble me not. The door is now shut. My children are with me in bed.

Now notice verse eight especially. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend. Yet because of his importunity.

That's what's called shameless asking. Or asking that will not be denied. Because of his importunity.

He will rise and give him as many as he needs. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Actually it's be asking, be seeking, be knocking. For every one that asks receives.

And he that seeks finds. For him that knocks, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father.

Will he give him a stole? If he asks a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an ape, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children. How much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? So they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. And he told them how to get the Holy Spirit into our praying.

In Zechariah chapter 12, it speaks about God pouring on his children the spirit of grace and supplication. One translation says, the spirit of grace. And Phineas saw that so clearly.

It became a very important part of his theology and practice. He said if he ever lost the spirit of prayer. He couldn't converse with any individual or any congregation effectively.

If he lost the spirit of prayer. He looked on this as being a gift from God, guided by the spirit of God. I think he was right.

Opportunity. He will arise. The need is great.

We need to know that. Have you ever wondered like the twelve apostles? They spent, I guess, maybe three and a half years with Jesus. They heard him preach and teach and exhort publicly, privately.

They watched him heal thousands of people over those years. And you would think that that would be enough. But it wasn't.

I've read some articles where the writer was saying that the thing that sent the apostles to the ends of the world was the resurrection of Christ. No, it wasn't. After the resurrection, they were told to wait.

Not to go, but to tarry. In Jerusalem, until they were infused with power by the spirit of God. So three and a half years was not enough.

Seeing what they saw and hearing what they heard. And watching him night and day. And his resurrection was not enough.

They had to have the spirit of God. And he is the spirit of prayer. And we need to be seeking him for that.

Do you remember the Bible says, God said, my house should be called a house of prayer for all people. Is the average evangelical church a house of prayer? Not really. We honor it with our lips.

We don't do much about it other than that it seems. Now Anna in little chapter two. She got it right.

She never left the temple. She was always in the temple praising God. Seeking the face of God.

Now sure, she took criticism from friends. Anna, why are you wasting your time in the temple? There's people out there in the streets that need help. You should be giving people money.

What are you doing in the temple? But God was so pleased. And what she did. Does he mean sure? She served God with fastings and prayers.

Night and day. Everything was serving God that way. Fastings and prayers.

Nobody knew God would be aware of it perhaps. But that's the way it needs to be. When it comes to prayer.

For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. And for the love of the spirit. Paul wrote in Romans 15.

Strive together with me. In your prayers to God. For me.

I think the word for strive is back on. From which we get the English word agonize. Agonizing in prayer.

He spoke awesome. Galatians 4. Prevailing in prayer. Like childbirth.

It's not just. Mouthing a few words. It's throwing your whole heart.

Into it. Letting nothing else improve. Along with God.

Not always. Sometimes incorporate prayers tonight. Now Jacob at Jabba.

He had a problem. He had a brother coming to meet him. Whom he hadn't seen for years.

A brother who he had wronged grievously. And he heard his brother was coming. With 400 servants.

And he knew. It meant trouble. Well he tried I think all together.

Four or maybe five. Little deals to kind of. But none of them worked.

And it says finally. In Genesis 32. Jacob.

Was left alone. He had no more plans. He was up in Egypt.

Because he was at the place where it was God. Or nothing. And God loves to bring people to a place like that.

Where plans are finished. Flattened ground broken. Not doing it.

And we need God. Now there's a comment on that happening in Genesis 32. In the book of Hosea.

And commenting on that. God said. Way to God.

Do what he did. He wouldn't let God go. He got a hold of him.

And held on to him for dear life all night. Physically hurt. His thigh.

Would do the same thing. We read of a man called Moab. Well Moab was a tribe of people.

And says he came to the sanctuary. To pray. But he never prevailed.

He never got through to God. And I'm sure that many of us would have to say. That we've often prayed.

Without getting through to God. We've got to make time. And have time.

And shut other considerations out. We can't always do that in praying. But as much as we can.

Crying to him. Now there's a little parable in Luke 11. I interpret it this way.

You think it's wrong. You can correct me. Somebody has a need.

And they go to somebody that they know can help. That's almost God. You know God can help no matter what the need is.

How dark the night. He's the light. You need power.

He's got the power. Power belongs unto God. So he went there expecting.

Because there were friends. And his friends were rather rude. He said no.

I can't. But he kept on beating. And crying.

And finally his friend gave in. Now is this a good picture of God? In one sense no. But in another sense yes.

Because he likes to try our faith. See whether we really mean business in prayer or not. Though he will not rise to heaven because he is his friend.

We at God are friends of God's. He is our friend. We are his.

He said that. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. Henceforth I will call you not servants.

For the servant does not know what his Lord is doing. He will not rise and give here because he is his friend. You don't necessarily get an answer to your prayer.

But you get it. Through opportunity. Asking that will not be denied.

Something for the glory of God. And the good of man. Will usually be the will of God.

So. This is the heart of it. In Luke 11.

But answers with this. If you have been evil know how to give good gifts. To your children.

How much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit. To them that ask him. I know we have the spirit.

But he is talking about something I think beyond that. We know enough of church history to know there were many times. When individuals.

Or churches. Got serious about prayer. I was reading a while ago.

About a church. They so desperately wanted revival. They had.

Are you listening carefully. They had. Three prayer meetings a day.

For two years. And what happened. A revival broke.

And hundreds were converted. A real movement of God. But they got started right.

Three prayer meetings a day. Oh come on. That's too much really.

Is anything too much. When you are seeking the face of God. I am not surprised that God answered.

They were just not going to let go. They were like Jacob. At championing.

They had to have. Revival. Our prayer for revival is usually rather weak and short.

And easily forgotten. And that has to change. I went to Saskatoon in 1962.

A Baptist church. 175 members. Seating about 300.

The prayer meeting ran 25. And here is how I ran the prayer meeting. Before I knew better.

I preached for 40 minutes. And we had 15 minutes for prayer. And God showed me this was not what he had in mind.

So I reversed things. I spoke for 15 minutes. And the prayer meeting never had an ending time.

We just told the people if you have to go, just go. If you can stay, stay. That's one thing we did.

Then something else was this. I would say to people we didn't do this all at once. But over a period of time.

I would say, now maybe you've had an answer to a prayer in the last week. Get up and tell us about it. Even if it's a little thing.

You fall apart from a spot where the. And people started doing that. And pretty soon there was all kinds of.

And then we started something else. If you're here tonight. You have a deep spiritual need.

Please get up and tell us about it. And if you'd like us to pray for you. We have a chair here.

And you know what happened? It became the hottest meeting of the week. People didn't want to miss it. You know, some of you know that I used to tell the people this.

Miss Sunday morning if you have to. Miss Sunday evening. They took it seriously.

What I mean. Was the New Testament meeting of the week. And maybe.

Some of us here tonight. Need to change the order. Like I said, I'm not exaggerating when I say.

People didn't want to miss it. Or something else we did was this. We had.

We exhorted people to ask God. To waken them through the night. Just to pray for his life in the church.

And so. Now I said before I say it again. We didn't put all this on the people at once.

And so. People began telling me. I remember somebody came running up and said.

You know Pastor. I used to. Do you know what happened? When God saw that we met in business.

And people began talking about answers to prayer. They'd meet and say. Pastor something happened yesterday.

They tell me all about it you know. And so. It caught fire because.

We were willing to change. That's how God led us. And how he blessed us.

And you know. God came on the scene. And some of you read about it.

Heard about it. I don't want to wear you with that. Wesley Jewell said once to me.

Brother Bill. I think that 95% of Christian work. Is prayer.

And sometimes I think it's 100%. Do you know who Wesley Jewell is? Some of you do. Great man of God.

He needs prayer now. He was with us in Indianapolis. I'm not in very good shape.

Do pray for him. He's been great. Wesley Jewell.

Remember him. Well when churches need workers. Do you know what they do? Many times.

They go to the internet. I still find it hard to believe. I know a church.

It was a large church. They needed a pastor. I think they advertised in a magazine.

A Christian magazine or two. For a pastor. They had 80 pastors.

That responded. All of whom felt. God was calling them.

To Canada. Is this how they did it? In vital times? No. They met.

They fasted and prayed. And they did it until the spirit spoke. And then he said.

I keep hearing all around the country. Churches. They have a pastor they're not happy with.

Trying to get rid of him. You can't blame him. They shouldn't have called him in the first place.

You see we don't really believe that God can do it. That's the problem. So you've got to check his resume.

Listen. I met a guy in the states one time in Indianapolis. He had so many degrees after his name.

He had to have a half ton truck to carry that. But you know why? He could never get a church. And he came to me in desperation.

Please get me a church. I said brother. That's not the way it happens.

God has to call you and open the door. You've got to look to God. You don't have to go and apply to anybody else.

That's not what you need. There's a lot of garbage going on in Christian circles. That are not recognized at all.

We've kind of left God outside. We use his name a lot. But we're not really getting him in.

You know the church is supposed to represent the whole Christ. But you know what the average church is like? Well, they just have a mother. They've only got a preacher.

Other churches have two wives and a couple of deacons. So the average church has some deacons and a pastor. And the rest of the church are totally uninvolved.

And the world is not seeing. Is seeing a mouth? Is that the way God is? Not at all. There are 18 or more gifts of the Spirit.

A complete Christ can be seen when each member of the church has found what God wants him or her to do. And is doing that. Feet shot for the preparation of the gospel.

That's another message. I don't want to get into that in the front. David was called, as you know man, after God's own heart.

What else did he call that? Evening and morning and noon when I prayed, he said, and cried out, and he heard my voice. I found ten places in the Old Testament where it says that David, he never moved a wheel without inquiring of God. And after being successful in the battle, then a certain, when the enemy came back, he didn't use the same plan.

He inquired of God and God gave him a different plan. And God was like that. He's waiting to be inquired of.

He loves it when his people inquire concerning everything. Now there's some simple things. But most things in life, the reason we get into trouble, and that of course is wrong.

You know, Spurgeon, I've read much on his life. You know, he's an amazing person, gifted by God. For example, he could read a book of 300, 400 pages in half an hour.

And then quote all pages were in page 67, 123. They tested him. They said he never forgot anything he read.

He had a library of 30,000 books. He had a voice, they said, like a golden trumpet. His tabernacle would seat 6 or 8,000.

But he also preached to crowds of 10 or 20. I can be perfectly heard. And so people were saying, Spurgeon was so naturally gifted, he just couldn't miss it.

But that's not what he said. He used to bathe his people with tears. Don't ever think that God is using me because of some natural gifts I have.

That is not it at all. You must pray for God, the Holy Spirit. He saw it so clearly.

It has nothing to do with what God is doing through my ministry. These are just some natural things. And when he bathed his people with tears, please, please, pray for me.

The Lord emptied me and filled me with his Spirit, or I can't carry on. Some people didn't get it, didn't understand it. I think as Christians, they were thinking it all and have to agree with what he said.

You see, we don't go to the Pope and shake ourselves and hope something will fall on somebody. Long before we get to the Pope, we're asking God to come. Empty us of sin and self and pride.

Fill us with the Holy Spirit of God. The Bible speaks about people insulting, and sometimes we insult the Spirit. In preaching, teaching, he knows what needs to be said.

But often he's left, I say, standing outside. And we blunder on, tripping and falling. And wondering why things are so bad.

Well, don't blame God, blame yourself. We need you. You know, the 1858 Revival in the United States happened at a time when the population of the United States was... It was called the Prayer Revival.

Most experts believe, and I think they're right, that of all the revivals in the history of the Church, the 1858 Prayer Revival was the most powerful and far-reaching. For it was felt not only in the States. It was not a preaching revival.

And some of you heard me say this before. Preaching has never produced a revival. It has produced some great preachers.

Revivals have always been produced by prayer. By great prayer. And faith.

So, how can we forget this or ignore it? Maybe we never knew it. I don't know. Calvin Coleman, who wrote that book, A History of America, 1832, I've got a copy of it.

I think, I understand it's being produced, or has been produced, again, a modern version. But talking about revival, here's what he said. We were never satisfied with ordinary Christian work.

With insulated conversions. We would use the word faithfully. He explained it.

We're happy, okay. So, a few people... So, he said this. We prayed, and we fasted, and we preached, and we believed God for revival.

Until the Holy Spirit came and took the work out of our hands. And made the whole community aware of God. And then he said this.

This was the early 1800s, particularly in the northern states. He said this. Revival never came to a church that did not believe it would come.

And it never failed to come to a church that believed it would come. In other words, he's speaking about the faith element. Based on what comes, Acts chapter 3, where God said there would be.

At least we can take that. And then God's many promises are on poor water. Upon human's thirst and floods.

On the dry ground. Upon my spirit on your seed. My blessing on your offspring.

And then sometimes people... Well, we prayed a lot for our kids, but they're all strayed. What's the next verse in Isaiah 44? With four boys. And two of the brothers younger.

None of us are Christian. My father not a Christian. And the whole mountain split.

My mother came back. She got saved in the meantime. But you know, people, listen.

For 14 years after she came home, not one of us was converted. And she just kept believing God. Then it happened like a one, two, three.

My youngest brother, Gene, took a little longer because when he got married, he and his wife shook hands. So he went and ended up as an evangelist. My mother was on top of it all.

I give her all the credit. But people straight thing. You've got to hang in.

Opportunity. Shameless asking. Asking that we're not being denied.

Jacob. Remember him. Prevail.

Revival. 1858. It touched every community.

It's called the event of the century. And the title of the book. It came from a non-Christian businessman.

Who when he saw the social effects. Maybe some Christian. God is waiting.

God is willing. And God is able. But he waits to pass.

Christ prayed with strong crying and tears. Can we not do the same? At least with all our hearts. You may have heard about a young black Christian in Africa.

He came to the missionaries and said shortly after being converted. God is calling me to be a pastor. Please give me a church.

Well, they put their heads together. Hey, this kid, he doesn't know anything. He's just a new convert.

Let's just put him off. Tell him to come back in six months. He'll forget.

Well, he didn't forget. He came back in six months. Got a church.

Didn't know what to say. They put him off another three months. Then he came back again.

So the mission decided to do this. They had a church. Somebody put it this way.

The church had been fighting so much. It was down to about 12 people. And they made this kid the pastor of this church.

And they knew he couldn't do anything with it. And of course, then they just took him. But at the time, the article I read in an English paper in Africa, he was still a pastor.

Only now he had 5,000 members of the church. What did he do? He had no training. But he knew how to pray.

And you know, every now and then he'd say to the congregation, God is calling me away. I don't know how long I'll be gone. I'll be gone a week, maybe two or three weeks.

I found a place, a cave, and I'll be there, and I'll take a little sack of food. We wouldn't get it. They said every time that kid came back from his time in the cave, there was new offers.

And sometimes hundreds would be converted. People, listen. You know as much as I know about it.

You read things like this yourself. And we aren't doing anything about it. Somehow we don't get it.

We're too lazy to do this. Somehow we think God has to do it all. That statement is true to a point, but he does it through his children, and he's waiting on us.

So think of all these people, and the first one we mentioned, or the twelve apostles I guess were first, and what they needed. Sure the training was helpful to them, but even after the resurrection, Jesus spent, and then there was ten days prayer, and then Pentecost. Jesus, being at the right hand of God's office, and having received of the Father, He did what God the Father gave him, and Jesus pulled his spirit out on the hundred and twenty, and the twelve among them, at that time.

He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. When will we stop saying what happened then doesn't apply today? When will we stop saying I just can't do it? You just have to stop doing some things you're doing, and you may have to run against a strong current. Let that be.

When we get to a place where like Jacob, we don't have any more plans. I think the church is close to that today, because if we don't have a revival, it won't be safe to walk the streets. Everybody will have to carry a pistol with them just to stay alive.

I mean, that's the way it's moving. And it will continue sliding downhill until the church wakes up. I don't know what else to say.

My heart is breaking. Peace. God bless you all.

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