

# Unified Concerts of Prayer Revival History

by Bob Bakke

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**Scripture:** Acts 1:14, Matthew 18:19, Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16, 2 Chronicles 7:14

**Topics:** "United Prayer", "Spiritual Awakening"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I'm in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and today is a very busy day in Minnesota. One of the things I was just involved in, and it is still going on throughout the day, and it will be going on into the evening. I can't stay for it all, but I will certainly spend as much time down there as possible.

Of course, all of you know who have been watching the news in recent weeks that Minneapolis has been the hub of unrest, racial unrest and violence in the streets, and there are some 1,500, 1,600 businesses and other properties were burned or somehow destroyed over the past several months. And that unrest continues sporadically. And just the night before last, we had another round of looting and torching of buildings in our city.

And of course, that's a very distressing thing for all of us to watch our cities in such turmoil and to know that our people are so angry and so distrustful, and then that other people would take advantage of such a thing. They would leverage it. We have three enemies historically, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The world, of course, are all the systems that in fact ultimately conspire against the spread of the gospel or the presence of truth, and particularly against the truth of Jesus, our Savior. But then you have the flesh. That's what walls up inside of us.

That's the rage that we can't control often when we're so angry. It's the temptations and the sins that arise within us and we lose ourselves to it. And then we have the devil, of course, and he's the personality that is at the heart of all the manifest evil on the face of the earth.

And those three things conspire against us continually. You remember the Apostle Paul who, in Romans chapter seven, wrestled against the flesh. But in the first several chapters of the book of Romans and elsewhere, he speaks of the systems of the world as well that conspire against it.

We just simply have turned our back on God, not only ourselves individually, but ourselves corporately. But of course, the devil then stirs all of this up. And if our own flesh can get us into trouble, well, the devil isn't going to bother with us.

He's just gonna let us destroy ourselves. And if the world is doing a great job in all these distressful things and causing evil, well, the devil doesn't need to. Maybe he'll spin the wheel a little bit every once in a while, leverage it some, get his mischief in there.

But if he needs to, he'll apply himself and he'll do so vigorously. And we know that our enemy is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realms, as Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter six. So as we go and we add to some of the subjects I intend to review with you today, and then pause along the way for some prayer points.

Well, I hope that you'll see that our call to prayer that is in fact, one of our principal means by which we attack and subdue and stifle and ultimately have victory over our enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. And when God pours out his spirit in answer to our prayers, we see the evidence in the world and in our own flesh and in the defeat and the chasing away, the overthrowing of the works of the devil as well. Well, as Dan was introducing me, of course, he spoke of my interest and my long-term interest in revival and spiritual awakenings.

And in fact, my greatest interest is how the movements of united prayer correspond and in fact are well presage. That is, they go before each of the works of God. And so I've done work over the years, much work over the years on numbers of periods of history where we have seen this at work and I'll tell you some stories.

And along the way, then maybe we'll identify some prayer points. But before we do anything else, let's just take a 30,000 foot view of what we're talking about here. And I'm sure over the course of Friday, Saturday and Sunday, you'll hear a lot of things, points repeated.

And we often, well, we focus on very similar passages sometimes, but we do so because those passages teach us very, very powerful lessons that we forget so quickly. One of the passages that has always enamored me and just sort of gripped my imagination comes out of Revelation chapter eight, where we have after seven chapters, after that glorious opening of the book of Revelation, where the glorified Christ is beheld, where Jesus comes to the apostle John as he is in a spirit state, a trans-like state, perhaps much like the state that Peter was in in Acts chapter, in Acts 10, when he receives the vision of the cloud, excuse me, the bedsheet or the spread of foods coming to him. And God says, eat of them and ends up

with Cornelius.

And perhaps he's in that kind of state, John is, and he beholds Christ. He's in a state of prayer and Christ manifests himself to John. Now, remember John was one of Jesus's dearest friends.

He was the beloved disciple. He calls himself in the gospel of John. And he knew Jesus.

He walked with Jesus. He had walked with Jesus since his earliest days. That is the Lord's earliest days of ministry.

He saw Christ healing the leper in Jesus. He saw him preaching to multitudes. So he was very, very familiar with the ministry of Christ.

And he also saw Jesus die. He saw him suffer and die. So he beheld the crucified Christ.

But he also saw both the dead and the buried Christ. That is, he knew Jesus had perished. He knew that he was stone cold dead.

He heard the reports. He knew that John, that he had been buried in an unused tomb. He knew where it was.

And then he saw the resurrected Christ. He held his hands at his side. He heard him speak.

He even sat down and had breakfast with him beside the Sea of Galilee. He spent 40 days with this Jesus, this resurrected Lord. And we don't know what kind of body he had, but it was a resurrected body, much like you and I will have.

But then this John beheld the ascended Christ. He watched as Jesus was taken up into heaven with angelic escorts. And John heard the angels ask, why are you staring? This Jesus is going to come in like manner.

But when John sees the glorified Christ, not just the Savior of the world, not just the resurrected Christ, not just the ascended Savior, you know, encompassed into heaven, in the clouds of heaven, but when he beheld the glorified Christ, well, we know that he fell at his feet as though dead. And this teaches us that Christ is far more than we could imagine. He is terrible to behold in his glory, apart from grace.

He is so resplendent, so gloriously, gloriously resplendent that John didn't know what to do. He melts, just like the guards at the tomb, I'm sure, just melted in fear. This glorified Christ, whose voice was like the sound of rushing waters and whose countenance was like the sun.

Well, anyway, we have John then recording in those first opening chapters of what is going on into heaven. He has an escort into heaven and this angel is showing up all around and he sees the worship that is going on and on, the worship, the continual worship of God. And this is what we have to look forward to, the throne circled by four living creatures and then around the four living creatures are 24 elders and around them are gazillions of angels and then around them are gazillions more of the saints who are worshipping God again and again, they praise him.

And we will never grow tired of praising him. It is our eternal calling, isn't that gonna be glorious? Well, all of this activity is going on, there's ceaseless activity in heaven. Everything is going on and nothing stops with regard to the worship of Christ, except this moment.

Revelation chapter eight, just an amazing scene. I hope they have a recording of this because I wanna see it, I wanna see the playback. I hope you do too.

When the lamb had received a scroll from the father, from the Lord himself, when the lamb of God, looking at it as if it had been slain, this lion of Judah who is now beheld as a lamb, when the lamb received this scroll and upon the scroll are seven seals. And we know that, we just sense that something is really, really important is gonna happen as this scroll is unfurled. And I don't know, I just think what is being unfurled across history is the declaration that everything is mine and the glory of everything is mine.

And I will manifest my grace and my glory over all things. I don't know what words are on this scroll, but it'll be the declaration of God's lordship and the savior's glory over all things. But the lamb receives this scroll and no one is worthy to open the scroll except him.

The famous song that we're all worshiping with in the recent days by Andrew Peterson, are you worthy? He is worthy, of course he's worthy. Well, when the lamb opened the scroll, seal by seal, things started happening. And when he gets to the seventh seal, the seventh, the final seal where the scroll will then be unfurled.

And the declarations of God will be known over the face of the earth. And where the glory of Christ will be manifest. When he opens the seventh seal, which I believe is the most dramatic moment in all of history, other than the cross and the resurrection itself.

Think about it. This is the moment that the father has been waiting for since he breathes life into Adam's nostrils. This is the moment he has longed for when he will fellowship with man.

When there will be a new heaven and a new earth and all things will be reconciled to him. This is the inauguration of the consummation. This is the beginning of the end of all things.

And then the beginning of all new things. But when he opened the seventh seal, the lamb, there was rejoicing and wonderment in heaven. No, the text tells us there was silence in heaven.

Absolute silence. Everything that John had been witnessing, everything that was completely blowing his mind, everything that was consuming him with wonder and joy and absolute awe, everything stopped. And there was silence in heaven when the lamb broke the seventh seal.

Five minutes goes by. There's absolute silence. The four living beasts, these amazing creatures who live for the glory and the praise of God, nothing.

The 24 elders who have been shouting amen and laying their crowns at his feet and putting their faces to the ground, they felt nothing, no noise. The angels, the tremendous body of angels surrounding the throne, encircling the throne. Now remember, the sea-like crystal was nearby and a rainbow like an emerald.

John is exhausting the capacity of the Greek, of the human language, to try to describe all the fantastic sights that were gleaming, that were glorious, that were going on in heaven. Everything stops. The angels stop.

The noise, the thunder and lightning in the heavens, all of it stops. All of it. And the millions and millions of saints around the throne, they become silent.

Five minutes goes by. There's nothing in heaven, no noise. You could hear a pin drop across heaven.

10 minutes goes by, still nothing. 15 minutes goes by, 20 minutes. I think John would be going crazy, don't you? Absolutely crazy.

Still nothing. 25 minutes goes by, 26, 27, 28 minutes goes by, nothing. I don't know what a half hour is and what it represents in heaven.

If 1,000 years is like a day, I don't know, do the math. What is 30 minutes? It could be a really long time waiting, waiting in silence, God waiting in silence. After a half hour, after a half hour goes by, one angel begins to move and he begins passing out instruments to the band.

And then another angel, we're told in verse three, another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer. You know what the censers are, right? Those are the things that you put incense in, the Catholics still use them. The Orthodox, some of them make huge censers and they put them on 40, 50 foot chains or ropes to the ceiling and they throw them and they swing back and forth in the sanctuaries and the smoke just billows out.

And the smoke, the censer, of course, is a visual and, well, sense to the nose as well of worship and praise. Well, this censer is being filled then. Another angel begins filling this censer with coals from the altar.

And we're told that this censer also is filled with the prayers of all the saints. Now imagine it, right? A censer billowing with this smoke coming out. And of course, in the Old Testament, the censers were continually, incense was continually being burned before the Lord.

That was to symbolize. So if you go into the temple in the days of Jesus, there would always be this smoke in the air. You know, some of our churches are using smoke machines and the light comes shining through them and there's all kinds of things that you can do because you have particles in the air off of which you can dance light.

Well, that would have been the scene too in the temple of the Lord 2,000 years ago, 3,000 years ago, to symbolize the ongoing 24 seven, because we're to be a house of prayer, aren't we? And his house is to be a house of prayer for all people. And it goes on day and night. Well, this censer is brought before the Lord.

And when the smoke of the incense with the prayers of all the saints rose before God from the angel's hand, then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, threw it onto the earth and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Take it all in. Do you know how important prayer is? Do you know how important your prayers are? Do you know how important the prayers of your church are? They're so important, so vitally important to the work of heaven on earth that God, at the very end of time, at the most poignant moment in history, other than the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, will stop in his tracks and wait, and all of heaven with him, and they will wait, and they will wait, and they will wait for the prayers of the saints.

And it's not until the prayers of the saints rise before God that God gives the permission for the end of all things to commence. Come on now. You have to be deeply impressed.

Did you ever think your prayers were that important? You have to know this. Even at the end of time, your prayers are that important, and God will wait. So we're talking about revival and spiritual awakening in our

day.

Why hasn't it come? Well, among the reasons why it hasn't come is because God is a God that waits, waits for the prayers of the saints. Now, sometimes the answer to your prayers come, well, they come fairly rapidly, fairly quickly. Sometimes they take an entire lifetime.

And sometimes, oftentimes, they're not prayers that you should be praying alone. There are prayers that people keep private, and they pray for many, many years to keep them private. There are great stories of the saints over the last 2,000 years who prayed for loved ones, prayed for things to happen.

John Knox praying for England, and he prayed for years, for decades. And the Puritans used to say that a prayer warrior was like one who wrestled with God like Jacob and refused to let him go until he blessed them. I mean, have you gotten a hold of the leg of the Savior? Have you gotten a hold of the garment of the Lord, the angel of the Lord, and just resolved to yourself, I will not let you go until you bless me? He waits for such praying.

He waits for your praying. There are prayers that you should not be praying by yourself and you should be holding fast with others, holding fast with others. Years ago, I was reading the memoirs of A.B. Simpson.

A.B. Simpson was a missionary, but he was also the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. And it's a denomination. Those of you who might be familiar with it, others might not be.

It's not a big denomination. I don't know, maybe 1,000 churches, maybe 1,200 churches or so around the country. But A.B. Simpson was recalling, this is perhaps 110, 120 years ago, he was recalling in his memoirs a war that was taking place between, what was the Burmese wars.

I believe it was between the English and the indigenous Burmese population. And of course, like many places in Asia and across India and elsewhere in the world, there are many, many tribes. So these aren't cookie cutter nations, as it were.

There are very different kinds of languages and customs and so on, even within the nations themselves. Well, this one village was in, their men were engaged in the war and they saw that they were losing their battle. And they had a prized golden bell in their possession.

It was one of the things that they had hung up in the center of the village. And they didn't wanna lose this gold bell. It was a solid gold bell.

It was big and very, very heavy. Have you ever lifted gold? Very, very heavy thing. So the village decided that though the village might be overrun by the enemy, by the English, they didn't wanna lose this bell.

So they took it down from its perch, rolled it out to a river bank and loaded it on some of their canoes. I think they put like three or four canoes together to try to hold this thing. This very heavy thing.

Well, they pushed out from shore with the bell intending to go over to the other side of the river. But while they were halfway across, the boats began to creak under the weight of this bell. And finally the bell just was too much for the boats and it fell down into the water and down to the bottom of the river.

And there it lay. Well, after the war was over and everyone was convinced that the bell was lost, the tribe opposite them on the other side to which they were rowing came over and said, if we can get the bell off the bottom of the river, can we keep it? And the tribe who owned the bell, well, they knew it was an

impossible task. This just simply isn't possible.

It's down at the bottom of the river and it's stuck in the mud, I'm sure. And feel free, you can go ahead and try as best you can. And it's an impossible thing, but if you can get it up, you can keep it.

And they laughed at the notion of it. Well, this tribe opposite them started coming out to where the bell was, over the bell, probably 30, 40 feet down into the river. And their divers began diving down to the bell.

And you know what they brought down with them? They brought down little pieces of bamboo about this big. And one after the other, they would dive and they would go down to the bell and they would attach this little piece of bamboo to the bell. Day after day, the divers went one after the other.

How can a little piece of bamboo tied to a solid gold bell, stuck in the mud at the bottom of a river do much of anything for anyone? But they persisted. Do you know, days after days of diving and little pieces of bamboo, after little pieces of bamboo went down to the river bottom, were attached. One day, the bell began to move on the bottom of the river and they were so overjoyed, they kept diving and putting more little pieces of bamboo, a little more little pieces of bamboo until finally one day, you can guess, this impossible thing, this weighty treasure stuck in the mud at the bottom of the river, bobbed to the top of the surface.

Again and again, they dove with their little contributions. And finally, the weight was so great or the buoyancy was so great that it raised an impossible thing to the surface. This is much like our prayers too.

God waits for such prayers. If waiting for a half hour is, I don't know, 50 years, 75 years, 100 years, what is it? God will wait for the prayers of the saints. And the impossible becomes possible in the power of God.

Attaching my little piece of grace, my little piece of grace, my little intercession, my little intercession. And you know what? I don't wanna do this by myself, so I'm gonna have you do it with me. One more story and then we'll get to some revival accounts.

I have a friend, I haven't seen him in a while. I certainly wish I have, but his name is D. Duke. He's from Jefferson, Oregon.

He writes some really, really cool books on prayer. But D was with his dad one day. His dad was either in the Navy or the Merchant Marine, I can't remember which, or at least he served on the water.

And he took D down to the docks next to a large ship. I think it was a cargo ship. Maybe it was a, you know, a small military, I mean, a smaller ship, I mean, it's a big ship, right? This isn't a boat and this isn't a PT boat or whatever.

It's a ship. And this big ship is docked down on the water. And D's father said to D, now watch me.

And D's father went over, and D's just a little boy. D's father went over and leaned out over the end of the dock and put his two hands on the hull of this big ship, this big military ship. And he was leaning against this ship, this gray naval vessel.

And D confesses that he probably thought that his dad was a little bit crazy. Maybe he'd been out in the sun too long. But his father persisted, leaning against this ship, leaning and leaning against the ship.

And he said, after about 10 minutes or so, by golly, this ship began to move. And as it moved, D's father stepped back onto the dock and D was amazed. He turned to D and he said, you're surprised, aren't you? But you know what? If you had helped me, we could have moved this in half the time.

It's part of the joy and part of the privilege, but also part of the power of United Prayer. But if you'll lean into something with me, if we will all together lean into something jointly, well, we can do it in half the time. But maybe the prayers of the saints would have cut the, if they were united prayers, would have cut the time between a half hour and 15 minutes in heaven in Revelation chapter eight.

Well, let me give you an example of something that something that happened. I don't know, maybe I can, I'm not quite sure if I can share a screen or not, but years ago, Jonathan Edwards, who was a pastor in Massachusetts, he was essentially out on the frontier of Massachusetts at the time, wrote a book that maybe some of the other guys who have been speaking to you these days, well, wrote a book about prayer, and that is United Prayer. And the book was entitled A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to biblical prophecies.

He wrote it in 1747. And by the way, when I first began reading this book and determining that it was in fact a series of sermons that he had preached in 1747 to his own church, it was the Revelation chapter eight verse passage that he was preaching on that just simply blew my mind. Well, that's 1747, but Edwards didn't get the idea all by himself.

In fact, he got the idea to write on this and to promote United Prayer in a concerted fashion. Well, just about five years before, because five years before there was a friend of his in Campbell's Lane, Scotland, named, well, I'll give you, William McCullough was his name. He was a young pastor, and he had come to this parish in Scotland.

It was a sickly church. In fact, the presbyters, the presbytery of Glasgow, Scotland had sent emissaries to the representatives to this church after McCullough got there and determined that the men of the church, particularly were in such bad shape spiritually that there wasn't a single male in the entire congregation that was worthy of being elevated to the rank of presbyter or elder. Now, McCullough was a good guy, but he wasn't a very good preacher, but he was about to change the world, literally change the world.

Maybe some of you are serving in churches that, well, maybe you don't have the greatest gifts in the world either, but you know what, God can use you to change the world. He really can, because changing the world is not a matter of one person's particular gift. It's a matter of God moving upon the face of the earth and always in answer to the prayers of the saints, as they are obedient to the mandates of God.

Well, McCullough, this young man, he invited a guest speaker to come in back in 1741, 1740, 41, and he wanted to juice things up a bit. And back then, you couldn't juice anything up better than to invite George Whitefield to come and preach. George Whitefield was, I don't know, sort of like that generation's Billy Graham, except maybe he had even more profound impact upon culture and his own nation and the American colonies than perhaps any preacher has in the last 500 years.

Well, McCullough invited Whitefield to come to preach, and he did, and because he was a star, because his reputation preceded him, when Whitefield accepted the invitation, came and preached at McCullough's church, crowds came to hear him preach. So many people came to hear him preach that they had to open up the windows of the church. It was a nice day outside, and people sat out on the hills, out on the banks

around the church.

And, well, Whitefield preached to a large crowd, perhaps the largest crowd that McCullough had ever seen. Well, after Whitefield had preached, 90 families eventually came to McCullough, 90 families. And asked him to organize them into prayer societies.

Let me just backtrack just a little bit, because prayer societies were essentially, well, they were essentially the small group strategy of the 16 and 1700s. The strategy goes back to the early 1600s when prayer societies were being formed to meet every fortnight, once every two weeks, not to study the scriptures, because you couldn't study the scripture by yourself. You could read the scripture, you could sing together, but then, most importantly, you could pray.

And these prayer societies were, in fact, a response to dead orthodoxy. That is, churches that preached the word of God, but did so in a lifeless way, believed all the right things, but their religion was dead. So there were people in those congregations who just knew that they had to pray for those churches, and they would form prayer societies.

It was sort of, these were sort of secret societies at first because they were very, very threatening to the organizational structures of a denomination, and particularly the authority of the pastor. He believed that they were conniving and getting, trying to, well, conspire against him in such ways. Well, they were, but they weren't doing it in an ungracious way.

They were seeking heaven. What greater conspiracy could there be than to conspire together to ask God to pour out his graces from heaven, and to bless my pastor that when he gets up to preach, well, that he'll preach with the power of the gospel, with the power of the Holy Spirit, with the outpouring of all of God's grace and authority from heaven. I know pastors who aren't particularly smart.

I know pastors who aren't particularly handsome or charismatic in the pulpit, but they pray, and they preach with the power of God upon them. There's an anointing when they open their mouths to speak of Jesus. Well, so these people would get together, and they'd pray, they'd create prayer societies.

Well, eventually, these prayer societies became common house throughout the evangelical world. So McCullough has 90 families come to him after Whitfield preaches, and they say, form us into prayer societies, and he does. And he puts them together, and then he invites Whitfield to come back the following year.

Whitfield, in his own memoirs, says that when he comes back to Campbell's Length, the entire spiritual climate of the city had changed. It was transformed. Think of it.

And when he got up to preach, he did so to a throng that was enormous. It was the largest thing that they'd ever seen, and God worked phenomenally among them. And people were reconciled to God and saw the guilt of their sin.

And Whitfield knew that he was preaching to a town that had been prayed for. And in a church that was praying for these people, Whitfield comes back a third time. Now, in the meantime, this guy, McCullough, has learned a lesson.

He said, okay, a man of God comes to my town, and he speaks wonderfully and powerfully. And my people are moved by what they hear, and the Spirit of God moves upon their heart and compels them to

pray. They pray, and this man comes back again, and God does an even greater work.

Ah, I wonder what would happen if I got all of these prayer societies going, and they would pray the same prayers, that is, not exactly the same words and phrases, but we would get some bullet points out there, say, every one of you, I want you to go after this point and this point and this point, and none of you leave those points alone. You go after those points. He called that a concert of prayer.

He formed the first concert of prayer. Now, the word concert comes from, well, from the notion of working together. It doesn't have anything to do with music, but it gives us the reason why symphony orchestras can produce good music.

Matthew 18, for example, Jesus says that if two of you would agree as touching something, the King James says, my Father will give you anything you ask for. Well, that word agree is very much like the word concert. It's the word symphoneo, ah, symphony, symphonic orchestra, but again, it doesn't have anything to do with music.

It has to do with the agreements that allow great music to be produced. For example, if tonight you were going to be playing in an orchestra, or maybe the praise band that you're gonna be playing in tomorrow and leading your church in, you would get your instrument and you would show up on time. Ah, first agreement, isn't it? You're gonna show up at seven o'clock on Saturday evening.

We're gonna agree, all of us are gonna agree to show up on seven o'clock. And we're going to agree to stay there for two hours, from seven to nine. Well, when we get there, what else do we have to agree on? Music.

All of us have to agree on the music we're going to play. Think about it. Have you ever heard an orchestra play music where everyone was playing whatever they wanted to play, at whatever tempo they wanted to play, in whatever chord they wanted to play it? Well, yes, you have.

It's called warmup. You go into an orchestra and everyone's playing everything. Things are screeching, things are going boom, boom, boom, drums are going blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, whatever.

Right? Well, that's kind of interesting to watch these people get ready. But you didn't pay money to watch them get ready. You paid money to hear them agree.

They have for months agreed on the time that they were going to meet. They have for months agreed on the music they are going to play. For months, they have agreed on the conductor, he who is going to organize everything.

And they're going to agree that they're going to do everything that conductor says in the way that he says it. And when the preparations are going on, the warmup is going on, and people are playing anything that they want to play, suddenly you hear that tap, tap, tap, and everything goes silent. Everyone is at attention.

The conductor raises his baton. And when he lowers it, they start. And everyone is in agreement.

If you would agree as touching something, as holding something in your hands between you as common, God says, I'll give you anything you ask for. Well, McCullough put these people into prayer societies and they started to pray in concert with one another. And they did so in full agreement and with passion.

Whitfield gets invited back the third time. Whitfield comes back to a thing called the table of the Lord or the sacrament. Now, back then, the Church of Scotland only held one sacrament a year.

One sacrament a year. That was in the spring. I mean, that's when brides would get married.

The weather was nice. You'd open up things up. It's also the one time of the year.

First, probably just within a few weeks of your first bath since the fall. Isn't that interesting? That's why brides, and that's why they carried flowers as well. But the weather's nice.

The sacrament was being honored. And it was a three-day affair. The table of the Lord was a three-day affair.

So you showed up on a Friday and you would worship and you would hear the word of God preached. Scriptures are opened. But then there were sermons on personal reflection.

How are you doing with God? Because the next day, the very next day, well, the very next day, you're going to be examined by your pastor. That's right. Your pastor is going to meet with you.

And if you're the head of the household, if you're the man of the household, he's going to interview you in front of your wife and family. He'll interview your wife too, and your children, but you first. And he will ask you about how you have, how you have prepared your children this year.

The scripture verses, the things that they have memorized, the catechisms, for example, your morning and evening devotions, your prayer times, how you're treating your wife in the household, how you're treating your children. He will examine you. But then he'll also examine your wife.

He'll ask her similar questions, et cetera, and your children similar questions. And if you pass that examination, you would get a little token, a little tin stamped piece of metal that would allow you to take communion the next day. Because if you didn't pass the examination, there was no communion, no table of the Lord for you that year.

So it was a sober thing. Well, Whitefield was asked to come to preach to the sacrament. And when Whitefield comes to preach to the sacrament, there are 30,000 people waiting for him.

The entire county in which Campbell's Lane found itself had only 2,000 families. 30,000 people came. And because of his messages, it was the greatest in-gathering of communicants, souls into the kingdom and communicants to the table of the Lord in the history of the Scottish church.

And that event was so powerful, like an atomic bomb going off in the heart of Scotland, that the effects were felt all around. Of course it is. Some of you watched the effects of that explosion in Beirut a couple of weeks ago.

Boom! Everything in Beirut was impacted. The explosion could be heard down in Israel, so far away. It could be heard in Cyprus, it was so powerful.

This is a powerful explosion of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Scotland. And pastors from all around this place will then bound themselves into covenants of united prayer, because they saw what happened in the wake of their prayers, in the wake of, what do you call this, congregational prayer. And these pastors, a whole number of them, signed a covenant together for a concert of prayer that they would, on the quarter

of the year, when the seasons changed, they would move from church to church within a reasonable proximity of themselves, and they would pray together and pray together.

The first covenant was two years. At the end of the first two years, the power of the gospel in answer to their prayers and the wonder of the Holy Spirit in answer to their prayers was so significant, so remarkable, that they then re-signed that covenant for seven years. So every seven years from that point on, they would re-up in this covenant.

This is 1742. If we can just wait for a moment, I can dig in my, here we go. Any of you know Claude King? Claude King is a dear friend of mine, and Claude King was searching on the internet.

Claude helped Henry Blackaby write *Experiencing God and Other Works*. Claude's just a wonderful man. Claude was looking on the internet several years ago and came across this on the internet.

And as soon as he saw me, he knew I was supposed to have it because he heard me tell this story about Cambuslang. This right here, if you can see it, you can't see it too closely. See, yeah, just something like that, is the communion token from 1742 in Cambuslang, Scotland, under the leadership of William McCullough and the preaching of George Whitefield.

This token is in my wallet, so it sits on my butt every day, reminding me of the power of United Prayer and how I must give myself to it and mobilize as many people as I know how into it. And I hope I can mobilize you too. This changes history.

It's so important. God will wait for it at the second coming of Jesus and the end of all things. Here's a prayer point.

Are you praying? Really, do you pray? Commit yourself to it. Prayer is the partnership between you and God for the unfolding of his work in history. His purposes are accomplished in partnership.

He has sovereignly chosen to work in concert with humankind for the accomplishment of his purposes on earth, the glory of Christ and the salvation of the lost. And he will wait for us to pray in that partnership before the new heaven and the new earth and the judgment of all things. That's you.

That's me. You don't like to pray? Tough. It's what we're raised to do.

It's what we're made to do. It's how all of this takes place. Repent before God and tell them that you're sorry, that you have abandoned something so important, so fundamentally valuable to the working of this kingdom.

And you pray only alone or repent before the Lord because he says that the united prayer has extraordinary power. In Acts chapter one, we're told in Acts chapter one that for 10 days prior to the outpouring of God's spirit on Pentecost, his saints prayed together. And the word there is *homothumadan*, with one mind.

One mind. They prayed with one mind. They prayed in concert and they persisted, wrestling with God like Jacob, refusing to let him go until he blessed him.

And when they had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter two, in Acts chapter two, 42 to 48, we're told that they continued in such prayer. In their homes, in the temple courts, they couldn't get enough of each other. They gave themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the breaking of bread, ongoing

prayer, committed prayer.

I will agree with you as touching this thing and I will refuse to let it go until God blesses us. All for his glory, the salvation of the lost and the raising up of Jesus our Savior as he deserves to be raised up over all of history. Now I was preaching in Mexico City some years ago and I was teaching on this issue of agreement.

And I had a translator and I, many of us have preached with translators, I know. But I said to the crowd, I said, I want you to just pair up, all of you. And translator had everyone pair up.

And I said, face each other and hold out your hands like this, hold out your hands like this. Maybe you could do it right now. Hold out your hands like this.

And I said, face each other and now put the tips of your fingers together. The tips of your fingers, tips of your friend or your spouse. Now imagine that you're holding a soccer ball, a football, but you're holding it between you.

Now don't let it drop. If one of you were to remove your hands, it would drop to the floor. Don't let it drop.

Hold this thing in agreement between you. And everyone in the crowd was touching each other's fingers and they were holding it in agreement with each other. It was great to see.

And I said, who could you put into your hands? Your children, your grandchildren, your village, your neighbor. Could you agree as touching this thing? United, concertedly, in agreement, not to let this go until God gives you what you ask for. Really powerful stuff.

Well, the next night I was going to preach again and my wife and I were staying down at the Central Square in old Mexico City, the Socolon, they called it. Big, huge flag, Mexican flag. Every morning, the military would come out and they would play on their trumpets and the National Anthem of Mexico, et cetera.

So we were waiting there and it got to be, I don't know, four o'clock in the afternoon. We had been walking around town and such a beautiful city, such beautiful crafts, such wonderful people, such syncretism as well. We went over to the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Metropolitan Cathedral, big, beautiful Catholic place. But we watched as people knelt to pray and crossed themselves and received the blessing of their priest and so on. And they would walk out the door and right out the back door, as you're facing the altar, there's a door to the left.

If you're on the altar, it'd be to your left, but from the audience, it would be to your right. They'd go out that door. So we followed them out the door and out the back and into the back of the church are the ruins of an ancient temple.

And there shamans stood, shamans. They stood with bowls of incense and eagle's feathers. And as the people came out of church, they went right down in front of the shamans and stood there in line, all of them in line.

And the shamans would blow, would wave the eagle's feathers into their faces, the smoke from the incense, and chant over them, their ancient religions. Well, this broke our hearts, of course, and we have prayed for them ever since, that God would pour out his spirit on Mexico. We love Mexico.

But that night, I was waiting for someone to come and pick me up a taxi, not a taxi, but just someone from the church where the conference was being held. And it got to be, I don't know, six o'clock. We had eaten dinner.

We're sitting in the lobby. No one has come. Got to be set at 6.30, 6.45. The service starts at seven and took at least 25 minutes to get across town.

And so I finally called, or I had someone in my party call and say, you know, it's getting near time. There's no driver. Oh, they'd forgotten.

It slipped through the cracks. No one had been designated that evening to come get me. Don't worry, don't worry.

We're okay, I told them. And they said, are you comfortable taking a taxi? And I said, yes, I'm comfortable if it's a good taxi. You know, in certain nations, there are certain categories of taxis.

If I can take a good one, I'd be happy to. So they went out and they got one of the high-end taxis to come in, and the taxi driver got up to the booth, the registration desk, and was talking on the phone. Uh-huh, C, C, C, yeah, C, C, yeah.

Chattering back and forth. He was getting directions where he was going. Well, we got into the back of the taxi and we sped off.

And within about 30 seconds, I knew we were going in the wrong direction. I just sensed it. And well, who am I? This gringo from up in America telling this local taxi driver where to go.

Until we drove up into the front of the Mormon tabernacle in Mexico City, and the taxi driver turns around and smiles at me and says, well, here you are. And I said, no, no, no, no, no. And in the most broken Spanish I could, you know, I was telling him it was out by the airport and it was this way and that way.

And for the next half hour or so, well, all in all, it took at least an hour for us to finally wave ourselves back and forth and we could find someplace to recognize this thing and that thing. And I got to the church and the street was filled with people who were very, very worried at this juncture. I didn't have my cell phone.

I didn't have anything to communicate. It was just tough. And we walked into the worship service and the entire place was crowded and everyone was facing each other in pairs, holding their hands together, touching their fingers to each other and crying out to God for salvation.

They were so frightened. And the pastor explained to me why they were frightened. It was because over the previous six or seven months, there'd been a series of carjackings and especially of American citizens who were in taxis, who were in taxis when the taxi drivers were in cahoots with bad guys and they would drive them to places where they would then be assaulted and some of them killed.

And they were so frightened for us. But they had learned the lesson of the night before. They held us in the palm of their hands together in agreement.

Who could you be praying for in such a way? And by the way, the most natural and the most powerful concert of prayer, praying Homo Thummadon with one mind is between husband and wife. And some of you, some of you need to repent that you don't pray with your wife. You don't pray with your spouse.

You don't put time aside to hold each other's hands for the sake of your children and your grandchildren and your friends and your extended family and your churches and the ministries you're in and the cities in which you live. I was afraid today I was going to be late. I should have been late.

But unfortunately, I got here on time to begin. But I was gathered with a march in my city of Minneapolis. Minneapolis, which has been burning the last couple of months.

And we saw riots, like I mentioned earlier, just a few nights ago again. The looting of stores and the burning of buildings. And there's a march, and we marched down the main street, just a short distance from where George Floyd was killed on the streets of Minneapolis and where the buildings are still burnt out.

Do you know that there have been revival services and baptisms and ongoing worship most nights of the week in the very intersection where George Floyd was killed? The outpouring of prayer and the outpouring of God's spirit upon that place has been really quite remarkable. And today, all day, the body of Christ is together in the city, in one of the troubled areas of the city, unitedly, they're standing together, shoulder to shoulder, hands touching hands, holding that blessed city in our hands and crying out to God for it. That's what we're doing for America.

That's what we're doing for the nations of the earth. That's what we're doing for November. So much is at stake.

We have to repent of our prayerlessness. We have to repent of our hopelessness. Without us, excuse me, without God, we can't, without us, he won't.

But with God, all things are possible, especially when we're in agreement and we seek him in power and grace. Well, Edwards wrote that book in 1747 about, inspired, because one of the, William McCullough, after that revival in Campbell's, Lance, Scotland, well, he wrote a letter to McCullough, to Jonathan Edwards, telling him all that took place. They were pen pals.

They had become pen pals because earlier in the 1730s, there was a great revival in America, in the American colonies, in New England, under the leadership of Edwards. McCullough was so inspired by it that he became a pen pal of Edwards. And he wrote to Edwards and told them all that took place in Campbell's, Lance, and that the covenant of concerted prayer, the concert of prayer, had been launched among the pastors of Scotland.

And now they were sending out letters and invitations to everywhere, everywhere on earth where the gospel was known and asking people to comply, asking people to join them. Edwards was so moved, so deeply moved, that he began that series of sermons in 1747 that became the book, a humble attempt to promote explicit agreement, not just fuzzy agreement, explicit agreement. What do we mean by that? Well, some years ago, we were doing an outreach in our community, and one of the elders, his name was Dave, said, let's pray for a good turnout.

And I turned to him, I said, Dave, what does a good turnout mean? And he thought for a moment, and he said, 600 people. And I looked at him and I said, Dave, do you have faith for 600 people? And he paused. And he said, 400 people.

And we all laughed. And I said, can you believe God for 400 people? And Dave said, yes, I can. I said, we're going to agree with you for 400 people.

That Friday night, when the count was taken, 403 people. And Dave came to me and said, pastor, next time, 600. In other words, our agreement and seeing the answer to our prayers had spawned in him faith to believe God for greater things.

And that's what God does. That's what prayer does. That's what our agreements do.

Explicit agreement, ask God for something. Don't be presumptuous. Don't be silly.

Let somebody ask you, do you really want to ask God for that? Because, but if you do, I'm going to join you. And visible union, the book says. Visible union, that means you actually get together.

In these days of Zoom calls and virtual prayer meetings, we understand what we need to do during this season of crisis, right? But it's not what God has in mind. Visible union, we're going to be together. We're going to pray together.

The word ekklesia for church in the Greek, ekklesia means the gathered ones. We're not a church unless we gather. We're the gathered ones.

This, in the gathering of the church, is the expression of the fullness of Christ's body. All the gifts are together. All the little relationships that then together look like the bride of Christ and the body of Christ.

Pray together, visible union. And do so with extraordinary prayer. There are times when just ordinary prayer will do, but these are not those times.

These are times for extraordinary prayer. Extraordinary prayer that says we're in such desperate need. We must cry out to you, God.

And not only am I in such desperate need, and we are in such desperate need, like Jacob wrestling with the angel, his brother was coming. Do you remember the story? He had cheated his brother, and now his brother was coming, and his brother was rich, and his brother was powerful, and his brother had military. He was strong.

He was coming. Jacob was afraid, and he wouldn't let the angel go until he knew that he was safe. Let's not let the angel go.

Let's not let the Lord go. Let's pray in this time, earnestly, an extraordinary prayer. And for what? For revival of religion.

Of true religion, Edwards wrote. Not just spirituality, but true religion. The gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is given to us by the apostles, attested to over time in the scriptures that we have been entrusted to with since Jesus returned to heaven. The letters, the gospels, the wonder of it, true religion, the revival of true religion. And of course, revival presupposes that something has gone bad.

Something is dying. Something is wasting away. It is wasting away.

All of us can feel it in America today. Can you agree with me that it's wasting away? But can you agree with me that God will give well beyond that which we could ask or imagine? And can bless even beyond our agreements? Do you know that Cambuslang situation in 1742, which spun out for decades after that throughout the known world, was appealed to once more in the 1790s when America was in a big mess?

Yes, we were. We were in a big mess.

There were things going on in America that, well, you'd think that everything was hunky-dory at the founding of our land, but it just simply wasn't the case. We were coming off of eight years of war. In the 1790s, we had superpowers poised on our borders, England and France, Spain.

We had divorced ourselves from England. That meant our ships and our means of transporting goods overseas. Well, they were compromised too.

There were threats of war. England was threatening to come back and fight again and to take us again. And, of course, that happened in the War of 1812, just a few years later.

There were pirates and terrorists on the seas that were taking our ships and our sailors. We were spending 20% of our gross income as a nation, our national budget, paying pirates in the Mediterranean, Islamic pirates, jihadists, as it were, who were taking our people and holding them for ransom in the Mediterranean until Jefferson sent in the Marines. Our first war, our first undeclared war.

We were near bankruptcy. We were near financial collapse. Two banking crises in that time period.

People lost all that they had. There were plagues and there were famines, just like we're having a plague today. No, no, no, this was really bad stuff.

Tens of thousands of people were dying. You know, a fever, smallpox, et cetera. There were national doubts as to whether we could live as a free people.

There was the Enlightenment coming in, and it was a godless thing coming in from France, taking our schools and our universities, and they're turning them into godless places that had an antithesis to the gospel itself. Our kids had to meet, as Christians, on these college campuses in secret for fear of the other students in their classes. There was the French Reign of Terror that killed tens of thousands of people in France, and we were afraid that they were gonna export it into the US.

There was social unrest. There were riots in the streets. There were burnings of buildings.

There were actually treasonous acts in these days, and people went on trial for treason. There was political rancor. We had the nastiest presidential election in American history in 1800, at the end of the 1790s, between Jefferson and Adams, and it came down to Jefferson and Burr, and it was settled in the House of, in Congress.

There was a coarse sensuality across the land. There was this anti-Christian sentiment, not only in the places of the universities, but in the intelligentsia as a whole, the press, and the bureaucracies, and so on. Empty churches, churches were empty.

Pastors were writing letters saying we had never seen such times, never seen, couldn't have imagined, and then there was slavery. You think we're dealing with racial issues now? It was slavery. It was a detestable thing that hung over the land, slavery, human cattle.

What did people do? They miss hope. They did not. They appealed back to Campbell's line, and said, this is what we have lost.

We have lost the pursuit of God, and they began praying, and praying, and praying, and letter writings, and things, and the collaboration of prayer societies, and groups of all kinds began seeking the favor of God. My friends, we could spend another couple of hours just telling the stories that came out of that. I would love to do so someday.

But the second Great Awakening came, more powerful than the first, and it changed the course of American history over the course of maybe eight or 10 years. Fundamentally, marvelously, graciously, the most explosive and powerful thing that America has ever experienced, and it was at the founding, shortly after we had ratified our form of government, and ourselves as a people. God can do it again, and I trust he will.

Can I pray for us as we close? And rejoice in it. Father in heaven, a few things that I wanna pray for. I wanna pray, oh Lord, that you grant those who are listening and watching a praying spirit.

I pray, Father, that you will grant to them not only a praying spirit, but that they will know that their prayers not only will change history, but will set the stage for eternity. I pray too, Father, that they will understand the power of unity, and the agreements that are entered into in prayer. But Lord, that they will be forgiven for not praying with their husbands, or their wives, or even their children.

That, oh Lord, you will pour out your spirit upon them, and they will raise up prayer societies, groups that will pray together, and pray together, and refuse to let you go until you bless them. And that, Lord, they will pray with confidence and hope. That, Lord, you will answer from heaven, and we will see the greatest thing that we've ever seen, beyond that which we could ask or imagine.

This is not above you or beyond you, oh Lord. This is what you do, and we have confidence in you. Because we know that we are sons and daughters of the Most High, brothers and sisters of Christ, co-heirs with Christ, with whom we will reign over the nations of the earth forever.

Thank you, oh Lord, for this time.

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