

Jesus, Help Me!

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the power of the prayer 'Jesus help me' as a constant plea for divine assistance in various life situations. It delves into the importance of not just praying but also being willing to act and surrender to God's leading, especially in reaching out to a world in need of redemption. The message draws parallels from the stories of Abraham interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah and Jonah's reluctance to fulfill God's call, highlighting the need to go beyond prayer and actively engage in God's work with a heart of compassion and love.

Scripture: Genesis 18:23, Jonah 1:12, Romans 7:18, James 2:17, Matthew 9:36, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:1, Matthew 6:10, 1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 2:10

Topics: "Power of Prayer", "Active Faith in Action"

Description

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Transcript

I'm going to speak about one of my favorite prayers tonight. This is about a prayer meeting. It's about the power of prayer.

It's about the prayer that Jesus has always answered all of my days. And it's three words. Does anybody know what that prayer is? Jesus help me.

It's the prayer I prayed. I still pray it. I prayed it last week in my hotel room before going out to speak to hundreds of people in a conference gathering.

I'm never too proud to pray it. I pray it all the time. Jesus help me.

I pray it when I get up in the morning, especially when I'm trying to put on my socks. I'm so old now. I got to sometimes lay down on my back on the bed and put my knees up so I can put my socks on.

And I find myself saying, Jesus help me. It's a good prayer. You can pray it all your life.

It's easy to memorize, very easy to memorize. And you can focus on different words. It can be on Jesus, it can be on help, and it can be on me.

And you can say it nine different ways, this prayer. If you work at it, you'll get it. Nine different ways you can say Jesus help me.

But it is the one prayer throughout my life that God has always answered. Jesus help me. And so I want to go through some stories of Scripture tonight and maybe explain how that particular prayer can make a difference for you and I today, especially we're living in a generation that is dark.

We're living at a time when society seems to be unraveling all around us. A season where evil is becoming good and good is becoming evil, where confusion is starting to abound. As the Bible says that the lawlessness and the iniquity in people will get to the point where the love of many, that many of God's people even will start to grow cold.

And that speaks to me of the love of the work of God. Now what is the work of God? The work of God is the redemption of the lost, is reaching people who are without God, are going to spend an eternity in hell unless they find out about the cross, the love, and the message of God's redemption. And they won't hear about it unless you and I go to them.

So we need a sovereign help to stay engaged with the work of God as the people of God. And you who are listening online who might be just new to the kingdom of God, or you're just maybe even still outside and you're not quite engaged yet with the kingdom of God, you also need the help that only God is able to give you in the days ahead. It is no shame for any one of us to pray the prayer, Jesus help me.

So tonight, Jesus help me. Help me Lord to assure these truths from your Word in a way that is easy to be understood, in a way that people desire to embrace it, in a way that makes it plain and simple. God help me Lord Jesus Christ to be able to convey your heart God through the pages of Scripture to those that are here in this sanctuary and those that are listening online.

God Almighty overshadow the frailty of this human body and this human mind and let me just be a vessel through whom you can reach and teach and speak. Lord we invite you God. We don't want to hear from a man, we want to hear from you.

It has to be your voice, it has to be your heart, it has to be your leading Lord. So I simply yield my body to you. You say it's reasonable that I should do so as a living sacrifice for your purposes.

So Lord whatever you want to do, we invite you to do it. But only let your kingdom come tonight. Let your kingdom advance.

Let us grow in the true grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Help anybody Lord that's listening online tonight who has not yet made the decision to let you be God in their life and Savior of their lives. Lord help them to get across that line even if all they can pray is Jesus help me.

And I thank you for this and for hearing this prayer tonight in your precious name. Amen. Old testament, Genesis chapter 18.

A man called Abraham. Now this man's been given an incredible promise of God just like you and I have. He's been taken outside by God.

He's been shown the stars in the heavens and the Lord said to him if you can count the stars in the heaven that's the number of descendants you're going to have. Now Abraham would have have no real way of understanding the greatness of the promise that God is making to him. As a matter of fact he's told him you're going to become a great nation.

We know that would be the nation of Israel. He told him that through you the whole world is going to be blessed. He could have no way of knowing that through the the nation of Israel is going to be born a Messiah and through the Messiah is going to be born a people in the earth called the church of Jesus Christ.

That we are ultimately the fulfillment of what God was promising to Abraham and that through us the world would be blessed. How? By God bringing the knowledge of who he is to people who live and sit in darkness through a people called his church, his bride on the earth, which is you and I. So we are that fulfillment in a sense of the promise in great measure that was made to Abraham. We are the people through whom the world is supposed to be blessed.

We are the people that that God sends into the darkness to bring light. He sends into confusion to bring order. He sends us into places where maybe people without the heart of God wouldn't go, without the heart of God.

As God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son, could it be said that God so still loves the world that he gives his only church, that whoever believes through their testimony about Jesus Christ might be saved? Now Abraham has had a bit of a journey. We know the history of Abraham. He didn't do it all right.

Does anybody here has ever done it all right? Please don't raise your hand. Please don't do that because then we, you know, then we have to pray for you because you are deluded, you know. Nobody here has done it all right.

We've all made mistakes along the journey. We've said things we shouldn't say we've done and Abraham did that. He, because of fear, he, his wife ends up in Pharaoh's court for a season and there's just stuff that he does that we do.

He's, Abraham is not a perfect man. He just simply believes God and the Bible says it was accounted to him for righteousness or right standing with God as it is. Abraham has had a long journey and now in Genesis 18 he finds himself, he has prospered.

He's got quite a household now. Four chapters earlier he has saddled up 318 warriors, you know, soldiers in a sense from his own house and he's gone and fought against the kings who took his son-in-law and family captive when Sodom and Gomorrah was defeated in a small civil war. And so finally he's at a place of rest.

He's in the tent and he's got a beautiful wife. As a matter of fact, she's almost, she's 90 years old and people are still threatening to kill him over her. So she's pretty.

I'm telling you, this girl is pretty and he's even feared at one point for his own life because she was so beautiful. But he's in a tent and he's got, obviously he's got goods, he's got a family, he's increased and he's got shelter and he's got the presence of God with him, just like maybe you and I. We all want a place to live. We all want to be comfortable.

We want provision and he's got all of that. We want, as Isaac shared tonight, we want somebody to love and he's found that. And suddenly two angels and a pre-incarnate Christ come and visit him.

That's the way most interpret this. And they sit in his tent and the Son of God offers him, tells him that Sarah, his wife, is going to have a son. So now he's not only got all the things around him, but he's got the promise of the life that he's always longed for, the future that he's always wanted, this ache in his heart that he's always believed that God is going to provide to him.

And so he's got the promise and the Lord leaves his tent after commuting with him for a season, and then he says in Genesis 18, 17, he says, the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Now the Lord then reveals to Abraham, there's such a wickedness in this society around you. It's probably not that far from where Abraham had pitched his tent, a place called Sodom and Gomorrah.

It had become so vile that the report of its vileness had actually ascended into heaven. The pre-incarnate Christ had come down with two angels to see, in a sense, if it's as bad as the report has been, according to the Scriptures, that has come up to heaven itself. And he lets Abraham know that he's going to destroy this place called Sodom and Gomorrah.

It's going to be sovereignly judged by fire. Societies can get so bad throughout history that they have to be judged. And I often wonder, are we getting very close to this? We have killed 60 million children in the womb in this nation.

We now call evil good and good evil. We're redefining everything that God defines as true and right and holy. We're defining evil now as true and right and good in the sight of man.

You can't help but wonder how close are we as a society today to the judgment of God. Now Abraham gets into a prayer meeting, just like we're in a prayer meeting tonight. Abraham comes into what I call a prayer meeting outside of Sodom.

I preached on it years ago, and that's the title I gave to the message. And he's saying to the Lord Himself, he said, Abraham came near and said, Would you also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were 50 righteous within the city. Would you also destroy the place and not spare it for the 50 righteous that were in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked.

Far be it from you, shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Now this is quite a bold prayer when you really read it in context. He is standing in intercession, in a sense, and saying, God, you can't destroy the city if 50 righteous are in it, because it's not like you. It can't be said of you that you would destroy the righteous with the wicked and treat them the same way that the wicked are treated.

It can't be said of you. This is not right. And Abraham says, Should not the God or the judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord responds and says, If I find 50 righteous within the city, then I'll spare the place for their sakes.

Then Abraham answered and said, Indeed now, I am who but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose there were five less than 50 righteous. Would you destroy it, all of the city, for lack of five? He said, If I find 45 there, I will not destroy it.

And he spoke to him yet again and said, Suppose there should be 40 found there. He said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 40. Then he said, Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak.

Suppose 30 are found there. So he said, I will not do it if I find 30 there. Now Abraham goes on and says, Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord.

Suppose 20 should be found there. So he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 20. Then he said, Let not the Lord be angry.

I will speak. But once more, suppose 10 should be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 10.

So the Lord went his way as soon as he had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place. I've always been perplexed by this story. Number one, why did he stop at 10? You know, sometimes we go to a prayer meeting and we just think, well, you know, I've gotten it down, like I've kind of chiseled away in a sense at this problem, and I've gotten it down to what I consider a reasonable level.

And so we stop. We stop 10 short of the victory. As a matter of fact, there were four righteous.

They were iffy righteous, but the Bible does declare Lot righteous. And his wife and two daughters were rescued by the angels out of the city. So that means he's only six souls short of the victory.

So sometimes in our prayers, we're so close when we quit. You know, it says Jesus went His way, and we're assuming this is a pre-incarnate Christ appearance, and then Abraham goes his way and goes back to his tent and back to his wife and back to his provision and back to his family. He's chiseled it down to 10.

The interesting thing is the Lord has said to him, if I find 10 righteous in the city, I'll spare it. I would think if I was Abraham, I don't know about you, but I would think I would go back, and I've got probably seven, 800 people in my entourage that travels with. He's a very wealthy man.

He has just saddled 318 men and fought against some of the kings that had fought against Sodom and Gomorrah. I think I would think I would go back and say, I need 10 volunteers to live in Sodom and Gomorrah, for real, because the Lord has told me if 10 righteous people are in the city, He will not destroy it. So we need 10 people who are going to get up, and it might be a year, it might be six months.

It will give us a season to at least go into the city and warn these people about the coming judgment that's coming their way. It seems reasonable that He had gotten it down to the place where, why would He just go home? I've always been perplexed by this. Maybe some theologian here has the answer for me in this, but if I was Abraham, I think I would have gone back and say, we've got this thing.

There's a city about to be destroyed. Yes, maybe they deserve it, and yes, maybe judgment will come, but until that day, we have it within our power to slow down this judgment of God, maybe for a short season. If I can find 10 volunteers to go into the city, make your home there, and we will go in there, and we will warn them about the coming judgment, but He didn't do it.

He just went home. So the angels took four out, and everyone else burnt in that city. Really sad in a sense, you know, when you think, and maybe I might think He's not right on this, but I honestly think that if 10 righteous had moved into the city, then God had already said, I won't destroy it for 10 righteous.

If 10 righteous are found, so it seems reasonable that maybe 10 missionaries could have gone there, and the Lord, maybe for a year or six months, and if judgment was inevitable, I have no doubt He would have warned the righteous to get out of the city. He would have taken them out before judgment came, but Abraham, for whatever reason, went home. And it kind of reminds me of prayer meetings, maybe in our generation, where we go, and we pray, and we think maybe that our prayers are just enough, that it requires nothing of us.

I want you to think about that sometimes. We pray, oh God, send deliverance. Oh God, be merciful to the city.

Oh God, for the sake of 10 righteous, don't judge the city, and we kind of implore, and we feel we've got the answer, and then we just go back to our tent, and our wife, and our cattle, and our comfort, and we just say, well, I did my bit. I went to a prayer meeting. You know, the funny thing is, like, especially in the Western world, in our season, we somehow got the idea that it doesn't require anything of us.

We just go to pray, and prayer in itself is enough. But James, in the New Testament, said, faith without works is dead. Faith without it, and outworking of that faith, faith that doesn't bring us to a place of saying, God, send me, if necessary.

I throw my life in with my prayers. It's a concept that we have lost in the Western world. I'm going to just say it straight out.

We've lost it. The thought of taking up our cross, the thought of going to the lost, the thought of being given for the sake of others, the thought of living for the benefit of others, has eluded much of our generation. So even when we do pray, we're always kind of holding on to the measure of our own protection, our own security, and our own comfort.

Now, there was a man also in the Old Testament, whose name was Jonah, who was commissioned by God, again, to go to a place he didn't want to go, commissioned to a people who were known for their violence against the people of God, and it kind of nauseated him, the thought of going there. He didn't like these people, and he actually wanted them to be judged. And he was afraid that if he went and preached to them, God might forgive them and let them live another day so they could captivate more or hurt more of his own people.

There was a history there. There was a bitterness there. He didn't want to go.

And so he bought a ticket, and he went in the opposite direction. He's still a servant of God. He's still a prophet of God.

He's still called of God. He's just going in the opposite direction. He's got his fingers stuck in his ears, and he's saying, I am not interested.

I'll pray. God, could I just pray for the Ninevites, but do I really have to go there? Do I really have to talk to these Assyrians, these people who have caused such heartache to our people, these people who really deserve your judgment? They really deserve to burn. Why would I want to go there? So can I just pray? Isn't that good enough? Do I really have to give of myself? Do I really have to do something? And so on the sea, on this journey away from God, the Scripture tells us this great storm arose.

And you know, folks, I'll tell you something. God is able to put us in a storm. You know, you could be in a storm right now, and it could be a storm that, you know, nobody else around you sees it, but you're like this.

You're in your seat, and you're just like, God, I'm getting hit from every side, the waves, and I feel like I'm drowning. And you recognize it. What is wrong? What's going on in my life? And everybody on that boat that Jonah was on, they were all crying out to their version of God.

Of course, there's no answer, because their versions weren't God. And finally, they wake him up, and they say, who are you? What is your occupation? What are you people? Where do you come from? And Jonah says, well, I'm a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. And the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, why have you done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

And they said, what shall we do that the sea may be calm for us? You know, so he is suddenly aware, says, God, this turmoil is upon these people, because I'm unwilling to do what you've asked me to do. You're wanting me to go to a certain place, and I'm trying to go somewhere else, and because of it, everyone around me is in a storm. I want to speak to people online tonight.

God is asking you to surrender your life to Christ. He's asking you to read the Word of God. He's asking you to let the Holy Spirit begin to change you from the inside out, because the promise of God is that in Christ, you will become a new creation.

All around you is a storm. Your family are drowning. Your children are drowning.

Your marriage is drowning. Your neighbors are drowning. And God is now speaking to you, and saying, it's you that I'm trying to get a hold of.

And many, many people will be out of their, they will be taken out of their storm the moment that you step over the line, and you come into right relationship with me. And I'll begin to use your life to calm their storm, and to bring them, in a sense, to the place they desire to go to. Now, here's where it gets interesting.

Jonah said, they said, what shall we do you that the sea may be calm for us, for the sea was growing more tempestuous? And he said, pick me up and throw me into the sea, and then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that this great tempest is because of me. Now, I find that interesting. Pick me up and throw me in.

You know, is he incapable of climbing over the side of the boat by himself? Think it through for a minute. You know, he knew what to do, but he couldn't do it. You know, sometimes we know what to do, but we need somebody to help us to do it.

In other words, like the sides of the boat can't be that high, but he knew, I know what to do, but I am incapable of doing it. And so he cries out to the, he says to the men on the ship, pick me up and throw me into the source of the storm. And when I'm in this, when I'm thrown into the storm, it will become calm for you.

In other words, Jesus help me. I know what to do, but I can't do it in my own strength. I know where I should be, but I can't get there in my own strength.

I know what you're calling me to do, but I don't want to do it, and I can't do it in my own strength. You have got to pick me up, and you've got to take me where I need to go. And there is no shame in crying out, Jesus help me.

Jesus help me. Jesus help me to care about other people. I don't care about others.

It's a Jonah situation. I don't care about the Assyrians. I don't even like them, and I don't want to go there.

But God, if you want me to go there, pick me up, help me, and throw me in. That's the only, and God knows how to get you. He's got a fish prepared for everyone here.

He knows how to get you exactly where you need to go. He'll get you. You don't worry about how you're going to get there.

Once he throws you in, you're going to find your way there. It's you. It's me.

It's people like us. You know, I remember when I first was called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I didn't like people.

Why would I want to preach them? I don't even like them. I remember the first time I walked into church, and I'm brand new to the Lord, and we come into this charismatic church, and this old guy, old guy, he's my age, he comes up to me, and he hugged me. Now, first of all, it gave me the creeps.

I just didn't like, like nobody hugged in my hockey team. Trust me, nobody hugged. You know what I mean? And so this guy hugs me, and he says, I love you.

And I just, like this, I just looked at him as he backed away from me. I just looked at him, and my wife said to me, Pastor Teresa said, well, why didn't you tell him you love him? I said, I don't even like the guy. Why would I tell him I love him? And then I feel called to preach the gospel, but I don't really like people.

Because if you know my story, people were a source of pain in my life. I didn't like being around crowds of people. I didn't like being vulnerable before people.

I didn't want any kind of intimate relationships with anybody. I'm the worst candidate to ever be called into the ministry. I was a Jonah.

And so the only thing I could pray is, Jesus, help me. Throw me into the sea. Throw me into their troubles.

Throw me into where the people live, because I can't go there by myself. And there is no shame to pray that prayer. There's no shame to say, Jesus, help me.

I know what to do, but I, as Paul says in Romans, the condition of like the human heart, I know what to do. And I delight after it in the inner man, but I find another law warring against me and the members of my flesh, bringing me into the captivity of the law of sin. I know that I should be kind.

I know that I should do more than just go back to my tent when I pray. I know that people are perishing, and I should be willing to go there and give of myself for their sakes, if that's what it takes to save them. God, help me not to just pursue my own comfort.

That's the dilemma of this generation. One more time, God's going to have to stir us with a storm. One more time, every Jonah and Jonette's going to have to rise up one more time and say, Lord, throw me into

the midst of this tempest.

Don't let me intercede for the people and then go back home and just enjoy my meal and enjoy my tent and enjoy my treasure and enjoy my success and enjoy my own relationships when these people are going to burn in their sin. God, help me. God, help me.

I'm praying that right now. I'm praying that every day. Jesus, help me.

Help me not to draw back. Help me to keep going forward. Help me to preach the gospel.

Help me to yield my life for your purposes as a living sacrifice. Help me to speak the things that need to be spoken. Give me the heart that I need to speak it.

Oh, God, take me out of weakness and bring me into the strength that can only come from your Holy Spirit. This is the cry of my heart. It's the prayer I've always prayed.

Jesus, help me. Jesus, help me. And to those that are listening online tonight, it's you getting up off of your couch.

It's you getting up and saying, I'm going with God. I'm in all the way. I'm going to take the word decided and I'm going to text it to 51,000.

I'm not letting somebody else do what I'm called to do. By the grace of God, God Almighty is going to throw me in the place where I need to be for the sake of others around me. And He will give you the strength.

He'll give you the help. He'll give you the heart. It will all be given to you.

I was doing an interview with Susie Larson, and she's got a radio station somewhere in the Midwest. And it was a radio program. And she said to me, I've read your book.

It's time to pray. And you've had so many miracles all over the world. And you've seen civil wars come to an end and all this stuff.

And she said, tell me, what's the greatest miracle you've ever seen in your lifetime? Without any hesitation, I said, the greatest miracle I've ever seen is that I love people. And she started to cry. She said that she actually cried in the interview.

She said, that is the last thing I ever expected you would say. I said, no, that's the first and the greatest miracle of all, because without that one, none of the other ones ever would have happened. I never would have gone.

I wouldn't, I wouldn't have gone into a war zone in Nigeria. I wouldn't have gone into no man's land in the middle of hell on earth in Jamaica. I wouldn't have gone into Burundi in a season of war.

I wouldn't have gone into Hindu-Muslim prisons. I wouldn't have let myself be locked into Sullivan maximum security prison with 60 lifers, all these places, everything. I wouldn't have done it if I didn't love people.

And you see, because God enabled me, then He threw me like Jonah into the middle of somebody else's struggle. That's the point. That's everything I think that God has given me to say this evening, that we

would have the courage just to say, Jesus, help me.

I know what's right. I know what I should do. I know what you're calling me to do, and I know what you're asking of me, but give me the courage.

Don't let me intercede to the point where it gets down to 10 people and just go home and the place burns. So the intercession was for nothing because the city's burnt and everyone is in hell today that was in those cities. Don't let me get it down to 10 and just go home and say, well, I did my part when I was so close to at least a mercy moment, at least a mercy moment for those people, whether or not they would repent, at least they would have a chance to hear.

Give me the grace not to draw back from human need in this day when it's getting so dark when men's and women's minds are becoming so vile, when it's all just seems like an assyria, everybody seems against the testimony of Christ and the people of God. Help me, Lord, not to live just to preserve myself. Give me the heart of the Son of God who came to this earth and died for me.

If he died for me, then I think it's only right that I should live for others. I don't think it's exemplary. I think it's just honorable and I think it's true that I should.

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