

Pray With an Honest Heart

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying with an honest heart and a relationship with God, rather than just following a formula or performing a ritual.

Duration: 22:02

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, Psalm 145:18, Matthew 6:7, Matthew 6:33, Luke 18:38, Ephesians 4:8, Hebrews 10:19

Topics: "Heart"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that believers do not need to beg God to do what He has already accomplished through Jesus' victory. The speaker uses the analogy of a victorious king distributing spoils among his people to illustrate how Jesus has taken away all that hell had. The sermon highlights the importance of sincere and honest prayers, rather than relying on fancy or lengthy words. The speaker also addresses the need for believers to pray for deliverance from the influences of a godless agenda in society, particularly for the freedom and protection of children, high schoolers, and college students. The sermon references Luke 18 and Matthew 6:7 to support these teachings.

Transcript

Father, tonight we ask you, God, that you would push back the darkness that wants to swallow our whole nation. We believe, God, that this is a nation that you founded. You brought some people here and gave them a promise that if they would seek you, that you would give them a land where men and women could worship you, Lord, in freedom of conscience.

Now we see darkness trying to take that freedom away. And God Almighty, we ask you, Lord, that according to your word, when darkness comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord would raise up a standard against it. So God, we ask you, like a spiritual tsunami, to come and sweep over your house, over your people, my God, sweep away all the compromise, the refuge of lies, everything, God, that makes us a weak light in a darkened hour.

And Lord, we ask you, God, to give us clear vision and a clear testimony again. Give us authority and power to stand up and believe you, Lord. We ask you for your holy name's sake, Jesus, that you would set our children free from this immoral, godless agenda that is trying to baptize them in filth and perversion.

We ask, Lord, you set our high schoolers free from those who would try to dominate their minds and mock them if they believe in you. God Almighty set our college students free in this country from those who

would indoctrinate them against you and against their own nation. Lord Jesus Christ set our families free, God, from all of the selfishness, Lord, that causes marriages to break apart, the heartache that has become the standard fare of our children.

Set our homes free, God, from all of the influences of the ungodly through television and through the media, Lord, that have come into our homes and weakened your people. Forgive us, Lord, as you warned your own people not to make affiliation with the Canaanites lest the worship of their gods would take away their strength. God, help us to turn away from these things that have robbed us of strength as your people and taken away our vision.

My God, have mercy on your house and have mercy on the nation. Bring us back into unity with you, Lord. Give us again the power of your Holy Spirit to stand against, Lord, everything that would come to swallow the testimony, God, that you have established in us through your son, Jesus Christ.

Have mercy, Lord. Have mercy on this nation. Have mercy on our government, God.

They're so confused. Have mercy, Lord, on those who are supposed to lead us as a people. Have mercy, Lord, on your house, God, and all of the light pastors that have stood in pulpits and led us into this moment of weakness, Lord, in our nation.

Give us men and women of God again who will open your word and speak to the people on your behalf. Deliver us, Lord, from the lightness and the treachery, God, that has so weakened your house. Oh, Jesus, Son of God, tonight we stand at your throne and we recognize that it's only you that can make a difference now.

We have lost the right, Lord. We've lost the power. We've lost the influence.

It's only you that can vindicate your own name. And so, Lord God, we ask you to do that. We ask you to vindicate your name, Lord, in this generation.

We ask you for mercy one more time, that you would literally sweep our borders, oh God, sweep our homes, our churches, Lord, God Almighty, everywhere. Sweep the society and find every person who can still hear your name. Lord God, we thank you for this tonight with all of our heart.

Thank you for your forgiveness and your mercy, Lord. We recognize, Lord, that we deserve shame of face. We deserve it, Lord.

We deserve it. But to you, Lord, belongs glory. To you belongs righteousness.

To you belongs power. To you, Lord, belongs honor. It belongs to you, Lord.

We're not looking for it to be given to us. We don't deserve it. But you do, Lord.

You do, Lord. You are the creator of all things. Everything is sustained by your hand.

And so tonight, Father, God, God, help us. Help us, Lord Jesus Christ, to come into right relationship with you and to trust in your power again in our generation. God, we thank you for it, and we praise you in Jesus' name.

Gospel of Matthew chapter 6 and verse 7. Jesus said, And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. You know, sometimes you and I can fall into that trap, the trap of thinking that somehow we just have to hit the right note with God, maybe the right time frame.

If I pray for an hour, maybe God will hear me. If I pray for two hours, maybe God will hear me. And we can find ourselves in a performance mode when that's never been the desire of God for prayer, ever.

You know, over the years, it's been a cry in my heart to learn how to pray. And I thank God he finally answered it. But for years, it was, Oh, Jesus, help me to pray.

Teach me to pray. Not realizing that that was the prayer that God was looking for. So I left the answer to pursue the question.

It's amazing. And so I read books on prayer. I read about how people prayed until they melted the snow.

You ever tried that? You ever knelt down in the snow? All I did is almost freeze to death. I didn't melt anything. I remember a guy called Payson prayed until his heart was enlarged when he died at 26, because he had such a burden, they say, that they found his heart was like so enlarged that that's actually what killed him.

And we look at all of these other people that prayed for hours and hours and days and days and thank God for them. Thank God. I've never been able to find that place the way they did.

I try as I may. I tried it. I tried it.

I started the five o'clock club in Canada. It got to be known in our area where one person got up and called the next person, called the next person at five o'clock, it all started. Then we all got up and supposedly prayed only to find out that nobody was praying after a while.

We're all just calling each other and go back to bed. I would get up in the morning because I was the leader of this thing. I felt obliged to pray because you have to pray.

It has to be five o'clock or it's not holy, right? God doesn't hear it. He only hears at five. He gets busy around seven.

He can't hear you anymore. So I got up at five o'clock and I would go in my living room and get on my knees because it has to be on your knees, it's not really prayer if you're not on your knees. I mean, there's a whole formula to this thing, isn't there? Then I'd put my face down.

Usually there were two cushions in the couch and there was like a little slot in the middle. I kind of fit my face in the middle of the two cushions. Then at five o'clock, I'd get on my knees and I generally wake up about seven o'clock, but I had been on my face.

It was true. I was on my face and on my knees before God. So the letter of the law is fulfilled.

I read these books about, there was this one guy got this whole prayer thing going and it became very big in the church about, you went into the outer court and you kind of cleansed your garments. Then you went to, do you remember this stuff? Then you went to the laver and you cleansed and washed in the water. Then you offered his sacrifice.

It was Old Testament and it was how the Old Testament was the type and shadow of prayer. He had to go through this whole rigmarole to get into the Holy of Holies. You're so exhausted by the time you get there, you can't even remember what it was that you were coming into.

And we get into this pattern of thinking it's by the multitude of our speaking that God answers us. And I went through all of that stuff. There was a prayer I used to pray because I used to be a jogger.

I wasn't much of one, but I used to be a jogger when I was younger. And there was a prayer I just prayed all the time. Jesus, help me.

Oh God, help me. Oh God, lead me. And I would run for a mile, two miles, three miles, whatever.

And I would pray that prayer the whole time. And I was praying, help me to pray. And I was already praying the prayer I needed to pray.

Jesus, help me. And you begin to realize over all the years, all the prayers and the gimmicks that I fell into and all the formulas. And that was the one prayer that he answered all the time.

He helped me. He led me. He showed me the pathway.

He gave me the strength. You know, the Bible talks in Romans 8, 26, Paul the apostle said, the spirit of God intercedes in us with groanings that cannot be uttered. So sometimes a prayer doesn't have words.

It's deeper than words. It's a groan. It's a longing for God.

It's a longing for his kingdom that can't be put into words. You remember Hannah in the book of 1 Samuel chapter one, verse 13, it says she, she was so tired of being barren. She was so tired of not bearing life.

She was so tired of, of, of feeling unfulfilled that she went into the temple. And the Bible says that her lips were moving, but no words were coming out. The groan was just in her.

She couldn't speak. I don't know if you've ever been there. I've been under a burden like that, where I didn't have the words to express what I was feeling.

And words seemed to fall so short of what was going on in my heart. There was really no vocabulary to express it. It was just a groan, but God heard it.

He heard her groan. Thanks be to God and gave her that which she had requested of him. And he, she became the mother of one of the greatest prophets in all of Israel, Samuel, a man who anointed David to be king of Israel.

The man who could change the tenure of every town that he walked into came out of that emptiness that was in that woman, where she went to a prayer meeting and really had no words left to express what was in her heart. But God heard her, even though she didn't speak. Isn't that amazing? God heard her.

You see, prayer is not always in a multitude of words. It's what's in your heart. What is it you're asking God for? She was saying, God, give me life.

That was her cry. And it was so deep within her. There were no longer any words.

Give me something that can glorify you. Give me something that will take away my shame and my reproach. And sometimes prayer is just too deep for words.

The Bible tells us in Psalm 107, if you have time to read it, that prayer is just an honest cry. Psalmist talks about people who were foolish and disregarded the ways of God and got themselves into trouble. Others who knew the word of God and instead chose to build a prison around themselves by their behaviors.

It talks about those who completely thought that money and finance was going to give them fulfillment only to find themselves in the storm and not know how to get out of the storm. But there's one common factor for all these people. It says, then they cried and the Lord heard them.

It wasn't a fancy prayer and it was not filled with the multitude of words. It was from an honest heart. God helped me get me out of this prison.

I've built around myself. God helped me forgive me for thinking that money could satisfy all the needs in my life when only you can. Not a lot of words, but they came from an honest heart.

Luke chapter 18 talks about multitudes following Jesus. Everybody has their agenda. Everybody's trying to kind of corral him and push him in a certain way.

And there's a man just on the side of the road in Jericho and everybody's telling him to be quiet. But when he heard that Jesus was passing by, what was his prayer? Thou son of David have mercy on me. Have mercy on me.

Now there was no formula. There was no labor. There was no sacrifice.

There was no five o'clock club. There was no multiplicity of words, but his prayer was the one who stopped Jesus. His prayer, the multitudes were not stopping him, but this man's prayer did have mercy on me.

Jesus. Jesus said, bring that man to me. He said, what do you want me to do for you? Don't you love that? What do you want me to do? He says, I want to see.

I want to see. And Jesus said, okay, see here it is. And the scripture tells us that man went on worshiping him and praising him.

I don't know how long he followed him. I don't know how far I suspect it was to the end of his days. God answers prayer.

The whole time I was asking God to teach me to pray. I was praying. Isn't that ironic? The whole time he was taking me from image to image and glory to glory, place to place, door to door, ministry to ministry, depth to depth.

And the whole time I was thinking I wasn't praying when I was praying. Isn't that ironic? It's truly amazing. So I want to suggest tonight that we realize that we don't have to beg God to do what he died to do.

He already won the victory. Took your captivity captive. And the Bible says, gave gifts unto men like freely, freely gave us the victory, the spoils of the victory.

In the old Testament, when a King went in and won a victory, he came home with, he came home with clothing and gold and silver and emeralds and diamonds and sheep and goats and everything. And he

divided it equally among the people, just gave the spoils of the victory. Well, that's what he did.

He went and he took away all that hell had. He won a victory. And then when he was raised from the dead and went back to sit at the right hand of his father, he allowed us to share in the spoils of the victory.

And yes, it, we don't, we don't receive what God wants to give us because we get the right formula. You understand? That's all I'm saying tonight. I'm not saying don't pray for an hour, pray for an hour.

If, if, but don't think your performance is going to get you anything. It's not by performance. It's by faith.

It's by understanding his heart. It's by knowing who Christ is. It's by understanding the depth of his love, the desire that he had to give you and I freedom and healing and vision for the future and strength in our weakness.

And as we started out saying tonight, beauty for our ashes, joy for our mourning and the garment of praise for our heaviness. We don't have to beg him. And there's no formula to all of this.

And anybody tells you that there is a formula. They they're so distant from God. They they're out of earshot.

No, don't use vain repetitions and think that you'll be heard for your much speaking. Here's my advice to you. I've learned this maybe after 40 something years now of walking with God, pray with an honest heart, pray with an honest heart.

You know, sometimes your prayer can be something like this. Oh God, I am just so bummed today for real. I'm just so tired of the liars all around me and the people in my office and just, and my kids just adding, but Oh God, you know, and he's not offended by that.

He's not offended by the honest heart. Help me, Lord. I know I should love my enemies.

I don't at the moment. So help me. I know I need patience with my kids, but it just seems that I yell before I try to reason.

God, help me. You won the victory so that I can be a partaker of it. And I need it now.

You said you gave gifts unto people and I need patience. I need faith. I need a sound thinking.

I need power. I need love. The things you said belong to me.

So Lord, here I am. My basket is empty. You know, and again, he says, just as he said to the blind man, what do you want me to do for you? It's in his heart to give these things, but don't let prayer become what it's not intended to be.

Pray from an honest heart, pray unashamedly, pray honestly before God. And you watch what will start to happen. You start to realize that prayer leaves the realm of being a formula and it becomes an all day event.

I talk to God all day. I talk to him all day. I talk to him if I'm, if I've got a can of soup that I'm heating up on the stove, I can talk to him and I don't, I don't feel obliged to talk to him for a half hour at a time.

I talk to him just as long as I feel a leading in my heart and then he can speak back to me. Then I just do something else for a while. Then I'm walking down the street and I talk to him.

Praise God. I'm starting to pray out loud on the streets. You can do that here in New York.

I said it earlier, just, just put one of those white things in your ear and talk to him. Everybody thinks you're on the phone. Well, you are in a sense you're on heaven's line and you're talking to him.

He can hear you. You know, people are talking to themselves all over the place here. I see it all and some of them have phones and some don't, but they're all talking to themselves.

So it's not out of the ordinary. So just get one of those, I don't know what you call them, pods and stick it in your ear and talk to God as you go down the street on the subway. I mean, and, and, and talk to him like you're talking to a friend.

Don't get into this machine gun kind of prayer. You know what I'm talking about? Father, God, for the God, for the God, for God, for God. Like people think that your record is stuck and they got to hit the side of your head and get you moving.

Just talk to him. Talk to him. There's no formula to this.

And you're not going to be heard because you say his name a hundred thousand times. Just talk to him. God, I pray for that girl on the other end of the subway.

I'm asking you for the girl on the other end of the subway car. She looks so down, please. Would you, do you have mercy on her? You know, maybe nobody's ever prayed for that lady or that guy or that person, you know, or, or maybe your situation with your kids and your family, just talk to God and watch how, how much strength that will give to you.

And when you do, you're going to find your life takes a whole other dimension, a whole other place of strength. He died to give us a relationship with him, not a religion, a relationship. And so don't talk to him any differently other than recognizing he is God, obviously, but don't talk to him any differently than you would somebody else that you love.

Just, just talk to him. It's so liberating. My wife came home a couple of months ago and she said to me, who are you talking to downstairs? I said, Jesus.

I said, because I'm alone so much. That's what I do all day. I talk to him, talk to him when I'm downstairs.

I talk to him when I talk to him throughout my day. I just, it's become a habit now. That's what Paul meant when he said, pray without ceasing.

It's, it's just that easy. Praise God. Thank you, God.

Thank you that you died to give us a relationship with you. You used to come into the garden and you would talk to Adam and Eve, and you would bring animals to Adam and say, what should we call this Adam? Lord God, how we drift from the simplicity of what you died to regain. I thank you Lord that you will teach all of us how to pray by simply knowing who you are, knowing your heart.

Deliver us God from performance prayer and let us simply just talk to you again. Help us Lord to recognize the incredible depth of your love for us. Give us the grace Lord, to believe that when we say, Lord, help me, you actually will guide me.

You delight in doing that. Give me what I need. Lord, you don't regret you.

Withhold from any of your children. Give us the grace to pray. Father, we thank you for it in Jesus name.

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