

# The Prayer Before You Pray

by Carter Conlon

---

*This sermon emphasizes the call for individuals to rise up and be sent by God, to walk in supernatural power and make a difference in their generation. It draws parallels from the story of Nehemiah, highlighting the importance of seeking God's guidance in prayer before taking action, asking for spiritual authority, provision, and protection. The message encourages listeners to surrender to God's purpose, believing in His ability to rebuild what is broken and bring glory to His name.*

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 1:1, 1 Kings 3:5, Luke 10:19, Matthew 7:7, Ephesians 6:12, Matthew 28:19, Philippians 4:19, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Divine Calling", "Spiritual Authority"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the call for individuals to rise up and be sent by God, to walk in supernatural power and make a difference in their generation. It draws parallels from the story of Nehemiah, highlighting the importance of seeking God's guidance in prayer before taking action, asking for spiritual authority, provision, and protection. The message encourages listeners to surrender to God's purpose, believing in His ability to rebuild what is broken and bring glory to His name.

---

## Transcript

Father, we just want to thank you tonight for the presence of your Holy Spirit in this meeting, God. And I know that people online can also feel the touch of your hand has come into the room. And it's as if you are touching your people for a specific purpose that we're now living in, a specific time in which we find ourselves.

And God, tonight, I believe that you're calling a mighty army to its feet. You're calling us to walk in the supernatural power that you are willing to provide for us as we are willing to be sent in your name. God, would you help somebody tonight to get up? Somebody that didn't anticipate, came into this prayer meeting just filled with their own concerns and is going to leave this prayer meeting filled with the concerns of your heart and the needs of others around them.

We thank you, Lord, that with the calling come the giftings of the Holy Spirit. We thank you, Lord, the change of heart and nature is available to whoever calls out to you. God, thank you, Lord, that you've made us aware of human need all around us with 20,000 people this very moment surrounded by fire with no way out.

You've made us aware, God, of the spiritual condition in certain parts of the world with young people willing to pray and believe. May we join them in heart and not only pray and believe, but go where you call us to go as they have done. Thank you, Lord God, for giving us the ability to hear this short sharing of your Word.

But God, it doesn't have to be a long sharing. It doesn't even have to be more than a verse of Scripture, and you can transform a life. God, your Word has such power.

Would you open our hearts, open our ears? Would you give me the ability to speak this tonight? And Father, I thank you for it, and I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You may be seated here in the sanctuary, and those that are online, thank you for joining with us tonight.

And I want to encourage you at the end of this sharing tonight, we're going to have communion together celebrating the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross for your sins and celebrating the incredible promise of strength that God has for those who place their trust in Him. So all you have to do is get some juice and get a cracker or some bread, whatever you have in your house, and you can celebrate that incredible victory with us, especially if you have experienced the salvation of Christ in your own life. I want to talk to you tonight about the prayer before you pray, the prayer before you pray.

It's from Nehemiah chapter 1. Nehemiah chapter 1 in verse 1 says this, it starts this way, the words of Nehemiah, the son of Hakaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chisleu, whatever that month was for them, in the 20th year, as I was in Shushan the citadel. So here's the story of a man who is actually born and raised in a place of captivity.

Anywhere that we live in this world, any environment we find ourselves in that causes our lives to be shorter than what God intended it to be, that there's less glory being exuded or spoken through our lives than God intended for our lives, is in some measure a place of captivity. It's the restriction. So he's in a restricted place in a sense.

He's part of the group that's born into a Medo-Persian empire, initially conquered by Babylon, the people of God, because they had treated casually the things of God. And now you have a generation born in this place of captivity, as Nehemiah was. Now, in this place of captivity, he had done fairly well for himself.

He worked hard. He made peace with his captivity, and a lot of people do. We make peace with our circumstances, and inside of our circumstances, or the limitedness, in a sense, of our ability to make a difference in our world, we fight hard to eke out our own place, our own living.

He'd done quite well for himself. As a matter of fact, he'd worked himself right into the king's palace, as the head butler, as it was. Now, to be the head butler, you had to be trustable, because everybody was always trying to poison the king.

You had to be willing to take risks, because you had to be the first partaker of everything that was fed to the king, and because everybody's always trying to poison the king, it's rather a high-risk profession. You had to be able to manage a certain number of people, because the king obviously would have not much of a stomach for incompetence in his presence, so you had to have at least some leadership ability. And so he had eked out a pretty good living.

He probably had a nice apartment in or near the king's palace. He was able to lead some people, and he was trusted by the king. In his place of captivity, it probably doesn't get much better than that, or so he

thought.

Then one day, some of his brothers came to visit from Judah, and he said, I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, the survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.

And so it was, when I heard these words, I sat down and wept for many days. I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. One day, a word came that changed everything.

And the word wasn't about himself. It was about others. I think it was maybe a change of heart.

Maybe his burden had been about himself, my job, my security, my life, my happiness. You know, most of us are concerned about these things, but suddenly a word comes one day, and it's about others. And it's not just about others, it's about his family, the family of God.

It's about the people that he knew historically should be a blessing in the earth, should be exhibiting and exuding the presence of God everywhere they go, should be bringing the name of God as it is or was in that time to glory in the earth. And these people that were set apart through the promise of God that was given to Abraham to be blessed and to be a blessing throughout the earth are in reproach. The wall is broken down.

In other words, there's no demarcation anymore between these people that were blessed of God and the rest of the world. There's nothing that separates these people anymore. And it should break our hearts when the church or God's people get to the place where they're not discernible from the people all around in the world, where there's no wall of separation anymore.

There's nobody that can say, this is where God's people dwell and this is where we dwell. It was kind of an intermixing. And not only that, they were in reproach.

They were being laughed at throughout the known world of that time. Oh, these are the people of God. These are the ones who said, God is with us.

These are the people who said, we have this great history of God partaking, taking us out of captivity and parting the seas and bringing us through the Jordan and bringing down Jericho and establishing a temple where his glory was manifested and was supposed to be all throughout the earth. And yet here we are, the people of God in reproach. And the gates are burned with fire.

And at the gates of most walled cities, that's where commerce took place. That's where the plans for the future were made. In other words, the people of God don't have a real plan for the future.

Everything is in ruins. And maybe for the first time in a long, long time, when he heard these words, he sat down and began to weep. There's no indication he was raised there or ever had been there.

But you see, you don't have to be somewhere for the burden of God to come into your life. Suddenly God, by his Holy Spirit, imparts into us something that's in his heart, because we are being called for a specific purpose that he has outlined for our lives. It's not the purpose that we garner for ourselves with all of our jostling and all of our study and all of our trying to find a nice place to dwell in the midst of our circumstances.

It's something that God has for each of our lives. And when you're starting to seek God, when you begin to pray, that burden can come. And it's planted there sovereignly by God.

You don't have to work it up. You don't have to try to sit down and pull out a Kleenex and make yourself cry. Something of the Spirit of God begins to work inside of each of our lives.

And he sat down and wept and mourned, it says, for many days. And it was like, oh God, this is not right. God, it's not right that you're not glorified in the earth.

It's not right that your people are being reproached. It's not right that the wall that separates your people from the rest of the world is down, and there's this intermixing now. And there's no demarcation of who's from God and who is not.

It's not right that your people don't have a plan for the future, because aren't we supposed to be glorifying your name in the earth? Didn't you promise Abraham that through us the whole world was going to be blessed, but through us now your name is being mocked? It's not right. And he began to weep. And that thought could be in his heart as it comes into ours, what difference could my life make? What could I do that could change the situation? I'm a butler.

I serve the king. I lead his staff. I make sandwiches.

I take the first drink of every cup and the first bite of every sandwich or piece of chicken or whatever it is he's eating, just in case somebody wants to poison him. But suddenly this burden of God has come upon me. God, are you calling me to something bigger? And as he begins to pray, he begins to repent for the sins of God's people.

And he includes himself in that. He says, God, let your ear be attentive. Let your eyes be open.

Hear the prayer of your sermon, which I pray before you now day and night. And I'm telling you, when the burden of God comes upon you for something, you can't shake it. When God starts leading, you can't push it away.

It stays, and it sticks to you like Velcro. And he says, I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against you, both my father's house and I have sinned. We've acted very corruptly against you, he said, and not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which you commanded your servant Moses.

But he said, God, remember, I pray the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, if you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations. But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for my name. Oh, Lord, I pray, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who desire to fear your name.

You see, with the burden, faith started to arise in his heart. It wasn't just what we have done against you, God, but it's what you have promised if we'll turn back. It's never too late to turn back, because you are still God.

You are still all-powerful. You still have the ability to do the things that you promised one day that you would do for us. And so one day he finds himself in the presence of the king of Persia, and you're not allowed to be sad in the presence of the king.

You could get your head cut off. The king wanted everybody around him to be happy, happy, happy. You had to be happy, happy all the time, or literally you could lose your head if not your freedom.

And he was sad in the presence of the king, and the king said, why is your face sad since you're not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart. And then he says, so I became dreadfully afraid. You know, it took a long time to get there, and he was in danger now of losing the whole shooting match.

And I don't know why he did it, but Nehemiah just, he took the chance, because you don't speak this way to the king in those empires, but he just said, why should I not be sad when the city, the place of my father's tombs lies waste and its gates are burned with fire? So the king said to me, what do you want? What are you requesting? Isn't that amazing? The king, the king of Medo-Persia is now talking to the butler. Normally the kings would not address butlers, but obviously this man had found favor with him. And the king said to the butler, what do you need? Think that one through.

That's the way it seems sometimes when I go to the throne of God. I don't know about you, but it's like the king is speaking to the butler one more time, saying, what do you need? And so the king of Medo-Persia, he has got access to anything he wants. He's got access to gold and silver and armies and anything he wants.

He's in favor at this moment. The king has just asked him this question. And so I look at it as a type of prayer of going to the throne of God.

And God suddenly says, my son, my daughter, what do you want? So the interesting thing is, he says, so I prayed to the God of heaven. In other words, I prayed about what I should pray for. I prayed about what I should ask for.

Now, I want you to think about this just for a moment. If Nehemiah had just assumed that he knew what he needed, he would have said, okay, I need an architect. I need 12 cement trucks.

I need bricks. And that's what we do. We assume that we know what we need when we go to prayer.

Have you ever thought that we should start our prayers by asking God what we should pray for? We should go say, God, you know what I'm going to need a year from now, because you're already in the future. I'm not there yet. So, Lord, what should I be asking you for? You know what I will need.

When I get Nehemiah, he had no idea what he was going to need when he got there. He's not a builder. He's not an architect.

He's a butler. All he's ever done is serve sandwiches on trays and take the first sip of every glass and the first bite of every sandwich, and suddenly he finds himself in a position where God is leading him to something, and the king is saying, what do you need? And so he turns to God to pray about what he should actually pray for. I hope that's getting through to you, because it really got through to me when it first hit me.

God Almighty, I've been asking you for things that I thought I needed. For example, in 1 Kings chapter 3, verses 5 to 9, you can read it later, God appears to Solomon by night, and let me just... I'm going to go read the Scripture to you. At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, Ask, what shall I give you? Now think of Nehemiah just as you're reading this.

And Solomon said, You've shown great mercy to your servant David, my father, because he walked before you in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart, and you have continued this great kindness for him, and you've given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day. Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king instead of my father David, but I'm a little child. I do not know how to come out or go in.

Your servant is in the midst of your people that you've chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore, give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to judge this great people of yours? Now, although the Scripture indicates that his request pleased the Lord, I want to suggest to you that his request was short of what he should ask for. You know, he asked for this great wisdom.

He asked for this great ability. God gave it to him. But in retrospect, you look back and you say, Would to God that Solomon had said, Would you give me a heart to obey the wisdom you're going to give me? Would you give me the heart of my father David? Would you give me the ability to make it to the end without failing? Solomon didn't know what was ahead of him.

Solomon didn't know that his wives were going to turn his heart away, but God foreknew it. God saw it. He was warning him.

It's all through the book of Proverbs, my son, my son, my son, my son. He's trying to get through to him, but he asked for what he thought he needed so he could go in and go out and judge and discern the people, but he didn't ask for the power to judge and discern himself. And he ended up at the end of his life building heathen temples.

He ended up a total spiritual wreck in the sight of God, because he didn't ask for what he really needed. He asked God for what he thought he needed. I want you to think that through, because that's the one thought that God's put on my heart.

And it happened, actually I was preaching in Italy, and in the middle of the message it just hit me, where Nehemiah stopped and prayed about what he should pray for. I don't know if I've ever done that. I do it now, but to say, God, you know where I'm going to be in the future, so you know what I'm going to need.

Will I need courage? God, will I need deepened faith? Will I need the ability to forgive? I don't know. You know what I'm going to need. And so, Lord, would you move upon me to ask for what I'm going to need now, so that I don't find myself entrapped or in a situation where I'm going to be, my testimony's going to be marred or become less than it should be.

I pray now all the time. I'll be 70 in September, and I pray, God, don't let me blow it in the last season of my life. Whatever you need to show me, show me.

Whatever you need to say, say it. Whatever I need in my life, give me the courage to ask for it. Don't let me assume that 40 or 45 years of victory means the next 15 are going to be the same or the next 10.

Don't let me assume that I know what I need. Show me what I need. So, I can see Nehemiah, and he draws back, and instead of asking for seven architects and a cement truck and bricks and all these other things that a natural man would think that he needs, he asked for a commission.

Isn't that amazing? Send me. Not recognizing that if you don't send me, I'm not going. What's the point? If I'm not commissioned of God, then I'm not going to be empowered by God to do what I'm called to do.

So, he said, send me. I love that. That's sometimes really simple, God.

I could decide to go, but I'm not deciding to go. I'm asking you to send me. Send me.

Then he asked for spiritual authority. He asked the king of Medo-Persia to give me letters causing those leaders in other parts of the country on my journey to have to give me passage. So, he asked for a commission.

He asked for spiritual authority. Then he asked for provision. He said, I'm going to need timber for the work that I have to do in building the wall and such like.

And then he said, I'm also going to need some timber for my own house. I'm going to need a place to dwell. And then lastly, he just asked for protection.

And God, the Bible tells us that the king of Medo-Persia sent an army of soldiers with him to guide him on his journey. I could just imagine. You know, I'm never surprised anymore by God, what he does and how he does it.

Can you imagine? You're in Judah now. You're in Jerusalem. The wall is down.

The gates are burned with fire. The Bible says the rubble is so high that at some point, the donkeys can't even pass underneath it. And it's just an absolute mess.

And here comes this guy into town. Hey folks, I'm here. Lift up your heads and rejoice.

God has sent me. What do you do for a living? I'm the butler. Anybody like a sandwich, like a drink? Isn't it amazing? You know, God never calls us where we're comfortable.

He never calls us where our natural skill set would take over, because if he called us where our natural skill set would take over, we would take over. It's really that simple. We would begin to do things the way we think they should be done.

So he sends a butler who doesn't know how to do it, not realizing he doesn't need an army, doesn't need masons or cement trucks or any of this stuff, because his job is to encourage the people to begin to build this wall in the vicinity of their own homes, to get families to start building, to get the priesthood to start building again. He's really he's probably been a motivator as a leader, the head butler as it was, he's probably been a motivator, and now he's being used of God to motivate the people to begin to build this wall in the vicinity of their own homes. And of course the Bible tells us in 52 days, 52 days, a butler sent by God rebuilds a wall.

A miracle. Even the enemies of God had to admit that it was the hand of God. You know, I preached something similar to this in Italy, not realizing that in the meeting, I called the message, a butler called to rebuild a wall, and not realizing that in the hotel we were in, the head butler had slipped into the meeting,

and he gave his life to Christ at the end of this message.

It was truly amazing to be there and to see that. I mean, you talk about God speaking to you. Somebody had invited him, and he just came in and sat in the back, and the next thing you know he's at the front giving his life to Christ, the head butler.

You know, a butler called to rebuild a wall. And so tonight I have believed in my heart this whole service that somebody out there, this is your moment now to be called, you've made peace in a sense with the place that you were born in. You've done your best, and some it's been successful, and others it's not been as successful.

But here you are tonight, listening to a message, and you can't explain the burning that suddenly come into your heart, the sudden infusion of faith, sudden infusion of a sense that your life is meant to be more than it's been so far, as good or bad as it may have been. It's meant to be more, and the reason you're feeling that is because your life is meant in God to be more than it has been to this point. And so all you have to do is exactly what Nehemiah did.

You say, Lord, send me. I don't even know what it is yet or how I'm going to do it. But God, I'm tired of the reproach.

I'm tired of the broken homes. I'm tired of the burnt gates. I'm tired of the devil mocking families and children.

I'm tired of the destruction that's all around me. So God, I'm asking you tonight, send me. Send me.

That's where it begins. Send me. God, I don't boast of any skill set.

I don't have a certificate to hang on the wall that you could use, but God, here am I. I have a burden, and I believe that you're God, and I believe that as we pray, you're willing to show mercy. I believe you can rebuild anything that's been torn down. I believe you can bring anybody home, no matter how far they are.

If their hearts will turn, you can bring them home. I believe you can restore families. I believe you can rebuild the walls of prayer and protection and provision around people's homes.

I believe that you can be glorified in the earth once again. And God, I'm yielding my life to the purpose that you have for me. As Nehemiah did, I say, God, give me spiritual authority.

Give me the ability that you say in the Bible, where I can speak to mountains and have them move. I can tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Give me the things that I need in my life to do the things that you have called me to do.

Protect me, oh God. Protect me from every enemy that would rise up against me, and protect me from the things in my own heart that could rise up and lead me astray. God, I cast myself completely on your mercy and into your hands.

Folks, this is what revival is going to look like in our generation. It's not going to be the mighty. It's not going to be the noble.

There might be a few, but it's going to be the nobodies, the nothings, the people who never thought God would ever use them are going to rise up, and they're going to say, I've had enough of this. I'm tired of the

destruction of my family. I'm tired of the reports and the reproach.

God Almighty, send me. It's no deeper than that. And all the power that you need for God to use you was won for you on the cross of Calvary 2,000 years ago.

Jesus Christ paid the price for your sins. Everything that separated you from the purpose of God was destroyed on the cross. And when you open your heart to God, you are brought by mercy.

When you receive the sacrifice of Christ, you are brought by mercy back into relationship with God. God promises to give you his Holy Spirit and to raise you up out of where you are or what you have become into what he has destined your life to be. And he promises you that the journey will be victorious.

Something will be done that will bring his name again to glory. And I can't tell you what your journey is going to be. I don't know what it's going to be, but I can tell you this one thing.

When you get to the end, you're going to raise your hands as we sang tonight, and you're going to raise a hallelujah to God. You're going to say, Lord, only you could have done this. Only you could have rebuilt this broken down society, these broken down families, these broken down walls, these burnt gates in only 52 days.

God, only you could have done that to my life. Lord, I surrender to you tonight, and I ask you, Father, in Jesus' name, to do through me what only you can do. I'm going to ask you online.

There's people listening online. Stand up wherever you are right now. Just stand up in your homes, your kitchens.

If you're in your car, get out of your car. Roll the window down so you can still hear my voice, but stand up. Stand up and say, Lord, I'm going.

Commission me. Empower me. Send me.

Protect me. Provide for me. But God, my life is going to make a difference in my generation.

I'm not making peace with captivity any longer. I'm not making peace with mediocrity. I'm not even making peace with my own sense of success.

If my life is less than what you've destined it to be, I'm up and I'm out, and I'm going where you want me to go, and I'm going to do what you're calling me to do. This is the call of the cross of Jesus Christ. This is what revival will look like.

Listen to me, my brother. Listen to me, my sister. It's time to get up.

It's time to go with God. It's time to cast off those chains and shackles that have held you down. It's time to put away all your thoughts of what success in life is supposed to look like.

Success in life is when God is glorified through you in whatever he has called you to do. That is success in life. That's the life that gets to the end with a shout of glory.

That's the life that gets to the throne of God and hears his voice one day and say, well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful in a few things. Behold, I will make you ruler over many things.

Enter thou into the joy of your Lord. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. God Almighty, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, hear the prayers of your people tonight.

Hear the prayers of those who long to belong to you tonight. Hear the prayers of those who say, Jesus Christ, tonight I'm yours. Tonight, God, I'm asking you not just to save me, but send me.

Send me where you want me to go. Give me what I need to get there and protect me along the way, and God Almighty, keep me to the end. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

We're going to go to the communion table in just a moment, and we're going to celebrate the victory of Christ that was won for you and for me. Get some bread, get some juice of any sort. We'll be back in just a moment.

We're going to sing one song and come back in just a moment and celebrate the communion table together.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/LXSg8FsOFRE.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/carter-conlon/the-prayer-before-you-pray/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**