

The Still Small Voice of God

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and trusting in God's presence and power in our lives, even in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: Psalm 109:30, Proverbs 16:18

Topics: "Pride And Humility", "Dependence On God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the danger of pride leading to prayerlessness, highlighting the need for a daily dependence on God and a cry for His presence. Using the story of Elijah, it illustrates how victories and past accomplishments can lead to a false sense of self-sufficiency, causing a loss of prayer life. The call is to repent of pride and return to a place of humility, recognizing our constant need for God's strength and grace.

Transcript

It's a six-week holiday from, I think the last time was probably when I was about 12 years old. I started to work summers when I turned 13 and then it was every summer after that, right through college and then into police work after that. So I really never had a six-week holiday.

It was a wonderful holiday. I got to sit beside the ocean every day. And I watched some of the videos, videos of the services.

I looked for you. I know where most of you sit now, especially the ones that are fairly close. I looked for your faces, saw some of you worshiping, and it was wonderful to see that.

I've been told I look 10 years younger and 10 pounds heavier, which is true. I won't deny it. I did gain a little bit of weight when I was there.

But I got it in God's presence, so I believe that it's the weight of glory that the Bible speaks about. So you can remember that if anybody happens to make derogatory remarks about your weight in the future. Pastor Dave said this morning, don't worry.

He said 30 days back here in New York and you'll lose it all. There's no problem with that. And it's wonderful to be home.

Thank God for you. Thank God for his presence. But mostly I thank God for his grace, for his mercy.

I think I've been made aware in the last six weeks, possibly more than I have in many, many years, of my need for him. A constant daily need that I have for Jesus Christ. I need the power of the Holy Spirit to be a Christian, to live for God.

You or I cannot rest on past victories and past attainments. Morning by morning, we need a renewed strength. We need God.

I thank God that he has made me aware of that need because the awareness of that need puts a cry for him in our hearts. That self-satisfaction sometimes can begin to take away from us. I've always believed that one of the most perilous positions to be in is not a position of weakness, but it's a position of strength.

When we begin to be strong and God has done exploits through our lives like King Uzziah, the danger always exists that when we are strong and have a legacy of victory, that we will look back and our hearts will begin to be lifted up and we will no longer call on God like we used to. God must grieve the heart of God. Six weeks now, the Holy Spirit's been speaking to me about prayer.

He's been speaking to me about my prayer life. He's been speaking to me about the prayer cry of Times Square Church. And all that God has spoken to me has culminated in what I'm about to speak to you today.

I believe that God has been speaking to this church about prayer. And we would be wise to listen today because the Lord has got something on his heart, and I'm trusting God to bring it through to fruition today. Would you pray with me before we open the word of God? Lord Jesus, I love you.

I'm more aware than I ever have been in my life of my need for you. I thank you, Lord, that you remind me daily that my strength is in you, my life is in you, and my hope is all about you and all through you. I thank you, Lord, that you allow things to come into my life that produce a cry in me for you.

It's because of your love. It's because you're not willing to let me go. And, Lord, you're not willing to let this church go either.

The way of others that have gone in the past who have had great revivals, and yet you walk in the doors of the building today, and you would never ever know that your presence had ever been there. Father, I'm asking today that there be a cry in this house for you. As long as this church exists, until the day you come and take us home where New York City burns with fire, whichever comes first, Lord, God in heaven, that there would be a cry in this house for you that would never cease, that you would make us aware of our need.

Lord, that we'd not become complacent, we'd not become people with only a testimony of the past, but we would have an ever-present, daily cry for you. And, God, as we do, you promise to show yourself strong, you promise to do miracles and exploits. You promise to save our wayward children.

You promise to bring to you those that need salvation. You promise, God, to fight against all of our enemies. You promise to show yourself powerful, mighty, and strong.

You promise to give us a song in our hearts that circumstance can't take out of us. God, you promise to establish us as a people that would be appraised to your name in the earth. And, Father, I ask that this

church would be appraised to your name.

God in heaven, thank you that you've been speaking to us. Thank you, Lord, that you've spoken the same word to me that you've been speaking to this church. Lord, you didn't let me away from your dealing because I was on holidays, Lord.

It seemed that the dealing was more intense than it even is here at times. Father, I thank you for that. I praise you for it.

I don't always understand, but I know that all things work together for good, because I love you and you've called me, God. Lord, help me to convey the word that you put in my heart this morning, Lord. I don't have the strength, I don't have the intellect to do it.

You have to do it, Holy Spirit. You have to quicken me. The flesh profits nothing.

I ask you to quicken me and I ask you to quicken the hearts and the ears of the hearers in this house, Lord. If you don't quicken us, we can't hear. We can learn, but not come to the knowledge of the truth.

Help us now to embrace your word. Help us to hear it and to love it. Ask it in Jesus' name.

1 Kings chapter 19, please, if you'll turn there with me. 1 Kings chapter 19. The small, still voice of God.

His strength is perfect when our strength is gone. He'll carry us when we can't carry on. Raised in His power, the weak become strong.

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He'll carry us when we can't carry on. Raised in His power, the weak become strong. His strength is perfect.

His strength is perfect. 1 Kings 19, beginning at verse 1. And they have told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and with all how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as one of them by tomorrow about this time.

And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die. And said, It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.

This is an incredible picture of a man, a great prophet of God, quite conceivably one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. A man called Elijah, a man that God raised up to confront a spiritual lethargy that had gripped an entire generation of people. Elijah, now this great prophet of God that had withstood false religion in the land, he had withstood the king, he had withstood all of the theologies that had grown up around him that were displeasing to God, and now he is running from a woman called Jezebel.

She's the pagan wife of a man, a king called Ahab, that Scripture testifies was the most wicked king, which the northern part of the divided kingdom had ever known. I'll just read it to you back in chapter 16, verse 29 and 30 says, In the thirtieth and eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, began Ahab, the son of Omri, to

reign over Israel. And Ahab, the son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. A seemingly insignificant battle, this battle with Jezebel, in comparison to those things that Elijah had previously faced. We look at the life of this man and we see what an incredible history he had.

In chapter 17, verse 1, the Scripture tells us that he stood and defied the influence of this wicked king. Scripture says, Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. This man had stood, and in the strength of Almighty God, had defied the influence of one that the world would say is more powerful than God himself.

But Elijah had stood in the presence of the one who has the power to stop the rain. And he had heard a word from God. God had spoken into his heart, and in the strength of what God had spoken, not in the strength of Elijah, but in the strength of what God had spoken, Elijah stood up to possibly one of the most wicked and powerful men of his generation.

And I see him standing there without trepidation and without fear, just like you and I when we come to Christ. All of a sudden, God gives us a revelation that we have now the power within us to stand up to all the forces of hell that are pitted against humanity and against our own soul. And we have the right to stand before them and declare that the kingdom of God has come, and there is no power of evil that can triumph over us.

Chapter 17 again, verses 2 to 7, tells us that he had been protected and provided for as God spoke to him and he obeyed. The rain stopped, as he had said, and God told him again by his word. Go down to a certain brook where the ravens came, we know the story, and they began to feed him.

Chapter 17, as we carry on, verses 8 to 16, tells us how he was led by the word of the Lord to a place of constant and inexhaustible supply, only as he continued to stand in the presence of God. Again, in verse 8, where it starts, it says, The word of the Lord came to him and told him, Arise, get to Zarephath, and dwell there. I've commanded a widow woman there to sustain you.

And you and I, if you've been any time in the Lord, you know the story. How God took just a little provision that that woman had and fed her and her son and Elijah throughout a great portion of the drought that had come upon the whole of Israel at that time. And as he obeyed God, as the word came to him, and he stood and walked in the strength of that word, he was led to a source of inexhaustible supply.

And that's what God does for you, and that's what he does for me. As we begin to commune with him, as we begin to talk with him, as his word comes, you see, the word has to come to us. It's the Holy Spirit that has to lift the words of God off of this book and make them a reality to us.

And we begin to embrace the word of God as a higher law than everything we see around us. For example, the man or woman who might be bound by a spirit of fear, the Holy Spirit will take the word that Paul wrote to Timothy and says, God's not given us a spirit of fear, but power and love and of a soundness of mind. And the Holy Spirit will take that and make that a higher reality than the fear.

And we begin to walk in that and begin to understand that God has placed a love within us that casts out all fear. And as we begin to do that, we more and more become aware that there is an inexhaustible supply of everything that we need. This Bible, the supply line, the life that God has given us is as

inexhaustible as God Almighty is himself.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I thank God for that knowledge today. When we come to the Lord and hear his voice, when he speaks to us and quickens the word to our hearts, the treasure of heaven is open to us. And there is no end as there is no beginning to what God is able to accomplish in the person's life who places his confidence and trust in him.

Again in chapter 17 verses 17 to 24, it tells us that Elijah was brought to a place of understanding and experiencing the power and the kindness of God over which even death had no authority. The widow woman's son died and you remember Elijah bringing him up into his room and breathing into his body and the spirit of this young boy coming back to life again. It says in verse 22 in chapter 17, the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came into him again and he revived.

God had brought him to this place of understanding that even death has no power over a child of God. Those that are in the presence of God, death has no reigning power over them. Chapter 18 again verses 17 to 20 shows us the spiritual authority given this man that he could instruct the king to do that which God desired to do.

That's an incredible thing. You see Ahab in chapter 18, let's look there for a moment, verse 17. It says it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? In other words, are you the one that shut off the rain? Are you the one that's brought us into this drought? And he answered, he said, I have not troubled Israel but thou and thy father's house in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and has followed Balaam.

Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal 450 and the prophets of the grobes 400 which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together under Mount Carmel. So we see that God had put into this man a spiritual authority.

The king doesn't even question his word. He's standing before this wicked king of the northern part of Israel and he tells him go and gather all the prophets to Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal and gather all of the ones that minister at the grove of Jezebel and you bring them to Mount Carmel.

And so Ahab the king goes and does exactly as he was told to do. What an incredible authority was in this man. And lastly in chapter 18 verses 41 to 46 we see we have the picture of Elijah after confronting these false prophets and defeating them in the power of God.

Again prostrate upon the mountain with his face at his knees, lying prostrate on the ground hearing and declaring the word of deliverance from drought. God is speaking to him as he's praying. We see the Holy Spirit coming upon him and he up and girds himself and outruns Ahab and his chariots to the city.

A supernatural power of God came upon this man and he literally outran horses and chariots. That would be an incredible thing to behold. I want to see the replay of that when we get to heaven.

Because that would be an incredible thing to see. The Spirit of God coming upon a man and you can see them furiously whipping these horses because they've been told there's an incredible rain coming and if you don't get moving you're all going to get bogged down and caught in the ensuing mud and everything that's going to happen because of it. So they're furiously beating these horses.

A king doesn't have a neg as it were pulling his chariot. He's got the finest horses in the land. And we see them running at a full gallop and as the charioteers are beating the horses all of a sudden go by this man running.

Can you just imagine that? Heading to the city with the Spirit of God upon him. You'd think unstoppable. Unstoppable.

What an incredible anointing of God. The power, the victory, the revelation, the things that had come to this man. He is virtually unstoppable.

Anybody who would look at him and say has there ever been a man like this? Has there ever been an anointing like this come upon a man who's not known anything but victory in his walk with God? And then very shortly after this in chapter 19, which we just read, we now see him running from a verbal threat. All it was was a verbal threat, which he should have considered only a last gasp of a dying spiritual authority. That's all it should have been.

It was like a defeated foe who's been run through the heart with a sword saying I'm going to get you as he's dying. That's all it really was. But all of a sudden it's as if the hand of God is lifted off of this man and a terror comes into his soul and he begins to run from a threat.

He didn't run from a wicked king. He didn't run from the drought. He didn't run from the word of God.

He didn't run from a dying boy or a dead boy. And that circumstance, he didn't run from any of these things. But now just a threat comes in his direction of someone I believe didn't have the power to carry it out.

And no, didn't have the power to touch him. And yet he runs for his life. Now his situation is certainly not unique at this point for there have been many after him who have followed the same path.

And some of you even here today, this is what's happening in your life right now. There's this incredible question that's come into your heart. God, I have known you in faithfulness.

You have walked with me. I know you're an inexhaustible supply of strength. I know no power of darkness can come against me and triumph over the work that you've done in my life.

I know not even death has any power over you. I've seen you work miracles and you've so changed me that I know that you are, without any doubt whatsoever, I know that you are God. I know that you're an all-powerful God.

But now, just like Elijah, you're running from a voice. And a confusion comes into your heart saying, God, have you abandoned me? Have I grieved you? What have I done? It seems like your strength is gone from me. It seems like the anointing I once knew is lifted from my life.

God, what is it that's come into my life that is producing this? Or, have I grieved you? I meet people from time to time. I've gone through these times myself. You go before God and say, God, have I grieved you? Where did this voice get the power to come back and taunt me again? Where did this thing get the power to come back and chase me and cause me to want to run from my life and my heart when it seems so insignificant in comparison to the things that you've done in my life? It can be an old sin wanting to come back and haunt you one more time.

An old memory that God had one time dealt with and healed, and you thought it was long gone. All of a sudden, it's right back at the forefront again. And it's tormenting you, and it's pushing you, and you find yourself running and not understanding what it is that's going on in your life.

Can you imagine how confused Elijah must have been? After all the victories and the fire of God coming down, and now he's running from a threat. There's not even any reality really behind it. It's just a voice, and he hasn't even seen Jezebel.

He's not confronted her, and she's just spoken a word, and the word is sufficient to cause him to run and to wish that he was dead. What was going on in Elijah's heart? Now, every time I have preached this, and many times when I've heard it preached, I've heard it said that this is battle fatigue. He got tired, and the intensity of the battle, and he left off perhaps communication with God and such like things.

I suppose there might be a measure of truth to some of these things, but I don't think this is really the issue that God is trying to get at here. There is something that was happening in this man's heart that in spite of all the victories, in spite of all the things that were being won, in spite of the fact that after it was all over, he was prostrated on the ground with his face between his knees, still speaking correctly the word of God, in spite of the fact that God's Spirit could come upon him, and he could run with supernatural strength, there was something in his heart. The Holy Spirit began to show this to me when I was on holidays.

I began to meditate on this in this particular passage of Scripture, and it's in one line in verse 4. In verse 4, it says he went a day's journey into the wilderness, and that's I suppose where some may even be this morning, and sat down under a juniper tree and requested for himself that he might die. Have you ever been there as a Christian? You know it and God knows it. All around you there might be testimonies of victory and glory and smiles and God blesses you, but on Wednesday you may have said, God please if I don't get the victory I want to die, just take me home.

I don't want to live like this anymore. He requested that he might die and said, It is enough now Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my father's. Now keep in mind that he said this in prayer.

This was a prayer to God. But this prayer revealed something which had crept into Elijah's heart, which I believe that God was forced to deal with. Now we have to ask ourselves the question, was it the beginning of pride that caused as it were the hand of God to seemingly be temporarily lifted from Elijah's life? He made a statement, he said, I am not better than my father's.

And the question that the Holy Spirit began to ask me as I began to look at this passage of Scripture, had he begun to think that because for a season he was able to stand that he actually was better than those that had come before him? Where did this idea come from in the first place that he was better than other people? You see and it's evidence further because he got the idea that he was the only one left. He got the idea that he was the only one standing for God. He had a different criteria than God's criteria.

He saw himself differently from the way God saw him and therefore he began to see others differently from the way God saw them. And God literally, very tenderly at the end of this whole episode rebukes him and says there are seven thousand others. I've asked the question in some of my messages, where were the other seven thousand? Folks, I believe they were right there.

Elijah was the only one that couldn't see them. He had a different criteria of what strength was and he was looking to himself and something had gotten into his heart where he was saying I am better than other

people are. That's what happened to the first.

He came into the house of God and instead of that prayer that beats upon his breast, instead of a prayer that acknowledges that he has a daily need and dependence on God, his heart began to shift because perhaps he knew a measure of victory and his prayer turned from that need for the continuous grace of God to God thank you that I'm not like other people are. There was a subtle shift in the heart of a Pharisee which I believe was happening. I think the scripture bears witness.

You may agree or disagree with me but this is what the Holy Spirit was speaking to my heart. There was a subtle shift taking place in his heart that God had to deal with and he dealt with it by lifting his hand of strength for a moment and letting him see what he was without the Spirit of God. Just an ordinary man, just a fearful man like every other man in Israel.

Without God's anointing upon him, without the touch of God's hand, without the daily dependence on God, he was no different from anybody else. And God had to show it to him. God had to bring him back to that so that he can continue to be used in his kingdom.

You and I can get strong. We can live the Christian life. We can change our vocabulary.

We can begin to be successful in business. We can begin to see our problems dissipate at once, threaten to devour us. We begin to walk with God.

We begin to get strong in our heart. Then all of a sudden this idea out of nowhere comes into our heart. Well, it comes out of the flesh.

It's the natural man who always wants to be God. He wants to be his own God. He wants to be the master of his own destiny.

And the way he does that is by convincing himself that he's better than other people are. Proverbs 16 and 18 says, Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. Now one of the definitions of pride would be forming an opinion about oneself that differs from that which is declared by God.

God declares me to be weak without him. I agree with the word of God. Thanks be to God.

I am weak. God declares that he chose me not because I'm strong or intelligent or have royal blood flowing in my veins. He chose me because I was weak and foolish and I needed a savior.

He chose me because it's his choice, not because it was anything that I had decided to do. Had Elijah begun to believe that the powerful victories he had known were due in part to something apart from God which was inherent in himself? I spoke earlier about Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26 verses 15 to 16. The scripture tells us he was the king of Judah.

The scripture tells us his name spread far abroad for he was marvelously helped until he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. He began to presume upon God.

He took an office not given to him and walked in to offer sacrifice to the Lord which was forbidden by the law of God and only allowable to the priests and subsequently became a leper to the day of his death. I think of King David in 2 Samuel chapter 24 after that he had numbered the children of Israel. Now he numbered them because there was a pride getting into the king's heart.

Perhaps even in the people's heart. And it was a sense David saying let's see how many we are so that we can begin to talk about how we won the victory. And you remember Joab resisting him and saying David don't do this thing.

It's an insult to God. Joab was in the forefront of the battle most of the time and Joab knew he said David he makes our men much more than they are. We've gone in effect against forces that far outnumber us and far outstrengthen us and have far superior weaponry and we have triumphed over them.

We have defeated them in the power of God. Let's not do this thing. Let's not let our hearts turn to our numbers.

It's not about numbers. It's about the presence of God. He makes us into something other than what we are.

Joab would be saying to David I see it every day. I see it every morning. I see it every time we go to battle.

God moves upon us. And he multiplies the little strength that we have. Israel's armies were infamous at times of victory for crying out to God.

When they cried out to God you'll see it time and again before the battle they're bringing in the Ark of the Covenant or gathering together those where they recognized priesthood at that time and crying out to God and God coming in power and strength and giving them the victory that they needed in the battle. But after David numbered the children of Israel one of the judgments or the chastisements that God gave him put against his life was to flee before his enemies for three months. Well we know that David didn't choose that one.

He chose another. But to flee before his enemies for three months. The chastisement was God saying I'm going to show you if this is what you choose which he didn't but if he had I'm going to show you that you have no power without me.

You have no power. You're going to try to number the children of Israel. And you're going to see if you have the resources within yourself to win the battle but God's saying you don't have the resources within yourself.

You've only won because my spirit has been upon you. You've won because you've listened to my word and you've walked in my word and as you did that there was no weapon formed against you that could prosper. But God said to David now I'll show you.

I'm going to show Israel if you choose this that I am the source of your strength. Without me you can do nothing. Without me you will flee from a voice.

Without me you'll flee when nobody's even pursuing you. Now only pride will keep. Well let me go back to chapter 19 again verse 7. God tenderly comes to Elijah and begins to talk to him about the way out of his struggle.

And the angel of the Lord came the second time and touched him and said arise and eat because the journey is too great for thee. This is the beginning of God saying to Elijah you're not any better than your fathers are. You've stated that correctly.

The journey is too great for you. You can't make it through this life without my power. You can't make it through without my presence.

I've often wondered what is the root of prayerlessness especially in God's people. I know the root of prayerlessness in the unsaved is simply they don't know God. But what is the root of prayerlessness in a man or woman who knows God and in particular perhaps has a testimony who can say I was saved in 1960.

Thank you. And God has done wonderful things in my life. He's done this and he's opened this and he's shown me this and he's led me to his supply and I've seen his power over death and no weapon formed against me has prospered.

I've watched them come against me and every way they come against me my enemies have fallen. I've seen the hand of God. What causes a child like that to turn to prayerlessness? What takes away the prayer light? There are a lot of excuses made for the prayerless Christian but I believe the Holy Spirit showed me something that I've never really even considered before and I want you to consider it this morning that the root of prayerlessness is pride.

The root of prayerlessness is basically a man or woman saying God I'm better than those that have come before me. I know the history. I know the testimonies.

I know the stories of all those that woke up every morning. I know those that spent the early parts of their day needing you but I'm better than they are. I'm not like they are.

I can run my own life. I've got a testimony of victories. I've got a testimony of your power.

I've got a testimony of your presence and I've known your supply. God, I don't really need to pray anymore. I don't need you.

You see, prayerlessness is an undeclared declaration that I no longer need the presence of God. I no longer am dependent daily on His grace. And God in His love will deal with the prayerless Christian by causing you to begin to run before that which at one time should have been considered insignificant in your life.

Prayerlessness is the spirit of man which says I'm not as other men are. I'm not weak. I don't need the daily strength of God.

I have resources within myself to stay the course. Why just look at my past victories? Now, if we look at the story of Elijah in this way, verses 11 to 13 in chapter 19 take on a brand new meaning as they begin to unfold before us. Elijah ends up hiding in a cave.

And I tell you, if you and I lose our daily dependence on God, that's exactly where we will end up. We will end up hiding in a cave. Now, it may not look like a physical cave, but we'll be in a cave.

We'll come into the house of God. We're all bottled up. We don't want anybody around us.

We don't want to talk to anybody. We're criticizing everything that moves around us. All kinds of things are wrong now in the house of God.

Instead, we can't take the inward focus any longer. We can't take the dealing of God that's come upon our lives. We begin to lash out in an attempt to destroy everyone around us to prove once again, I suppose, in human effort solely, that we are better than other men are.

You show me a prayerless Christian, and I'll show you somebody that's got a tongue that they can wrap three times around the Statue of Liberty in the house of God. A prayerless Christian has a need to condemn others around them because that's the only way they can maintain their sense of accomplishment is to destroy everybody around them. And thus, they can maintain that image in the heart that has built up a pride that says, I'm not like other men are.

God was dealing with Elijah and trying to draw him out of this and draw him back again into a place of usability, continued usability in his kingdom. And as he was holed up in the cave, in verse 11, it says, and he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord.

But the Lord was not in the wind. I've oftentimes wondered, what really is it? I mean, I've preached on this several times, and I've heard messages on it, but I've wondered, God, what is it? What were you trying to get through to Elijah? Why the demonstrations of power? And then the add-on that you, obviously, you caused the wind. Obviously, the wind was so strong it broke the rocks, but why did you tell us, why are you telling us that you were not in that? And the Holy Spirit began to speak to me.

He was saying to Elijah, You have known and experienced great demonstrations of my power, but in these is not the source of your strength. You have a history of my faithfulness. You have seen my power, but this is not where your strength comes from.

Today we have people that are running, looking for demonstrations of power. They're running all over the world, and God's saying, Then your source of strength is not in these. You can go there, you can experience them, you can see them, but you will not grow any stronger because of them, because that is not the source of your strength.

And after that, after the wind and earthquake, but the Lord again says He was not in the earthquake. God's speaking to Elijah, and He says, You have seen that I am able to shake and remove all things that offend me. You've seen that I'm all-powerful, you know that, but neither in this will you find your source of strength.

It's not just in knowledge. It's not just in a studying of the Scriptures, in a verbal declaration of the power of God. God was saying to Elijah, No, neither in this will you find your source of strength.

And after the earthquake of fire, verse 12, But the Lord was not in the fire. And Elijah was so familiar with this. It had just been a few days before that he was on the Mount of Carmel, and he had seen the fire of God come down and consume a humanly inconsumable sacrifice.

He had seen the fire of God turn the hearts of multitudes back to the Lord God again. He had seen the fire of God come and back up every word that had come out of His mouth. And God was speaking to Elijah saying, You have known me as the one who backs you and gives you victory in great spiritual confrontations.

Yet this is not where your strength comes from. It's not in the fire. It's not in the earthquake.

It's not in the wind. And after this, a small still voice, These other things will come, but they all become part of your life because of those quiet, still moments we spend together. That's what God was saying.

Elijah, do you remember? That it all began when you used to spend time with me. It all began when you used to just quietly perhaps go into a room. I don't know where.

Maybe he had a secret place he went to. God was saying, It all began, Elijah, when you went in that quiet room and you communed with me. You didn't shout at me and I didn't shout at you.

You didn't get what you got at some meeting somewhere. You didn't get it in the wind. You didn't get it in the earthquake nor in the fire.

But you got it in my presence. You came in every day. And you remember, Elijah, the word came to you.

I spoke that word. I spoke it softly into your heart. You remember the character, the life it built in you.

And it gave you the power to stand. It gave you the power to stand before kings, Elijah. It gave you the power to stand before 850 false prophets.

It gave you the power to pray a prayer believing that I was going to answer it and I did. But none of those things were the source of your strength. The source of your strength was the moments we spent together.

Elijah, you are just like every other man is. You need me. You need me every day.

You need me every morning. You need me every afternoon. You need me every night.

Without communion with me, you will run from things that you never believed or dreamed you'd ever run from. Without communion with me and just relying on a legacy of past exploits, hell will have a heyday with your life. This is Elijah's moment with God where he hid his own face.

To behold the face and to hear the words of the one who never changes. He hid his face. And I believe that was the declaration of finally the revelation comes in.

I'm just like every other man is. And he hid his face. I have nothing to present before you God.

I'm nothing. He became aware of his weakness. He became aware of his nothingness.

He became aware that the victories he'd experienced were only grace. It was all grace. It was nothing of himself.

He was just like every other man who'd come before him. But as he began to behold him once again and the small still voice began to speak into his heart, God took him and restored him to the place that God desired him to be. David said in Psalm 109 verses 30 and 31, I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth.

Yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul. He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.

When Jesus rose from the dead, the scripture says he was seated at the right hand of the Father. That means the right hand is synonymous with strength and with completeness. And Jesus says, I, David says, God stands at the right hand of the poor.

Jesus himself in one of his sermons in the gospel said, Blessed are ye poor for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Everybody in that audience wasn't physically poor. There were landowners there, there were people that had houses and businesses.

They weren't all physically poor. No, he was speaking another thing. He said, you know you need me.

That's why yours is the kingdom. Yours is that seed which starts out small but will eventually grow and overtake every other thing in your life. Yours is the kingdom.

Yours is the pearl of great price. Yours is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Because you know your poverty.

You know you need me. That's why you're sitting on the hill. He was speaking a spiritual principle, not a physical one.

God today stands at the door of our dilemma and our weakness. And he says, like he said to Elijah, what are you doing here? There's some people today, God's speaking to you right now and saying, what are you doing here? Oh, I've been very jealous for the Lord. I've stood against the false altars and I've cast them down and I'm the only one left.

And now they seek my life. You know God was so tender with him. He didn't rebuke him because I believe the deeper work was already done in his heart.

He's still making the same old confession but things are beginning to change. And it was then that God began to restore him. What are you doing here? Why are you running from insignificant enemies in your life? Step out, he says to Elijah, like he says to us, and put away your arguments.

Let the pride of thinking that in yourself you can stand be put away and meet with me. A prayerless church is a proud church. Proud.

You will find me tender, full of compassion, and ready to forgive. I will renew your strength and give you life. At Times Square Church, I believe in God in this coming year.

That every ministry is going to turn to prayer. We have 32 ongoing ministries, in-house ministries here at Times Square Church. And I'm going to be, and I am today, exhorting every ministry leader to turn to prayer.

Turn to sincere prayer. Let your prayer become a cry in the presence of God. I'm asking in the Holy Spirit, and I know I've already talked to Pastor Dave about this in the past, so I speak for both of us and Pastor Neil and Pastor Patrick as well.

We have to be willing to cry out to God and let God do in our meeting times together whatever he will do. It will be divine and it will be in order. Tuesday night prayer, if the Lord wants to take us until 5 o'clock in the morning, then he's free to do so.

God has to do whatever he's going to do. I'm asking you as the body of Times Square Church. I believe it's grieving to the Spirit of God, and I want you to hear me on this, that prayer at this altar has become a ministry.

It's not grieving that there are people who feel that calling and that ministry, but prayer should never have to be relegated to a ministry. You and I should be at this altar two hours, three hours sometimes before

church starts, should be crying out to God. And I'm believing here at Times Square Church that from this altar, perhaps partway down the aisle, there'll be people crying out to God.

Ask somebody to save your seat, and if you lose it, thank God for it. It's not all about getting a seat in the house of God anyway. It's more important to be seeking the face of God.

It's more important to be declaring our daily need of him. Lord, we need you. We need you every day.

We need you every moment. We need you every hour. We cannot rest on the things that God has done in the past.

We cannot rest on the fact that a thousand souls were baptized last year or the year before, because there's another year coming, and we need the power of God. We need the presence of God. I'm trusting God in my own life for a renewed understanding of my need for him, a renewed understanding of prayer.

Hallelujah. A crying out to God and understanding that I am dependent on him. I can't live another day as a Christian without him.

I have no testimony without him. I have no hope, no future without him. I closed my Bible a few days ago sitting in Prince Edward Island, Canada, and I bowed my head and I cried.

And I said, Jesus, forgive me for the pride that's gotten into my life. Forgive me, Lord, for the times that I've just, I guess, become comfortable with what you've done in the past and the cry. And God began to take me back, and he began to show me things in the past.

I remember being in this little town outside of Riceville, Ontario, Canada, where there was no testimony for God. It was sewn up of religious darkness. We had no money.

We had no skill. None of us had any religious training. But we got together to pray, three of us.

We prayed every Tuesday night. And we saw God. Then he began to speak into our hearts, and we saw what God was about to do and began to declare it in our prayers as if it was a reality.

And within a few short years, it became a reality. We had a school building where our children were being taught of the Lord. We had a church given to us for a dollar.

A consortium of ten Jewish lawyers gave us a building that the insurers had appraised at \$335,000 for a tax receipt for another congregation that sprung up. And quite recently, another building has been released to the church in that area. And the legacy of God's faithfulness carries on.

But it began with a need and a cry. God, help us. If we ever get to the point in this church where we, in our, with our, by not praying, we're making a declaration that we don't need you now every day.

We don't need your strength. We don't need your power. We don't need your moment-by-moment grace.

God, help us. God, help us. God, help us never to get there.

I'm going to ask today for those in the annex and here in the main sanctuary if you'd like to join me in a prayer at this altar. And you would like to repent of the pride of prayerlessness. And that's what it is, folks.

It's pride. I've for years wondered what was the root of prayerlessness. And now I know.

It's pride. It's the nature of fallen man saying, I can get through my day without God. I don't need God.

It's pride in its purest form. It's exactly what Adam and Eve fell prey to in the Garden of Eden. I can be God in my own life tomorrow.

I don't need you, Lord. I can get through this day. I've got the testimony and the resources.

I can get through. I don't need you, God. What a tragedy to be given the resources of heaven and to have a testimony.

This is how churches in the past that have known the revival presence of God have become empty dens of unclean birds, really. That's what they are. Because they lost the understanding that it's I need him every day.

I repented before God. I haven't been crying out the last while. I haven't been crying out the way I used to.

I've been marvelously helped by God. And so have you. But I don't want to lose that cry for him.

And I've asked the Lord, and we're going to pray that at this altar today, that Times Square Church, there will be a cry going up to heaven until the day that Jesus Christ comes and takes us home. And as you begin to cry out to God, you're going to see your unsaved children come back to the Lord. You're going to see family members touched.

You're going to see your communities touched. People that have a community lighthouse, you put up a few posters and people didn't come to your house, you're getting all discouraged. I'm telling you right now, you hold that meeting even if you're the only one there because you're not alone.

Christ is with you. You begin to cry out. You pray specifically for neighbors.

You pray specifically for friends and people you've seen in the community. And you watch what the Holy Spirit will begin to do. You watch God begin to build his kingdom right in your house, right in your living room.

The kingdom of God will begin to advance. Morning by morning, new mercies will begin to see. Morning by morning, we'll become aware of our need for God.

I believe that with all of my heart. Let's stand. If you'd like to join with me.

If you'd like to repent of prayerlessness or the loss of a prayer life, would you slip out of your seat, please, and just make your way to this altar. In the annex, you can go to the screens. And then we're going to pray together.

Hallelujah. Move in closely. Make room for those that are coming.

This is going to be a house of prayer. Jesus said it is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer. And those that are coming now, remember, it's your cry that God is going to respond to.

Let there be a cry in this house at this altar from now until Jesus comes. Move in closely, please, everybody. The pride of prayerlessness.

This is why you're coming. This is what we're going to repent of as a church. We need to repent.

The Holy Spirit has been speaking this to you. I know he has. I've heard some of the messages.

But he's been speaking it to my heart for six weeks. I couldn't get away from this. First, dealing with my heart.

And then dealing with the church body. Move in closely, please, and give room for everybody to come. For those who could say, Lord, I've lost the cry for you.

I'm trusting in my testimony and not in the living God. And there's others here that you're running from nothing. You need to repent as a Christian for your lack of dependence on God.

God has allowed it just to show you your need for him. That's why it's come into your life. He loves you and he's saying to you today, what are you doing here? You've got to get out of this place.

We'll just give a moment for everybody to respond. Lord, we need you. We need you, Jesus.

We need you, Holy Spirit. God, we have no strength without you, Lord. We have no wisdom.

We have no power. We have no direction. God, we need you.

I thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness in the past and all the wonderful things that you've done. But, God, we need you for today, Lord. We need you to get through this day.

We need you for tomorrow, Lord. We ask you, Father, to forgive our prayerlessness as a church. You pray that now.

You cry out to God and you ask him to forgive you right now. Father, forgive us for the prayerlessness, God. Lord, you've seen it.

You know it, O God. That's why you've been speaking so hard and forcefully to this body. You know that so many are losing their dependence upon you.

And it's the pride of human accomplishment that's come into the heart and taken over from a Holy Ghost dependence upon you. God, forgive us for prayerlessness. Forgive us for this pride that has crept into our hearts, O God.

Lord, we ask now that there be a cry in this house. An absolute cry for you, God. A cry in the morning.

A cry in the afternoon. A cry when we get together. A cry in every ministry, O God.

Lord, that we not lose the understanding of our need of you, God. Lord, we not lose heart. We not lose the faith that you are willing to plant in the hearts of those who spend quality time with you.

God in heaven, thank you, Lord. I ask you, Father, as one of the pastors of this church, to fill this altar. Every service starting today at 3 o'clock.

Fill this altar. Fill it, God, with people that are crying out to you, Lord. Let the social things be done out on the street.

But, God, let your house be a house of prayer. Let it be a place where there is a cry for you, O God. Hallelujah.

We don't trust in ourselves, Lord. There's nothing to trust in. But, God, we trust in you.

You're the living God. You're the life giver. You're the one God that will give us strength to get through tomorrow.

God, you'll give us the strength and the faith to believe for the impossible in the days ahead. Oh, Jesus, thank you, Lord. Thank you, Father.

Pray with me now, Lord Jesus. I repent of the pride of prayerlessness that's creeping into my heart. I thank you so much that you have seen fit to allow me to run even before some of my enemies to show me my need for you.

I'm not ashamed today to tell you, Jesus, that I need you. I need you every minute, every moment, every hour. I need you in the morning, in the first part of every day.

I need you to speak to me. I need your word to come into my heart. I need your spirit to quicken that word and to give me the faith to stand in the power of your kingdom.

Oh, Jesus, I love you. We love you as a church. God, there will always be a cry in this house until the day that you take us home.

In Jesus' name. Now, I want to sing it one more time. Let's sing it again.

I need you, but sing it as a prayer. Some of you may just want to cry out to God. Maybe you haven't cried out in a long time.

You tried to battle something in your own strength. God can do in two minutes what two years of sermon change can't do in your life. When you cry out to Him and declare your need to Him, God will come in power and bring you right back to that which He has destined for your life to be.

Hallelujah. We're going to sing it one more time, and then after we do, you can feel free to be dismissed and to greet one another. We meet again this afternoon at 3 o'clock and this evening at 6 o'clock.

But sing it as a prayer, and maybe you just want to cry out to God. I'm not ashamed to cry out to God. I need Him.

I need Him. You need Him. We need Him as a church.

Cry out to Him.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cRv8wylvD48.mp4>

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