

Why Sleep Ye? Rise and Pray

by David Cooper

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of being vigilant and active in prayer to maintain a strong relationship with God.

Duration: 1:18:46

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:36, Psalm 55:17, Matthew 6:33, Mark 14:38, Luke 22:46, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 1:6-7

Topics: "Prayer Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the importance of prayer in the life of a Christian. He emphasizes that prayer is the act of talking with God and lifting our hearts to Him in faith. The speaker encourages the congregation to not only pray in the morning but to have a continuous and frequent prayer life throughout the day. He reminds them that prayer is a weapon in the Christian life and urges them to be watchful and prayerful, especially in the face of trials and temptations. The sermon concludes with a call to repentance and a commitment to walk in communion with God through prayer.

Transcript

Good morning everyone. May the love of Jesus be with each heart here. I welcome you all to the service this morning and to the hearing of the word of God.

And I have been blessed already by Brother Dean's testimony. And I wondered a little bit how the message that God laid in my heart was going to fit into that, and maybe I'll just try to make a connection here. The one I think that God has in mind, that issue of faith is the most important issue.

It is a true faith that really truly believes that Jesus Christ has washed me. I believe the record God has born. But how many of you could raise your hand and honestly say, I find keeping that faith fresh and alive is a labor.

It is, isn't it? It's not just something that flows out of our fallen nature. It's something that takes reading and the disciplines of the Christian life to keep it fresh and flowing. And God is faithful as we are faithful.

He meets those things. And so, I'd like to begin this morning. Let's turn to the book of Luke, the 22nd chapter, verse 46.

Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane. And he said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Can we do that? Can we stand and let's have a word of prayer here? Father in heaven,

we have gathered here as your people this morning because we know our need.

We come looking to you, lifting faithful eyes, hopeful eyes to you this morning. God, if we are to receive what we need, it will come from above. So, we come to you as your people and gather together to hear your word.

We have opened our hearts this morning. We are hiding nothing. We are aware of our weakness.

We are trusting in your strength this morning. Would you come and open up your word to our hearts? You know where every soul in this room is. You know where they are.

You know the deeds. You know the sin of every soul. Pray that your mercy would be granted to each one this morning.

As we open up this subject. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank you. You can be seated please. Title of my message this morning is, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray.

I don't have a new teaching this morning. It's not something that's going to be dynamic and new. So, relax.

I hope it's going to be like a family meeting. We're going to just rehearse some basics. And I think I've already preached a message like this already here.

But, if I know you, you're like me. We need reminding now and again. And the things that once were fresh and I was struck so keenly by.

I find myself again needing a reminder like our dear brother Peter said. As long as I'm in this body, I'll stir you up by way of reminder. Because you need it just as much as I do.

So, I'm trusting that you'll like that this morning. I'd like this morning, if I could, and God grants us. Just to be a time of rising in our prayer life.

We get sleepy in our Christian life. And sleeping here doesn't mean that we don't go to bed ever. What it means is, we lose the alertness in our prayer life.

We forget how needy we are of the constant fellowship of God in this world. Or we're going to lose out. We lose sight of that.

And we get dull. And we stop praying. And the more we stop praying, the duller we get.

And pretty soon we're sleeping and dozing. And important things are passing us by where we should be responding and we're not. Because we're asleep.

The importance of prayer is very clear in the New Testament. Prayer is mentioned over 150 times. And I walked through those passages of Scripture.

And I read every passage that talks about prayer. And you know, it did something to my heart. It frustrated me how I would get it all into this message.

I finally had to just kind of cut back and find out what I was going to say. Because it's too much. Prayer, brothers and sisters, is a vital part of the Christian life.

More vital than I think you realize. Prayer in the New Testament was a constant thing in the Christian life. It was a practice of Jesus Christ, you know.

Judas knew where the garden was when he came to betray Christ. Why? Because Jesus often resorted there with his disciples. He often removed himself from the busyness of his teaching and those things to refresh himself and just walk in the garden, clear his heart, and talk with God for a while.

Sometimes he would go into the wilderness, if you remember. Sometimes all night long on the mountain alone. Often times it says he would slip aside and his disciples would have to find him.

Because where's Christ? Where'd Jesus go? I don't know. He just slipped out. Because he had to get away somewhere and pray.

And I think if we really open up our hearts, we'll soon come to realize herein is the strength of our Lord. It's in his prayer life. I wonder if we realize that like we ought to.

It was the practice of Paul. Here and there, if you read Paul's history through the book of Acts, you'll find him, now he's kneeling on a beach with the elders there that came down from Ephesus and the other place. And they're kneeling on a beach, praying before he goes.

Now he's praying before he heals somebody. His life is just peppered with prayer all the way through. He says in many of his epistles, I labor for you in my prayers.

And if you look at the wording in his epistles, Paul had times of prayer. He had times of prayer together with Epaphroditus. That's how he knew Epaphroditus is burdened for you.

He labors for you in prayer because we pray together. It is the avenue to fellowship with the Father. It is the strength from which the overcoming life flows.

It's prayer. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. But that promise has very little effect on our lives unless we meet it in prayer.

Peter went to the roof to pray. Did you ever think of that? What do we do when it's lunchtime and it's not ready yet? Peter said, here I've got a little bit of time, I'm going to go up to the roof and pray. It is commanded by Jesus and taught by Him.

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke 21.36. Just cross the page there. Then said He unto them, but now... Pardon me. Doesn't look like the right one.

Luke 21.36 Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and stand before the Son of Man. He's talking about the mark of the beast, the fall of the church, the rising of the Antichrist, the tribulation of the world, the wrath of God. And what is it that we need to do if we're going to escape those things? He says, watch and pray.

If you are a watchful, prayerful Christian, then God will count you worthy to escape these things and stand before the Son of Man. Ephesians 6 verse 18. Ephesians 6 verse 18.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto unto all perseverance and supplication for all saints. This is one of the weapons. It's not labeled as a weapon, but it's listed at the end of the weaponry of the Christian life.

Colossians 4.20 says, Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving. 1 Peter 4.7 says, But the end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober and watch.

What is prayer? What is prayer? Prayer is talking with God. Prayer is talking with God. It is the lifting of the eyes of my heart by faith to that blue crystal throne where God is seated high and lifted up, seated in an unapproachable light which no man can approach unto.

And I look into the face that burns like fire, like the sun shining in its strength, and into the eyes that are a flame of fire. By faith, I look into that face and say, Abba, Father, I don't know what to do in this situation. I need you to walk with me here.

I need you to intervene in my life here. I don't know what's going on. This is confusing.

But I look unto the throne that is forever and ever to the one who lives forever and ever, and I can call him Papa. Daddy, I want to have some fellowship with you. And he wants to have some with me.

Turn with me, if you would, to Psalm 62, verse 5. Psalm 62. This has been a favorite psalm of mine. It actually was a real anchor in my life when God was bringing us here, taking us through some difficult times.

David is writing this psalm, and in verse 5 he says, My soul, wait thou upon God, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense.

I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.

Trust in Him at all times, ye people. Pour out your heart before Him. Do you know what that means? In prayer? That's a graphic picture.

Trust in Him at all times. That's when I don't know what's going on in my life, and I come to God, and I just look into that face, and I say, Daddy, I don't understand, but I trust You. I trust You.

And I take my heart that's burdened, and breaking, or confused, or angry, or whatever it is, you know those things that build up in the heart until it wants to burst? And the psalmist says here, Ye peoples, pour out your heart before Him. That's prayer. That's prayer.

Blessed is the man who can fulfill that command. Blessed is He. Woe unto us if we're so stopped up in our emotion, and so cold in our relation, that the heart never gets poured out.

Like Peter says, casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you. If we can never get to that place of faith, where we believe that God, You care for me, I'm going to let this care right here. And like the song says, I'm going to bear a song away.

Woe is us if we get there. The world, sin, the flesh, and the devil will try to stop prayer. The world, sin, my flesh, and the devil are all dead set against prayer, because prayer is my lifeline.

The world will make it seem dull, and uninteresting. Sin will make me feel guilty, like I don't belong in prayer. The devil will tell me lies, and try to shut the door.

And my carnal flesh will say, I don't like it down here on my knees. I've got other things I'd rather be doing. And it will all keep us from the place that Jesus sought so often, when He drew aside and just fell on His knees and said, Lord, I need some fellowship.

God, I need to walk with You. I want to talk with You. But when He got up off His knees, He walked through amazing things.

He said things that we wonder at. And I believe it would be ours to more if we followed His example. I'd like to talk a little bit about the posture of prayer.

There's a physical posture of prayer, and there's a spiritual posture of prayer. Before I do that, I missed a poem I'd like to read. I read this at the men's leadership, so some of you men may have heard it before.

But it's been a real blessing in my life, this poem. Christians, seek not yet repose. Cast thy dreams of ease away.

You are in the midst of foes. Watch, O Christian, watch and pray. Gird thy heavenly armor on.

Wear it ever, night and day. Near thee lurks the evil one. Watch then, Christian, watch and pray.

Hear the victors who o'ercame, who have trod this warrior way. They with one clear voice exclaim, Watch, O Christian, watch and pray. And hear above all these, thy Lord, whom thou lovest to obey, giving guidance by His Word.

Watch then, Christian, watch and pray. Christian, seek not yet repose. Cast thy dreams of ease away.

Called to conquer all thy foes, called to watch and called to pray. Watch as though on thee alone hung the outcome of the fray. You know what a fray is? That's the battle.

Watch like it's all up to you. No, not brother so-and-so. I sure hope he's praying for these meetings.

Watch as though on thee alone hung the outcome of the fray. Fall before thy Father's throne. Watch, O Christian, watch and pray.

That has been such an inspiration to me so many times. If everybody were praying like that, where would we be? But I have to confess, sometimes I think maybe you're praying, and I don't. There is a posture to prayer.

The physical posture is not specific. There is no law about the posture of prayer. Jesus said, when you stand to pray, then forgive.

The publican stood to pray and beat on his breast. Peter knelt to pray before he raised Lydia from the dead. Joshua and Moses both prostrated on their face before God.

Jesus practiced twice in the New Testament. It says he lifted his eyes to heaven and he said, Father. In 1 Corinthians 11, it teaches us that we should be concerned with the state of our head when we're praying.

That's the oracle of God. I don't understand it all. But God says there's something happening in heavenly places when a man has something on his head when he's praying.

So our prayer life should affect the way we think about head covering. And also something about the physical posture of prayer. I have learned, and maybe this is not scriptural, but I have learned that walking is better than sleeping when it comes to prayer.

Better to get up and walk around and pray than to try to kneel or prostrate and fall asleep. There is a spiritual posture to prayer that is more important yet. Jesus says, He says, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.

So when you come to pray, forgive. That is a posture of prayer. It is coming to God with my heart open, Lord, is there anyone in my life that I have hard feelings for, that I'm not forgiving? I forgive.

You know, there is such a posture that comes to us when we do that. I forgive. Forgiving all men their trespasses.

It is a broken and a contrite spirit, the opposite of a proud and a self-willing spirit. The second posture, the spiritual posture, men, is honor your wives. Honor your wives as a fellow heir of salvation, Peter says, lest your prayers be hindered.

You ever been at odds with your wife and then you come to your prayer closet and try to get through to God? Scripture is true. We need to be honoring her as a fellow heir of salvation. And then we need to be praying.

James says, fervent in James 5.16, he says, fervent prayer. Fervent means laboring prayer. I would use the word earnest.

I mean, I'm getting into prayer and I'm earnest about it. I have something I want to say to God. I have something I want Him to say to me.

I don't want to just waste my time here. What a depressing thing to come out of your prayer closet realizing that was a waste of my time. I think it was a waste of God's time.

Lord, have mercy on me. It's a laboring and an earnestness which is the opposite of apathy and casualness. We can be too casual in prayer.

But God says, let's get into that posture of earnestness. Even when we draw aside, Lord, I just feel like You're a little distant here. I've been working here for a while now and the morning's gone by and my mind's been on other things and I'm feeling distant.

Lord, I don't like this. Would You draw near to me? Would You draw me near to You? There's an earnestness about a cry like that. John Fletcher has this quote in a little devotional I was reading the other day.

It says, Go to your closet as though you were going to meet your dearest friend. Cast yourself at his feet. Bemoan your coldness.

Extol his love to you. And let your heart break with a desire to love him. For want of such a frame, our times of prayer are frequently dry and useless.

Imagination prevails and the heart wanders. Can anybody else say that that's been my experience? One more thing about your spiritual posture of prayer. I would just encourage us all to make your prayer time a

blessing for God.

I know the Bible says cast your cares before God. But you know what must depress God more than anything is when I come to God with no faith and I'm just in the dumps and woe is me and I'm just bemoaning all the things that are coming in my life and there's no thanksgiving, no joy, no looking to God saying I know this is a small matter for you, it's just troubling me and I know you're going to take care of it. And I'm not saying we shouldn't cast our cares before God, but I'm thinking we should make prayer fun for God, if I can use that word.

We should make it a delight for Him. You know, it's fellowship. And I think we can do that by times of joy.

You know when you come and you're burdened in the morning and you've got things on your heart, let's take a break for a minute and sing a song. In your quiet time. Blessed Lord Jesus, in moments like these I lift up my voice.

You know some song of praise and worship, forget the burden for a moment and worship for a little bit. And make it a joy for God to come and meet with you. Songs of thanksgiving that Paul says, staying alert in prayer with thanksgiving.

I'd like to say a little bit about shutting the door. You know, Jesus said in the book of Matthew 6.6, if you turn there, it's good to just open up the Sermon on the Mount again here, to these words, but you, when you pray, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Shutting the door is also physical and spiritual.

Shutting the door, I believe, is a blessing if you can to have a place of prayer. Jesus had Gethsemane. It's said He reverted there often.

He went there, I believe, to close the door. To get away from the crowd. To put out the pressing throngs and the duties of His life.

And He went to Gethsemane to close the door. To get away. He went to the wilderness sometimes just to close the door.

Where there's nobody else around, I can bear my heart to God and you know how it is, I don't have to worry about what everybody else is thinking while I'm saying what I'm saying to God. I'm alone. The door is closed.

It's safe to talk here. It's safe to pour my heart out before Him. Ye people.

Abram, it says in Genesis, it says he went to the place where he stood before God. Did you know that about brother Abraham? He had a place in the morning. He got up early in the morning before he went to sacrifice Isaac.

It says he got up early in the morning and he went to that place. I don't know what it was. Maybe it was the place out on the hill that overlooked his pastures or whatever.

And it was just the place Abraham went and stood before God and prayed. And God had fellowship with him. And he talked about the things that were happening there.

Maybe Lot and the herdsman problem and whatnot. But Abram had a place where he went to talk to God. And he closed the door.

So I believe it's a good place. I know in my own life, I made a place in my home where I could go as a sanctuary. And when Daddy's there, everybody knows Daddy's not to be disturbed.

It's a blessing to have a place to shut the door. But also shutting the door is a spiritual thing. Shutting the door is a spiritual thing in public prayer.

It is a difficult discipline, but it is a necessary discipline. Jesus did not always pray in secret. I'm sorry.

Jesus prayed in public. And He taught us to pray in public. But it's difficult to pray in public the same as you would pray if you weren't in public, isn't it? It's hard not to concentrate on what brother so-and-so is thinking about my prayer.

And I believe that that's somewhat what our Lord is commanding us here. He says, but when you pray, don't be like those who like to pray in a prayer meeting, and you can tell they're thinking about how they sound. But rather, close your door.

You know, when you're in a prayer meeting and there's other brothers around, take a moment. Close the door. And lift your eyes.

And now let's talk to God. Yeah, there's other brothers here in this group, but I'm not talking to other brothers. I'm just talking among other brothers.

Let's talk to God when we pray. Shutting the door. It makes our speech in prayer more natural, less religious, more realistic, more honest, if I could say.

Okay, I have a few suggestions here for prayer. Just some things to help us enhance our prayer life. I don't have a real great outline here.

I'm just hoping that I can rub prayer up against you this morning. And it will rub off and you'll go away thinking more about your prayer life than you came this morning. And I think if I can do that, then I have accomplished something for God in His people.

I have accomplished something for God in His people here this morning. I would suggest you mingle reading with your prayer life. In your devotional time, I would suggest you mingle some reading in your prayer.

To break up your prayer life, take a moment, read a passage of Scripture. Hear what God is saying as He speaks to you through the Word. And also pray the Scriptures back to God.

You know, as you're reading along and David says something and your heart says, that's exactly the way I feel. Well, amen. Say it then.

Pray it right back to God. Ask Jesus about the meaning of a passage. You know how many times you're reading along and you think, I'll have to ask Brother Mose about that.

Well, ask Jesus about it. You're in your prayer closet there with the wonderful counselor. And I'm not saying you shouldn't ask Moses either, but fellowship is just saying, Lord, I don't understand this.

What do you mean? What does this mean? It's fellowship. I would suggest fasting. Now, I want to say that carefully because I think you can go overboard with fasting.

So I'd like to define what I mean by fasting. Fasting is a time of refraining from a pleasure or a necessity of life in seeking God and denying self. It's something I do to deny myself and seek God.

So I don't drink today. I don't eat today. I only eat bread today.

Okay, I'm not going to have any desserts this week. Okay, I'm not going to engage in that pleasurable thing anymore for a time. I'm going to set it aside and seek God.

It's a denying of the self by some restraint because I'm seeking after God. Fasting is good for times of mourning over sin or a coldness of heart. When my heart is cold and I know it, and I think you all know what I'm talking about when there's something amiss, David.

Things are not right. You're not responding right. You should have been more happy about that message that was preached.

Something's amiss in your heart. Things are cold. Well, that's a good time for a time of fasting.

It does something. It's miraculous. It turns the eyes back to Christ.

It proves to the conscious I'm not playing games with God. Acts of loving devotion. Fasting is an act of loving devotion.

It is a sacrifice of self-denial just like in the Old Testament when they would take a sheep that they really enjoyed and they would just say, I love God so much I'm going to burn this sheep. I'm going to kill this sheep and give it to God. Waste it.

Or a libation where they just poured out wine or oil or something valuable to them just because they love God and they don't want to spend it on themselves. Well, fasting is a bit much like that. It's just saying, God, I'm going to take this pleasure and just waste it on you because I love you.

Also, fasting can be a seeking of a clear mind. It has a tendency to clear the mind and renew spiritual alertness in a time when you're seeking direction for your life. Also, the Bible says that refraining from husband and wife relationships by agreement is for the purpose of prayer.

In 1 Corinthians 7.5. I'd also like to suggest in your prayer life that you pray aloud. That you pray aloud. When you pray, make a distinction between the passing thoughts of your mind as you're in meditation and your prayers.

I would suggest you pray aloud. And I would go so far as to suggest that when you're not speaking with your lips, unless you're very clearly speaking in your mind, you're not praying. With the lips, Jesus says, with your words you should be justified and with your words you should be condemned.

And I have found it the case, unless you make that distinction, prayer gets kind of confusing. Did I pray that or did I just think that? Well, if you make it a habit when you're praying, even in a crowd, if you're praying to yourself, if you mouth those words, Lord, be with me. Lord, I'm sorry.

I shouldn't have said it that way. If you just say those words, it's a clearing in the heart, it's a solidifying of your prayer life. I would encourage you to consider praying aloud.

And then lastly, consider what you will say to God. If you turn with me to Psalm 5, verse 3, the Bible speaks of this. Psalm 5, verse 3. David says, hmm, maybe I'm in the wrong verse.

Okay, that is the wrong reference, I see. Anyway, it is early in the morning. David says, I will arrange my prayer.

I forget what words it says. Does someone know that passage? Early I will arrange. Okay.

Anyway, the word that David uses in that psalm is the word to lay in order my prayer. I will come to you in the morning and I will lay my prayer out in an orderly fashion. Not just helter-skelter.

And I know I'm guilty of this a bit because I kind of take advantage that God knows what I'm thinking and God's patient. But David says, I'll take some time and when I bring my prayer to God, I give some thought to what I'm going to say to the Most High. Do you do that when you pray? Also in Hosea, Hosea 14, verse 2, look at that.

Hosea 14, verse 2, Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord. Say unto Him, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.

Plan what you're going to say. Like the prodigal son, I will go unto my Father and I will say, this is what I'm going to say. Well, I think sometimes we need to do the same in our prayer life.

Let's plan what we're going to say to God. Don't just go in there and just start mumbling a bunch of words. Let's stop and give it some thought.

You know, what I have to say here is either going to justify me or condemn me. And let your words mean something when you pray. Alright, I'd like to give some warnings about prayer here.

If I could, just a few. There are some warnings in the Bible. And I think I might be treading here in a very personal area.

Our prayer life is a personal area, I agree. And I don't mean to... I'm not trying to point a finger at your prayer life. God knows I confess it all the time that I'm not where I need to be in my own prayer life.

I'm not a prayer warrior, brothers. But I felt like these are things that should be said, should be preached. They're in the Bible.

And I want to see us all grow in our prayer life. If we're going to grow as a church, then we're going to need to grow in our prayer life. So, these are some warnings that the Bible has.

The first warning is be honest. Be honest in prayer. Dishonesty in prayer separates us from the reality of fellowship with God.

Do you realize that? The moment you stop being honest with God, then God is a form of religion. And you're just going through a form. If you're just talking to God in a way you wouldn't talk to a friend, or wouldn't talk to somebody who was really standing there, then we're just playing games, religious games.

We need to be honest with God when we're praying. When we are dishonest in prayer, it separates us from the reality of fellowship with God, and it hardens us in a ritualistic religion. And I know I've been there.

I'm speaking out of experience. I know what it's like to get on my knees because I need to pray, and then you just start talking. You know, halfway through, your conscience just says, David, why don't you just be quiet for a minute, because my heart's not awake yet.

I don't even know what I've said. You don't know what you've said, so let's just be quiet for a little bit. And get real.

And decide what you really want to say to God. Don't just say your prayers. Talk with God.

Avoid phrases that have no meaning. Avoid phrases that have no meaning. And some of those phrases can be good phrases.

Can't they? But they get to a place in my life where I just find them tumbling off the lips when my mind is thinking about work. Does that relate to anybody? You're thinking about something else, and yet you just said the most beautiful phrase. It's just meaningless.

Well, why don't we just stop right there in our prayer life? And get real. Strive to say only what you mean. In prayer, how would our prayers change if we strove in our prayer to say only what we mean? Better to say five words from the heart with meaning than 10,000 words.

Emptily. Empty words. Paul says it's better to preach five words where everybody understands and edifies than to speak 10,000 words in an unknown tongue.

How much more if we're talking to the Most High and we don't mean what we're saying and He knows it. I know my children do that sometimes. They'll come home and they'll tell me all about my day and I'm still figuring out how I'm going to do that thing and they're getting, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh.

And what did you do today, Diane? And maybe if they were smarter, they would just catch on and we'd just stop it right there. Just wait and you get your heart home and we can have fellowship then. And I'm afraid it's like that with God sometimes.

And I'm not speaking from... I'm not criticizing. I hope you know. I'm just laying out what God laid on my heart.

Avoid praying to yourself. We can get into a state where we are the only ones listening to our prayers. You know what it says of the Pharisee? The Pharisee went to the temple to pray and he prayed unto himself thus.

Prayed unto himself. And he was the only one listening. Jesus said that.

Jesus said God was not listening. He prayed to himself. And it was a wonderful prayer.

I'm sure he enjoyed it. But let's avoid that. Let's us get down deep with God and have time of prayer.

Even if it's shorter. Even if it isn't an hour. Even if it isn't half an hour.

Let's spend five minutes in real prayer. Maybe we need to just get quiet and wrestle with God and groan a while until we can pray. Then, we need to pray believing.

We need to pray believing. This has been a real fault in my own life. And so I share it with you.

This is something that God has blessed me with. And that is exercising ourselves in the discipline of faith in prayer. That when I come and I make a request to God, I'm not going to come with this hopelessness in my life anymore.

I'm not going to talk to God like, well, maybe this will happen or whatnot. But I'm going to get to the place and when I speak, the words that I'm saying are coming from my heart and I expect that God is hearing it and I believe that He loves me. And now that it's said, it's done.

That's faith. Jesus says, whatsoever thing you ask believing, it shall be done for you. You believe that? Now, I'm not preaching cars and houses and stuff like that.

What I mean is when I've got a need in my life and I just can't see my way around it, but the Bible says, Jesus says, you come to Me and believe I'll take care of it and I'll take care of it. God make us strong men of prayer in that area of faith. James says, but let him ask in faith nothing wavering.

Because the man that's wavering is like that wave of the sea tossed about by the winds. And then He says those awesome words, don't let that man think that he will receive anything of the Lord. That's a warning, isn't it? When you pray, make sure you believe what you're saying.

Don't come to God without faith. Don't come to God in a hopelessness. Come to God with faith and confidence.

Read your Bible for a while until you can believe it. And then pray. Praise God for prayer.

Alright, one more warning. Avoid vain repetition. And I would like to just be personal if I could this morning.

This is a personal area. And I'd like to just make it very clear. When we pray, I'm afraid we talk sometimes to God in such a repetitious way that it's almost using the Lord's name in vain.

And I know, I've done it myself. I'm not condemning. But I think it needs to be preached.

Jesus said, don't use vain repetition like the Gentiles do. They think if they say it a lot of times, God will hear. And Jesus says, don't be that way.

When you pray, you get your prayer arranged. Say it through once. Believe that it's done.

And be done. You know, if you read the prayers in the Bible, if you read through the prayers in the Bible, do a study of the prayers in the Bible and then time yourself how long it takes to pray them. Are they long? Half hour prayers? Even Hannah's prayer.

That brought about Samuel. I think you could probably pray that prayer three minutes, would you say? If you're slow and meaningful and groaning in it, maybe five. Jesus, many of His prayers, 30 seconds.

The one that raised Lazarus from the dead was less than that. So, can we just be free to pray short prayers? Let's just say what we want to say to God and then stop. And let's fill it with faith and with hope and joy and confidence in God.

I'd like to just share with you the picture I get when Jesus says not with vain repetition as the Gentiles do. I think we all go back to Elijah in 1 Kings. Can we read that story together? In 1 Kings 18.

And it doesn't say that they used a lot of vain repetition, but I'm guessing they did. O Baal! O Baal! Leaping and cutting themselves. O Baal! O Baal! Hear us! Save us! All day long, leaping and jumping, it says, on the altar, and gashing themselves with knives and crying out, and what on earth? It must have been hideous to hear it.

All these 400 men just crying, O Baal! O Baal! That's the picture I get. And then you have Elijah, and he's saying, what does he say there? He says, I've got to carry it away here and didn't turn to it. 1 Kings 18.

Call a little louder. Maybe he can't hear you. And so they called all a little louder.

O Baal! This is a beautiful passage of Scripture. Verse 36. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.

That's about 6 o'clock. Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord.

Hear me that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again. Done. Six seconds.

26 seconds that prayer took. And it changed the course of history in Israel. Beautiful.

You know, I just see Elijah's... You know what I see in that prayer? Here's a man who's not trying to pump up a relationship with God. He knows when he talks, he's talking to God. Maybe that's our problem sometimes.

It lies at the root of faith. Maybe we need to get real with God. Maybe we need to confess where we're at.

I like the next story too. It says when he was praying for rain, did you notice the posture he has? Anybody notice that? It says he put his face between his knees. Can you imagine that? I don't think he was standing up either.

I think he was on his knees and he had his head down in between his knees and he was closing his door. You know, he was getting earnest with God. And you know, when you're in that kind of posture, you're not thinking about everything out there.

I mean, his face was between his knees. He was praying, saying, okay God, isn't it enough? Send rain. Okay, go look.

God, send rain. Go look. And I don't know, it doesn't say how long it took, but from the prayer that he has here, I don't think it was a long time.

So, I would just encourage each one of us, pay attention to our prayers. Can we? As we're praying, watch the words that come out of our mouth. Let's trim our prayers down to the bare essentials.

Now, I'm not saying no repetition. And I didn't write it down here. I'm sorry, I didn't put the... Well, I guess it's in the 17th chapter of John.

If you read the prayer of Jesus, there is repetition there. And David, King David also uses repetition. But it is the repetition of emphasis.

David uses the repetition of emphasis. Oh my God. And he may say it two or three times in his prayer, but it's not vain repetition.

It's not just something he's saying. It's meaningful. It's emphasis.

When Jesus says, Oh righteous Father. You know, that's not vain repetition. That's not using the name of Lord in vain.

He's using that in an emphasizing way in his prayer. And that's okay. I say, use all that repetition you want.

But it's the vain repetition. It's the empty repetition. That Jesus says, Don't be like the Gentiles.

God won't hear you anymore for using his name more times in a prayer. And I'm sorry. I hope you're understanding that I'm not trying to criticize your prayer life.

I'm blessed by your prayers. Even, you know, I've accepted it and been blessed by many prayer meetings. But I felt this morning as I was preaching on prayer, this is a very clear teaching in the Scriptures.

And I feel that this is a very real application of this teaching. Okay, I have a few admonitions to prayer then before I close here. Pray often.

You know in the Bible, prayer happens all the time. If you study it, prayer happens all the time in the Bible. You know when a brother struggling, sharing his struggles with you, wouldn't it be alright instead of just saying, I'll pray for you.

Let's say, let's pray. Maybe we would pray more often for one another that way. I don't know about you, but sometimes I say, I'll pray for that brother, and then I have a guilty feeling because I see him again and I remember his struggle and I, Lord, I didn't remember to pray for him.

Well, maybe we should just stop and pray. We don't have to pray for half an hour together. Let's just pray and bear our hearts to God as brothers and sisters.

When you're in temptation, pray. This is where the devil wants to stop you. You're in a temptation, immediately guilt comes in and says, you shouldn't pray.

You don't deserve to pray. I mean, you've got to be holy to pray and you're in this temptation. That's not true.

Pray. God, help me. This is staggering me.

This is heavy. Where's the door? Help me. Enjoy and give thanks.

You know, let's not forget that prayer is for thanksgiving to its fellowship. You know, when something goes right at work, let's give thanks. Thank You, Lord.

Thank You that that fit. I didn't even check the measurement on it and it fits. Praise God.

Thank You for watching over me there. When something goes wrong at work, let's pray about it before we start turning red in the ears and snappy with the other people in the workplace or something like that. Or in the home, sisters.

When things start feeling kind of chaotic and the children are out of control, can't we just stop the house and say, children, let's come over here to the couch and kneel down. I'd like to pray. And have a five minute prayer.

Earnest prayer. Lord, save our home from strife and from all the things that want to destroy us and make us a holy home. Before you leave the driveway on a trip, pray.

Okay, children, let's just stop here and ask the Lord's blessing and safety on this trip. I know something my dear wife does and I bless her for it. Whenever the ambulance goes by, our little children say, Daddy, let's pray.

You know, somebody got hurt. Let's pray for them. My wife has instilled that and I bless her for it.

Just make prayer a thing of your life. Morning and night. I know it's not always possible to have family devotions morning and night, but it's not hard to just gather around and have a word of prayer.

So in conclusion, some of us are falling short in our prayer life. That's the bottom line. Some of us are falling short in our prayer life.

We're falling short when it comes time to talk to God. Our personal lives and our homes are lacking because of it. Our missions are hurting because of it.

This is the time for repentance this morning. And I meant it to be that way. I hope I'm not laying a heavy law down here this morning, but if you're anything like me, this is a good time to repent of my prayerlessness.

It's time to repent and start again. This is a blessing. Repentance is a blessed thing because I can stop, repent, turn and start afresh.

Maybe you're here this morning and you don't have a prayer life because you don't have a relationship with God. That's a very real possibility. And trying to have a prayer life without a relationship with God is difficult.

Very difficult. Maybe you have sin in your life that is alienating you from God and stopping your prayer life. Jesus said, Watch and pray therefore, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are coming to pass and be counted worthy to stand in front of the Son of Man.

His admonition to the disciples comes down through the ages and it comes to us this morning. Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation. He showed us the way.

He taught us the way. We have no excuses. Our prayer life needs to be an effort in our life.

We need to be diligent in our prayer life. I'd encourage you today, I don't know if we want to open it up this morning. I thought we'd just open it up for testimonies.

I would encourage you to stand up and give a testimony today and start afresh and new. Begin today to walk in communion with God through frequent, frequent prayer. Not just say your prayers in the morning, but a walk of prayer, a life of prayer, a relationship of prayer in your life.

And do just like Jesus said this morning. Wake up. Why sleepest thou? Arise and pray.

Well, God bless each one of you. Yes, brother, I want to join with you in hearing and receiving that message. And I also want to wake up, you know, not just in the morning, but all during the day and rise up and pray.

There's something about the day as you go along that kind of wants to hold you to its course and keep you... I don't know if down is the right word, but I'll use that word instead of rising up and praying. So I receive that and I repent that I don't pray frequently. I think you used that word, be frequent prayers, I think you said.

That's right. You know, wherever we are, whether it's at business or family situations or church situations here. Amen.

Amen. That's good. We need that.

I appreciate the simple truth of God's Word given to us on such an essential thing. It's prayer. You know, it's not hard, is it? It's not something you've got to go home and study a long time and figure out, is it? We just need to repent and do it, don't we? May God give us the grace to do that and the faith.

It does take faith, as he mentioned. Amen. Well, let's maybe open it up and you can raise your hand if you have something you want to share to either add the message or maybe a testimony of repentance or just sharing where you're at.

Need encouragement. Need prayer. You raise your hand and we'll get a microphone to you.

There's one over here. One over there. Praise the Lord for this service this morning.

It's so refreshing. Toward the end of the week, the Lord is drawing me back. I want to confess that I was just, I guess, walking away from God and feeling very discouraged and listening to the lies and some of those things again.

Toward the end of the week, the Lord started showing me where I was at and I just bless God for His faithfulness. And this is a balm of Gilead this morning because God is faithful and because I'm justified in Him. There is a place of prayer.

There is a place of rest and quietness at His throne and at His feet. And I revel in that this morning and determined by His grace to cease from sin and learn to love and to do well from Isaiah. And I would just covet your prayers.

I thank God that He loves us. He loves me. Thank God this morning that because He loves us, He sends chastisements.

He says He does in Revelation. And I want to bless God for that this morning. That I'm His child and because I'm His child, He spans me.

And I love Him. Thank you. Amen.

Amen. I just wanted to share. Satan is an adversary to us and we're going through a lot of things in our home.

So many times I'll say, I don't have time to pray. God has enlightened me in the last few weeks that time is nothing to God. He has all the time.

He knows. And I've taken 30 seconds here and 30 seconds there. It says in Thessalonians, pray without ceasing.

I have found that to be such a joy and such an uplifting thing just to take those burdens off your shoulders every minute of the day. Don't wait. I've found that to be so true.

But Satan is still there. You don't have time to pray. Well, I appreciate what David said.

It's not in our prayer that makes the difference. It's the continuous prayer. It's the continuous mindset on the Lord Jesus Christ that He's there.

And I just wanted to share that I found myself lacking so many times because I let that discourager, that deceiver, that accuser, say, you don't have time to pray. I pray that you would all find your time to pray. And thank you for your prayers for our family and our home.

God bless you all. Amen. God bless you, brother.

Yeah, thank you, David, for that exhortation on prayer this morning. I need that for myself, especially as you talked about through the day. I guess by nature, I fix things with a welder and a torch.

And that's kind of my livelihood all my life to just fix things kind of naturally. And you know, when it comes to the spiritual things, it doesn't work that way. And I tend to do the same thing sometimes, try and fix it in my own strength.

And I want to receive that challenge to just cry out to God more. I know sometimes this is a practice that I do occasionally when I lose something and find myself being frustrated not being able to find a tool or whatever. And I have a lot to do.

And sometimes I just ask God, well, You know where it is. And it is amazing many times how God does help us when we do cry out like that. And I can testify to that.

Sometimes I search so long and finally I just got down and prayed about it. And it's amazing how soon I... I think God's trying to tell me something in those times perhaps too to lean on Him and cry out. So I thank for the message this morning.

This morning I was crying out to God about the dryness of my prayer life. I just feel like I want to bless God today for giving that encouragement. Thank you, Brother David, for listening.

God is amazing. He obviously was giving you a message before I even cried out about it. I thank Him for that.

Also, in the service this morning, I was struck to remember some verses that had been laid on my heart about three weeks ago or so. I think maybe if I had been a little more careful with what God wanted to say to me, maybe that would have prevented some dryness perhaps. But in 1 John 1, verse 3 says, "...that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Brother Dean this morning brought out that Jesus Christ, because of Christ, we can have fellowship with God. And what an amazing thing that God has given to us and that we would cast it away in not praying, in not bringing our heart to God. He's given us fellowship with Him.

That's what Jesus Christ did for us was to give us fellowship with God. And I stand here and just confess that I haven't taken advantage of that fellowship the way that I should. I can remember times in the past when I have taken advantage of that fellowship and had that vibrant time of prayer with God.

And then amen to praying without ceasing. That comes automatically. That comes all the time.

And by God's grace, I want to return to that. Walking, as Brother Lawrence just shared, even in losing something, even in the times of frustrations at work, even in the times, as Brother Marty shared, of needs at home, sick children. That all flows out of taking advantage of that fellowship that God has given.

And I stand here this morning and I just desire that I would have that greater fellowship. And I ask for your prayers and determine that I will. And amen, brother.

When it comes to fasting, I know part of where I failed in that was that I've stopped fasting sleep as much as I used to. And so, by His grace, I'll do that too. So thank you for the message.

Yes, I just, first of all, ask forgiveness from the church for my negligence this morning getting here an hour and twenty minutes late. And also thank Brother David for that message. That was a real encouragement and a help.

And I know one of the things that I struggle with the most in that is the spirit of hopelessness. When you've been struggling with something and you're praying about it, but it's true our actions speak louder than words. And even if we want to tell ourselves we have some theological faith that He'll help us, we ought to pray with the spirit that we do indeed believe that He will.

I just thank you for that. That was a great encouragement. And God bless you.

Amen. I had a hand over here on the sister's side. Arthur, down front here.

The Lord has really been pressing on my heart in the last months the burden of learning to pray. And I just want to confess to the brothers and sisters here that I'm not where I should be when it comes to prayer. But I long to go on with the Lord in this area.

And I just wanted you all to know that I'm not where I should be. Amen. And I also want to share with you all I'd like you to pray for me.

I'm going to Manitoba this next week to be with my family some. And I'm trembling a bit. But I just desperately long that my parents would see Christ in their children.

And so I ask for your prayers. Thank you. Yeah, I praise God for the message this morning too, Brother David.

Thank you for letting God speak through you. Something that I really needed in my life. God has been speaking to me for a long time in my life.

That's an area that I'm not being faithful to Him. I'm not praying enough. And one thing that really challenged me that you brought out is when Peter went up to the rooftop to pray.

His supper wasn't ready yet. And many times I find myself wasting those minutes or that half an hour before lunch or whatever it may be. And just sitting around and doing nothing when I could be going and praying to God or reading the Word or something.

I just want to ask your forgiveness and pray for me that I would see the greater need and what a power there is in prayer. And I know the power there but I don't believe it in my heart. Because I believe if we would believe it in our heart that prayer is so powerful, we would pray.

But I feel we all know it in our minds but we don't know it in our hearts. And I want to see you all pray for me that I could anoint in my heart and that I would be more prayerful. God bless you.

I know some of you all and for those of you all that don't know me I'm Daniel Byler and I'm staying with the Livies right now. I'm from Ohio. And I also would just like to thank God for the message this morning administered to my heart tremendously.

And it also convicted me Also, God bless you brother Dean for your honesty. I know that those confessions are hard and I'd like to make the same confession that in that area of gluttony and also it goes into the area of prayer and many other areas in my life where I am not enough of... I am not disciplined enough as a Christian. And God especially spoke to me about that area in my prayer life this morning.

And I bless God for that. I know what it's like to pray in faith. I have had that in the past and those are blessed exciting times.

But it's not that real to me right now. And I do ask your prayers. I want to come to God knowing that I'm going to receive what I ask of Him.

Because I'm asking according to His will and I believe Him. And even more than that, it honors God and it makes Him happy when we do that. I desire that.

I want to walk with God. Amen. Thank you brother.

Alright, I think we'll go on from there. Why don't we bow our heads and just pray for those that ask for prayer. Heavenly Father, we do thank You this morning for Your Word.

And we do thank You for Your faithfulness to us, Lord. What a blessing we have being here. What a joy we have.

Oh, Father, may we see these things more real with spiritual eyes. And we do pray for all those that ask for prayer in this area of their life. Father, we know You forgive them and so do we.

Father, we also pray for the burdens that are expressed. Especially we know that Davina is going to Manitoba like she said, and both of her parents are lost. Even though her father is a preacher in a Hutterite colony, he does not know God.

He's not born again. Oh, Father, she trembles and we all tremble at the thought of going up there and spending several weeks and trying to be a witness when you're received harshly. And I don't know how to do all those things, Father, but I pray You'd give her grace and give her wisdom and give her love and fill

her full of Your heart and let her be a daughter of prayer of Yours these next few weeks especially to walk carefully and circumspectly during this time.

And help us to pray for her. What a testimony it would be, Father, if they would get born again. We trust You for these things, Father.

Our faith is in You. And we do thank You for this service. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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