

America Back to God - Prayer

by David Ford

The sermon emphasizes the need for a fresh anointing of God and the importance of prayer, surrender, and living a crucified life to experience the power of God in our lives.

Duration: 26:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 7:2-46

Topics: "America"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story of a young boy in South Africa who had lost his family in a bombing. Despite his tragic circumstances, the boy expressed his faith in Jesus and believed that even those responsible for his family's death would one day bow down to Jesus. The preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus and having our passions and desires crucified. He also highlights the need for a deep thirst for God and a longing for revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The sermon references John chapter seven and shares a story about George Whitfield's dedication to prayer.

Transcript

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes unto the Father but by me. In those significant, poignant words of Jesus wherein he says, I am the way, the truth, and the life, are found all the answers of mankind. Man wants to know why he's here, where he's come from, where he's going, what's the meaning of life, what's going on.

We see the chaos in the world all around us, but Jesus, His word still stands true. I am the way, the truth, and the life. A man of God years ago named E. M. Bounds wrote many books on prayer, and he's buried in Washington, Georgia.

He lived there, wrote many of his books from there. I want to give a few quotes today. What he said was this, what the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men and women, men whom the Holy Ghost can use.

Men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men.

He does not anoint plans, but men, men of prayer. And he used the terminology men because he was writing to preachers at that time. The men of mighty prayer are men of spiritual might, he goes on to say.

Prayers never die. Brainerd's whole life was a life of prayer. By day and by night, he prayed.

Before preaching and after preaching, he prayed. Writing through the interminable solitudes of the forests, he prayed. On his bed of straw, he prayed.

Retiring to the dense and lonely forests, he prayed. Hour by hour, day by day, day after day, early morning, late at night, he was praying and fasting, pouring out his soul, interceding, commuting with God. He was with God mightily in prayer, and God was with him mightily.

And by it, he being dead yet speaks and works and will speak and work till the end comes. And among the glorious ones of that glorious day, he will be with the first. Edward said of him, his life shows the right way to success in the works of ministry.

He sought it as the soldier seeks victory in a seizure battle, or as a man that runs a race for a great prize. And then made it with love to Christ and souls. How did he labor? Always fervently.

Not only in word and doctrine, in public and in private, but in prayers by day and night, wrestling with God in secret, and travailing in birth with unutterable groans and agonies until Christ was formed in the hearts of the people to whom he was sent. Oh, I would to God that our prayer lives would be so full of the divine presence of God that we watch people transformed right in front of us as we preach the word of the living God. I recall a story I had reading years ago of George Whitfield, and he was going to come over to the U.S. And he had some men, and they came to the port, and the shipping vessel hadn't arrived yet for him to leave.

And he and his friends went back to a home where they were staying overnight, and they went on to bed. They spent that night, tonight when they arrived there, from 9 o'clock till about midnight in prayer. Whitfield was up again the following morning at 4 o'clock, and from about 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. they all gathered together in prayer.

And we wonder why God met those men of God. We wonder why God used Wesley and Whitfield so mightily, because they were men, men of prayer. Bounce said the holier a man is, the more does he estimate prayer.

The clearer does he see that God gives himself to the praying ones, and that the measure of God's revelation to the soul is the measure of the soul's longing, importunate prayer for God. Salvation never finds its way to a prayerless heart. Indeed, the word says, whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Holy Spirit never abides in a prayerless spirit. Preaching never edifies a prayerless soul. Christ knows nothing of prayerless Christians.

The gospel cannot be projected by a prayerless preacher. Gifts, talents, education, eloquence, God's call, cannot abate the demand of prayer, but only intensify the necessity for the preacher to pray and to be prayed for. The more the preacher's eyes are open to the nature, responsibility, and difficulties in his work, the more will he see.

And if he be a true preacher, the more will he feel the necessity of prayer, not only the increasing demand to pray himself, but to call on others to help him by their prayers. Richard Cecil said this, all the minister's efforts will be vanity or worse than vanity if he have not unction. Unction must come down from heaven and spread a savor and feeling and relish over his ministry.

And among the other means of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, the last also must be given to the word of God and prayer. In the Christian system, unction is anointing of the Holy Ghost, separating unto God's works and qualifying for it. This unction is the one divine enablement by which the preacher accomplishes the peculiar and saving ends of preaching.

Without this unction, I love that word. It's found in 1 John 2. Without this unction, this enablement, this endowment with power from on high, there are no true spiritual results accomplished. Did we hear that what Brown said? Without this unction, there are no true spiritual results accomplished.

The results and forces in preaching do not rise above the results of unsanctified speech. Without unction, the former is as potent as the pulpit. The unction on the preacher generates to the word of God the spiritual results that flow from the gospel.

And without this unction, these results are not secured. Many pleasant impressions may be made, but these all fall far below the ends of gospel preaching. This unction must be simulated.

It may be simulated. There are many things that look like it. There are many results that resemble its effects, but they are foreign to its results and to its nature.

The fervor or softness excited by a pathetic or emotional sermon may look like the movements of the divine unction, but they have no pungent, penetrating, heart-breaking force. I ask the question in Christendom today, in our speech and in our preaching, can we say with the Apostle Paul that my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Holy Spirit and the power that your faith should not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God? Friend, how can you and I know this fresh anointing of God, this fresh unction, the indwelling life of the Spirit of Almighty God? I'm glad you asked. Jesus gave the answer in John 7, 37-39.

He says this in the word of God. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly, out of his heart, shall flow rivers of living water.

But this spoke he of the Holy Spirit, whom they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. And because of the stirring of Jesus speaking here in the precinct of the temple when he said this, it says in verse 43, So there was a division among the people because of him, and some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him. And the officer said about him in verse 46, Never a man spoke like this man.

Have you come to the point in your life and ministry where you're tired of being sick and tired all the time? Where there seems to be a void of a lack of the power of God upon our lives, upon your life, upon my life? Have we come to the point where we say, Oh God, there's got to be more to the Christian life than what I'm seeing. It seems my prayers are powerless. It seems my petitions bounce off the ceiling.

Oh God, what's the secret of this Christian life? I must know. I'm so thirsty for that. In John chapter 7, it's the last day, the great day of the feast.

This feast in verse number 2 of the same chapter, it says the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. This was an agricultural feast and a historical feast. They have it even today in Israel every year, about the month of September or so is when they have it.

It's an agricultural feast to commemorate God's provision in the promised land and even in the wilderness of God brought manna and quail for 40 long years, but coming into the land of promise, of knowing the land filled and full of milk and honey and the provision of God there, that it would be sustained by the rains of heaven, not by the foot pumps as back in Egypt. It was a historical feast to commemorate the battle won at Jericho. It's seen in the book of Joshua, how they circled the walls those seven days on the last day.

They gave a great shout, but God said, be quiet for these days until the last day. Well, in this feast of tabernacles, they would go down by the Pool of Shalom, the Levitical choir, the singers, the high priest, and musicians, they'd go down and they would sing from Isaiah chapter 12, with joy shall we draw water from the wells of our salvation. And then back up to the precinct of the temple, singing from the Hallel Psalms as well, going down and up.

And they would circle the golden altar once a day every day, but the last day, and on this last day, Jesus was in the temple area. In the last day, they would circle around seven times, just like Jericho. And scholars said that at the end of the seventh time around, there'd be a great shout in the temple there in Jerusalem.

And then there'd be a silence and a cutoff. And that that is when Jesus stood up and cried out saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.

Can I say this? The reason why there's no moral clarity, it seems to be in the world today, is because we've gotten away from the moral absolutes of Jesus and the word of God. Jesus stood up and he cried out to a lost and dying and religious world, and he said, if any man. You say, David, that doesn't apply to me.

Jesus said, any man. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Friends, Jesus is the fountain.

It's an encouragement. If any man thirst, let him come. That's what Jesus is saying.

He's encouraging. Don't hold back. But let him come unto me.

Any man. If any man thirst, let him come. And he says, unto me.

Can you imagine anybody saying, come to me? Philosophers don't say that. They say, what do you think about what I've written or what I believe or what I've said? Jesus said, let him come unto me and drink. Jesus is the fountain of the divine life of the indwelling Christ living through us, the very life that he is.

He says there in verse 39 that the Holy Spirit wasn't given because Jesus wasn't glorified. So when is the Holy Spirit poured out? Listen, he was poured out when Jesus was lifted up. He said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.

Jesus was glorified in his crucifixion. In his crucifixion, he was lifted up. And when we lift up Jesus, he will draw men, women, boys, and girls unto himself.

In his glorification, Acts 2.33 says, And therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear. When was the Holy Spirit poured out, beloved? When Jesus was exalted back to the right hand of the Father as Lord. That's when the Holy Spirit was poured out.

And when is he poured out in your life and mine? When we know the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we know the conquering power of the blood and the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, Accept a grain of wheat, fall into the ground, and die that bithes alone.

But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. Do you know a crucified life? Is my tongue crucified? Is my thought life crucified? Are my passions and desires crucified? Have I surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Years ago, I was in South Africa preaching, and I was on the beach one morning early, not long after the sunrise. I was just out there alone in Durban.

And a boy walked up to me, 16 years old, obviously had some nice clothes, but they were dirty. He told me the story of how a certain organization in South Africa petro-bombed his home and killed his mother and father and his brother. And he told me this gruesome story of what they'd gone through.

And then his tears streamed down his face. He looked up heavy word, and he said, But I want to say this, that someday those men who petro-bombed and killed my mom and my dad and my brother will someday have to bow the knee to Jesus and confess, Jesus, you're Lord of all. Jesus, you're Lord of all.

Friend, the reason we don't know the power of God in our lives and prayer is because we haven't yet surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. May we say, Lord of every thought and action. Lord to send and Lord to stay.

Lord in writing, speaking, giving. Lord of all things to obey. Lord of all that is of me.

Now and evermore to obey. Thou art king in my life. That's who he is.

And I ask the question, Is he Lord of your life? Is he undisputed Lord of your life and my life, of our lives? That's the fountain Jesus. But what are the features? He said, thirst. He said, come.

And he said, drink. And I asked you just now. I asked you just now.

Are we thirsty for him? Or are you thirsty for Jesus? I recall a story years ago told by Stephen Oldford when they were missionaries in Africa when he was a boy. He said, we had men helping us carrying supplies and water bags and moving across into Africa, into an area that had not yet heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said, every water hole they went to was dried up.

The skies were clear. And they didn't have any water anywhere. He said, our tongues were began to thicken.

Our voice was becoming extremely hoarse. He said, all the helpers dropped their bags and ran and left and fled trying to find water. He said, my dear dad, my dear dad got us together.

And when he got us together, he put his arms around my mother and my brother and myself and looked up to the sky. And he said, oh God, this is the land of my adoption. This is the land that you called me to.

He said, oh God, I ask you, Lord Jesus, you've sent us here. And if we're going to get the gospel to these people who need to hear about Jesus, oh God, we need rain. God, send the rain from heaven.

And he said, from nowhere, all of a sudden, clouds gathered together right over them in a miraculous way. And the rain of heaven began to pour down and pour down and pour down upon everybody who was there. And we drank and we drank and we drank.

Oh, friends, I thirst for God. I believe you thirst for God. Thirsting for a mighty moving of the spirit of almighty God in North America.

Oh, he said, if you thirst, come unto me. Come unto me. It's more than just thirsting.

Jesus said, if you thirst, let him come unto me. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, that's what coming is. Coming is believing.

And it's coming to Jesus, the only one who can pour out the rain of his glory and his presence in revival, blessing, and power. Listen, that's the secret. The burning bush principle of revival is when you see the burning bush in a given church service somewhere or in a prayer meeting.

Those men gathered together praying for revival on the Isle of Lewis in 1949 and two elderly ladies in their 80s. One was blind and couldn't see, and the other's body was crippled. She could hardly even stand or even walk.

And it's told that as they used to get together two nights a week to pray all night, they cry out to God and they say, Oh, God, you said I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and I will pour floods upon the dry ground. Oh, God, I pray, pour out the rain of heaven upon us, Lord Jesus. We're thirsty, we're thirsty, we're thirsty.

And God met their cry. God sent a man named Duncan Campbell. Duncan Campbell went through a breaking experience in his life.

His little daughter came to him one night in his study, and she sat on his knees as only a daughter could do to her father. And she said, Daddy, Daddy, why doesn't God use you anymore in revival? You're known as Duncan Campbell of Argyle, but Daddy, why doesn't God use you anymore in revival? And she took her hands and put them on the sides of his face, and she said, Daddy, whatever it takes, go all the way through with God. And she left the room, and Duncan Campbell got down on his knees and his face on the floor of that study, and through the cross of Calvary and the cleansing blood of Jesus, he wept his way back to Jesus.

And God raised Duncan Campbell up, but he went to the Isle of Lewis. He left a conference where he was speaking at, left the platform. He was excused by the leader of the huge conference.

He was supposed to speak shortly. He said, Brother, I've got to go. God's told me to go to Lewis.

I don't understand, but I've got to go. And he left there, took a ferry over across the Isle of Lewis, and there was a boy there. And he said, Son, he said, Is there a pastor in the local parson, in the church building? He said, No, sir, but there's an elder lives up there in the house up there.

He said, Could you go up and tell him that Duncan Campbell has arrived? The man come down, and he said, Mr. Campbell, he said, We've been expecting you. He said, Mr. Campbell, he said, Are you walking

with God? And he said, Well, I don't know, but I do believe I fear God. He said, I think that'll be enough.

He said, Mr. Campbell, we've already advertised your coming, that you'd be speaking tonight in the church. Would you mind stopping by and just greeting the people in the church tonight? And he did. And God broke through in that place.

In God's manifest presence and poured out his Spirit. And God shook the Isle of Lewis in 1949 to 1952. Duncan only went for a few days, ended up staying over two years, because God came and refined the power of blessing.

The features of this life is that we thirst, we come, and we drink, as William of Translation of Ephesians 518, drink deeply of the Holy Spirit. But the fullness of this is out of his belly, so flow rivers of living water, the Congo, the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Danube. Oh, beloved friends, may we cry out unto God today and say, Oh, God, I thirst for you.

I come to you, Jesus. And I come to drink of the water of eternal life. I don't care what you've done.

I don't care what sin you think is too great. Jesus said, Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. I invite you right where you are.

I'm not going to give you the words. You cry out to God where you are. You know what to say.

Cry out to him for forgiveness, for mercy, for grace, for Jesus to forgive you to come into your heart and life. Christian who's weary and tired and going through a barrenness of an experience with God. And maybe in your church, will you thirst for Jesus right now? Will you say, Oh, God, I come to you.

I need you, Lord. I hunger for you, Lord. And I drink of you, oh God.

Friends, we must humble ourselves and bend our necks and bend our knees to the God of creation, to Yeshua, to Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Father God, I pray right now in Jesus name. Oh, God, I thirst for you, Lord.

We thirst for a mighty moving of your spirit, oh God. Lord, I come to you this midnight hour and I pray God for a mighty outpouring of your spirit that will shake this nation, that will turn the churches upside down, that will bring about a holiness in the church like we've never known, that people will quit performing and begin worshipping. May we be gripped by the hand of God, gripped by the power of God in this nation once again.

That the world might know that the Lord alone, he is God and that there is none else. Lord, those rivers are living. Those rivers are lasting.

You said that if any man thirst, let him come unto me the fountain and drink. Lord, we come. That's the future.

And Lord Jesus, the fullness is those rivers are living. They're not dead. It's not dead church.

It's living church. It's alive Christ. Father, many of us, we've been to a church service that was dead, but we've never been to a true worship service that was dead.

Lord, I thank you that we're saved by grace alone through faith alone. But the faith that saves is never alone because God is in it. And I ask you, Father, to give us a sense of hungry and of thirst.

Lord, that we'll lay hold of the horns of the altar. Oh God, and not let go until you answer. There's people right now, Lord, listening, their marriage is in a mess.

Their teenage son is messed up in drugs. Their daughters come home with an STD. People are bored to tears in many places.

Father, because we have religiosity without the dynamic of the spirit of the living God. And I ask you, oh God, tonight, I ask you, Lord Jesus, today, I ask you, oh God. Oh, may we come back to you, God, in America.

May we draw near unto you, oh God. You said draw near unto me, and I will draw near unto you. Lord Jesus, the reason why you're not drawing near to us is that we are not drawing near to you.

And I ask you, Father, that we might pray, that we might preach, that we might live with the clarity and the reality of the living Christ, with the humility and the authority of Jesus himself alone. Father, I worship you, and we bless your holy and glorious name. Touch lives that are full of chaos for Lord Jesus.

The heart is that which controls the inside. So we bless you, and we thank you for the person and the promise and the presence of the Holy Spirit of Almighty God. Holy Spirit, glorifying Jesus, we ask you, oh God, to turn open the heavens and come down in America.

Feel our cars, our churches, our homes, our families, Lord. May we see a move of your hand and power of God in our families, in our government, as your word commands to pray, in our churches, in our schools, in our workplaces. Amen.

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