

Edward Payson

by David Smithers

The sermon emphasizes the need for men and women mighty in prayer to bring about revival and spiritual growth in the Church.

Scripture: Psalm 145:18, Matthew 6:6, Luke 18:1, Acts 1:14, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

David Smithers preaches on the powerful impact of prayer in the life of Edward Payson, a man known for his fervent and constant prayer life. Payson's deep intimacy with God and his unwavering commitment to prayer led to remarkable spiritual experiences and a longing for revival. Through humility and fervent prayer, Payson witnessed numerous revivals marked by a profound sense of Christ's presence and power. His diary serves as a testament to the necessity and effectiveness of prayer in bringing about spiritual awakening and transformation.

Transcript

E. M. Bounds in his classic little book "Power Through Prayer", wrote, "What the Church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use - men of prayer, men mighty in prayer."

Edward Payson was just such a man; a man mighty in prayer. "He prayed without ceasing and felt safe nowhere but at the throne of grace. He may be said to have studied theology on his knees. Much of his time he spent literally prostrated with his Bible open before him pleading the promise; "I will send the comforter and when He, The Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." Payson's advice to his fellow ministers was, "prayer is the first thing, the second thing and the third thing necessary to a minister. Pray then my dear brother, pray, pray." It has been well said that the secret of Edward Payson's ministry was that he prayed much in secret. The scars on his bedroom floor testify to this fact. Next to Payson's bed where deep grooves in the hardwood floor were his knees had pressed repeatedly in times of travail.

To read "Praying Payson's" diary is to be touched by his heart longings and tender love for Jesus and the lost. On January 4, 1807, he wrote, "I was favored with a spirit of prayer beyond all my former experience. I was in great agony and wrestled both for myself and others with great power. God seemed to bow the heavens and come down and open all His treasures, bidding me, take what I would."

January 29th, "I never felt such longings after God or such a desire to depart to be with Christ. My soul thirsted for more full communion with my God and Savior. I do not now feel satisfied as I used to with the manifestations of the divine presence, but still feel hungry and craving." February 18, "I was enabled to lie at Jesus' feet and to wash them with the tears of contrition. No pleasure I have ever found in the Christian life is superior to this." February 28, "I was favored with great enlargement in prayer. I seemed to be carried out of myself into the presence of God."

Like all true men of prayer, Payson understood the need for true humility. "It was the burden of his secret prayers that he might be delivered from pride, from self-seeking, from preaching himself instead of Christ Jesus the Lord." Through humility and fervent prayer he was always in hopes of seeing a fresh wave of revival. "The revivals which took place under his labors were numerous and were characterized by a depth and power seldom seen." Often Payson congregation was overwhelmed with a sense of Christ's presence and power and irresistibly brought to tears. Mr. Payson's diary testifies of the power and necessity of prayer for revival. September 27th, "In the evening I was favored with great faith and fervency in prayer. It seemed as if God would deny me nothing, and I wrestled for multitudes of souls, and could not help hoping there would be revival here." September 28, "I was favored with the greatest degree of freedom and fervency in interceding for others. I seemed to travail in birth with poor sinners and could not help hoping the God is about to do something for His glory and the good of souls." Within days, "Praying Payson" saw his prayers answered through a fresh work of revival power.

On April 23, 1808, Edward Payson wrote, "My heart seemed ready to break with its longings after holiness." Such longings for heart purity, revival power and the person of Jesus are the marks of a healthy and normal Christian life. The lack of these precious things in the modern Church reveal a nominal Christian life. Too much of what is called the Church today is not fit to live or die. The nominal Christian is unfit to deal with our demon possessed age or the coming judgment seat of Christ. Truly the Church's greatest need is for men and women, mighty in prayer. We need men and women who will pray and yearn for revival. Lord make us a praying people!

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