

e.m. Bounds

by David Smithers

David Smithers' sermon on E. M. Bounds highlights the profound impact of prayer and the necessity of revival in the Church.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Church Revival"

Description

David Smithers preaches about the life and impact of E. M. Bounds, a man hidden away by God in prayer, who despite being unknown and unrecognized during his lifetime, is now considered one of the most prolific authors on prayer. Bounds, gifted in building and reviving the Church, spent hours daily in fervent prayer, interceding for preachers' sanctification, Church revival, and the spread of holiness. His dedication to prayer and revival often made preachers uncomfortable with his call for holiness and attacks on worldly desires. E. M. Bounds' life and prayerful dedication left a lasting impact on those around him, drawing many to a deeper life of prayer and intimacy with God.

Transcript

E. M. Bounds in his book "Prayer and Praying Men", wrote "Elijah learned new and higher lessons of prayer while hidden away by God and with God . . ." This statement is certainly also true of its author. E. M. Bounds was a man hidden away by God and with God in prayer. During his lifetime he never attracted a large following or gained the success and reputation that one might expect. After forty-six years of faithful ministry he still was virtually unknown. Out of the eight classics on prayer he wrote, only two were published during his lifetime. Though hidden and unrecognized while alive, E.M. Bounds is now considered by most evangelicals as the most prolific and fervent author on the subject of prayer.

E. M. Bounds was born on August 15th, 1835 and died on August 24th, 1913. Some may be surprised by this fact, assuming Bounds to be a contemporary author, because of his clear and forthright writing style. As a young man E. M. Bounds practiced law until feeling called to the ministry. He was ordained a Methodist minister in 1859. E. M. Bounds also served as a Confederate Army Chaplain during the Civil War. As a result he was captured and held as a prisoner of war for a short time. After his incarceration, Bounds returned to Franklin, Tennessee, where he and Confederate Troops had suffered a bloody defeat. Bounds could not forget about Franklin, where so many had been ravaged by the Civil War. "When Brother Bounds came to Franklin he found the Church in a wretched state". Immediately he sought out a half dozen men who really believed in the power of prayer. Every Tuesday night they got on their knees to

pray for revival, for themselves, the Church and the town. "For over a year this faithful band called upon the Lord until God finally answered by fire. The revival came down without any previous announcement or plan, and without the pastor sending for an evangelist to help him."

It became increasingly apparent that E. M. Bounds was gifted in building and reviving the Church. This prophet of prayer often made preachers uncomfortable with his call for holiness and his attacks on lusting for money, prestige and power. "His constant call for revival annoyed those who believed that the Church was essentially sound . . ." God gave him a great prayer commission, requiring daily intercession. He labored in prayer for the sanctification of preachers, revival of the Church in North America and the spread of holiness among professing Christians. He spent a minimum of three to four hours a day in fervent prayer. "Sometimes the venerable mystic would lie flat on his back and talk to God; but many hours were spent on his knees or lying face down where he could be heard weeping . . ."

W. H. Hodge, who is responsible for putting most of Bounds' writings into print, gives us some personal insights into Bounds' life. He writes, "I have been among many ministers and slept in the same room with them for several years. They prayed, but I was never impressed with any special praying among them until one day a small man with gray hair and an eye like an eagle came along. We had a ten day convention. We had some fine preachers around the home, and one of them was assigned to my room. I was surprised early next morning to see a man bathing himself before day and then see him get down and begin to pray. I said to myself, 'He will not disturb us, but will soon finish', he kept on softly for hours, interceding and weeping softly, for me and my indifference, and for all the ministers of God. He spoke the next day on prayer. I became interested for I was young in the ministry, and had often desired to meet with a man of God that prayed like the saints of the Apostolic age. Next morning he was up praying again, and for ten days he was up early praying for hours. I became intensely interested and thanked God for sending him. 'At last,' I said, I have found a man that really prays. I shall never let him go. He drew me to him with hooks of steel."

In closing let us consider some of E. M. Bounds' remarks on revival, "Revivals are among the charter rights of the Church . . . A revival means a heartbroken pastor. A revival means a church on its knees confessing its sins - the sins of the individual and of the Church - confessing the sins of the times and of the community."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-smithers/em-bounds/>

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