

Hindrances to Prevailing Prayer

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the importance of prevailing prayer, highlighting hindrances such as believing prayers are not accepted, condemnation and guilt, neglecting prayer, praying only in crisis, and mistaken notions about prayer.

Duration: 56:12

Scripture: Psalm 3:1-3, Psalm 3:5-8, Psalm 6

Topics: "Prevailing Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor David encourages the congregation to seek God's touch and allow their lives to be changed. He emphasizes the importance of responding to the Holy Spirit's prompting and seeking God's presence. Pastor David invites the attendees to shake hands with others and offers refreshments and resources for further spiritual growth. He concludes by reading Psalm 6 and highlighting the accessibility of God's mercy and grace through Jesus Christ, urging believers to come boldly to the throne of grace in times of need.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge P.O. Box 260 Lindell, Texas 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. I want to speak to you this morning about hindrances to prevailing prayer, hindrances to prevailing prayer. Sixth chapter of Psalm, please.

Psalm 6, if you'll go there. The sixth chapter of Psalms. By the way, welcome, visitors.

How many are visiting New York for the first time? Your first visit, right? Wave, just in a, in a, I can't see in the, in the annex, but go ahead and wave it up in the balcony, your first time to New York. Well, God bless you. We trust you see what the great need is here and pray for us as you go your way.

And we pray you've been blessed by being among us. Psalm 6, I'm going to read the whole chapter, ten verses. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed.

But thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul. Save me for thy mercy's sake. From death there's no remembrance of thee.

In the grave, who shall give thee thanks? I'm weary with my groaning. All the night make on my bed to swim. I water my cots with my tears.

Mine eye is consumed because of grief. It waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord has heard my supplication. The Lord will receive my prayer. Let all my enemies be ashamed and sore vexed.

Let them return and be ashamed suddenly. Now, Father, I need the touch and unction of the Holy Spirit. I pray, Holy Ghost, that you come sanctify and cleanse this vessel.

Lord, let me speak as an oracle of God and not of man. You put this in my heart after seeking your face. Lord Jesus, you are trying to get us on our face before you.

You're trying to get us to pray and to seek you as never before because you're preparing us for what is coming. Lord, I pray that everyone that hears this message will be motivated to seek you, motivated to pray as they've never prayed before. Lord, we hear a doctrine going out in the land that you don't have to pray anymore, that that's just for the Jew or the Old Testament.

Oh God, that's blasphemy. We are to pray now more than we have ever prayed, to seek you now more than we've ever sought you. So minister to us, Holy Ghost, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, God's people are commanded to pray at all times. We're to pray when we're high.

We're to pray when we're low, when we feel good, when we feel bad, when we're prosperous, or when we are lacking health, when we are depressed, and when we're in ecstasy. No matter what it is, we are to pray, the scripture says. Now folks, I have approached this subject in a number of ways.

I have come down with thunder. I have warned. I have pleaded.

I'm going to come with sugar. I'm going to come with tenderness. I'm going to come with such mercy and love, because God showed me such mercy and love on this subject.

Because you see, I really believe that most Christians want to pray. They really want to pray. They can't understand why they lose interest.

They can't understand why they can't be consistent in in prayer. And I really have brought this to the Lord, and the Lord just opened my heart. And really, after what I say this morning, it's not profound, very simple, but I hope I touch some truths that will motivate you to pray.

And honestly, if you don't want to pray after this, I don't think you want to pray then. I don't think it's in your heart. And let me get right into it.

When I ask my friends why they don't pray, or if I see people who I know don't pray, even those that I've known for years, even pastor friends, and they'll even admit they don't pray. And I say, well, why? Give me a reason why you don't pray. And most of them shrug their shoulders, I don't know.

I don't know why. I am not a prayer man or a prayer woman. I don't know why I don't intercede before the Lord.

Let me begin right off the bat. Here's what I believe. We have a hard time believing our prayers are accepted.

Many people have a hard time. Now, you can't believe that your prayers are accepted unless you believe you are accepted. The Bible said we have been given access to the Father through the death of Jesus Christ and faith in Him.

You have been given access into the very throne room of the Heavenly Father. You have been given access. You are totally accepted by no good thing you've done, no merit in you.

When you go to pray, you don't bring anything that's good. I pray every day, but I bring nothing of merit. There's no good thing in me.

It's only the righteousness of Jesus that He has given to me by faith. We come in the honor of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ. We have this access, but if you don't believe that, you won't come to Him in freedom.

You can have no more faith in your prayer being accepted than you have faith in yourself being accepted before the throne of God. So I'm convinced that if I am accepted, I'm under the blood, and I have access to the Father, there's no way I'm going to go into His presence and be dumbfounded and stand there and have requests that He turn me down. If He accepts me, He's going to accept my request.

Does that make sense to you? But you see, until you settle that, until you're convinced in your heart that you can go to the throne of God and you are fully accepted, then you will never have a prevailing prayer, the scripture says. Paul in Ephesians says that we're adopted children, that He adopted you because He loved you. Know the reason, He loved you.

He didn't adopt you because you were cute, you were pretty, you were handsome, or you had talent or merit or anything else. He found you in your dirt, the Bible said. He found you when you were in absolute rebellion, and He said, I want you, and He adopted you.

Then the scripture says, according to His good pleasure, that's all, His good pleasure, to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. God accepted you in Christ. If you're in Christ, you are totally acceptable unto God.

You can say to me, well, Pastor Dave, I know what the Bible says, that I'm accepted. I know that I have access through Jesus directly to the Father, but I'm too convicted to go there because you see, I'm still battling heavy temptations. And others say, well, I've fallen into sin.

And you see, we come into guilt and condemnation, not really believing that God will accept us because we have failed Him. There are many of you sitting here right now, same way. But the Bible says, no matter what you have done, if you love Jesus, if you're His child, He's still your high priest.

He is your high priest, and you still have a right to come into His presence and find the mercy and grace you need. You need mercy. You need grace when you sin, when you fail.

But like Adam, we run and hide when we sin. Don't do that. When you fail God, when you're going through a hard time with temptation, run to Jesus.

Go to your high priest. You have access to the Father. And that's not what happens.

All through the church of Jesus Christ, when there's failure, when there's something wrong, when temptation overwhelms, Christians have a tendency to run and hide and say, I can't go to Him. He won't receive me. He has dealt with me too many times.

He's been too merciful for me. And this time, I just don't think it'll work. Turn to Hebrews, the fourth chapter, if you will, please, and I'll prove otherwise.

The fourth chapter of Hebrews, let's start with verse 14. Fourth chapter of Hebrews, starting with verse 14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are without yet without sin. Let us therefore do what? Come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need. Look at me, please.

Some of you here this morning need, before you get out of this church today, to run to the throne of God, to mercy of grace, to your high priest and say, Lord, I have failed you. I have sinned, but you're still my high priest. I know I love you.

I got a letter this past week from a gentleman on our mailing list, and he said, Pastor David, I am hooked on pornography. He said, I don't know how it happened. I just got hooked, and I hooked badly, and this past week I've confessed it to my wife.

And he said, I really love Jesus. I love him with all my heart, and I am so grieved and hurt by this sin, and I can't seem to get free. He said, Mr. David, he called me Mr. David, he said, I want to know if God can forgive me, but I have hesitancy about going to prayer.

I feel so condemned in his presence, I don't want to pray. I don't want to go in. In so many words, you sound, I have been convicted by my sin, and it's keeping me out of the throne room.

Folks, that's the wrong thing to do when you have failed God. The high priest, he's touched with the feelings of our firm. This man has a sickness.

Jesus said, I came for the sick. I came for those in need. This man is really mentally, it causes a mental illness.

Let me tell you something, if you're fooling around with pornography, ladies and gentlemen, including ladies, and you're surfing the net, or you're bringing in these movies into your house, I'm going to tell you, that is a demonic stronghold. It's one of the most demonic strongholds on the face of the earth. It can destroy your marriage.

It can destroy, it destroys ministries. It's destroying ministries all over the world right now. All over the world, bringing missionaries home beaten and defeated from the mission field, and teenagers are being absolutely destroyed.

Their health is being destroyed. Their minds being eaten, and if you're here right now, you need to run to the throne of grace, and go to your high priest, and find mercy and grace, and say, Oh God, break this chain, mortify it through the power of the Holy Ghost. Folks, it's time to pray.

It's time to seek your faith, seek the face of God, if this is a problem that has gripped your soul. You see, the Lord says, Yes, I'm a discerner of your thoughts. I know everything about you.

I know what you're doing, but he said, I want you to come boldly to my throne of grace, for you to receive the mercy that you need. Now, there are others who don't think they're going to be accepted, because they've neglected prayer for so long, after hearing so many messages about the need for prayer, even hearing holy thunder from the pulpit sometimes, as we've had from this pulpit, and yet they've built up a reservoir of guilt, where they know they should have been seeking God. There are some of you here now, are in this very condition right now, because you've been saved a long time.

You've known the Lord a long time. You've heard teaching. You've heard preaching.

You've been condemned. You have been provoked by the Holy Spirit to pray, and you've made promises to God you'd pray, and you haven't. And so, you say, Well, I just can't stop now.

It's like the letter that we received from a housewife. She invited her husband. He goes to church maybe once a year, and he's condemned by it.

He likes to see what God's doing with his wife, by her going to church, and how she's changed by the glory of God. But he finally agreed to go to church, but he said, I feel guilty because I haven't been there in a whole year, but that one time was when he got saved. It was that one time that he got saved.

And I'm telling you, there can be a time suddenly come upon you where you say, I'm not going to let the devil beat me down with guilt because of how I have neglected prayer. I want to start now. I said that last week.

It's never too late to start again. I once sent a very large financial gift to a minister who had truly wounded me. Wounded me probably as much as any minister has ever wounded me.

And I was praying for him one day, and the Lord said, send him a check. And he named a figure, and it was a high figure. And I said, well, you have to provide.

The Lord provided, and I sent him a large check. And for months there was no answer, no word whatsoever. Six months went by, and now I just wanted to know that he got the money, because the Lord told me to give it, not expect any answer or thank you.

I didn't want to thank you. I just wanted to know he got it. But a few more months went by, and finally got a letter, and it said, David, the reason I have not sent you an acknowledgment is because I couldn't believe that you would do this after all that's gone, all the water's gone over the dam.

Why would you send me this money? I couldn't find words to thank you. He said, after all this time, I've just found the courage now to come and say thank you. And you see, folks, that's exactly where some people

are.

See, he had the gift, he had the mercy, he had the grace shown to him, and the Lord gives mercy and grace. He's not going to beat you down because of the fact that you've neglected him days without end, according to the Scripture. He said in Jeremiah 3, 32, my people forgot me days without number.

But then you read on, it says, yet return again to me, saith the Lord. And I said, after all these things that you've done to me, turn thou unto me. Turn back.

Begin again. I'm not here to put you down for neglecting the Lord. I could stand up here, and folks, I could make you blush, and I could put such a fear of God in your heart that you run down here and repent.

But unless the Holy Spirit does it in your heart, and you do it willingly, it's not going to work. You'll go right back to your old ways. This is not a message of condemnation.

The Lord says, yes, you've neglected me. But he says, return to me now, even though you forgot me days without number. There are others that have a tinge of guilt because they know they pray only in trouble when there's a crisis.

How many of you, when you get a telephone call that one of your grandchildren has been in an accident, and he's in a hospital, not expected to live? Do you pray? What about the time that you go to a doctor, and you get a word, and he says, look, there's something suspicious. You better get a second opinion. Until you get that second opinion, do you pray? Oh, you better believe you pray.

What about all of the crisis and all the times that come into our lives that there are many, and we are driven by, are troubled by, a crisis to fall before God and pray like a house on fire? Now, folks, I'm not putting that down because the Scripture doesn't put that down. Not at all. The Scripture says, He will regard the prayer of the destitute.

He will not despise their prayer. Hungry and thirsty, Psalm 107, 5 and 6. Hungry and thirsty. They're so fainted in them.

You see, they were at the end of their rope. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble. Did God say to them, well, where have you been all this time? You're in trouble.

Now you call on me. That's not what the Bible says. It says, and he delivered them out of all their distresses.

Psalm 107, 18 and 20. They drew near to the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, but he saveth them from their destruction.

He sends his word and heals them and delivers them from all their destructions. In Psalm 107, 26, they're so melted because of trouble. They were reeling to and fro.

They were staggering like a man and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble. Does God rebuke them for that? No.

The Scripture says, and then he brings them out of their destruction. He make it, the storm, a calm. Now folks, why does God answer so mercifully our prayers when we're in crisis and in trouble? Why does he keep on answering those, even though many Christians do not go to prayer, do not seek his face in

between crises? Why is God so faithful in that? For one reason that, and you will hear the heart cry in the Scripture.

Psalms 107, verses 28 and 32. In trouble they cry, they pray. The Scripture says, he hears and he answers, he delivers.

Then they are glad. The Bible said, then the calm returns and listen to the heart cry of God now. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, for his wonderful works.

Let them exalt him. The Lord answers your cry and mine in times of crisis with the hope and the desire that we, after the crisis has passed and after he's delivered us, would be so grateful, so thankful. We would go into his presence, not to ask anything, but just to thank him, just to thank him.

You don't need a prayer book for that. You don't need an instruction book. All you need is a grateful heart.

All you need to say, Lord, I was in trouble. You delivered me and I'm going into the closet and I'm going to pray and I'm just going to thank you. Stay there for a half an hour.

Then Jesus, Lord, you've been good to me. You've been gracious to me. You don't have to learn how to pray that.

It comes out of your gut. And that's why God keeps answering. It's not, it's beyond his mercy and grace.

He does it for that. Yes, but also this yearning of his heart. Somehow I've got to have communion with you.

Somehow I want you in my secret closet to pray. And if I have to bless you, if I have to heal you, whatever I have to do to bring you into my presence, I'll do it. He waits for you in any way to get communion with you.

Are you understanding that? Hallelujah. I've never gone into the secret closet of prayer, uh, with a prayer manual. And I'm not putting it down.

If that's what you have to have to get you started, it's fine. I've never had to wear boots or uniform to go to warfare in my secret closet. I've never had a written list to remind me how to pray.

Never had a prayer book. Now there are times that I go into the secret closet of prayer when I've, I've had trouble and I've, I've had confusion and I've had testing and trial. And I'll go to God and I'll tell you, I pour my heart out, but I don't have to have somebody write me a prayer about that.

God has never, the Holy Ghost has never inspired anybody to write a prayer for you because that's not your prayer. It's not coming out of your heart. God wants it out of your heart.

I could learn some kind of a Shakespearean love poem and take my wife out for a nice evening and we go to dinner and say, honey, I'll tell you what's in my heart. And I've quoted, I've learned by heart this Shakespearean soliloquy and I'm just going with this D's and thou's and the sunset and all of the eloquence. And she looked at me, she said, what have you been eating? Get real, David.

What are you talking about? Because that's not Dave Wilkins. You know what Dave Wilkins is? Hey baby, I love you. To me, that's eloquence because it's from my heart.

It's from my heart. God wants your heart. You don't need some long prayer with D's and thou's.

You just have to go and empty your soul, empty and unbosom your heart to him. Another hindrance to prayer, preventing prayer, is the mistaken notion that it always has to be loud, vociferous, mournful, and accompanied by tears. And I know this is why a lot of new converts don't develop prayer lives.

They don't pray because they come to church and they'll hear Pastor Neal or one of the elders get up and pray like a house of fire and hit heaven. And they hear us talk about, by the way, these men didn't learn that. That didn't come out of themselves.

Not one of them, not me, not anyone who stands up here and prays, you know, with fire and unction and it pours out and everybody gets blessed. And they sit there and say, I can't pray like that. Well, neither can they.

Without the Holy Ghost. That's the Holy Ghost. It's the Holy Spirit.

But most young converts, they hear, you know, heaven suffered violence, the violent take it by force. In fact, so fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much and they're shy. A lot of people are shy.

Neal, your wife is a shy woman, beautiful, but grace of God, but there's a shyness there that's a very sweet thing. And my wife is half shy. I'm sorry.

She wasn't shy yesterday, I know. But do you understand what I mean? There's some people that can't, they can't pray loud. There's some people that, you know, this idea that every time you go to prayer, you have to, you have to wrestle like Jacob.

Or you have to open your window and pray like Daniel until the whole city can hear. Or you have to come out of the prayer closet just worn out. Folks, I'm, I'm touching a nerve here.

Now, that is why many people do not pray because they don't think they can stand. They picture it as a battle. We've talked so much about warfare and there is spiritual warfare that the Lord doesn't hear you unless you go in there and scream at the top of your voice and say, God, I'll not let you go until you answer.

I'm not making fun of people, folks. There are people that are not capable of that. That's not their nature.

They're mild mannered people and they don't raise their voice. They don't raise their voice at their mates. They don't raise their voice at their children or on the job.

They're just, they're just wonderful, quiet people. And they say, I would be embarrassed. I was, I recall having, going out to dinner while on vacation.

There were, I think there were one, two, three couples and very wonderful couple that we had invited and I called on him to pray. Very sweet, very sincere Christian. I called him to pray and he whispered, no, no, no, it's somebody else.

He, he, he too shy to ask the blessing on the food. But I do know the man talks to the Lord, but, but he doesn't want to pray publicly. I've had so many people, don't ever ask me to pray publicly.

Don't ever. I can't pray publicly. I'll tell you what, God understands that.

God understands that. If you can't pray publicly, somebody calls on you, just say, hallelujah, Jesus. I love you.

I praise you. Just worship him. Worship him.

Probably everybody else gonna start worshiping with you and the power will come down because that is what God wants to hear. But see, we are, we are hindered by this idea that there has to be constant groaning or some kind of loud intercession. There has to be constant weeping because it's, they said, well, Jesus prayed in the garden with a loud voice and you, you, you, you hear it.

But the scripture said there's a woman in the Old Testament named Hannah. You know this story. She diligently prayed for a son.

The scripture said she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord and she wept sore. This is in first Samuel, the first chapter. And it came to pass as she continued praying that Eli, that was the priest, the high priest, marked her mouth and he kept watching this woman.

Now, Hannah, she spake or prayed in her heart. Only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli thought she was drunk.

Hannah replied, oh no, I am not drunk. I have poured out my soul before the Lord out of the abundance of my complaint or my meditation and grief. Have I spoken? Have I spoken? She's never said a word yet.

She said, I have spoken out of the grief of my heart. I have poured out my soul to the Lord. There wasn't a sound being made.

Folks, I can tell you that many of you have, have gone in the closet of prayer sometimes. You've been so overwhelmed you couldn't even speak. I've been there.

I've gone to prayer times that I was so down, so grieved, not knowing what to do. I just get there and say, I have nothing to say. I've got no words.

There are no tears left in me. And I've just had to sit in this presence and say, Lord, hold me. Put your arms around me.

I need you. That's all I can say. Help.

But I want you to know there are times that you can go in. I've been in, in a conference dealing with this building that they want to build on the back, 50-story building on the back of this church. And folks, I can tell you that I can't give you a definitive word till this coming Tuesday.

I've told them and warned them this is my last visit with them on Tuesday. And, and we're still in negotiations. And we will have the final word for you on Tuesday.

But when I'm in these meetings and I don't know what to do, I pray. They don't hear a word. But I'm, I'm there just crying out to God in my spirit.

Oh God, I need wisdom. And that wisdom comes as I'm praying. I don't know what to say next.

I, I don't know what to do. And folks, you, you should, you can pray anywhere. You pray on the job.

You pray on the bus. You pray on the subway. You can close it in and seek the face of God.

And maybe your lips are moving. People call you nutty, crazy, whatever. It doesn't matter.

You shut yourself in with God and the Lord hears that cry of the heart. He heard, he heard Hannah, didn't he? Gave her a prophet. Gave her a leader in Israel.

Samuel was born and not one word was spoken in her prayer. Turn to Psalm 6. Go back to Psalm 6, if you will, quickly, please. This is the end of side one.

You may now turn. Do you know what? Sometimes all you can do is cry. Oh, come on now.

Oh, God forgive you for being so pious. How many of you have come to the place where you could do nothing in the presence of God, but cry? Nothing but cry. I'm going to tell you, though, that cry has a voice.

Look, look at, look at it. Verse 1, he said, those who trouble me, who rise up against me are increasing. Verse 2, they even say that I'm beyond help.

They've given up on me. That's in essence what is being said. Look at verse 3, but Lord, you are my shield, my glory, the lifter of my head.

You that have gone through a divorce. You that know pain of rejection. You that know enemies that have risen up against you and trouble on all side.

And people have given up on you. They've said there's no hope. They've given up on you.

But Lord, you are my shield, my glory, the lifter of my head. Look in verse 4, I cried unto Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. And what was the result of his cry? You see, look at me, please.

I've already told you that God hears the quiet, unspoken prayer. But he also asked that you speak with your voice. This silent prayer is a very rare thing.

It comes when you're overwhelmed. It comes when you just can't, you have no other words. But here is another, and I want you to get this good in your mind, this is another hindrance to prevailing prayer, and that's contemplative prayer at the exclusion of voice praying.

In other words, mind praying only. I've had many people say, well, I pray all day long. Yes, that's called prayer without ceasing.

You pray. I prayed on the way to church. I prayed while we were worshipping.

I pray as often as I can daily, just keeping my mind in a state of prayer. You can do it when you're sweeping. You can do it when you're housecleaning.

You can do it when you're traveling. It's mind praying. It's contemplative praying.

Yes, but not at the expense of making a voice, a sound with your voice, and lifting your voice to the Lord. That's where many people get in trouble. They are always in contemplative prayer, but they never go into the secret closet.

Jesus said, when you pray, enter into your closet. Now, that's any private place, and shut the door, and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father in secret shall reward you openly. And there comes a time, folks, I get a release.

Many times, I've not been able to pray. Many times, I've had to go and quietly just trust his love for me. But there are times, folks, I'm going to ask my wife, I have to go to a place where I can't be, I mean, you can hear me.

I go out in the countryside, in the roads, and you could be a mile away sometimes and hear me. And I cry out to God, and I walk, and I pray, and I praise, and raise my hands, and wave my hands. And folks, you don't want to see it, and think I was a nut.

But folks, I get a release. I lift my voice to God. And there comes a time when you lift your voice, and you, and so it is with David.

There comes a time when you just have to cry. There's a voice to that. You do it with your voice.

It's not just an inner crying, but the tears begin to flow, and you're crying out to God. You're just crying. There's a lady in this church, and I know she's gone through a great depression for a number of weeks.

You see, weeping endureth for a night. That's not a 24-hour period or a 12-hour darkness. Sometimes that's a long period of night and darkness, but joy comes in the morning, the scripture says very clearly.

It's going to come if you just hold fast. But I know that people, visitors said she can't do anything but cry, and it's not a nervous breakdown. She, the tears just flow.

And here in the third, it's the third chapter. Did I have you in the sixth chapter? No wonder you didn't see it. Go to the, go to the third, Psalm, the third chapter.

Do you want to see it again? Look, look at one. Lord, how are they increase the trouble me? Many are they that rise up against me. May it be would say of my soul there's no help for him in God.

They've given up, but thou will, Lord, a shield for me, my glory, the lift up of my head. I cried unto the Lord my voice, and he heard me out of his holy. He'll look at the next verse.

I laid me down and slept. I awakened for the Lord sustained me. I'll not be afraid of 10,000s of people that have set themselves against me round about arise.

The Lord saved me. Oh my God, for thou has smitten all my enemies upon the cheekbone. But you see what I'm talking about? I cried with my voice.

I cried. There comes a time when you cry out with your voice. And then he said, I laid me down and slept and I awakened for the Lord sustained me.

Now look at verse chapter six, chapter six. And I want you to go with me, please. I want you to just see this a little clearer because this is where some of you are right now.

And I told you it's merciful and you'll see the mercy here in chapter six. Verse one. Oh Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger.

Neither chasing me in their hot displeasure. You see, he's got a feeling that God is angry with them and he's under chastening for some kind of sin in his life. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak.

Unheal me. My bones are vexed. His situation is so overwhelming.

It's absolutely weakened his body and confused his mind. Have you ever gone through a problem that has absolutely weakened your body and brought nothing but confusion to you? My soul is also vexed for Lord. Oh Lord, how long? If you ever asked the Lord, Lord, how long is this going to last? When are you going to get me out of this return? Oh Lord, deliver my soul.

Save me for thy mercy sake. Verse six. I'm weary with my groaning all the night, make on my bed to swim.

I water my couch with my tears. Now folks, here's a man who's doing nothing but weeping. He can do nothing but cry.

He can do nothing but weep. My eye is consumed because of grief. It waxes low because of all my enemies.

Verse eight. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. For the Lord has heard what? The voice of my weeping.

Folks, there is a voice. There is a hearing in the ears of God to those who weep and cry before him. The Lord has heard my supplication.

The Lord will receive my prayer. Folks, I'm not going to preach much longer, but I want to share something with you that it must be the grief of the Holy Spirit. Probably one of the greatest griefs of the Holy Spirit.

And hear me out before I close. I saw this yesterday in prayer. You see, the scripture says, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us and groaning which cannot be uttered.

You see, the ability to pray and the desire to pray and the consistency in prayer all depends on our trusting the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Everyone that's saved has been given the Spirit. The Spirit of God is in you.

There are other gifts of the Spirit, but the Spirit himself abides in you. And the Bible said you're to ask him. If you don't know how to pray, you say, I don't pray because I don't know how to pray.

If you will go to him, the first thing he's going to do is, listen closely, he's going to focus your mind on Jesus. He's going to focus your mind on Jesus. He's going to remind you of all the words that Jesus spoke, and he's going to teach you.

The worst thing you can do is go to prayer and put your mind in neutral. The worst thing you can do is go to prayer and just let your mind go blank. You have to have your mind engaged when you go in the presence of the Lord.

You have to have scriptures in your mind. You have to keep your eyes focused on Jesus. Otherwise, there's delusion.

And we have multitudes of good Christians right now who are going into delusion because they're going into prayer hearing voices. Folks, we get letters from all the United States and it's a grief. Gwen and I, we look at this, we read these letters.

Gwen said, can you believe this? Listen, how many have written, said, I go to prayer and I just release my mind and I go free. I just sit there and in a blank mind, wait for the Holy Ghost to speak to me. And the Holy, the devil knows when you go into a blank mind, when you're not furnished with the word of God, you're not focused on Christ.

There's no focus. And the delusion comes and I get letters that say, I'm one of the two witnesses in the book of Revelation. Every time I pray, put my mind at ease, the Holy Ghost puts that in my mind.

I'm one of the two witnesses. Another delusion we hear so much of that comes very, very frequently. You are going to win nations.

You're going to win world leaders. Now this is somebody in the middle of Virginia or Kentucky that's never been out of their little town and suddenly they're going to win nations and they're going to be going to world leaders and winning world leaders. And the number one thing that we get, the biggest delusion of all, God has told me in no uncertain words.

And I've heard it over and over again. When I go to prayer and I listen to that voice, it says a large sum of money is going to be given to you so that you are free the rest of your life to preach and to help others. Oh, I've had, we get letters from people that lived with that delusion for 20 years.

You go into the house of, you go in the presence of the Lord with your mind engaged. You go there with your mind focused on Jesus. You go there praising the Lord and don't for a minute, let your mind go free.

Your Bible says you bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. You go to the Holy ghost and he'll tell you how to pray. He'll teach you how to pray.

You know what the Holy ghost does? If you'll depend on him, wait, wait, because it's not natural to want to pray. It's against human nature to want to pray. You'd have to fight and you don't have that power.

You can say, well, bless God, I'm going to go and pray. I hear it. I'm going to do it.

You can't do it without the help of the Holy ghost. You have to say, Holy ghost, woo me into your presence. Call me through the day.

And if you'll believe that and pray that prayer to the Holy ghost, you'll be doing your housework or you'll be doing something or you'll be going to, you'll be getting your car ready to go to the mall to do your shopping thing. And the Holy ghost will say, pray, go pray. And you'll turn the key on and the Holy ghost.

I said, go pray. And it'll get louder and louder. And you'll just turn it off and you'll go pray because it's a Holy ghost doing it in you.

It's not because the pastors tried to get you to do it or because you're under condemnation, but you trusted the Holy ghost to do with you what he said he would do. I will be patient with your infirmities. I'll help your infirmities and I'll show you how to pray and what to pray about.

But here's the grief of God. And with this, I close that he's made this provision to help us with our infirmities by giving us the Holy ghost. He's told us he'll teach us to pray.

He'll woo us and draw us into his secret closet. And yet we won't go to the Holy ghost and ask him, but listen to this now. And I got to seeing this yesterday.

Think of it for just a minute here in the United States, Muslims are praying by the millions, kneeling toward Mecca three to five times a day. They spread their blankets. They go to their mosque and you'll see hundreds of men prostrate praying.

Muhammad, Jews all over the world. I was coming home from Israel and I told you, wrapping the prayer band and looking toward Jerusalem and other Jews throughout the plain, standing and praying on the streets here. You'll see Jews praying.

You'll see Muslims praying. They don't care what anybody thinks. You'll see the Hare Krishnas pray until they exhausted.

They fall in exhaustion in their chanting and in their praying. Catholics worldwide by the millions are praying over their beads, doing their Hail Marys, praying for the dead, lighting prayer candles, not caring what anybody thinks. Buddhist monks are chanting prayers by the hours, spinning their prayer wheels.

When our apartment was up on 67th street, I could look right across to a building where there were many, there were some gurus, Indian gurus there. And I looked right across. Every time I'd pray in my prayer room, I look across.

Every night I was praying. I'm standing, walking in prayer. There is a guru over there.

He had to be a guru. And for hours he'd walk and pray. Just, I'm walking and praying.

And I couldn't, didn't want to quit because he's still walking and praying. And that man, I had a hard time keeping up with this man. And I got to thinking, of all the people that are praying, to see the heathen rising up early, staying up late, when the bells are ringing, chanting, praying to the gods on the street and in the storefronts and in mosques.

And then we look at the church of Jesus Christ and see so few praying. So few calling on God. So few that spend any time with him.

That has to be the grief of the Holy Spirit. And folks, I've told you as lovingly as I know how, the patience and the mercy of God. But it boils down to this.

If you want to pray, if you want to be a man of prayer, you want to be a woman of prayer. And folks, that's where you get your guidance. That's where you get hope.

That's where you get your gladness in the Lord. That's where your faith is increased. And that's where prayers are.

That's where your answers come from. Why won't we do it? Folks, we've shown you mercy. We've shown you love.

It's between you and the Holy Ghost now. Amen. Let's stand.

Hallelujah. I hope and pray that this was delivered to you in mercy and grace. That's what the Lord told me to do.

I had to come to you with mercy and grace this morning, and I trust that you've received that. Now, the question is this. Please don't leave anybody.

Hold steady, please. You'll be out of here shortly. Those of you I know have to catch planes and buses and other things that have to be done, so just hold steady.

We'll not keep you long. I feel God's mercy and grace toward you, but I also feel that grief of the Holy Ghost and that call of God, oh, that my people would return to give me thanks and praise. Oh, that my people would turn to me with all their hearts.

Oh, that the people that have neglected me days without number would turn to the Holy Ghost, say, oh, Holy Spirit, make me a man, make me a woman to whom prayer is not a burden but a joy, joy. I'm coming to a place where to me prayer is not a burden. Prayer is not some kind of communion that I have to do because I'm a preacher.

It's because I feel the Holy Ghost drawing me and wooing me, and my wife can tell you, no matter what I go through, no matter how down I may get, no matter what kind of trial or persecution or anything else comes, she knows that when I go into that room where I pray, I'm going to come out changed. I'm going to come out free. I'm going to come out with the joy of the Lord in my heart.

I'm going to come out with assurance. And I know it too. There are some times she's had every right and she's done it.

She said, David, you better go upstairs. And I do it and because she knows that she can't, there's something she can't give me, only the Lord can give me. And I'm not going to put a guilt trip on you.

I'm going to open these altars now for a humble confession before the Lord for those who say, I want to leave this church with a commitment. I'm going to seek the Holy Ghost to do in me what he's promised to do, what the word has promised me. I don't know how to pray.

I don't know what to pray for, but the spirit helps my infirmities and he will teach me to pray. He'll do that. Now there's some of you have been drifting from the Lord in the annex and in the overflow rooms.

You can't pray because of the coldness and the lukewarmness in your heart. There's some of you came here, you were brought by a friend and you really have never surrendered your heart to Christ. There'll never be a better opportunity than in this service now.

Nobody will say anything silly to you. Nobody will force you to do anything. You don't join this church.

We don't have a membership. We're here to help meet your need. We're going to sing a song.

This is not to create a mood, it's just to give you time. In the annex, don't go to the screen, but you just move forward to the front. Move forward to the front between the screens.

One of my associates is going to be there to direct you. I'll pray for you first and then we'll give you direction. Just take a few moments so that your life can change.

Up in the balcony, you feel the tug of the spirit come down either side, down any aisle. The rest of you in this auditorium right now, as we're singing, the Holy Spirit speaking to you saying, Pastor David, something you preached this morning touched my heart and I have to have this out with God. I need his touch.

I need to be brought back into the freshness of my relationship. I don't want to walk with the Lord the way I've been walking. I want a closer walk with Jesus.

And if you're backslidden, you don't know Jesus, come with these that are coming. You can still come while I'm talking. In the annex, we'd like to pray for you and those that are gathered here before me.

We're going to believe the Lord right now to change, change your heart. Look at me, please. Look this way for just a minute.

The Lord said he's more willing to give than you are to receive. He wants to do something very special in your heart today. He wants to do that right now.

Don't leave this church the way you came in. If this is a Holy Ghost church and the Spirit of the Lord is here, that's what happens. You don't leave like you came.

There's a change every time you come. But I'm asking God, many of you are visiting here and others of you have come to this church maybe a few times or you come regularly. Whatever it is, the Lord wants to settle something in your heart.

Let this be the day that you cross a line and draw a line in the sand and say, I am not going back. I'm going to trust the Holy Spirit now. I'm going to call on the Holy Ghost.

He said, if you ask of me bread, I'm not going to give you a stone. You ask me a fish, I'm not going to give you a serpent. He's a loving Father.

He's a loving Savior. He's going to answer the cry of your heart. Pray this prayer with me right now.

Dear Lord, I need you. I thank you for your mercy. You have not upbraided me today.

You have not rebuked me. You've called me in your love. And I call upon the Holy Ghost to lead me and guide me and woo me into a life of prayer.

Lord Jesus, I don't know how to pray. There are times I don't want to pray, but I pray now that the Holy Spirit come upon me, lead me, draw me to prayer. And in God's presence, I yield myself to the Holy Spirit that he pray through me, that through my mouth, he does intercession.

And I'll know how to call upon my God. Forgive me, Jesus, for neglecting you. Now pray this with me, Lord.

Blot out my sins. Blot out my transgressions. I come to you by faith, asking the Lord to take the lukewarmness out of my heart and make me on fire.

Put me on fire for my Savior, Lord. Now let me pray for you. Father, I'm asking you now to do what you have promised.

Lord, the word that I preached this morning cannot be in vain. Holy Ghost, this book is not a lie. You inspired every word in this book.

This is the mind of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And I pray, Holy Spirit, that what I preach will come to pass now, that the Holy Ghost will help the infirmities of everyone here now, that infirmity of weakness, that infirmity of temptation, that infirmity of sin, whatever it may be, that you will help us in our infirmities, and that you will draw us and woo us. Lord, we're going to need power with you.

We're going to need authority. We're going to need closeness. We're going to need communion with you, Lord Jesus.

Lord, you give an access. Let us take advantage of that access. Let us come boldly to you now with confidence that you will hear and answer.

You're going to supply every need of those that are here. Amen. Would you just lift your hands and give God thanks right now.

Lord, we give you thanks. We give you praise. We glorify your name.

We magnify your name. Lord, you are worthy. Hallelujah.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. God on this whole congregation, don't let anybody leave unmoved, untouched. God, you came down from the very beginning of this service.

Your presence was manifest, and we carry this with us wherever we go. Lord, protect those who travel and leave our presence, and Lord, protect all of the New Yorkers who are in these subways and buses and walking these streets. Lord, summon dangerous communities.

Lord, send angels to go with every one of them, we pray. Send angels. Hallelujah.

Glory be to God. I want to praise, of course. We're going to praise the Lord here in just a minute.

Folks, we're going to praise the Lord as we leave. We always praise the Lord when we leave this house. Glorify the name of God.

Don't forget, those in the main auditorium here, upstairs and here, you go through exit eight and nine, upstairs in the ancillary room. We have reception room there. We have some good refreshments, one of my books and a sermon tape, and also in room 204, isn't it? 204 in the annex.

You can go there now. You're not allowed to leave this church, though, until you shake hands with at least a dozen people. And just a good God bless you or praise the Lord.

Next service is at three, and then at six o'clock. God's peace go with you. This is the conclusion of the message.

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