

The Secret Closet of Prayer

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the necessity of a personal and dedicated prayer life to seek God and avoid hypocrisy.

Duration: 57:18

Scripture: Matthew 6:1

Topics: "Private Prayer", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of seeking God in secret and not seeking recognition from others. He warns against doing good deeds for the purpose of being seen by others, as this will not bring true reward from God. The speaker emphasizes the need for quality time spent alone with God, shutting out distractions and focusing solely on Him. He also shares a cautionary tale of people who had previously sought the Lord and experienced His blessings, but then turned to relying on their own strength, causing God to hide His face from them.

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, Post Office Box 260, Lindale, Texas, 75771, or by calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. The Secret Closet. I'd like to read about seven or eight verses.

Begin verse one, if you will, please, Matthew 6. Take heed that you do not your alms before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee. That means quit blowing your own horn.

As the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.

That thine alms may be in secret, thy Father which seeth it in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. Now listen to this closely. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray.

You see, they really love to pray. That standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, thy Father which seeth it in secret shall reward thee openly. When you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask it.

Heavenly Father, I need your anointing and your touch tonight. I pray for the Holy Ghost to come upon me. Let the Word of the Lord find its mark in our hearts.

Lord, we thank you for what we've heard today. You've ministered to us. I take your authority, Jesus, over every demonic, wild spirit, of every spirit that is unsettled, every spirit that is unlike you.

It cannot withstand the Word of the Lord. Give unction, give anointing to me tonight. Let this Word go forth in power, in Christ's name I pray.

Amen. Praise the Lord. If you read carefully the Old Testament, you'll find that God divided his people into two categories.

And as far as I can determine, there are only two categories of his children. Those who sought after me, he said, and those who sought not after me. God has two kinds of people, two kinds of children.

Those who seek me, in other words, those who pray, and those who do not seek me. They talk about it, but they don't do it. They do not seek me.

And God was angry with Israel over idolatry. Moses pitched his tent, remember, outside of the camp. And those who had a heart for God went outside the camp to pray.

And it came to pass that everyone that sought the Lord went out under the tabernacle or the tent of the congregation, which was without the camp. In the midst of all the idolatry, God had a people who still knew how to pray. They knew that if they're going to have victory and they're going to keep their peace in this idolatry and apostasy, they had to go outside the camp.

And I picture that group of people in that idolatrous nation saying, I'm going out, I've got to pray, I've got to seek God. They went outside the camp. What a wonderful camp that was.

What a wonderful group. What a heart-blessing it was for Moses to see these hundreds of people coming out of that camp of a few million people to pray and seek God. Scripture says that under King Asa, God's people understood that seeking the Lord brought prosperity and rest and peace from all their enemies.

The Scripture says, because we have sought the Lord our God, this is Asa speaking to the congregation, explaining why God has prospered them, explaining why there is peace in the land, explaining why the kingdom is in order. And he said, because we have sought the Lord our God. We sought Him.

He's given us rest on every side. And so we have built and we have prospered. 2 Chronicles 14, 7. Now, under King Asa, also remember a million-man Ethiopian army came against Asa and Israel at the time.

And he said, Lord, we don't have any might. We don't know what to do. We're so small in comparison.

And the Scripture said, And Asa cried unto the Lord his God. In very simple, that means he sought the Lord. He turned to prayer.

He got on his face before God. O Lord, he said, Thou art our God. Let not man prevail against you.

So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and the Ethiopians fled, and they were destroyed before the Lord. As Riah the prophet cried out to Asa, he said, King Asa, the Lord is with you while you're with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found of you.

But if you forsake Him, in other words, if you stop seeking after the Lord, you stop calling on Him, stop yearning after Him, and He will forsake you. When in their trouble, they did turn unto the Lord God of Israel and sought after Him. He was always found of them.

This prophet stood before King Asa because he knew that because of the pride and all the deliverances he'd seen, that in this next crisis, he would turn to the blessed. We see that in Christianity everywhere we go. People who have for many, many years sought the Lord.

They knew that prayer was the answer. They knew that they could get along with God in any crisis they had, and God would see them through. God gave them victory after victory, and then finally in one particular crisis, they lean on the arm of the flesh, they forget the past blessings and deliverances of God, and they turn to the flesh, and then God has to hide His face.

This is exactly what happened. The people began, of course, to see where the power and the victory was. The Scripture says they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.

For they had sworn with all their heart that they would seek Him with their whole desire, and He was found to them, and the Lord gave them rest round about. Thirty-five years of rest. That didn't mean they didn't have problems.

One enemy after another came after Asia, including the Ethiopian army. But God always, because they got on their face and cried out to God through prayer, through intercession, through yearning and seeking after His heart, and turning to Him in total dependence, God always delivered them and gave order and strength to the camp of Israel. It was also written of King Uzziah, as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper, and God helped him.

In fact, the Scripture says he was marvelously helped until he became strong. He quit. Here's another king who, in his prosperity, having learned the secret of bringing order into his kingdom, he turned away to the flesh, and he died, of course, as a leper.

Jeremiah prophesied that pastors, in his day and in the latter days, who refused to seek the Lord, he's talking about shepherds and pastors who do not pray. And I want to tell you right now, and I say it kindly, but it's the actual truth. Only, and Brother Bob will tell you, and anyone who travels, only a handful of preachers today pray.

They do not pray. They lean on the arm of the flesh. They go to their books.

They go to their commentaries. They stand in the pulpit. And for many pastors, it's a job.

It's a paycheck. I had five ministers stand right out here, right out in front of us, and I said, I have heard that to be true. Please tell me it's not so.

And one of the five pastors looked at me and said, Brother Dave, I'm in my forties, I think he said. I don't know how to do anything else. And he said, I have to tell you the truth that many of us, like me, have compromised, both in our prayer life, and in seeking God, and in preaching the truth, because we're afraid to lose our living.

And I looked around the circle to find at least one of them who would object and say, Well, that may be all right for you, but it's not for me. And these were Pentecostal pastors. A handful of pastors pray today.

Jeremiah said, For the pastors have become stupid. They are not seeking the Lord. Therefore, they shall not prosper, and their flocks shall be scattered.

And that's the picture we see in the church of Jesus Christ today. We see the sheep being stattered. We see that which caused unity being broken up, and the unity is no longer there.

We see people starving and running from place to place to find a little crumb of the gospel to satisfy their heart. And it's a living saying that my newsletters that go out to about 500,000 people now, people all over the United States stop me and say, That's the only food that I get. And they go to church every Sunday.

It's a saying that one letter a month would bring the only little crumb that comes to their table. It said, My tabernacle is spoiled. All my cords are broken.

In other words, that which kept unity in the church, the cords that kept unity, they have been broken. My children are gone forth with me, and they are not. In other words, the flock is all scattered.

There is none to stretch forth my tent anymore and to set up my curtains. He said, There's such uncleanness, such a lack of prayer. No one dare go near the holy things of God.

No one go to the curtains of the holy place anymore. And folks, some of you sit here now because there was a time you wandered from place to place. You looked for something to satisfy your soul.

You sat under men, and I said, Kindly, but you sat under the kind. The shepherds, Jeremiah's putting his finger on. He said, They no longer seek me.

There are many, many men in their middle age that at one time started out as men of prayer, and God blessed them and prospered them. There was unity in the church because prayer creates unity. That no demon or devil in hell can break through a praying church and a praying congregation.

None. There's not a demon strong enough in all of hell to cause discord in a church where pastors and congregation and people in Sunday school and the choir and everything else have been on their face seeking God. Devils run from that kind of church.

And some of you came from a church where the pastor started right and then suddenly turned to the flesh, and I don't think there's anything sadder than meeting a man of God in his fifties and sixties and seventies who's burned out, who doesn't even know how to touch God anymore, who never prays, who stands up dead and cold and lifeless. And the only thing that produces life is life. Life is produced by life.

Unless there's life in the pastor, in the shepherd, there is no life going forth. And if you're sitting in some dead, cold church where there's no life in the pastor, it's because he's not praying. Now you better be sure you know what you're saying if you go and rebuke a man like that.

You better know where you stand. But this is from the prophet Jeremiah. Zephaniah warns, the time is going to come that the Lord will come by His Spirit and consume those who don't turn to Him and seek Him.

Them that are turned back from the Lord and those that do not seek the Lord nor inquire of Him, He shall come and consume. Zephaniah 1.6. I told you that there are two kinds of people. People who seek the Lord and people who do not seek the Lord.

That's God's own category. He has drawn that division. I want to talk to you about seeking God.

And most of you that are in this church and those of you sitting here tonight would consider yourself a seeker after God. You said, I pray. Some of you pray here corporately with us and some of you pray daily in the secret closet.

Here's what I want to convey to you from the Holy Spirit tonight. The power of the secret closet, first of all, demands that you have a secret closet. Now, this is not just a closed closet somewhere in your bedroom.

Now, it can be. But that's not what the Bible's talking about. I've got closets everywhere.

The closet means simply to be set in with God anywhere at any time, giving God quality, chosen time to yearn after Him, to seek Him, to call upon His name. Usually it's in my car, driving back and forth, New Jersey or Pennsylvania. In fact, up in Pennsylvania, I've got a little hideaway up there, way up in the hills of Pennsylvania.

And I'm going up there Wednesday and I go up almost every Wednesday and I get alone because there are country roads there and I just walk and I talk. It's my secret closet. It's just wonderful.

There's nobody around. I hear the birds singing and that's my closet. I've heard more from God walking those hills than probably any place.

I just came back from Florida yesterday or Friday for a 10-day vacation and I was walking the beach late at night. There's nobody on the beach after midnight. What a wonderful thing.

The sun and the stars and the moon and the waves coming in. That whole beach on Marco Island was all mine. A mile and a half down, a mile and a half back, the biggest closet I've ever had.

Prayer closet is simply a prayer habit. Now I'm not talking about something by rote that you do by rote or thoughtless repetition. But I'm going to ask you a question.

Do you have a daily practice? That's what a closet is, a daily practice of shutting yourself in with God. Do you have that daily practice where there is something in you that is called? There's something in you that is being wooed. There's something in you that reaches out no matter where you are or who you're with.

You say, I've got to get away. There's a magnetic pull. There's something in you the closet is calling.

You say, I have got to touch God today or I die. I have got to meet with my Lord. Brother Bob was talking about loving Him.

That is what we do in the secret closet. Wherever it may be. It can be on the job.

Well, make sure it's on lunch break. Don't take man's, I don't know if God's going to hear your prayer if you're cheating on your time. But you can pray in your spirit that it's any place, any time that you begin to reach out and call on His name.

Now, Jesus warned against hypocrisy in prayer. Now, hypocrisy means a hypocrite is simply an actor. That's what the original root word is.

He's an actor playing on a stage. Jesus points out that there are a lot of actors in His church. They go around sounding a trumpet before them as hypocrites.

They love to have people acknowledge them. You know, the flesh loves to be applauded. The flesh loves to be complimented.

My flesh does. And I hate that about my flesh. You see, God can't use flesh.

The flesh never changes. You don't get your flesh sanctified. God does away with flesh.

He can't handle flesh. He doesn't use flesh. You don't remodel your flesh.

You don't get your flesh sanctified. God doesn't use flesh. He uses spirit.

The flesh has to be done away with. The flesh has to die. And we do things for God and we can't understand why people don't appreciate it.

And we have to blow our own trumpet. And Jesus said, you don't, He said, lay your trumpet down. Whatever you do, you're doing it for me.

If you're going to pray, if you're going to fast. These hypocrites went around when they fasted and they would disfigure their face. They would rub their eyes until they were red and they would pull their thing until they got red and they would put a cloth over their head and everybody come around.

I can't talk. I'm fasting. How many times I've invited people to lunch.

I can't. I'm fasting. They blow their trumpet.

How many times we have musicians that sing here. I don't know anything about the choir here. And I know that's not the case here tonight, but there have been occasions where, they're like me when I go home sometimes with Gwen to the apartment and I'm saying to her, Boy, preached my heart out.

Nobody said a word. She said, Oh, David, that was a good message. I said, That doesn't count.

You wouldn't even tell me if you didn't know what I was saying. I brought it out of you. You should have said it before I said that.

That doesn't count. But see, the flesh wants to be stroked. Now, don't come up to me tonight and say, That was a good message.

I told you my flesh is dying, so don't cater to my flesh. You see, these hypocrites, they love to pray that they may be seen of men. See, they have no prayer cloths.

There are a lot of people that pray in public. They pray in church. They'll come to meetings and pray.

They go to prayer meetings, but they don't have a prayer habit. They don't have this wonderful daily drawing toward the Lord. Now, this shocks me.

I am literally amazed at how few Christians, including those who come to Times Square churches, how do you know? The Holy Ghost told me. A lot of you sitting here right now, I have to tell you right to your face, and I say it lovingly as a shepherd, you don't have a habit. You don't have a place.

You don't have a closet. I'm talking about wherever you are at any time, you don't have the habit of daily retreating into the Lord's presence and calling on His name, because when you get in trouble, you pick up the telephone and call somebody else. Or there's a blindness that comes over us and we do not reach out to the Lord.

We reach to everybody or anything, but we don't have that habit. Immediately run. Immediately go into His presence.

Immediately seek His face. Call upon His name. We very seldom do that.

You see, I'm not talking about hypocrites tonight. I want to focus on good, honest, Christ-believing Christians. There's something of a holy anger that rises in me when people say, Well, Brother Dave, you pastors have to pray.

That's your job. And sometimes when I'm with people and I have to excuse myself, it's almost, Well, let him go. He has to do that.

That's his job. There's something in me that just rises. I hope it's holy anger.

I can't tell you that it's holy. I hope it's holy. But something rises up in me that preachers are supposed to, Sister Gwen is supposed to, and those in the choirs that are doing things in God's kingdom have to, but I don't have to do that.

I'm not a pastor. No, God says that it's for every single one of us. I ask you again, do you have a prayer habit? Do you have a daily prayer habit? David said he prayed seven times a day.

How many times do you pray? Well, three times at each meal. And one little goodbye Jesus or goodnight Jesus before you go to bed. Let me tell you something.

There has to be a closet established. A prayer habit. Now, this also implies quality time.

It's true we're not heard for our much speaking, the Scripture says. But the Scripture makes it very, very clear. We're to give Him the best that we have.

You couldn't bring a lamb, according to Malachi, you couldn't bring in Deuteronomy, you couldn't bring a lamb to be sacrificed that was blemished or blind or lame. It had to be the very best that you brought to the Lord. What kind of time are you bringing into your closet? Busy, busy day and you come in yawning in His presence and you sit down after three or four yawns and you say, Oh, hallelujah Jesus, I love you, come

to pray.

And all of a sudden, you know what a lot of people do who know how to pray in tongues? Because their mind is not engaged, they're not speaking to the Lord with their understanding, they start speaking in tongues. And while they're speaking in tongues, they're thinking about the car that has to be washed, they're thinking about all these things entering in. Their mind is over here and their tongue is speaking something else and they think they're praying in the Spirit.

You are not praying, listen to me, you are not praying in the Spirit if you're talking in tongues and your mind is somewhere else. Your mind, your heart, everything has to be where your lips are. Now you can go to the job and you can sit and talk to somebody and have your mind wandering off somewhere else.

You can sit in school and you can listen to the teacher and your mind can be wandering off somewhere else. You can come backstage and talk to me, look me right in the eye and listen to me and your mind can wander anywhere you want and I won't know it. But when you come into the presence of the King, when you come to God, my Bible said He sees in secret.

That means He sees what your heart's doing. He sees where your mind is. He sees where your thoughts are.

Do you come with your thoughts into captivity to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ? When you're in that secret closet and your mind begins to wander off and you're yawning, I tell you, when I'm too tired, I say, Jesus, I'm too tired to pray tonight. I'm going to bed. I'm going to wake up and give you a better hour.

We hear people say, Well, I laid before the Lord last night. They snored before the Lord last night. I know what it is like David who said he meditated on his bed at night.

I know what it is to lay on the bed, be wide awake. There's a wonderful thing that happens when you pray in the Spirit often. You say, I can't sleep, Lord.

My heart's going out to You. And that bed becomes a secret closet. Isaiah spoke of the kind of burnt offerings and sacrifices that are acceptable on my altar.

That's in Isaiah 56-7. He said, Them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. And he said, Only those.

I don't have time to go through it right now, but when you go home and study Isaiah 56, you'll find out what brought power at the altar when these people prayed. First of all, the Scripture says that they were obedient unto the Lord, who love the name of the Lord and are obedient and who take hold of His covenant. There was a divine purpose.

There was quality time. And they went into, the Scripture says very, very clearly here, that there was an acceptable offering upon the altar. I don't think our prayer sacrifice is acceptable unto God unless, listen very, very closely, unless we've established that closet and our hearts are into it absolutely completely.

Jesus said, The Father is in secret and thy father seeth in secret. He said, If you want to have an acceptable offering, if you want me to hear you, if you want me to see you, if you want my ear, if you want your prayer answered, you come to me with a focused mind. You come to me with a focused purpose.

You know, I've often had people come to me from all over the world and they'll stand in front of me. They'll block my path and say, Would you please pray for me? I say, About what? They say, Well, I don't know, but I thought the Lord would tell you. They want a word.

They want me to be a mind reader. And I say, I'm sorry, if you don't know what I'm to pray about, how can I pray? I'm not God. There are some men who play God and they'll start giving about 10 words and one of them is going to hit.

You know, it's an amazing thing how we go to God in such a haphazard measure. And I know people who said, I pray for hours and I don't understand why God doesn't hear me. I don't get answers to prayer.

I remember a man saying, I heard of his reputation as a man of prayer. They said, This man prays for eight hours a day. And I thought, Boy, he must be some preacher.

I'd like to meet that man. I met the man and there was nothing different about him. I didn't recognize anything of his spirit or anything else.

But first of all, it dawned on me later, if he's praying eight hours, nobody would know about it. He wouldn't have to tell it. And he wouldn't let anybody else tell it because he wouldn't be letting the trumpet blow.

But you see, you can spend hours in prayer and come out and nothing happens because half that time or more of that time was spent with your mind wandering one place after another. And I'll tell you, I called them satanic interruptions. He will come and interrupt you.

If you go and pray, take the telephone off the hook. Better yet, pull it out of the plug. Pull it out of the wall.

Now, I don't mean rip it out. I mean just pull that thing out. I made up my mind years ago.

Now, I know the president would never call me unless it was to rebuke me for preaching against some of the things that are happening, but I've made up my mind when I'm alone with God and it's my prayer time and I'm in my closet, that may be in my office, it may be in my bedroom, however the door is shut, I don't care if the president calls, nobody's going to reach me because there's quality time and God knows it. When I go in there, I'm focused and if my mind begins to wander, I stand up against it in the name of Jesus and I bring every thought into captivity. I will not think about anything else because I'm before the King of kings and Lord of lords and I want him to know I am there, make my petitions known and then I'm going to wait on him to speak to my heart.

How do you go into the secret closet? Haphazardly praying for hours and just static gun, never directing, never hitting the target of his ear because you really don't know what you want or what you need. Folks, yes, you go in to love him, you go in to praise him, you go in to worship him and mostly to love him but there comes a time you make your petition known, the scripture says. But I'll tell you, most of my petitions I don't know clearly until I go to prayer and in prayer he tells me what my need is.

Because not only do we not know how to pray, mostly we don't know what we need. Hallelujah. The power of the secret closet is first of all to have one and secondly is to come into that secret closet with an undivided mind and that means simply shutting the door.

When you pray, shut the door. Most people pray with the door open. It's like going to federal court down here in 100 Court Street down here.

I've been down there at times and I go in the courtroom and I don't know even how the judge can keep his mind on the case. You've got stenographers running around and tapping. You've got guards running here and there.

You've got lawyers running everywhere. It's a wild mob scene and sometimes I've seen judges get so upset they'll get the gavel and say, Silence! And I wonder sometimes if God doesn't feel like that when we come into his courts and our minds, like that courtroom, everything is racing around and I wonder sometimes God won't slap that gavel and say, Silence! Silence! All these things hanging on us. You say, well, I've got children.

What am I going to do? Well, if you have to wait until they go to bed. If you have to get up before they get up. I know women of God that get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and they have an hour with God before anything else happens and they pray, God, give me special rest.

Give me more sleep in six hours than I used to have in eight. And he doesn't. Because they have set their mind that their children will go up before God.

They're going to bind every demon or devil of hell that comes against their family and they are really seeking the face of God. They come in there and they shut the door. Folks, you may have a closet, but is it an open door closet or is it a shut door closet? I'm asking God to help me keep my door shut.

That's in my mind. I'm not talking about the physical. No, the physical door does help.

Especially if you've got company. Surely you don't want the company to walk by any room and see you laying out there weeping and praying, lest your heart be filled up with pride and said, hey, they saw me pray. Shut the door so they can't see it.

Shut the door so the devil can't see it. Shut the door so nothing can enter in. Shut it literally.

Shut it spiritually. Shut everything out and say, Lord, this is your time. Quality time.

I dare you to go to the mayor's office and sit there doing dumb and he's saying, what are you here for? I really don't know, but I thought you'd know. You try sitting down in the president's office and you get an hour of his time and you're just sitting there. Your mind is out there.

You're looking out at the tennis court. And you're sitting there talking to the president. You're looking out there and you're watching somebody playing tennis.

Hillary's out there playing tennis. I hope. You know how long you'd last in that office? Are you getting the point? You come into the king's presence focused with everything shut out and you look God in the eye and say, Lord, search me.

Try me. I'm here for you. Hallelujah.

Praise you, Jesus. It's the only acceptable sacrifice in the closet of prayer. The Bible said when you shut the door, the next thing you do is pray with all your heart.

Once you've established a habit and you shut the door and got rid of all the distractions, God expects you to seek Him with all your heart. But if from thence you shall seek the Lord thy God, you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. He said, you'll find me.

You'll get your answer if you seek it and you seek me with all your heart, all your soul, and other scriptures and all your mind and all your spirit. Now Moses spoke to the Israelites in his dying message, his last message. He knew that there would be tribulations and trials coming and he said, in the latter days when you're in tribulation and all these things are coming upon you, if you turn to the Lord your God and you shall be obedient unto His voice, for the Lord your God's a merciful God.

He will not forsake thee. He will not destroy thee. Nor forget the covenant of their fathers which He swore unto thee.

He said, if you will turn to Him with all your heart, if you just seek Him with all your heart, no matter what you're going through, no matter what your trial, if you'll seek Him with everything that's in you, He said, I'll see you through. Now folks, I wonder how many of us here tonight can honestly say that you have a closet and when you go into that closet you're focused and that you pray with everything that's in you. You're not lazy.

You're not sitting there waiting for some angel to tap you and give you some thrill. You're there for one purpose and that's to pour yourself out. Pour yourself out.

I can do that sometimes without saying a word. It doesn't have to do with just words. It means that Lord, everything in me is reaching out to you.

All my mind, all my heart, all my soul, all my strength. It's what He said, if you'll seek me with everything that is in you, every thought focus, everything. Now folks, we want to go into the secret closet.

We get to thinking prayer is just second nature. No, it's not second nature. It's something that has to be practiced.

It's something that is learned. That's why the disciples didn't teach us to pray. They knew it could be learned.

It could be taught. And Jesus taught them how to pray, the scripture says. The Holy Ghost will teach you how to pray and He's trying to do it through this message tonight.

You go to Him in your daily closet. You go to Him where you sat in with His presence. And you focus.

And then with everything in your heart, reach out. Reach out and call upon His name. Sometimes it'll be loud.

Sometimes it'll be quiet. But it's the heart totally given to Him. Now, if you have established a closet and you have shut the door and you come without distractions and you're seeking Him with all your heart, Jesus said there's a reward.

Now, those who are hypocrites, God, Jesus said they have their reward. They like the applause of man. That's all they're going to get.

Their prayer didn't go above the ceiling. God said, I didn't even hear it. In fact, where it said, your Father which is in heaven, there's no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

You got your reward. You wanted to be seen of man. You wanted to be applauded.

You wanted to be praised. You got that. That's all you get.

I don't want that. I want His reward. The scripture says, And thou, when thou prayest, enter into your closet.

And when thou set the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And here it is, And thy Father which seeth in secret, so reward thee openly. Now, folks, I've asked the Holy Spirit, and I'm not going to preach long tonight, maybe five more minutes, but I want you to get this reward, please.

I could name all the rewards that come from the power of the secret closet, but there's one in particular that the Holy Spirit revealed to me, and I want to show it to you, please. 2 Chronicles, 23rd chapter. Now, this is very vital, and I want you to see it.

That's why I want you to turn to it. 2 Chronicles. Here's the reward for those who have established the secret closet of prayer and have set the door and have prayed intelligently and with all their heart.

2 Chronicles, the 23rd chapter. I want you to mark this in your Bible. And every time you go into the secret closet, I want you to remember it.

2 Chronicles 23.9. I've got the wrong... Let's see, is it 22.9? Yeah, 22.9. I'm sorry. 2 Chronicles 22.9. Well, let's start with verse 8. Now, folks, don't read it yet. Look at me, please.

Don't get ahead of me. This is important. I want you to get this truth.

It's so freeing, especially if there's disorder. Now, let me ask you a question. If there's disorder in your home with children, your marriage mate, if there's disorder in the job, if in your life there's any disorder at all, if there's any confusion, you've got to listen to me.

You've got to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying. This is so clear. If you allow the Holy Spirit to speak it to your spirit, not to your head, but to your heart.

I want it to go deep. Now, the Scriptures say it's very clear that Jehoshaphat sought the Lord, and the Scripture says very clearly he sought the Lord with all his heart, and because Jehoshaphat sought the Lord with all of his heart, he had 35 years of a kingdom in good order, the Scriptures say. Everything was ordered.

There was order. There was no chaos. There was no confusion.

There were enemies that came on all sides, but God quickly, as soon as the enemy came, they began to seek the Lord, and order was restored. The devil tried to break the cords that bound them together, and order was restored. Everywhere you go, when you find a king or a nation, Israel or Judah, turning to the Lord and seeking with all their heart, order was always restored.

Complete order. But his son comes to the throne. Ahaziah.

Look at verse 9. And he sought... Oh, verse 8. And it came to pass that when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab and found the princes of Judah and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, they ministered to Ahaziah. That ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him, for he was hid in Samaria, and brought him to Jehu.

And when they had slain him, they buried him, because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom. In the original, it's to keep order in the kingdom.

He had no power to keep order. How many see what the Holy Spirit is trying to say? Here is a man, Jehoshaphat, his father. He seeks God and 35 years of order.

No confusion. Every enemy is defeated. Every trial, there's victory.

Because the Scripture said, he sought the Lord. And if you read the story of his son, the Scripture said, he sought not after the Lord, but did that which was evil. And he had no power to keep order in his kingdom.

Now your life is your kingdom. Your home, wherever you are, that's your domain, that's your kingdom. And if you don't have a prayer closet, if you don't have this daily habit, if you're not walking in the path the Holy Spirit is outlining tonight, I said carefully, you have no power to bring order to your household, order to your job, order.

See, the devil is an author of confusion and disorder. He brings disorder into children, into marriages, disorder into churches. There are churches where there is no spiritual authority against disorder.

The children run wild. There's all kinds of divorce in the church, all kinds of confusion everywhere you turn. Why? Because it's just like this man, the Scripture said, had no power to keep order in his kingdom.

Folks, when there's any problem in this church, we don't get around and discuss it. Brother Bob and Brother Don and I get on our knees. We cry out to the Lord.

We don't try to do anything about it. We let the Holy Ghost discipline. Other times Holy Ghost will say do this or do that and he'll lead us.

But there's been order in this church and there's order coming to our lives through the prayer closet. There is power. My message is the power of the secret closet and that power, and this is the key to my message, is if this is all you get out of what I'm preaching, if you want order restored to your life, if you look around you right now and say honestly, Brother Dave, there's disorder creeping into my life or into my home, into my job.

There's disorder. Now folks, I've known wives who've had to live with a husband who's a devil. Some of them have been beaten, alcoholic husbands, and for years they've prayed and tried to bring order.

It may have taken 25, 30 years, but I've seen the testimony after testimony I've heard of women who are faithful to God. First of all, God gave order into their spirits. God gave them knowledge of where they were going and how to act, how to hold on.

There was order in her life until finally one day the Spirit of God strikes them down not to kill them necessarily. Now God will do that if he asks you to bring order. A lot of people die because there's somebody not praying them dead, but praying order.

And to get that order, God has to remove people sometimes. Didn't he do that in the Pentecostal church in Jerusalem? Who fell dead? Ananias and Sapphira. So God can restore order.

Is there disorder? What he would do, you may not see the sign of it right now, but the first thing he's going to give you is order in your spirit. Your spirit will not be wild. Your spirit will not be in confusion.

God will bring order and unity and peace because you're seeking him with all your heart. You're not turning to other people. You're not turning to the flesh.

You're not looking for some human counselor. You're sudden with God and little by little, inch by inch, he's bringing order out of that confusion, taking it all away. He had no power to keep order.

Now here's a good word for those who are determined to seek the Lord. The Lord said, not only will I give you order, but in a time of famine, I'm going to feed you and you're going to be in green pastures until you die. I'm reading from Isaiah 65, 10, and Sharon shall be a fold of flocks in the valley of Achor.

Now that's supposed to be a valley of weeping where everybody else is weeping. That's a valley of shame. But the valley of Achor, a place for the herds to lie down in for my people who have sought me.

Those who seek me go lay down in thick green pastures and want society all around them and church people are starving. In fact, the scripture says, makes it very clear, but he said, my servant, here it is, those who do not seek the Lord, they shall be hungry. They shall be thirsty.

This is Isaiah 65, 13. They shall be hungry. They'll be thirsty.

They'll be ashamed. When you look around and see that in the church today, the hunger and the thirst, but the scripture says, those who seek the Lord, but my servants, they shall eat. My servants, they shall drink.

My servants shall sing for joy of heart. You show me a praying people and I'll show you people don't have to be pumped up. Not with preaching, not with singing, the joy flows.

He said, the joy will flow automatically out of their spirits. Hallelujah. All right, it's power to be taken into green pastures.

It's power to bring order. And finally, it's the power of the 91st Psalm. Turn there and you know what that is.

Hallelujah. Did you know that that has to do... Folks, how many of you have accepted this as your favorite psalm, 91? If you don't know the 91st Psalm, you've never been walking with God. Look at that, every one of mine.

No, I'm not going to blow my horn. Forget it. It's about doing something I'm preaching against.

Have you ever seen all these great promises? He's my refuge, my fortress. He's going to deliver me from the snare of the devil. He's going to cover me with his feathers and under his wings.

I'm going to trust. I'm not going to be afraid for terror by night, arrow that fire by day, or for pestilence that walketh in darkness for destruction. A thousand are going to fall at my side, 10,000 at my right hand, but it's not going to come near me because I've made the Lord my refuge, even the most high habitation.

No evil shall befall me, neither shall any plague come near my dwelling. Give His angels charge over me to keep me on my way. Yeah, but you know, there's a condition.

It's right in the first verse. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high. There it is.

That's the closet. You can't claim any of this until you have a closet. It doesn't apply to you, so you might as well just rip it out of your Bible.

It doesn't have anything to do with you. If you're in the secret closet, you're going to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty. Hallelujah.

In every promise, this book is yours because you, the Bible says dwell means that's to live. You say, well, Brother Watson, do I have to be praying all day long? Doesn't it say we're to pray without ceasing? That means that you can pray in your mind, you pray in your thoughts. Now, that doesn't mean you have to go to work carrying a big Bible everywhere you go.

Some people carry it just as an accessory, like a purse. To show off their holiness. Better have a little one in your pocket here that you're reading read.

But you see, hallelujah. He's wanting to establish the people that have determined all through the day just to keep running to him. And I thought today, and this came, and I believe the Holy Spirit put it in my mind, with this I close.

My Bible said God's a jealous God. And the Muslims have just built a big temple here up in Harlem. A great big dome temple, you've seen it.

And they blow that horn hour after hour. I don't know how many times a day. Now, it's done by rote, yes.

But they kneel and face east. And I wonder if God doesn't get jealous. He said, oh, that my children had that kind of devotion for me.

That they would come to me as often as the Muslims go to their Allah. Now, you may not agree with what they believe, and I don't. But I see sometimes that I have more devotion in cults than I do in the house of God.

How about you? I know God's been wooing me more and more. He's wooing me into that closet. Before I close, I have to say this.

I don't know how many times in this pulpit I have tried. I have tried everything the Holy Spirit's put in my heart to get people to pray daily. Now, we've had six weeks of prayer.

We've had weeks of prayer. We have people come on Thursday night to intercede. We have people praying downstairs right now.

That's not what I'm talking about. I'm not even talking about praying in this church at all. I'm talking about you alone with God.

And I'll tell you what, that's why we've not seen the glory yet. We've had taste of it, but the glory comes to a people who've established that habit, that daily, wonderful, marvelous habit of running to Him. I run to Him all day long.

I've been running to Him today. Right now when I'm preaching, I'm about to give an altar call. My spirit's run to Him.

My spirit just raced to Him and said, Oh God, now send your Holy Ghost to make this message real. I want you to stand. But look at me for just a moment.

Let me talk to you as a shepherd now. Brother Bob was talking very profoundly today about a shepherd's heart and the searching. And many times that searching love comes through His servants, His under-shepherds.

It came all day today through Brother Don and Brother Bob and again tonight. God's given this church true shepherds. There are times I have to tell you honestly, I've about given up trying to get people to pray.

I've almost come to conclusion that no matter what I preach, no matter what I say or any pastor comes up here, thunder it, threaten, plead, beg. First of all, to get women to pray then to get husbands and men to pray. We don't have that tendency.

We don't have something natural in us that makes us want to pray. It's something that you have to discipline your soul into and your body and your spirit. It doesn't come easy.

And I'm going to ask the Holy Ghost to convict you if you have not developed a prayer closet, a prayer habit, and you've not been shutting yourself along with God. I don't understand that if you've got a television set and you can sit there even for one hour watching television, God's jealous over that hour and one day you're going to answer for that hour that you took away from God. If you've got time to sit with your friends on the telephone, if you've got time to play games, it's wonderful to be with the family and play games.

There's time for that. But God said, if you're going to take time for that, you're going to give me time. And I don't think you can hear from God unless you give Him quality time.

Not believe in a specific effort in shutting yourself along with God, dismissing yourself from every person, everything around you, and disappear. Disappear. He said, God is in secret.

You go where He is. Where is He? He's in secret. Go in secret.

That's where He is. Go to Him in secret. And He said, I see in secret.

I see and I hear in secret. Hallelujah. I'm going to ask God to convict you.

He's convicting me. Convict you. Say, I'm not leaving this church until the Holy Spirit helps me to be reminded of this tomorrow after this service is long in the history that the Holy Ghost will remind me, Lord, I want that message driven in my heart.

I want to establish a prayer closet in my life. And I want to be shut in with you and seek you with all my heart because I know that's the power to bring order into my life. I dare you to show me a truly praying person whose life eventually does not come into full order.

There is order. It may take a while. But no matter what you see outwardly, God is at work bringing order, restoring order, taking away confusion, and giving purpose and direction.

Hallelujah. There's no other way. You don't need a pastor to counsel you.

You need to get on your face before God and say, Lord, you bring order to my home. You bring order to my life. You bring order to my mind that races and wonders bring order out of chaos.

Holy Spirit, only you can do this. Lord, humanly, I'm convinced it's impossible to get the church of Jesus Christ to pray through any human effort, even through any preaching, unless the Holy Spirit brings life to the Word. Holy Spirit, I'm asking you to go to the balcony, main floor, choir, all of us on the platform, including me.

Convict us, Lord, for not giving you more of our time, not truly seeking you with all our heart and loving you with all that is within us and then receiving that order and that clearness and that fullness that comes from seeking you with everything that's in us. Now, where your head's about, I ask first for those who have to acknowledge this disorder in my life, in my home, and I have not been seeking God as I should. I want you to get out of your seat from the balcony, go to either stairs and come down any aisle, either here.

I know that's a strong confession. You heard Pastor Bob make a very strong confession this morning of God's deal with him about love for him. That took a lot of grace.

It's going to take grace in your heart for many of you to step down this aisle tonight and say, Lord Jesus, forgive me. Forgive me. I've not been seeking you with all that's in me.

Now, you may be here tonight cold, backslidden, may not even be saved. You may not even know the Lord. Come and follow these that are coming.

Get out of your seat and follow these that are coming. Don't come and let the Spirit draw at you. You feel that drawing, let the Spirit of God just draw your heart.

Please. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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