

The Man Under the Stage

by Eric Ludy

The sermon emphasizes the importance of intercessors who stand in the gap and pray for others, rather than celebrating the man on the stage.

Duration: 1:01:30

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:6, Luke 18:1, Acts 1:14, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer", "Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being spiritually prepared and the power of prayer in bringing about revival and transformation. It highlights the role of individuals like Father Nash and the need for men and women to go under the stage in prayer, sacrificing comfort and reputation for the sake of the gospel. The message challenges the church to be a praying church, willing to fill gaps with their lives and bodies, and to be unstoppable in advancing the kingdom of God.

Transcript

Let's pray. Father, we must be spiritually prepared for this message. There's no human preparation that would be sufficient for this.

This is what you specialize in. You specialize in taking dead hearts and bringing them to life. You specialize in taking sinful creatures and turning them into palaces of holiness.

You specialize in being born into stables and transforming those stables into a beacon of hope and life for this world all around. Lord, I pray that you'd put your star over this stable today and that you would visit us in the way you know your church must be visited today. Lord Jesus, your church is languishing, not just here in America but all over this globe.

It would seem that we're entering into another dark age, not because we don't have the word of God but because we don't believe it anymore. And Lord Jesus, I pray that that would not be true of us. And I pray, Lord Jesus, not just for this body but for the body of Christ at large, that there would be a stirring and that there would be the rescuing hand, the righteous hand of Jesus Christ, which would reach in and change us and rescue us before it's too late.

Truth has fallen in the streets and most of us are just staring at it, languishing there. But Lord Jesus, you're looking for a people that will spend body and blood to see it properly erected again in this generation. May

you find it here in this group.

Lord Jesus, this is for you and for your glory. Amen. This title is going to make sense as we progress.

It's called The Man Under the Stage. It's ironic, but Nick Ellison did a devotional at Ellerslie on Wednesday, was it? And which, I don't know if it was called The Man Under the Stage, but it was basically about the man under the stage. And my Wednesday, even though I wasn't here, was all about the man under the stage.

And Wednesday was my 21st spiritual anniversary with Jesus. And to me, that's big. Every anniversary celebration I have with Jesus Christ is always significant.

I don't know if anyone else has that where their calendar is marked and when it gets around to that day on the calendar, expectancy bubbles within. God always does something. 21 straight years he has done something on my anniversary.

And last year was my 20th. And there's something, there's been a quote that I've been sharing for years when I would teach and I used to teach communications and I would talk about the preparation of a sermon. And I would always give the quote from E.M. Bounds.

And it was, it takes 20 years to write a sermon because it takes 20 years to make a man. And so you have to realize when 20 years comes along, I've been given this quote my entire life. Well, it seems like my entire life, my adult life.

And then suddenly I'm 20 years into the service of my king. And so obviously there was a little pressure. Does that mean my sermon is ready? Well, you know what launched this last year? Ellerslie.

So it's very significant what God has done in my life. He speaks a certain language to his children. It's a language that his children recognize.

If you listen, you'll hear it. So this is year 21. Well, to me, holy, holy, holy, 777, 21.

So you have to realize that might not mean anything to all of you, three sevens. But to me, it's very significant. And so I'm approaching the 21st anniversary.

And this is the message that came forth on my 21st anniversary with Jesus Christ. See, doesn't that lay a nice foundation for you? What in the world is this message? For those of you that have been around Ellerslie, you at least have an idea of what this is about. You see, when William Booth would preach, William Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army with his wife, Catherine Booth.

And those two were truly radicals. I mean, they would walk down the streets and people would huck rotten vegetables at them. And they would smile and rejoice and sing.

And they truly lived it. They didn't just talk about the work of the gospel. They lived it.

They went into the darkest corners, the most desolate areas of all England. And they served the weak, the dying, the lost, the downtrodden, incredible stories. And William Booth could preach.

I don't know what it sounded like. I remember this one audio recording on sermonindex.com, it says William Booth. Now, William Booth was a long time ago.

So if there's gonna be an audio recording of him, I was gonna listen to it. I was like, this isn't as satisfying as I would like. However, I did hear the growl and I heard the thunder crackling through.

William Booth, when he would preach, he would preach until something broke in his audience. And if nothing was breaking, if everyone was just looking back at him going, what do you keep going for? God's not doing anything. He would yell out, pray.

Who's he talking to? He was talking to the man under the stage. Pray. I don't know what William Booth, well, I've seen pictures of William Booth.

He had the long white beard, sort of the grizzled sailor type of guy. And I could just see him up there. Pray.

There was something that could only be accomplished in those people's lives and hearts that was accomplished through prayer and not just through preaching. Preaching is a necessary tool that God uses to speak to the human spirit and to rise it up like a flame within. But the only way for that spirit to be awakened is for the power of prayer to move upon it.

If God's men and women are being awakened, it's because God's men and women somewhere in this world are praying. And so for the world to be changed, men and women have got to pray. Prayer is the initial movement of the spirit of God.

Then God raises up preaching men and women. He raises up teaching men and women. He raises up evangelizing men and women.

But that's as a result of praying men and women. First, we need prayer. Then we have revival.

That's always been the pattern. But there's a problem, and that is that there is a need for a man under the stage. If we're gonna pick, and God says, do you wanna be the man on the stage or the man under the stage? You wanna be the man under the stage? It's a dignity issue here.

The world, Christian world, who do we celebrate? When you go to a Christian bookstore, which by the way, I don't hang out in Christian bookstores. I'm not a big fan of them. I have 18 books.

And so when I say that, I'm saying it because I know about the industry that is producing all the other books. Not a big fan of Christian bookstores. But if you do go into a Christian bookstore, you oftentimes will not see on the front of any cover, on the back of any cover, on the front of any CD or the back of any CD, the picture of the man under the stage.

Hey, I wanna be the man under the stage. He's forgotten. No one notices the man under the stage.

I itch for celebrityism. I want to be noticed. I wanna be seen.

And the world will never change as a result. American Christianity is based on celebrityism. We applaud and cheer on the ones that are seen.

And as a result, there is a difficulty for many of us wrangling within to say, God, don't call me under the stage. God is looking for men and women that will be called under the stage. And I'm gonna speak very straightforwardly and say he's looking for men and women this morning who will be called under the stage.

Not two years from now, he needs his men and women to begin to migrate in a new direction, in a direction of anonymity, in a direction where the world may never know what they did. I feel like God is preparing what we could call the underground church. The underground church is the church that isn't technically supposed to be noticed.

Because if they stick their head up too high, the governments, the hostile governments see them and then follow them down in through the channels that are underneath the earth and get to the queen aunt. We don't want that. So the underground church is a hidden church.

But if you are willing to be a part of the underground church that will really change this earth, you need to start getting prepared to do the work of Jesus in such a way that others don't applaud it and others don't see it. And you don't have to be approved for your work. That God can call you into a hiding place.

He can call you into a closet for three years of your life and no one knows that you've been there. They look at you and go, what is wrong with that person? You know what? They had such high potential. We had such high hopes for them and they just disappeared.

You don't need to explain your calling. When God moves his men and women under the stage, it is never a popular move. I want you to realize the men and women under the stage are not just misunderstood, but they are oftentimes hated because you know what comes out of men and women being under the stage? Power, transformation.

Some of the stories I'm gonna share with you today, it's not just the men on the stage that are hunted and despised. It's when the men on the stage say, you wanna know why there's power in this room and it has nothing to do with my preaching. It's the one you don't see.

And they're like, let me at the one I can't see. Let's get him out of here. There's something he's doing.

He's manipulating people. The power of prayer changes lives. It awakens something within them.

When we have men and women that are praying, men and women hear and they hear differently. The ones that are hardened to the gospel, suddenly there's a breakthrough in their soul. How did that happen? Just through raw preaching? Through raw praying is how it happened.

The missing intercessors. I'm gonna give you three scriptures in the Bible where God is looking at his people and he's in need of something. He's in need of something very specific and he calls it an intercessor.

But when he looks, he doesn't find one. It's a fascinating statement. God's looking for something and he has pretty good vision, by the way.

But when he looks, he doesn't find it. What is an intercessor? Now, depending on the church background you have, you've probably heard the word intercessor. But oftentimes it's merely associated with prayer.

And I want you to realize an intercessor is far more than just a praying man or a woman. It's a man or a woman who is built strong. And I mean strong.

Why? So that they can utilize that strength to defend the weak. There was a picture that we were talking about in our Ellerslie time on Friday. And I hesitate to use it because I don't really like to refer to movies, but it is a really juicy picture.

In Lord of the Rings, do you remember Boromir? He's sort of an unhealthy character throughout the movie because he's really hungering for that ring and he's lusting after the ring. But when it all comes down to it, the guy stands to defend those little hobbits. And the interesting thing about Boromir is he was a strong man.

And so the orcs are coming and the hobbits need to get away. And so Boromir stands in the gap in between the little hobbits and the orcs. And he's hit with an arrow.

And he keeps fighting. He's fighting so that those little ones can get away. And another arrow hits him.

And another arrow. And another arrow. Every bit of strength that was built into this man was called upon in that test.

And he needed to have a lot of it. Most of us get hit with one arrow and we're like, oh, oh, mortal wound. And we fall down.

Meanwhile, the orcs trample on our dead body and get to the little hobbits. But God's looking for men and women who are built strong, who stand and can take arrow after arrow after arrow after arrow. And give time for the little ones that we are defending to find rescue and salvation.

Intercessors are ones that give up their life. But it's not a meaningless giving up. It's not an untimely death.

It's the fullness of time. Jesus was an intercessor. At 33 years of age, you could say an untimely death.

No, the Bible's very clear. In the fullness of time. He was ripened for the purposes of Jesus Christ, for the purposes of God.

He was ripened for it. We set our lives in God's hands and he makes us strong. So that we can be spilled out.

That's his pattern. You see, there's gaps. There's weaknesses in our armor.

You can call them chinks. In a wall around a city, it's called a breach. But those gaps, whether it's in armor or whether it's in a city, are vulnerabilities that the enemy plays upon.

And an intercessor is the one that fills those gaps with his own strength, with his own body, with his own time and energy. And he says, not on my watch. That enemy will not get through.

And it gives the sufficient time for that weak one to repair the breach. So that they now can stand, become strong, and then give up their life. I know most of us don't like to describe Christianity in such a way.

Because it sounds like we're just called to die. What kind of message is that? Christianity, aren't we just called to live in America and have a nice family with the dog, the cat, a couple kids? And maybe we have a few more kids than the rest of them because we are evangelizing in and through our household. We're not gonna give up our life.

What good are we if we die? Well, talk to all the apostles about that. Who all died? You could say, well, what about John? John was thrown into a pot of boiling oil. And you could say, well, he died of old age, didn't he? Yeah, exiled.

Every single one of them was removed. Well, that's not a good strategy by God. God's strategies are different than ours.

And by the way, they work. So our human wisdom applied to how our life is supposed to work and how our life is supposed to impact this world, we have our ideas about it. If I just stay here, I make a lot of money and then I can support foreign missions.

And God says, I also need someone to go on the foreign mission. Who's available? All of us are trying to build our little kingdom so we can support the foreign missions. Is any of us actually called to go into the dark place? I think so, but who's gonna hear the call? We only hear the call, by the way, when someone's praying under the stage.

I tell you what, there is nothing in us that will naturally hear the call to foreign missions or to go under the stage unless someone is already under the stage praying for us to hear it. We don't wanna hear it, to be honest. We like our life just the way it is, it's fine.

You know, I'm more spiritual than everyone else around me. Get this Eric guy off the stage. Why'd I come to this church today? I don't wanna hear that call.

Well, there's part of me that knows exactly what you feel. I have four kids now, a wife, ministry. I have enough reasons to say I'm not called.

My kids need me. I can't just go off and die. The best thing for my kids is for their father to be obedient unto the pattern of the kingdom of heaven in my life.

And if there's a call upon Eric Loody's life, I'm not necessarily excited to leave my kids and my wife. But my kids and my wife are in God's hands, first and foremost. That is my responsibility unto my king.

I am his first. And I am a good father and a good husband because I am his first, not in spite of it. The missing intercessors, God's looking.

Judgment is turned away backward and justice stand at the far off for truth has fallen in the street and equity cannot enter. And he saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him and his righteousness, it sustained him.

There is no intercessor in Israel who can take the blow, who can stand in the gap. Israel is dying. Truth has fallen in the streets.

What's God gonna do? If there's not an intercessor, God becomes the intercessor. And God himself came to this earth, took on our form and said, hey people, this is what an intercessor looks like. He came because there was no man that could do it.

That's the gospel. We're weak. We can't function this way.

We can't rise up to such a message. All we find inside of us is fear and cowardice, self-protection. I want it my way.

I don't like this message. Could he shut up? There is no intercessor. There is no one in this world that can rescue you.

And so he comes. And what does he do? He changes you. He rescues you.

And then he says, you can't be an intercessor, but I can be one in you. I can take your weakened frame, your weak mind, your weak heart, and I can give it the roar of a lion. And that's Christianity.

Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. That's a statement to us too, not just way back in the book of Ezekiel. We have not gone up into the gaps.

We're staring at the gaps and we cry foul when we see what's happening in the government of our day. We see the social decline in our world. We hear about the human slavery.

We hear about the sex trafficking. We hear about the 148 million orphans. Oh, it's terrible.

And God says to us, but you have not gone up into the gaps. We're complaining about our politicians not going up into the gaps. What's wrong with those guys? Those liars and cheats.

And God looks at us as a church. He says, hey, stop wagging your finger in that direction. Turn it this way.

You have not gone up into the gaps. My people are built to go into the gaps. What are you doing? Don't complain about other people not doing it.

Don't complain about the moral decline in our culture. Where's my church? And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it. But I found none.

Dear Lord Jesus, may that not be the statement today. America hangs on the brink. And the only way to get us awake into the level where we will actually respond to this as opposed to just hear it and go, that's true.

Yeah, we all know this is true. The American Christian church is weak right now. But it's feigning strength.

People get mad at me whenever I call the American church weak. It's like, that is judgmental. It's fact.

The fact that we even try and argue it is the ridiculous. What does it mean I don't care about the Christian church? It doesn't mean I want to throw it out. I want to fight for it.

I want to see it strong. But I'm not going to call something strong that's weak. We're weak.

Just measure us against the word of God. We're not in alignment with it. We're not fearing God.

We're not trembling before him. We don't hate what he hates and love what he loves. That's weakness.

If my kids are constantly disobedient, if they're grumbling, complaining at everything, if they're rolling their eyes every time I give them an order, that's called bad kids. And I wouldn't call them good. Oh, they're well behaved and obedient.

I would say my kids need help. Someone help me. Someone stand in the gap for my family.

Someone get under the stage for my family. That's what this message is. Call in all gap fillers.

Okay, if you thought that was intense, you might want to buckle your seatbelt. This is only getting a little more rough. This is Isaiah, ironically, in a very similar passage to what Drew just gave this morning to the little kiddos.

And what Isaiah has seen the Lord high and lifted up. He has seen the holy, holy, holy God. And when he's in that almighty presence, he overhears God talking.

See, most of us, we want to look at God from a distance. We want to look at God through the book of Isaiah. We don't want to come into his presence ourselves.

It's a terrifying place where we literally fall prostrate before him and we realize how dirty we really are because it's bright, bright light. But when we're willing to walk into the bright, bright light, we start to overhear God's discussion. And this is what Isaiah overhears.

Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who will go for us? And because he heard it, he was able to respond. And Isaiah says, here I am, you can send me. Now, you may not feel like you're in the presence of God right at this exact moment in time.

You might not feel that you're beholding the holy, holy presence of your almighty God. But I want you via the words that you're hearing spoken to hear your God saying, who will go for us? Who will we send? Because he's looking. He's looking for a gap filler.

Who will we send? We got a breach over here and the enemy's taking full advantage of it. Who will we send? God, I know what this means when I say yes, but here I am, here I am. He looks down at you and you're like, I don't know, was that me raising my hand? I don't know.

Eric, you raised your hand. Yeah. Did you mean it? I think so.

I'm trembling a little as I'm talking to you right now, God, but I think so. I really want to mean it. God, I know you need a man sent.

So look no further. Send me, send me. That little statement somehow needs to spiritually grow up within each of our souls.

If we find ourselves cutting it off and explaining it away and saying, well, I have a calling to my family. I have a calling to, you know, this business that I'm heading up over here. Whatever it is, we all have a reason that when we overhear the conversation in the holy, holy throne room of God, of why we say, you know, look at him, send him.

That's a nice Christian specimen over there. Send her. God, send me.

See T. Stead, and I've said this to you guys many times before, but it's the best enunciation of this scripture that I've ever heard. See T. Stead at the age, I think he was 52 or so. The guy is sickly.

He has spent his body in interior China and interior India for the gospel. Every possible disease has come upon this guy's body and he's still limping along in his life. And he hears about the lost in interior Africa, that no gospel tear has ever reached them.

They've never heard the gospel in all of interior Africa. 52-year-old aged, weakened man lifts his hand and says, God, I know I can hardly breathe and hardly walk, but send me. I want what C.T. Stead had.

Because it's not something that is native to our souls, is it? There's nothing in us that wants to be called to interior Africa. It's the equivalent of being under the stage. That's hard work.

Little rats crawl around under stages. We just don't see them because we cover them up. I don't know that we actually have one here, but that's the type of thing.

It's dirty down there. There's like spider webs and things in your brain and a little spider crawls on your nose. Who wants that? I want to be up here in the open air where people can see my commitment to Jesus Christ.

They can hear it, but God is calling us down. He's calling us out. He's calling us into those interior places where no one has heard.

The darkness is where the light is needed. Going up into the gaps. Here's some men that went up into the gaps.

Peter was crucified upside down. Andrew was tied mercilessly to two beams of wood and left to hang to death for three days. Paul was beheaded.

Stephen was stoned. Philip was crucified. Matthew was slain with a sword.

James, the brother of Jesus, was stoned and clubbed. Matthias was stoned and beheaded. Mark was dragged to pieces.

Jude was crucified. Bartholomew was cruelly beaten and then crucified. Thomas was thrust through with a spear.

Luke was hung and John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil and removed unscathed, then exiled to Patmos. We need gap fillers for such an hour. Now that's just historic Christianity.

I know we live in America. And in America, those things don't happen. So here I am, God, send me.

Now, I want you to fully weigh what it is to be a Christian. Because this is what it's meant throughout all the ages. And this is why there's nothing native within us that responds to this message.

Because those that were truly born of the Spirit of God and sent by the Spirit of God are prepared to understand the true weight and gravity of such a call. You do not take this lightly. This is not a game.

This is life and death. And God's saying, can I have your life? Can I have it? He does not accidentally lose your life. He does not mispend what he's entrusted.

He spends it with perfect efficiency and excellence. He never wastes a drop of his saints blood. But if he asks for your life, you can know it's for the glory of the King.

And you do it with a big smile on your face. Because you know what awaits you? His presence for all of eternity. There's no downside to this.

To live is Christ. It's good. But to die is even better.

We need gap fillers for such an hour. We need a Peter and an Andrew for North Korea. One to be crucified upside down in order to see North Korea open up to the gospel.

One to be tied mercilessly to two beams of wood and left to hang to death for three days. We need to get inside this country. There's darkness in there.

There's death and carnage in there. More orphans probably per foot in that country than anywhere else in the world. There's incredible destitution in that country.

And we can't touch it. How are we going to get in? How do we get the light into that country? Well, we need a Peter and an Andrew to get under the stage. We need men and women who are willing to say, here I am.

Send me. We need a Paul and a Stephen for the 1040 window. One beheaded, one stoned.

We need a Philip and a Matthew for Haiti. One crucified, one slain with the sword. We need a James and a Matthias for Rwanda.

One stoned and clubbed, one stoned and beheaded. We need a Mark and a Jude for the unborn here in America. One dragged to pieces, one crucified.

If you knew that in the spilling of your life that these things would change in the natural realm, would you take it more seriously? You guys ever heard of the line of blood in Africa where Islam was spreading south and the Christians rose up with a very similar message and they said, our body and our blood for you, Lord Jesus. Islam cannot spread. And there's a line, the line of blood in Africa where martyrs gave up their lives and it spread no further.

Are we willing to say, God, this goes no further. That darkness is not greater than your light. And so take my life to prove it that greater is he that is in the church of Jesus Christ than any power that is in this world.

We need a Bartholomew and a Thomas to bring to an end the slave prostitution. One cruelly beaten and then crucified. One thrust through with a spear.

We need a Luke and a John for the rescue of the 148 million orphans. One hung, one thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. Now I know this isn't an American message.

This is just a historic Christian message. This is the way it's always been. The problem is we look at that list and we grimace.

We're like, that is just, it's not the way we go to church here in America. We don't listen to things like that. We don't have to put up with stuff like this.

This is Christianity and it always has been. I don't care. We live in America.

Things like this may not happen yet. But the church, if it's strong, is ready for them. I don't care if you're called to America.

You still need to be ready to give up your life. There's some documentary. It's called, I think, Blood Money.

I just heard about this the other day. And it's about the exposure of Planned Parenthood in the abortion industry. No theater in America will touch it.

It's been blackballed and banned. Wait a minute here. We are going to expose and we're going to speak truth.

And it won't be shown in any theater in America. What country do we live in? You stand up for these issues and you're marked. It's time we stand up and represent the truth of the kingdom of heaven.

Because if we don't, who do we expect to do it? If someone needs to die, may it be us. That's, when I talk to men, that's what I say. We are the first sufferers.

We don't say, could someone else die for me? We say, no way. I'm the one that gets to die for others. If there is one of those hostage situations and someone's saying, I'm going to kill someone.

You, get over here. In 10 minutes, if that doesn't happen, then we're going to kill this person. And you say, no, don't take them, take me.

No, no, don't take them, take me. That's what this message is. This message is, no, no, don't take them, take me.

Do you realize that there's a gun to your head if you say that? Yeah, you give up your life for them. That's Jesus. That's Jesus.

That's his nature, his character. Father Nash, I emailed Nathan Johnson this week and I said, what's the name of the man under the stage for William Booth? And he got back, he looked into it and he said, I can't seem to find it, which is quite an appropriate statement. No one can figure out the name of the guy that was under the stage for William Booth.

They know William Booth. They don't know the guy under the stage that William Booth accredited all the strength in his preaching to. He said, but I did stumble across an article that I think you'd find very interesting.

It's about the man that was under the stage for Charles Finney. I was like, huh, that's why he sent it over. And I read that article this week.

I sent it to all our staff and you know what? Deeply stirring. So I want to introduce you to Father Nash because not that he's the end all statement of what it looks like to be the man under the stage, but it's a good start. It's a good time for us to at least begin to wrap our minds around what it looks like and the power of it.

Most people in history have no clue who this guy is. His name was Daniel Nash, but he was oftentimes referred to as Father Nash. Let me read a couple things.

When God would direct where a meeting was to be held, Father Nash would slip quietly into town and seek to get two or three people to enter into a covenant of prayer with him. Sometimes he had with him a man of similar prayer ministry, Abel Clary. Together they would begin to pray fervently for God to move in the community.

One record of such is told by Leonard Ravenhill. I met an old lady who told me a story about Charles Finney that has challenged me over the years. Finney went to Bolton, the minister, but before he began, two men knocked on the door of her humble cottage, wanting lodging.

The poor woman looked amazed for she had no extra accommodations. Finally, for about 25 cents a week, the two men, none other than Fathers Nash and Clary, rented a dark and damp cellar for the period of the Finney meetings, which were at least two weeks. And there in that self-chosen cell, those prayer

partners battled the forces of darkness.

Another record tells, on one occasion when I got to town to start a revival, a lady contacted me who ran a boarding house. She said, brother Finney, do you know a Father Nash? He and two other men have been at my boarding house for the last three days, but they haven't eaten a bite of food. I opened the door and peeped in at them because I could hear them groaning and I saw them down on their faces.

They have been this way for three days, lying prostrate on the floor and groaning. I thought something awful must have happened to them. I was afraid to go in and didn't know what to do.

Would you please come see about them? No, it isn't necessary, Finney replied. They just have a spirit of travail in prayer. In other states, Charles Finney so realized the need of God's working and all his service that he was desirous to send godly Father Nash on and advance to pray down the power of God into the meetings which he was about to hold.

Not only did Nash prepare the communities for preaching, but he also continued in prayer during the meetings. Often Nash would not even attend the meetings while Finney was preaching. Nash was praying for the spirits outpouring upon him.

Finney stated, I did the preaching altogether and brother Nash gave himself up almost continually to prayer. Often while the evangelist preached to the multitudes, Nash in some adjoining house would be upon his face in an agony of prayer and God answered in the marvels of his grace. With all due credit to Mr. Finney for what was done, it was the praying men who held the ropes.

The tears they shed, the groans they uttered are written in the book of the chronicles of the things of God. Last week I gave a message called the 38th parallel. It's the dividing line between South and North Korea.

This line, if you attempt to cross it either from the North to the South or the South to the North, and last week our main emphasis was we don't allow any of the North, which is darkness, to cross into the South, which is our soul, which is the church. We have a boundary and we have military arms in place, razor wire in place, a wall, a boundary that says no darkness enters in. Then at the end of the message I said, but we are commissioned to cross over the 38th parallel as light into darkness.

And that's the great challenge of every believer because if light doesn't make its way into that darkness, then it will never see it. And so the great challenge of last week and how it finished was are we willing to cross the 38th parallel? You know the 38th parallel has divided families when it was first instituted by the Russians and the Americans. There were families on one side in the North and families on one side in the South, and they were forever separated.

They never saw each other again. This is extreme stuff. What's the gospel for you? Right there.

There's a line that needs to be drawn in the sand in this world. I'm with the light. I am with King Jesus.

And I will not mix with darkness. There's no alloy here. There's no hybrid of half darkness, half flesh, half world, and then half spirit, half heaven.

We kick out all that is darkness. We're purified, made holy, likened unto God. And then he puts us on wheels, or in our sake, legs.

Legs that can move in the direction of where the need is. We find a gap and we fill it. So we're talking about crossing the 38th parallel.

This week at Ellerslie was a very significant week. Before I go into that, I wanted to read one more thing about Father Nash. Actually, I think this is Jay Oswald.

Let me see. No, this is Jay Paul Reno that wrote this. Considering the souls being saved and the very culture of the area being changed in such a thorough revival, it should be no surprise that persecution came to these co-laborers.

Some came from jealous ministers, some from those of other doctrinal persuasions, and some from the lost. False statements were sent to newspapers by his enemies. Nash wrote a letter, May 11th, 1826, telling of some of the opposition.

Part of it said, the work of God moves forward in power in some places against dreadful opposition. We have both been hanged and burned in effigy. We have frequently been disturbed in our religious meetings.

Sometimes the opposers make a noise in the house of God. Sometimes they gather around the house and stone it and discharge guns. There is almost as much writing, intrigue, lying, and reporting of lies as there would be if we were on the eve of a presidential election.

Oh, what a world. How much it hates the truth. How unwilling to be saved.

But I think the work will go on. The call to the field, the call to the closet. There's two very distinct things that are happening in our midst here at Ellerslie.

And that is, we know that we're not here to stay. We know that this is a passageway in our life unto something else. And I do not know, I can't say, that every single student that comes to Ellerslie is called to North Korea or to cross the 38th parallel geographically or to go onto the stage.

However, we are all called at some level to be light bearers in this world and this culture and to be gap fillers at some level. Some of us at the level where we die. Some of us at the level where we are literally cheering on and supporting and praying for those that are in such circumstances.

But all of us must be made ready and willing to be the ones at the front. So this past week at Ellerslie, I remember on Monday when we had early morning prayer at 5.30 and when we were praying, I felt, I don't know how to describe it, but it was a distinct sense that there was a setting apart of people in our midst to commission them forward to cross the 38th parallel. So this is Monday morning.

Remember we had 38th parallel on Sunday. This is Monday morning, 5.30. A very distinct sense. We came in that week, or I'm sorry, that morning, so Monday for our classes and that's one of the things I brought up that I sensed that it's pretty obvious in our midst that there are two people in this school that God has hallmarked.

I didn't even mention who they were. I stuck the microphone in front of two different students' faces and I said, what's the initial of their first name? And out comes the initial, the same initial that every other student in the school knew. We all knew it.

It was obvious. They're being commissioned and it's our job to serve that commission, to say, what can we do to help? So we were talking about financially serving them however we need to as the body of Christ,

whether they're called to the prayer closet or they're called to the field. So on Wednesday, when, you know, that's my day, my 21st anniversary with Jesus, I have an important meeting set up with one of our students because something very significant was happening in his life and so we met and he said, God has spoken to me that this is the day.

He knew nothing about the fact that, well, that terminology means a lot to me. This is the day. I could have told that right back to him.

No, I knew that. This is the day. But what he meant is this is the day that he has separated out from everyone else to go into the prayer closet, as he said, to go onto the stage.

He knows what that means. I know what that means. The students here at Ellerslie know what that means and it means serious business.

There is nothing harder than being separated out to go into a position of prayer for an indefinite period of time. So are you gonna be fasting in this indefinite period? I feel like God says that I should be eating oatmeal. This guy is separated out eating oatmeal for an undefined period of time to pray for what is happening here in our midst.

He's praying for you. He's praying that your ears will be uncorked, that there'll be a stirring within our body, not just here, but in the earth. He's being moved to his knees because he knows that unless there's a man under the stage, nothing on top of the stage, invisible for the world around is going to happen.

Deeply stirring that a man would do that in our midst that we know and love. I think it was the next day, Sandy and one of our students, who's a girl, are in my office and she says, and by the way, these are the two, well, I guess we did mention them on Monday after we got the first letters of their names out in the open. She came in with Sandy and said that she feels called unto prayer, basically under the stage.

And it wasn't much of a surprise for me. God had just prepared us for this. What it looks like for her, I don't know.

That's what she's praying about right now. But God is stirring within us. He's driving people into this position to spend their life in prayer.

It seems like a waste of a life, doesn't it? Can you think of how much value is this really creating? Are you contributing to the common good? Humanism would say, what are you producing for society? Someone in a room locked in, praying? Well, if you don't believe in God, first of all, it sounds like a huge waste, a colossal waste of a life. But if you do believe in God, then you still have to say, well, God's gonna do what he does anyway. Why does someone need to waste their life in prayer? Trying to accomplish what he's gonna do anyway.

And I would say, God isn't gonna do it anyway. God gets his work done by moving people into the prayer closet. That is how he gets what he gets done.

So if he doesn't move men and women into the prayer closet, we have a dark age in our world. And it has happened, by the way. Dear God, move us into the prayer closet so that the work of God on the surface of this earth would begin to progress.

This is J. Oswald Smith. We refuse to so strive and should not be surprised the lack of God's mighty stirrings. One way that you could say this first line is we refuse to go into the prayer closet and to wrestle for the things of God.

And should not be surprised the lack of God's mighty stirrings. Is it not amazing that we have no problem with people wearing themselves out in sports for pleasure, work for money, politics for power, and programs for charity, but think it fanatical to so pray for souls. We would die for national freedom, but never for progress in the kingdom of God.

Is it any wonder that we see so little of God's great working? Nash would pray until he had to go to bed absolutely sick for weakness and faintness under the pressure. The world would have no problem with such dedication except that it was due to prayer for souls. Why should it be such a strange thing to the church? You know how Nash died? He was young.

I think he was in his 50s. He died on his knees. He expired praying.

You know how John Prane Hyde died? He was a man who gave himself in the prayer closet under the stage for India. The anxiety and the burden of God upon his soul was so intense. Remember Jesus in Gethsemane? Jesus exerted himself in prayer in Gethsemane to the point of shedding blood, which anyone who is a doctor would tell you if you are sweating blood, you are about to die.

He was dying, carrying the sin of the world, the burden of God, the Father. John Hyde literally prayed so intensely that his heart moved from one side of his ribcage to the other. He was brought into the doctor by one of his friends.

And the doctor said, whatever you're doing, sir, you need to stop doing it. Otherwise, you're going to die. And John Hyde refused.

This is why I'm here. And if I can die as a praying man, I die well. Sending off our first missionary.

I know it may not seem like we sent off our first missionary from Ellerslie. You're like, where'd they go? Could they give us some weekly updates? He went into room 213. Our first missionary went out with quite a hullabaloo, by the way.

We had a gift basket for him to take in with some hygienic products to make sure that he didn't stink up room 213 too much. We gave him notes from all the students that he could read when he was in there to cheer him on in what his calling is. It's a strange sort of missionary send off.

I realize that. Whenever anyone leaves the campus here, one of the students, whether it's to go home or anywhere else, there's always a big gathering of students and they, I don't know, you guys form the tunnel and the car goes under the tunnel. Well, we did that, I think, down the hall in Ellerslie too.

It was a big deal and everyone was cheering and then he went into a room. Closed the door. It was the first missionary send off at Ellerslie and I think it's appropriate.

It wasn't to North Korea. It was to room 213. Because the missionary that goes to North Korea, you know what he needs? You know how he's gonna get across that line? You know how the eyes of the North Korean guards are gonna be blinded? You know how all this is gonna happen? It's because there's someone under the stage praying him through.

So if we don't get the room 213's filled with praying men and women, then North Korea can't see the light. Because the way that those missionaries are raised up and pushed across the borders, the way that they are sustained in hostile territory is because of supernatural fuel. That is being gained on the knees of the praying saints of God.

Going under the stage. It's not a comfortable place. Nash would oftentimes arrive in town two to three weeks before Finney would arrive.

Two to three weeks and he would pray and he would pray and he would pray and he would pray and then when Finney was speaking, he would pray and he would pray and he would pray. And you know that every time the power of God moved in such a mighty way. It's extraordinary.

The stories that come out of it, what was happening above ground are inexplicable, which is why he had such enemies. It was inexplicable. No one could explain it.

No one could describe it. What is this? Finney, I mean he speaks loud and he speaks with thunder but there wasn't anything that special. He's just a preacher.

What's going on here? Finney was a preacher who knew how preaching would reach truly the hearts and minds of his listeners. And it wasn't just through preaching. It was through the praying that undergirded it.

The best known revival of this period in American history was that which occurred in Rochester, New York. Over 100,000 were considered to have been soundly converted during those meetings. You know, that was almost the entire city, bar none in Rochester, New York at the time.

Entire city of 100,000 people. You know that America was dark at that time too? They were living in their sin and their selfishness. Could you imagine? It's like all of Greeley, Windsor, you know, that whole area.

Totally converted and radical for Jesus Christ. Over 100,000 were considered to have been soundly converted during those meetings. Nash and Clary teamed up for the praying with the assistance of others.

These two men were so similar in their praying that one is often described to explain the other. Such fervent praying and agony of soul brought sights that may seem strange to our eyes today. Our gentle prayers accomplished so little, but then they cost us so little.

Finney said, I have never known a person's sweat blood, but I have known a person pray till the blood started from his nose. And I have known persons pray till they were all wet with perspiration in the coldest weather in winter. I have known persons pray for hours till their strength was all exhausted with the agony of their minds.

Such prayers prevailed with God. This agony and prayer was prevalent in Jonathan Edwards' day, in the revivals which then took place. During the Rochester meetings, there are several accounts of these two men in deep agony of soul while praying day and night.

Some accounts named Nash, some Clary, others both. It seems they were there together and fasting and prayer much of the time, weeping and crying out to God. Sometimes they lay prostrate without strength to stand up.

Their concern over sinners being lost brought great stress to their minds and souls. They groaned under the load. They risked health and gave up comforts that the battle of the heavenlies might be won.

Sometimes they would writhe and groan in agony over souls. God honored their burden bearing and sent revival. Privately they prayed and publicly God answered.

Practically everyone in the city was converted. The only theater in the city was converted into a livery stable. The only circus into a soap and candle factory.

And the grog shops, the bars and taverns were closed. Have you seen that? Should you expect that? How does one get that? Most of us don't believe that it's possible for American culture to actually be turned upside down. Could you imagine the owner of the Budweiser event center gives it completely over to the purposes of the revival? Cancels all other meetings, all other shows and circus acts and says, we have more important labor here on planet earth.

Use it for your glory. The Pepsi center, the guy gets converted. He says, I give it to you.

Use it for your meetings to see all Denver saved for Jesus Christ. Is it possible? Because if it isn't, we might as well throw our hands up in the air now. What are we doing? Which is why most of us live our little comfortable lives secluded because we don't believe God has any intention to move upon this world anymore.

He gave America our chance. He's had what? Two great awakenings in our country and now we're in a slumber again. Do we deserve another awakening? I don't think we do.

We didn't deserve the first one. It's not because of what we deserve. It's because God is long suffering and he's merciful and he longs for his people to be gains.

He has a longing for the reward of his suffering and he wants to see his people come into the fold that are still lost in this world. But which of us is willing to first of all, believe it and then allow our lives to be spent in the gaining of it. Room 213, the unstoppable power of a praying church.

I don't want to romp from my message next week, which is like part two of this. That's 10 times better than this message. Oh, it's good.

I am like bursting at the seams with excitement to get to that message. I'm really struggling right now to harness my tongue. But I do give a little hint of it here.

The unstoppable power of a praying church. Let me give you the illustration that starts this. You know, Ben and I, Ben Zorns and I just got back from Indonesia and Indonesia is 95% Muslim.

It doesn't mean it's 5% Christian. It's just 95% Muslim. It's also the fourth most populated country in the world.

280 some million people in that country. So that's a lot of Islam. And so my thought was this, you know, it's easier to think of God gaining America than it is Indonesia.

And it's also a lot more comfortable to think of God gaining America than Indonesia. So this was my thought process. I was thinking, God, what if we were to have men and women go under the stage for Indonesia? And what if we went after that country? It's just a thought, okay? Now, my first glimmer of a concern came in when I began to think, wait a minute.

It's not just 95% heathen. It's 95% Muslim. And we as Americans know well enough that if we could just leave the Muslims alone, it's like a hornet's nest.

You don't wanna just go in and poke a stick in there. So you don't go after one of their strongholds. 260 million Muslims? Do you think Islam worldwide is gonna sit by and just take it sitting down? If they see us going after their country, then they're gonna hit us from every side.

We don't want that. Go back into your shell, Christians. Wait a minute.

Greater is he that is in us, the church, than anything, any power, any force in this earth. The power of a praying church is that it is unstoppable. There is no force in earth and hell that can stop its forward progression.

Do you believe the Bible? Because that's what it promises. We've just never seen it. But what we also haven't seen is men and women called onto the stage.

We are not a praying church. We're a church that esteems prayer. And there's a huge difference between the two.

We are not a church that fills gaps with our lives and bodies. We are a church that esteems people that would. We praise the martyrs of past generations.

We're not willing to be them in this generation. And there's a huge distinction between the two of those. Are we willing to remove that difference and say, no, we're willing to be the ones.

Get us down on our knees, God. Lock us into room 213 if you must. Do what you must to gain for yourself the glory and your bride.

That's the commission. The man under the stage. He's not the one that is known.

He's not the one that is recognized. His reputation may not spread abroad. But we're not about our reputations.

We're about the reputation of Jesus Christ. So one of the greatest tests for your Christianity is to say, am I willing to go under the stage? Am I willing to never come out from under the stage? Am I willing to spend my life under the stage? That's the question. Because that's the Christian question.

That's the gospel for you right there. Who's on top of the stage? It's supposed to be Jesus. It's supposed to be all about him.

And at any point when we eclipse the person of Jesus and suddenly everyone is noticing, either the guy speaking or the guy singing, we are standing in the way of the entire purpose of the kingdom of heaven. We don't have a lot of other ways other than getting up and preaching. And when you preach, there's usually a body and a mouth and eyes and nose.

There's a name. But that person must hold it very lightly because he is standing on holy ground. And how dare he block the sun from shining? This is about Jesus.

It always has been, and it always must be. I know in America, it's about us. But that's why we're wrong.

God has never changed his message. It has always only been about him. So let's make sure in our life that we allow him to prove us.

Are you willing to say, here I am, send me.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22105.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/5UoAZWluLWA.mp4>

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