

The Necessity of Prayer

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the critical necessity of prayer in the life of believers and its vital role in world missions and spiritual growth.

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Scripture: Matthew 9:35

Topics: "Prayer", "The Power of Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

George Verwer emphasizes the critical importance of prayer in the life of a believer and the church, sharing his own struggles and experiences with prayer. He highlights that prayer is not just a routine but a vital connection to God that fuels spiritual growth and mission work. Verwer urges the audience to prioritize prayer, referencing the power of intercession and the need for a vibrant prayer life to combat spiritual apathy. He recounts stories of how prayer has transformed lives and ministries, stressing that true revival and effective evangelism stem from a deep commitment to prayer. Ultimately, he calls for a renewed dedication to prayer as the foundation for all Christian endeavors.

Transcript

It really is a challenge and a privilege to be able to share with you and you may wonder what this man with the video camera is doing, but we hope that some other people, especially on our ships, one of which is on the way to Japan and the other should arrive tomorrow in Barbados after crossing the Atlantic, will be able to also get in on your conference through this video cassette. I come to you in much weakness and fear and trembling. I don't spend most of my time speaking at huge meetings and in many ways my greatest need is still to just learn all of these things that we read about in some of these books and that we hear about in conferences like this, to learn more of it in my own life.

And so it's with some hesitancy that I ever came across, but many people are praying and many thousands of our friends and prayer partners are praying and I'm just trusting that God will hear their prayers. I feel there are many, many other people that could make better use of this hour, perhaps, than myself, but God has his strange ways of working. I think one of the blessings I have is to just introduce books.

That's really one of my gifts, just to introduce books. If I had to choose between introducing books and preaching, I would introduce books. Let someone else preach.

We've had the joy of distributing books like *Born Crucified* for the last twenty-some years all over the world, and we just got another thousand copies of *Total Warfare*, and if you haven't read that book, then you'd better bust into the bookshop tonight and get a copy. But God has been using these writings in such a marvelous way, and this evening I wanted to emphasize to you the writings of four authors that some of you may not be familiar with. Those of you who are well-read, and I was in one man's office today, Mr. Rendell, and it looked like I was going to come under an avalanche of books.

But for those of you who are not well-read, you may not know about these particular books. First of all, I'd like to mention the writings of Oswald Sanders. He was the leader of OMF for many years.

I met him in Singapore, and this is his book, *Spiritual Leadership*. If you come on OM and go through one of our leadership training courses, this is required reading. And I believe it's the best book that Moody Press publishes, *Spiritual Leadership* by Oswald Sanders.

There's a real lack of leadership training today, and I feel this is a book that should be widely read. One of our burdens right now, and we've just written to Oswald Sanders about this, is to put this book into at least fifty languages in the next five or ten years. That's actually impossible, but we don't want to die of low aim, so you can pray with us that this book could get into more languages.

And then the writings of A. W. Tozer, this Pennsylvania long, drawn-out speaker who eventually took Canada by storm. And this is a new book, fifty-two favorite chapters out of the twenty-two other books of A. W. Tozer. Some of the strongest spiritual material I have ever read, I've read in his books.

And I just believe he was a man that was never recognized until he was dead. He walked on people, he acknowledged that he was far from perfect, that his own strong temperament got sometimes into some of the things he said. But this is a message for the Church today.

And there's a number of books in the bookshop, all these books are in the bookshop, by A. W. Tozer. Karl Barth, who was hardly an evangelical Christian, sort of the founder of neo-orthodoxy, had great respect for a man way on the other side of the theological fence, a great evangelical leader in Britain, named Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. And he said Lloyd-Jones was the greatest living preacher in the world today.

That's interesting from the enemy camp. And I believe that this is probably true. We had Dr. Lloyd-Jones on our ship in London about a year and a half ago.

He spoke on spiritual balance. And I believe his book, *Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure*, though you may not agree with every point, is probably the greatest Christian book in the English language in fifty years. I don't say that lightly.

I've read a few books, a few hundreds, and I commend this as the great classic of Christian literature in the past fifty years. There are a few others. He's not known in this country so much because he's British.

He doesn't travel much. He's moving on in years now. And I just commend that book to you on spiritual depression.

It's a very strong medicine. The title, I'm not sure, is fitting, but there are quite a few of you, when you finish reading it, you will be depressed. Then you'll have to grab Tim LaHaye's book, *Victory Over Depression*.

And then another writer, William MacDonald. He was the president of Emmaus Bible School and some students on OM, before it was known as OM, went from his school down to Mexico, came back, and these students, their lives so shook him as a principal that he wrote this book, dedicated to the students. This book is now in forty languages.

It's gone over a million, two million copies, and has upset more people than most books. William MacDonald, a bachelor, a man whose life I know, and I can tell you he lives this life. He's written fifty other books as well.

This is his strongest, true discipleship, by William MacDonald. So there are four authors, Tozer, Lloyd-Jones, Oswald Saunders, and William MacDonald, that I especially want to commend to you. Now this pulpit isn't the best for book-pushing, but I think I'm okay.

No, that's all right, you leave, that's all right. They wanted to get the first copies because they're afraid they're going to sell out. I just want to mention two other items.

One is Operation World. If you went to Urbana, where seventeen thousand students were gathered a month or two ago, you know this was the book of the day. When this book was first published, it died.

It did not sell. People were sending back their copies. God put it on our heart to try again.

We put a new cover on it, and we're just going to press with another fifty thousand copies of this book that would not sell. And I think it's indicative of the increased interest there is in world missions. I didn't say increase of obedience, that's a step that's a little more difficult.

There is a great interest in world missions, and this is one of the outstanding books. Patrick Johnson, the author of this book, just spent a year on Operation Mobilization. He's actually a Iraq missionary, now the research secretary for WECC, one of the great mission societies, World Evangelization Crusade, started by a fool for Christ known as C.T. Studd.

And in this book, you'll have two hundred and sixty-six pages of information, maps, prayer requests, just valuable material. A section on the communist world alone is worth more than the price of the book. I think they sold four thousand just like that at Urbana.

And I'm trusting that this is going to be, again, one of the great books of this conference. And I would like the joy of presenting a copy of this to our brother Maxwell. He was sitting in my high school meeting in the front row, cheering, had just about turned all eight of my batteries on.

I wonder if I could present this copy to you. Amen. I'm sure he probably already has one and has it memorized.

But anyway, that was a... You know, it's a great privilege to be in a conference together like this. I've just come from about eleven different countries in the last seven weeks. One of them was China, communist China.

And I was only there a very short time, but Peter Conlon, who was speaking here to the students some weeks ago, went into China with the possibility of lining up things for the ship to visit China, which is a possibility that we don't want put into print. And he had the opportunity of being the first foreigner to interview Wang Mingdao, the great Chinese pastor, a name that will not mean much to some of you, but to

any of you who know China, his name is probably more known than Watchman Nee. He's just finished twenty-three years in prison.

He's almost completely deaf. He's suffered more than we can know. And when Peter asked him if there was one message that he wanted to share with the people in the church in the West, he shared this one message, stand firm.

Stand firm. What a challenge the church in China is to all of us here in the Western world. You know, in one area of China, they report that there's over two thousand house groups.

Some of those house groups worshipping the Lord Jesus don't have a single Bible. There are probably two, four million believers yet in China. Not many when you think of the population.

And I believe that the opening of China, not to official missionary work, but to the Bible to some degree, opening the churches, allowing more freedom, overthrowing the gang of four, is certainly one of the greatest answers to prayer in the providence of God in history. And I think it would be worth coming here, somewhat almost direct from China, that was the last stop that direction and this is the last stop this direction, to request of you to pray for China. And I hope that in the prayer meeting at 7.30, which I consider the most important meeting in all of this conference, that we can really be praying for the land of China.

Of course, it's such a significant challenge. There's so much I could tell you about that. Sometimes in a large meeting with people who may be writing up for the Gospel Gazette and whatever else, I'm a little bit hesitant to say too much.

So my heart is full. I was then in India, the land of my first love. My wife and I, family spent five years in India, most of the year or half the year, until we couldn't get any more visas.

And I'll be very honest that this was the thing that's tipped the scale in my coming here to Canada, the fact that you are Commonwealth and that you can go into India without a visa. And I just believe with all my heart that God wants to thrust Canadians out to the land of India. And if you think that is a closed door to missions, you have just played into the hand of the devil because India is probably one of the most wide open nations in the world today.

We have had unlimited freedom in India. For 14 years, we have 350 workers there. We have reached 150 million Indians face to face with the Word of God.

And there's just so much freedom that you almost go out of your mind thinking about it, especially for Canadians. Not so easy for Americans, though I'm an immigrant to Britain, I still tote an American passport. Not so easy for people from other countries, though they go as well.

Six months India, six months Pakistan, six months India, three months Nepal, three months Bangladesh, six months India, two months Ceylon, six months India, and it goes on. You can be out there at least four or five years, then you'll be so tired you'll want to come home anyway. So my heart is very, very full.

And you're going to have to pray. I've never heard of such an early lights out statistic anywhere I've ever spoken. In OM conferences, I don't even finish preaching until 10 o'clock.

We're going to get the lights out. You turn it out when I'm preaching, I've just been told. I don't have any notes, so that's no problem whatsoever.

But I remember when I was in Germany, I was speaking about an hour and a half, and in Germany they believe in this punctuality business. And the young people were really feeding on the message, but some of the older people, I guess, were getting nervous. Maybe they were afraid they'd miss the evening news or something.

But someone in the back row was really getting upset, and so he took his watch, or I think he borrowed it from the man next to him, and he was holding his watch up, trying to get my attention. And I was just pouring my heart out about world missions and true discipleship, forsaking all. And I saw this watch, and I said, Oh, hallelujah, here's a man already giving his wristwatch for world evangelism.

So I don't know what methods you use for communication here in Canada, but you may want to be careful. But this is the privilege of being able to speak more than one evening. I can save some of the burden for other evenings.

Well, let's just unite in prayer so I don't go too astray, and we can get God's focus and get into his Word. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank you that in your providence you have brought us together tonight.

And I don't understand your way of working and bringing me here across from England. But Lord, your ways are past finding out. You have something to say to us about China, about India.

More than that, about yourself, about this great spiritual warfare into which we have been called. We thank you for all you've done through this great Institute over the years. We thank you for so many hundreds that have gone out to the harvest fields, and we would just pray, O God, do it again.

Do it again, O Lord. We don't want to live on past tradition, but we yearn to see a mighty fresh new move of your Holy Spirit in our hearts and in our lives. We give you the praise and the glory for the great work of world evangelism, that at least half the people in the world today have heard the gospel in some way or form.

And we do come with hearts of praise and adoration and thanksgiving. And yet, Lord, we come humbled and we come broken, knowing there is so much yet to do, realizing the unbelievable population explosion that takes place all around us. And pray that, O God, you would grip our hearts, that our minds may be penetrated by your word and by the facts of that which is actually happening in the world today.

Give us spiritual sensitivity. Deliver us from any biases and prejudices, and that includes me, that truly we may obey you tonight. For we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. I want you to turn with me in your Bible to Matthew chapter 9. I feel that the Spirit of God very much led our brother Workantine from Indonesia to share what he shared. And as I heard him, and as I know just a little of his life and work, I thought that really I should be giving the book reviews and he should be speaking.

But we're all one, and we come here ministering very much as a team. And he's going to speak very strongly to you through some speakers and not so much through others. Some of you may be turned off by me.

That's fine. I'm sure God can turn you back on, as long as you don't get bitter. But it's wonderful, and we've seen this in our work, how God ministers through different people in different ways.

And I hope we'll understand this and just trust God to work and, of course, to give him all the glory. Matthew chapter 9. I want to start reading at verse 35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they were faint and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

This same text is more or less repeated in Luke chapter 10. And I feel that we have here a very important and significant passage of Scripture that needs to be studied and needs to be obeyed. I realize that many of you have had so much Bible teaching, excellent Bible teaching, and students, of course, are spending whole days studying the Word of God.

When I think of some of the men and women who come to share and minister here, I very much fear that in some ways there is very little that I can add to what you have already heard or read when I think of the books that are available to you. And in some ways I come, especially this evening, just as a feeble testimony that these truths which are taught here month after month, they work. It's reality.

It's truth, truth, as our dear friend Dr. Schaefer says. God answers prayer. Of course, we don't prove our belief in this doctrine by our lips.

We prove it by what we do at 730 tomorrow morning. And one of my greatest concerns today for North America is the prayer life of the Church. And as hard as you may try here at Prairie, and as hard as we may try in Operation Mobilization, there are now 1,400 of us full-time on two ships and in about 35 nations.

As hard as we may try, we will not be able to move much further than the Church is moving through the ministry of prayer. The Bible says as one member suffers, we all suffer. Some of you may have read an article I wrote, which miraculously was printed in Moody Monthly because I'm not a writer, called, What Happened to the Prayer Meeting? And after surveying and investigating many, many different Church situations, I found out that the prayer meeting is in many even Bible-believing churches disappearing.

Or it's down to a very minimum attendance, and often it's an incredibly cold stereotype meeting, which especially frightens away the young people. And one of my greatest burdens as I come to you this evening is for the prayer life of the Church. And I hope that in the meeting in the morning, and I'm not saying everybody has to be there and no one can be excused.

Maybe that's your hour for intercession. It usually is my hour for private intercession. I generally never let anything into 730 hour.

630 to 830 has been blocked out of my life for almost 25 years since my conversion, moving one way or the other to some degree. But I just feel that if somehow the Lord has led you to put the prayer meeting at 730 in the morning, that that's where God wants it and that's where God wants me. And I'll adjust my jogging and my waking up and the rest somehow.

And I feel it's better to do away with your breakfast than miss prayer. No one's gonna die in this overstuffed continent. Billy Graham said, this is one of the great sins of America, gluttony.

We all eat too much. Alan Redpath, speaking at Moody Church when I was a student at Moody Bible Institute, cut us to quick when he said, oh we don't fast much anymore, do we? Because not many of us are hungry for God. Job said he'd rather pass by his food and have his word, his time in the Word.

It's so easy to talk about prayer. We have over 50 books on the subject of prayer and new ones are being written almost every other month. We have seminars on prayer.

One I heard about recently, they do everything but pray. But when it comes down to hours of agonizing, prevailing prayer that we read about in the book of Acts, that we see in the life of Jesus Christ, that it was embodied in every man of God who ever walked the earth, we don't seem to know much about it. And if you graduate from prairie with all the Bible knowledge in the world and all your little doctrines neatly tucked under your arm and you're not a man of prayer, you're going to go a little distance in the work of God.

I don't find too many Christian colleges offering a PhD in intercession. I feel so strongly about this and I don't want to come on too strong and frighten some of you more sensitive types. I was told when I first came to Canada to take it easy.

They're very conservative and tender plants there. You don't want to come with your big American loud mouth. The English have been trying to quiet me down for 18 years.

Some of them are going out of their minds just thinking about it. But really I do want to be very somewhat low profile in this first evening. I told Bert this was my strategy.

I usually lose it somewhere in the midst of the book reviews, but my heart is so burdened that we would understand this principle Samuel Chadwick, that great soul winner, that spirit anointed man said this is the one strategy of Satan. It's to get your prayer life. Why is it that so many revivals sort of tail off after a year or two? Because the people learn something of praise, something of confession, something of putting things right, but they don't learn how to intercede.

They don't learn how to stand firm. The Bible says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty unto God to the pulling down of strongholds. This is not some game.

This is not some evangelical emotional delicacy that we sort of engage in like having some kind of evening snack. It's war, total warfare, and it begins upon our knees. And it will begin in this conference upon our knees tonight and in our private prayer tomorrow at 530.

And we've learned when there's a tight schedule that you can't get up at 630. You're joking. Wish you could come with some of our Indian brothers.

They believe in going to bed early. They fit well in here. They believe in going to bed at 10 o'clock.

And they're up at 430 on their knees, sometimes two hours, so that they can get the day in its right perspective. Oh may God quicken us during these days together for fervent prayer because it's the only hope for world missions. It's not quantity that's going to make the difference.

It's quality. In a sense, of course, we want both. Maybe I could just, in way of illustration, tell you about how our own feeble work, one of God's feeblest works, Operation Mobilization, got into orbit.

It was just one praying lady. One praying lady. It wasn't me.

I was an unsaved renegade, so rebellious in my high school the teachers blacklisted me. And that praying lady had been praying for that school for 15 years. Not only that people would be saved, but they would go from that school all over the world.

She had that text well memorized. Saved and sent, that was her motto. A woman of tremendous missionary vision, though an unknown woman to this day.

The kind of unknown woman we need in the church. And then I went to the school and somehow she heard about my bad reputation and so she started to pray for me and she prayed for me for three years. She sent me a gospel of Saint John through the mail, through the post.

That was used to soften my heart. And then I was converted to Jesus Christ March 5th, 25 years ago, Madison Square Garden, through one feeble sloppy sermon by Billy Graham. God's mercy.

We hear, oh, you know, people aren't saved through this mass evangelism. Well, I'll tell you, all over the world I have met people saved through mass evangelism. Maybe there's some critics of Billy Graham here.

That doesn't matter. If your God is big, whatever you think of Billy Graham, if your God is big, and I hope you don't have a small God, then he can work even if the evangelist isn't in agreement with all of your teaching, all of your burden, or whatever has concerned you. You know, the Lord brought a thought to me last week.

I, and I said, Lord, I think you want me to share that. And it was simply this, that if we have strong convictions, and those strong convictions, and I have too many of them, almost drove my wife completely crazy. If you have strong convictions and they're not mixed with love and patience, it will turn to bitterness.

And I fear that many a fundamentalist in North America is in that state. Convictions, but not enough love, not enough compassion, not enough patience, and so it turns to bitterness. And wherever I go, and in the articles I often read, I find bitterness even among a people of God.

Anyway, that's a message perhaps for another time. But God saved me that night, and I went back to that high school, and we started prayer meetings. We learned a little bit from this lady, and we started prayer meetings.

And before God was done, 200 students in that school, in a year and a half, surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ. That was the birthplace of what today is known as Operation Mobilization. Within a year and a half, three of us were in Mexico.

I then left college and went to Moody Bible Institute for two years, and within two years was in Spain. It spread from Spain throughout Europe. Within the next year, through the Middle East, on out to India, and there's not time to tell the story.

But 23,000 young people have been trained through this feeble work of OM. They are now serving Christ with almost every mission society in the world, in almost every single nation in the world. And they're now

still, though most people move on after one or two years, the Lord still left us with a permanent army of 1,400 people this year to continue in world evangelism.

The main target is the Muslim world, where miraculously, in answer to that woman's prayers and the prayers of many others, we now have an army of 150 strong. In India, there's 350. And God has given us the privilege of not just reaching some 250 million people with God's Word, but to see many living churches planted.

In France alone, 14 new churches. In Spain, in Italy, even in some of the Muslim lands, the beginning stages of new churches have been born. All can be traced back to one praying lady.

I want to ask you, are you a woman of prayer? You may feel I'm not very gifted. You may feel, well, the Lord seemingly hasn't used me much. Are you a woman of prayer? Are you a man of prayer? And I share this in some ways, fearing it may be misunderstood.

But I think I have a few hundred people who have lived with me for 15, 20 years. Some of those of us who were linked together 23 years ago are still together. And I don't think people would stick together if there wasn't some degree of reality.

But I just would not speak on this subject if this was not real in my life. And in my life, there's nothing harder than prayer. I'm an activist.

When I read that verse in the Old Testament, be still and know that I am God, I thought, Lord, this is the end. There's no hope for me. I don't think I've been still since I came out.

And my mother used to tell me long before I was saved, none of my parents were believers. But she said, son, you've got a big mouth. And it's true.

I had one compliment about my mouth. I haven't had many. I was at the dentist the other day, was working on a back, one of my back teeth.

And he said, wow, there's lots of room in here. But I believe, even though prayer may be the hardest thing for your temperament, even though you may find an enormous struggle to be in prayer, I believe it is God's will for every believer to become a man, a woman of prayer. This is not a ministry for super saints.

Hallisbee, in his tremendous book on prayer, said prayer is work. Prayer is work. Intercession, especially, is work.

Taking a book like Operation World and praying through those requests, allowing the burden of China to become your burden, allowing the burden of India to become your burden, and to be involved in the ministry of intercessory prayer. And I believe it's the will of God that each one of us who knows Christ recommit our hearts and our lives in this area of prayer at this conference. The harder it is, the greater the victory.

Tozer was quoting some old mystic who explained something along the lines that if your mind keeps wandering away in prayer, and I'm sure I'm the president of the International Mind Wanderers Club, but as your mind keeps wandering in prayer, bring it back. For each time you bring it back, it is an act of faith and worship to the living God. Another thing that Tozer quoted from one of the old mystics is that God knows all about you and He loves you still.

And you don't come into prayer under some legalistic club. You come into prayer because of grace, because of mercy, because of the shed blood, because of the righteous robes of the Lord Jesus Christ. The devil is the accuser of the brethren.

For any of you in women's lib, he's accuser of the sisters as well. He's always saying we're not good enough to pray. He's always telling us we're no good.

Our prayers are not effective. Let some other great saint pray. We're waiting for the great saints to lead the way.

When will we realize that even great institutions like this are not great fraternities for super saints, but are hospitals for sinners? And the sooner we in our Bible schools and in our churches realize that, I think the further we'll go in reality and spiritual power. You don't go to the prayer meeting because you feel like it. You know why I don't have a television in my home? Because I haven't got enough discipline yet.

Maybe I'll become more mature in the coming days. My children are praying for it. I like television programs.

I think the bionic man is great. I mean, I could use a hundred on every team. And a bionic woman, I mean, she's new.

I mean, I don't even understand, you know, her, what's with her yet. And so oftentimes when it comes to God's work, good is the enemy of the best. Most of the evangelicals down in the USA that have their televisions, they always tell me, because they know me, soon as I step in the house, that they have it there for the sports.

Yeah. I think sports can be more of an enemy than, than, than, than soap or some other way out program. The good is often the enemy of the best.

If you're missing a prayer meeting to watch Joe Blow kick a ball through a couple of poles or something else, to me it makes no difference. The devil's got the victory. The good is the enemy of the best.

And we cannot allow the enemy to deceive us into missing the prayer meeting in our church, and to missing those times of intercession, and into missing our own personal prayer life, whatever the cost may be. You say, oh man, you're going to lay a guilt trip on me. That's how they say it down in the States.

I don't know if you know all the lingo up here, and probably a third of you are Americans. He's gonna lay a guilt trip on me, as if that's the worst thing. The worst thing is to feel guilty about anything.

We got about 100 books, how to be free of guilt. We should be guilty. We are guilty.

And I pray that God will put a guilt trip on me every time I sin. Not a trip in terms of an elongated thing, but conviction. And I thank the Lord I know what to do with it.

Repent, and claim his precious blood. Get up and go on. May we be convicted of our prayerlessness.

May we be convicted of our lack of conviction in the area of prayer, and getting involved in the prayer ministry of the church. George Duncan was speaking at the Keswick Convention in England to the ministers, the ministers. And he had to assume, because he's one of Britain's greatest saints, and he knows these men, he had to assume that many of the ministers had no prayer life.

No wonder we get puppets in our pulpits instead of prophets. And we think in our seminaries we can mass-produce spiritual men. And in our seminaries there is hardly any emphasis on prayer whatsoever.

And then we wonder why so many churches, despite all the glitter and all the glow, are dying from the inside out, and being invaded by impurity, and every other wild concoction of the devil that's ever been imagined. Do not think God is impressed with our statistics. Our God is obviously from Scripture a God of quality, and he yearns to see men not just waving some gospel banner on a weekend, but being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

And that cannot be done outside of the prayer closet. If we look into the life of Jesus, we see him praying. There's a whole new book on the prayer life of Jesus Christ.

I was writing the references down in the back of my Bible and filled a whole page. We find Jesus in Luke praying through the night, and we find the Apostles following in the steps of the Lord Jesus as we look through the book of Acts. I feel a somewhat neglected book in our day.

I often preach on the book of Acts. I was in a very large church preaching on Acts, and I said, let us turn to Acts chapter 29. Everybody's turning.

The pastor is turning. Very embarrassing. You all, of course, know there's only 28 chapters.

We are Acts chapter 29. It has not stopped. Or Acts 2029.

In Acts chapter 1, these all continue with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women in Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And then we find right through the whole book, the end of chapter 2, after that mighty Pentecost experience, we find the four pillars of the church outlined in verse 42. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.

In Acts 4, 31, the very people who had experienced Pentecost were in a prayer meeting again, and they had to be filled with the Spirit again. Verse 31, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. And the life of prayer is very, very much linked with reality and witness.

They come together. And right on through the book of Acts, we find this reality in prayer, and we find them in prayer and fasting, especially when they had to make some major decisions. And notice chapter 12.

We find the whole church gathered together in an extended prayer meeting, because verse 5, chapter 12 says, Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him. Prayer was made without ceasing. This wasn't some little five-minute prayer meeting.

It couldn't have been even a one-little-hour prayer meeting. They were prevailing and persevering in prayer, so that after Peter was miraculously delivered and went all the way across town, he came to the prayer meeting in verse 12, where many were gathered together praying. This is God's strategy.

Valens said the church looks for better machinery. God looks for better men. In America, we've tried every gimmick, every Hollywood method, every Madison Avenue pipsqueak idea to advance the church of Jesus Christ.

Only one weapon is left that we have not really tried, and that's prayer. And I yearn that somehow we would see this. I yearn that I myself would know it in a greater degree.

As a natural backslider, I need constant exhortation, and there's seldom a time in my life when I'm not in the middle of reading at least one book on prayer, or the life of some great man about prayer. And one of the reasons I've introduced books to you tonight is because books have been such a significant, unbelievably important part of my own spiritual pilgrimage. Prayer.

Mr. Vendurin, in his little book, which some of you know, said, prayer, the Christian's vital breath. How is your prayer life? What about it? Young person? Older person? When's the last time you shed a tear for lost souls? We see Jesus in Matthew 9 going from town to town, from village to village. I'd love to talk more about that, and we may get to it in another evening, but to me it's so beautiful because it shows that Jesus was a man of action.

Why did He go from town to town and village to village? The next verse gives the answer, because He was moved with compassion. I'm not a compassionate person in myself, but something happened to me 25 years ago. The night I was converted, the Holy Spirit came into me.

And if you are a believer, the Holy Spirit is in you. You may be grieving Him, you may be quenching Him, you may be neglecting Him, but He is in you. And oh, if we only would know more of the cross and the Lordship of Christ, that in turn would release that power and that greatness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I know you can say it other ways. There are many ways to express these things. Colossians says, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, and then gives the same description that we read in Ephesians chapter 5, after we read, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Different books in the Bible explain it in different ways. Billy Graham puts it this way. I don't care how you get it, just get it.

The reality, the compassion, the fruit, the power, this is the will of God for every Christian. I want to share with you something that again is a risk. But you know, so often in our churches, we we invite someone in to give a backsliders testimony.

And so many people have backsliders testimonies. They came to Christ, they drifted away, they grew cold, and then somehow the Lord touched their hearts, and they came back, and they're plowing on, and we get them to give their testimony. Praise the Lord! I am 100% in favor of that, so don't misunderstand me.

But I think when we hear so many backsliders testimonies, we get the idea that backsliding is sort of the normal Christian life. That if you're going to be a Christian, that somewhere along the road you've got to backslide. Otherwise you won't have a backsliders testimony.

And I just believe with all my heart, and if you set your heart to it, you get your life and your heart in the right place, you never have to backslide. I was saved March 5th, 1955. I've walked every single day these 25 years, one month, and four days.

That is no boast. I have sinned at times, but I know what to do when I sin. I have failed, I could fill an encyclopedia.

But I know all that I have in Jesus Christ. I read a little book many years ago called, uh, Calvary Road, and I read another little book called Born Crucified. No, I didn't understand it all when I was 19 and 20, whatever.

I knew that I had all that I needed in Jesus Christ and in His Holy Spirit to live every day and to walk every day with Him. That is the will of God, that is the normal Christian life, and I only say it to bring back into balance the other side. That, of course, Christians backslide and they have to come back to Christ.

I've had many minutes. I've had even a few hours over the years when I've walked in the flesh, and oh, I hate it. I don't like to give the devil even minutes.

That doesn't mean I'm always at the same level. That doesn't mean there's not discouragement and fear and doubt and struggle of every kind. But as one man of God once said, great faith is not made in the absence of doubt and fear and struggle.

It's made as we battle through. And this is why we have to know something of dying daily. This is why we have to know daily repentance and daily revival.

This is why we have a daily quiet time, that we may know His power on a day-by-day basis. It was Jesus who said, if any man come after me, let him deny self, take up the cross daily and follow me. And I'm going to be sharing in some of my other messages some of the struggles, some of the perplexities that I've had, and I think that will bring what I've just said, perhaps, into balance.

I'm so desirous of keeping things in balance, I've actually written a book on the subject which was mentioned this evening. It's the will of God for all of us to live every day, every hour, in His power and in His presence, the rest of our life. And when we believe it, and we move by faith, that's half, that's half the battle right there.

I wonder how many of us tonight would dare to tell the devil to get lost. He actually is lost, but it's good to remind him of his position. And the next time he comes in on you with one of his little soft-soaked, sugar-coated poison pill messages, you will know where you are standing.

And if you do fail, and you do sin, you will know that God's grace is for sinners. And you will confess your sin, and He will be faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness. 1 John chapter 2 is one of my favorite chapters, especially verse 1. Our first goal is to sin not.

Our second goal is, if we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. It's so basic, it's so simple, and yet so often, it's right at that point where we are deceived. And so we drift away from the Lord, and we grow cold, deceived by the evil one.

And so, of course, we're not going to be found in a prayer meeting. And if we are, well, you know how that is. This is why I believe that revival and spiritual revolution, spiritual reality, is so totally linked with world missions.

And you can't have one without the other. This is the will of God. Daily revival, daily reality in prayer, daily power and witness, daily strength against the subtle tactics of the enemy, which we will be looking at very carefully in one of our coming evenings when we speak of the enemies of world evangelism and spiritual reality.

Let us gather a company of His people at 7.30 tomorrow morning, not to listen to a man, because we are but men, but to seek the Lord Himself. Oh, when they fly in some great new American convert to London, some great Hollywood star that's just been born again, we hope, comes in and plays his guitar, they'll pack out the biggest auditorium in London. But if you have a prayer meeting with only the Father, Son, and the

Holy Ghost present, you can have it usually in the church vestry.

Oh, may God burn into our hearts a new set of priority or priorities in these days together, that we may seek the Lord. It was said that Tozer was often found in his study lying flat on his face, worshiping, crying out to God for hours. We're not all A.W. Tozers.

There's no sense pretending that we all have the same living God. Let us seek Him. Let us make God our goal at this conference.

As we do that, I believe He will honor our meeting together in a fresh and wonderful way.

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