

(Easter Convention 2008) Prayer in the New Testament - Part 1

by Gerhard Du Toit

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and intercession in the Christian life, and how the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and leads them to salvation.

Duration: 1:00:10

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-7, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:28

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of preaching and teaching the word of God. He shares that sometimes he feels physically sick when speaking to large crowds, but also when speaking to just a few people. He emphasizes that preaching challenges and breaks us, leading to a response, while teaching informs our minds and challenges our worldview. The speaker references Jesus' sermon on the mount, highlighting the significance of memorizing and living out its teachings. He also emphasizes the importance of accountability and making a commitment to spending regular time alone with God.

Transcript

I want to thank you again for being with us this morning and if you have your Bible with you, I would like you to open it with me at two passages in the New Testament, Matthew chapter 6 and Matthew chapter 5, and then also in Luke chapter 11. If you are a visitor here this morning, we have been making material available and so when you leave, at the end of the service, there is a table and there are some sheets of some of the things that we have shared in the last number of days since we have been together. And so we would appreciate if you would like to take some of those with you, and then you can go and use them in your quiet times at home.

Matthew chapter 5, then Matthew chapter 6, and then Luke chapter 11. Matthew chapter 5, reading from verse number 1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth, and he taught him, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the earth is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for the earth is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall set all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted are the prophets which were before you.

You are the salt of the earth, but if a salt hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is then so good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the foot of men. You are the light of the world. The city that is set on a hill cannot be heat.

Neither do you may light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Now chapter 6 of the Gospel of Matthew.

Chapter 6 and we will read from verse number 5. Jesus said, When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are taught. They love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you that they have received a reward.

Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them for your Father. Knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him. Now after this manner therefore pray ye.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come by will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you. Now, just quickly go over to Luke chapter 11 if you will.

Luke chapter 11 and reading from verse number 1. And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place when he sees that one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, now when you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in heaven as it is in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted unto us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And Jesus said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend? And he shall go unto him at midnight, and he will say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to say before him. And he from within will answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed.

I cannot rise and give it to thee. I say unto you that thou wilt not rise and give it to him, because he is his friend. And yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he need.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you. Seek, and it shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For everyone that asks, receive it. And to him that seeketh, find it. And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give unto him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will he for a fish give unto him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer to him a scorpion? If you then who are evil know how to give good tithes unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him? Let's just pray together. Father, we are so grateful this morning that ever since we started on Thursday evening and our free sessions on Friday, twice when we met yesterday, and right into this last day of this Little Easter Convention, it's been a sense that we have become conscious of the presence of God. We thank you for those great times of prayer.

Times when many of our hearts found themselves being broken in the presence of God. Father, we thank you that even during this very brief weekend where we have become so conscious of the fact that when it comes to the reality of Scripture that we have just scratched the surface and we have just touched the tip of the iceberg when it would come to the immensity of the teachings and the reality of the promises of God's Word. And just, Father, some of us, we have found ourselves being awakened in the middle of the night and found ourselves praying and have seen how God has been stirring our hearts and how the Spirit of God has been working in our relationships with you.

And I want to thank you for this Word that has been ringing in my heart, that you have said unto us in the New Testament that that which I do now, you will not be able to understand as such, but you will understand it hereafter. And Father, we are so thankful that when we sit under the exposition of your Word and when we allow the Spirit of God to take the Scriptures and confront us with the reality of the price, and when we submit to God's Word, is there this glorious possibility that it can become part of our relationships with you and that you can bring a change into our lives and that you can help us to cultivate a life in the ministry of intercessory prayer. Now, Father God, we have come to the last day and we have only these three sessions left before we bring this weekend to a close with a little gathering possibly tomorrow morning when we come together.

And yet we want to ask you that as we ponder upon your Word today, Father, we thank you for the Holy Spirit of God, who has never come to speak of himself or about himself, but his ministry predominantly has been to bring us back to the life of Christ and to bring us back to the Word of God. And I ask this morning that as we get into the reality of your Word, that somehow that the Spirit of God will be able to find a resting place in our relationships with you and that our hearts will become broken so that we will be able to submit ourselves to you. Lord, the greatest burden that has been prevailing upon the inadequacy of my own relationship with you is that during this weekend that you will set men and women aside and that you will set them apart unto yourself and that you will pour out upon them a spirit of prayer and that our lives in the days and the weeks and in the years to come that our lives will never ever be the same.

And I confess again this morning that Father, I am not able to do this and neither any pastor or preacher would be able to take a human life and a body and a soul and a spirit and make from them a man and a woman of intercessory prayer. And yet we know this Sunday morning that when the Spirit of God comes,

that suddenly we will be captured and we will be captivated and we will find ourselves in the midst of the revelation of the brokenness of God that will bring unto us an unquenchable desire and that will bring unto us a sensation of desperation, of a hunger and a thirst after God that will be able to change our lives for time and for eternity. And we say to you this morning again, our God and our Father, the only way that you're going to send revival to this country of Australia is when you're going to pour out upon your children a spirit of prayer that will let us climb underneath the burden of God, that will bring unto us the brokenness of spirit, that will sanctify us and set us apart unto yourself, and that will allow the Spirit of God to become precedent so that we will receive a spirit of prayer that will be able to lead us to the will of God in prayer so that it might be surrounded with the promises of God as it relates to prayer.

And so this is what we ask you this morning. Bless your word to us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

You know, it's fascinating when you and I will begin to study the New Testament and we come to what we would consider as the Gospel of Matthew, that you will discover that the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew spent the majority of His time in what we would consider as the region of Galilee. And the reason why we are saying that is because from Matthew chapter 4, right to the end of Matthew chapter 18, will you come across two very significant statements. And the first one is simply this, that Christ, or rather that Matthew chapter 4 said, after these things, the Lord Jesus departed into Galilee.

And then if you very systematically would go through the chapters of Matthew's Gospel, will you discover that right up to the end of the 18th chapter? Because in the beginning of the 19th chapter, Matthew made this observation, and this is what he said. He said, after these things, Jesus departed out of Galilee. So what we are looking at here is all those chapters, according to Matthew's Gospel, Christ spent within the realm of Galilee.

He went into Galilee in chapter 4, and He left Galilee in the beginning of the 19th chapter. Now, if that is possible for us this morning to say that was the dominating aspect of His ministry in Galilee, you and I need to ask ourselves, according to Matthew's Gospel, to what degree did Christ minister? And so when you would study that, you will come to the realization that there were three aspects of the ministry of Christ. There was the teachings of Christ from Matthew chapter 5 to chapter 7, then we would come across the miracles that Jesus did from Matthew chapter 8 to chapter 10, and from chapter 11 to chapter 18, where you come across the reactions that came from the life of Christ as He communicated with men and women.

And as the Gospel of John said unto us, He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God. And so we discover this inner reaction that came from the life of Christ as as people responded and reacted to the fact that He was the Son of God.

You say, Gerard, why did they do that? Well, you need to understand that every simple word, brother and sister, that came from the lips of Christ never, ever, ever neutralized people. They knew exactly where they stood with Him. That's why in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, when Jesus turned to those followers of Him, and He said to them, you do not follow Me because of who I am, and that which I am about.

You are simply following because of the miracles that you are seeing Me doing. And then He turned to them, and He confronted them. And He said to them, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of God, and you drink His blood, and we know that He was speaking about Calvary and the crucifixion and the cross, He

said, if you are not going to do that, you will never be able to become part of what My life and ministry is about.

And if you remember how the Lord Jesus, when He said that to them, the Bible says, many of His disciples left Him, and they didn't walk with Him anymore. And you know, if we were in 2007 or 2008 in the Western world, as it relates to the Christian church, the majority of us would grab our Greek New Testament and run after these people that they didn't follow anymore, and say, you know, maybe there is a way that we will be able to work around this one. We don't want you to go.

You know what the Lord Jesus did? He turned to those disciples that were still standing around Him, and He said to them, so what about you? Why don't you also go away? And you remember how they turned to Him, and Peter said to Him, Lord, where shall we go? You've got the words of eternal life. And you know, brother and sister, when it comes to the Christian life, you will discover that the Apostle Paul made this statement, and he said, to some he said, we are the fragrance of life, and he said to others, he said, we are the fragrance of death. And so when the reality of the life of Christ is relevant in my Christian life, and I am in a position where Jesus said, as my Father has sent me, so sent are you, and I live a Christian life that demanded a supernatural explanation, is there a sense that the atmosphere and the presence of God that I carry with me, and when I am intoxicated to the supremacy and the centrality of the life of Christ, that there is always a two-fold result and the consequences? To some it becomes the fragrance of life, and to other people it becomes the fragrance of death.

And you say, why do you say that? Because the life of Christ never, ever neutralized people. They knew exactly where they stood with the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and let me explain to you why I'm saying that to you. If you study the Greek New Testament, you will discover that there are two words that are speaking to us about the conviction of sin, and you find both of those words in the Acts of the Apostles.

Now Jesus came in John chapter 16, and he said, when the Holy Spirit comes, the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin because they do not believe in me. Why don't people come to Christ? You know why they don't come to Christ? It's because most of the times they don't believe that God is able to save them.

Instead of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more. Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. And then, when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, and God poured out His Spirit upon the early church, you remember the Apostle Peter preached his first sermon, and after he spoke to them, and he said to them, these men are not drunk as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day, but this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel.

And the last days God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all things, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams. And he explained to them the gospel of Christ. And brother and sister, you remember what happened? The Bible says they were pricked in their hearts, and so when they were pricked in their hearts, they said to the Apostle Peter, so what must we do? And Peter turned to them and he said to them, repent and be baptized, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was the gift of salvation.

And you remember, three thousand people were gloriously saved on the day of Pentecost. And yet brother and sister, there is another word in the Greek New Testament, you say, what is it? It was when there was a man with the name of Stephen. And you remember the way the church was growing in the book of Acts? And the church was growing to the degree that they needed to have proper administration,

and those early Apostles in Acts chapter 6 made this statement, and this is what they said.

They said, we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, and there were a number of men that was chosen, and one of those men was a man with the name of Philip the Evangelist, and the other was a man with the name of Stephen. Now you remember what happened to Stephen in the book of Acts? The Bible says he was a man full of faith in the Holy Spirit, and in Acts chapter 6, in Acts chapter 7, he preached the only recorded sermon that we are aware of. It is the sermon of about 66 verses.

In fact, if I can be honest with you, it was not really a sermon. He simply quoted the Old Testament, and as he systematically went through the Old Testament, there was a moment when he began to apply in a theological way the Old Testament, and he turned to those who listened to them, and he said to them, you are a stiff-necked people, and you remember what happened? The Bible says they snatched upon their teeth, and they resisted Stephen's ministry, and as they were doing that, there was a moment that as they snatched upon their teeth, the Bible says, and here is the other word in the Greek language, the Bible says they were cut to their hearts. You know what that word means in the original tongue? It means that someone took a saw, and he took them, and he said they were sworn asunder.

The Spirit of God in his conviction was so relevant, and brother and sister so real, that they resisted to such a degree that they stoned Stephen, and you remember as they stoned Stephen, the Bible says his face was like a face of an angel, and he said, I saw the Lord Jesus, and he was standing. Why was Christ standing? It seems to me if God the Father turned to God the Son, and said to first martyr, because what is Jesus doing? He is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, interceding for us, but when Stephen was stoned, it seems if God the Father said to God the Son, rise to your feet, the first martyr is coming into the kingdom, and you remember there was a young man with the name of Saul who stood there, and he said, I consent. You know what that means in the Greek language? He said, I put the final stand upon the stoning of Stephen, and it became the instrument for Saul of Tarsus to become a follower of the Lord Jesus.

You say, what is it? You see, it is the life of Christ, brother and sister. I wonder this morning if I can ask you, does my Christian life and your Christian life make a distinction? And the society in which we live, do we carry with us the sins of the presence of God? I was in a Baptist church in Western Canada some time ago, and the Sunday morning, the Spirit of God broke into that Sunday morning service, and there was an incredible consciousness of God in that meeting. We were so broken up, and people, men and women, were at the altar of the church, and my own heart was just broken before God, and at the end of that service, I didn't realize really what was happening in the lives of many of those people, but at the end of the service, I didn't know that there was some young man in that service, and God mightily convict him by His Spirit.

I came out of that service this morning, and I got into the vehicle. I was driving back to my motel room where I stayed in that city, and as I was driving back, just as I was coming out of the parking lot, there was a little truck in front of me, and there was a young man sitting down the ceiling of his truck, and I look at him, I thought, you know, there's something wrong with him. He looked so disturbed.

He looked so disorientated. He looked so, so confused, and I followed him in the distance, and he was driving erratically, and we came to the stop sign, and I kind of took my distance, and then he turned to the left, and he just put his foot down, and the dust and everything, and was flying down his throat, and I said to myself, there's something wrong with this young man, and I wonder if he's on drugs. Is he drunk? Is he

disorientated? What's going on with him? And I followed him because to the next stop sign, and I had to turn left back to my room, but I was so captured that I didn't realize what I was doing, and he turned right, and he just went flying down this road so absolutely erratically, and before I knew what I did, I turned right instead of left.

Didn't realize what I was doing, and I followed him, and as he was flying down this road, there was a dirt road into the field, and his brake lights went on, and he just turned into this dirt road, and he went flying down it. I said to myself, there's something wrong with that man, and so I drove by, and realized I was supposed to turn left instead of right, and as I was driving by, the Spirit of God began to speak to me about this man, and so I kept driving, and I thought, I need to find out what's going on, and eventually I turned around, and I was on my way back to Prasad to do it anyway, and as I was coming back, I looked to my left, and this little truck was still standing in the field, and I thought, well, maybe, maybe, maybe it's some drugs, there's something wrong, and I drove by, and God just said, Gerard, I want you to go to this man, and I turned the vehicle around, and I came back, and I came into this dirt road. Then he was standing there, sitting in this little red truck, and brother and sister, I parked behind him, and I thought, you know, maybe he's got a gun, maybe he's on drugs, maybe he's drunk, maybe, maybe he's going to commit suicide, what is he going to do? I will never forget this.

I came to this little truck, and he was just standing like, sitting like this, and he had his hands clamped around the steering wheel, and he's tucked his head on the steering wheel, and I look in him, the tears were just streaming down his cheeks, and I knocked at the window, and he looked up to me, and he opened the window, and I said, I said, my young friend, what is wrong with you? You know, he said, I just heard you preach, and he said, I'm desperately lost, and I'm just trying to find God. I said, what do you mean? He said, I'm under such conviction of sin. God saved him right in that truck that morning.

I wonder if I can ask you this morning, do we know this concept of what the Christian life is all about? Brother and sister, never neutralize people, you know. Charles Grant and Finney, that amazing, controversial individual that did many things that very few people can understand, were so saturated with a sense of the presence of God in the midst of the revival, that you would come into a factory, and as you walk into this factory, the presence of God was so vivid, and it was so real, and it was so overwhelming, that people just came under conviction of sin. And I want to say to you this morning, I want to say this to myself, because you know it's a problem.

None of us, we've got the Christian life together. If you know anything about the inadequacy of my relationship with God, there are many times that my wife finds me three o'clock in the morning, in the corner of my library, under a blanket in the coldness of Canada, sobbing my heart out before God. And she lifted up and said, Charles, what's going on? And I would turn to her in great brokenness of soul and spirit, and I said, my darling, it's the reason for my existence.

Can I ask you a question this Sunday morning on this service? Why did God come into our lives, brother and sister? Why did He save us? Why did He reach down from heaven? Why is it that I am so important to God, that if I was the only lost sinner on this planet earth, that He still would have sent His Son to die for me in the cross? So you say, what is the ministry of Christ? We've got this treasure in urban vessels. And I wonder this Sunday morning, if you would allow me to ask you, can you explain, brother and sister, why is it that we are with such a lack of brokenness in us? Why is it that we walk through country, or place after place, and our hearts are not even broken before God? It's the life of Christ, you see. What did it cost? It cost absolutely everything.

And so you say, what about these teachings of Christ? Well, it's absolutely fascinating, you know, because you will discover in the gospel of Matthew, that before the Lord Jesus started with His public ministry, brother and sister, before He did the miracles, before He went out there and performed 10 of those glorious miracles in the gospel of Matthew, do you know what the scriptures say to us? The Bible is saying unto us, when He saw the multitude, He went up into a mountain, and when He was set, He called His disciples unto Him. Now, why in the world would Christ do that? Why is it that when He saw the multitude of people, and He realized that these are the people that He wants to reach, He's going to die for these people, He's going to give His life for them, but the Bible says that when He saw them, He went onto a mountain. In other words, He separated Himself, and He called His disciples unto Him.

And brother and sister, what did He begin to do? He began to teach His disciples. Why in the world would Christ do a thing like that? Why would He not bring these multitudes together and begin to teach them? No, no, no, no. You see, this is what happened.

He realized that through the lives of those early disciples, He's going to reach these multitudes of His people. And the Bible says He called His disciples unto Him, and He began to teach His disciples. That's what He was doing.

Teaching His disciples. Why was He doing it? Because they were going to be the ones that are going to reach the multitudes of people out there in the world as they go through. And you know, if you look at the evangelical world today, brother and sister, that's exactly what has happened.

Six hundred and eighty thousand people in the underground church in China, gloriously. Last year, a friend of mine was in China recently with a little pastor out in one of the provinces of China, right in the country area. And when he was standing with this little pastor who has been in prison, because last year, 80 percent of those pastors have been in prison.

But you know what has happened, brother and sister? He stood in this little village and as they stood there, my friend, God turned to this pastor and He said to him, how can we pray for you in Canada? How can we pray for this community? And this little Chinese pastor turned to him and he said to God, he said, you know, we only have one problem in this little community. And my friend God said to him, what is the problem? How can we pray for you? And the little Chinese pastor looked at him and he smiled. He said, you know what's the problem? Every single one of them has been born of the Spirit of God.

Every single one of them. And they weren't half born, you know. They were in spiritual abortion.

They were born of the Spirit of God. And so brother and sister, Jesus came and this is what He said. They called these disciples.

And what did He do? He began to teach His disciples, you know. He began to spend time with them. You see, that's why teaching informs the mind.

You say, Gerard, what does preaching do? Preaching challenges the world. Brother and sister, it's possible that you and I, through the years, we could have sat under the greatest preaching. And it has challenged us.

And it has come to your heart. And you responded. And you were broken.

And you sought God. And three, four, five, seven weeks later, there was absolute nothing left. You say, what do you mean? Well, you see, my world was challenged.

And I responded. I trusted God to cleanse me. I asked God to fill me with His Spirit.

And yet, brother and sister, it didn't last. But you see, the difference between teaching and preaching, preaching is challenging us. And it breaks us.

And we respond to it. But when the teaching of God's Word comes, it's informing my mind. I'm exposed to what God is saying in His Word.

And then it challenges my will. And when I responded to the Scriptures, it becomes part of my relationship with God. And that's exactly what Jesus did.

Don't you know what He did? He started one of the most fascinating things. I love a sermon in the mount. I trust that, you know, before you die one day, that at least, you know, we will be able to memorize the sermon in the mount.

You say, why do you say that? Because, brother and sister, the Beatitudes is speaking to us about Christian character, you know. The rest of the sermon in the mount is speaking to us about Christian conduct. The Beatitudes is speaking to us about the imputed righteousness of God.

The rest of the sermon in the mount is speaking to us about the imparted righteousness of God. The Beatitudes is speaking to us about the description of the Christian life. And the rest of the sermon in the mount, you know what it's doing? It's speaking to us about the description, how do we live, and Jesus started with a great word, and do you know what he did? Isn't Christ wonderful? You know, it's not like us, you know.

You know, when our children do something wrong, and we tell them that they shouldn't do it, and then they do it wrong, and we've got this famous thing. Didn't I tell you that? I told you that. Christ never did that.

He didn't turn to those disciples and say, aren't you a hopeless bunch of individual characters? No, no. Do you know what he did? He said, rest. Rest.

Brethren and sisters, I wonder this Sunday morning, have you discovered the greatness of God's plan for your life? Ah, you remember the prodigal when he came back to the father. You know, the father had all the right to throw this fellow in the dungeon. He took his inheritance, he went to the far country, he spent it in wasted living, the Bible says.

But you know what the father did? It's fascinating in the Greek language. Even within the context of the parable, it seems that the father every day was standing at the gate. I'm waiting for him to come back.

I'm waiting. Have you ever discovered the greatness of the love of God? And there was a day when he said, I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to my father, Father, I've sinned against heaven in thy sight, and I'm not worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy highest servants.

And do you remember what happened, brethren and sisters? The Bible says, the father ran to him. He fell on his neck, and what did he do? He kissed him. He said unto his servants, bring unto my son the best robe.

He said, give unto my son a ring. He said, what happened? He said, the rope is speaking about the righteousness of God. He said, what is the ring speaking of? The ring is speaking about the fullness of the Spirit.

He said, why do you say that? Because the word in the Greek language for the word finger is the word doctilos. And you remember how Jesus said, it is through the finger of God that I cast out evil spirits. And now those sorcerers in the book of Exodus say, this is nothing else than the finger of God.

There comes the authority, the work and the ministry of the Spirit. Now he said, bring unto my son the ring. He said, what is the word ring? It is the word doctilos.

It comes from the word doctilos, which is the word for finger. And that's what he said. And you know what's our problem? We so often do not see the heart and the Father of the prodigal son.

And Jesus said, bless it. Bless it. And I wonder this morning, my brethren and sister, are you still excited about God's plan for your life? I was counseling a couple the other day at a conference in British Columbia.

And they were sharing with me about God's plan for their life and ministry. And you know, I felt so awful. Because I sat there and I listened.

They were just a young couple in their twenties, you know. And I'm 54. I feel like an old man of 84.

And I sat there and I said to them, listen guys. If I can give you a million dollars, and I don't have it. But if I can give you a million dollars and I give you my 54 year old life.

And you give me your 24 year old life. I said, I will do it immediately. And they said, what do you mean? And I just broke down and wept.

And I said, you've got a life ahead of you. A life ahead of you. God has got a plan for your life, you know.

You need to find it. You need to follow it. And you need to finish it.

And you cannot afford to miss it, brethren and sister. And so what did Jesus do? He came and He said, bless it. Bless it.

It speaks of restoration. Restoration. With the possibility that I can know Christ.

Restoration with the possibility of the fullness of the Spirit of God. And do you know what you will discover? That's why we say, the Spirit filled life is not a goal, brethren and sister. It is a gateway.

For every reference in the New Testament that is speaking about cleansing, or consecration, or surrender. Do you know that there are 9 to 10 to 11 passages that is speaking to us about the consequences of being totally abandoned to God. And when Jesus came and He said, bless it.

You know what He said? This is the first consequences of the fullness of my Spirit. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are those that mourn. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And you discover the beautiful consequences of the life in the fullness of the Spirit of God. Do you know the Holy Spirit in His fullness? You know one of the greatest things that has happened to me in adequate life? The day when God came and He put the sentence of death upon the self-life. And I came to this place and said, God you need to cleanse me from all conscious sin.

Everything that I am conscious of. I surrender myself totally to you. Brother and sister, I thought it was going to be heaven and earth after that.

Do you know, I discovered the depth of my need of God. I discovered what the hymn writer said when he said, Nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling. He said, what is the life in the Spirit of God? It brings you to the sins of absolute inadequacy before God.

And I want to say to you this morning, If you are in any form of Christian ministry and you come to the place today where you feel you are able to do it for God, don't you ever do it because it will be a total disaster. Someone came to us some time ago and said, After more than 30 years in trying to work for God, do you still get butterflies? And you know, I just smiled and said, You know, the only difference about those days and today, today they fly in formation. That's the only difference.

Ah, brother, you asked my wife, there are some times that I need to speak to 11 or 12 thousand people and I just, I get physically sick. But let me tell you something, there are some times that I need to go and speak to 5 people and I get even more sick. She said, what is it? It's not the people, it's the responsibility before God.

Bless it, Jesus said. Let me explain to you something because our time is running on here. In the Sermon on the Mount, what did Jesus do? In Matthew chapter 6, He speaks about three things.

He is speaking to us about giving, He is speaking to us about fasting, and He is speaking to us about prayer. Now, when He spoke about giving, and I want to tell you this morning, you cannot outdift God. When Janice and Monica and myself stepped out in faith just about two and a half years ago, after being with an organization for 31 years, and the day when we stepped out from them, we had absolutely nothing.

And someone came and gave us a beautiful vehicle, and the thing was so nice, I said to Janice, we can't drive this thing, and I went to the man who gave it to us, and I said, I don't feel right before God about this vehicle. And he said, why? I said, first of all, it's too big, there are only three of us. I said, secondly, it's too heavy on petrol.

And I said, thirdly, it's so nice, no one is going to support our ministry. I mean, you have to be honest, you know. And so the man turned to me and he said to me, listen, you do whatever you want with it, you sell it and buy from something smaller, and keep the rest of the funds.

And I said, thank you so much. And we resigned. We were still in the mission's house, the mission that we were part of for 31 years.

And the Sunday night we came back, I would preach out for Seattle, and we parked the vehicle in the garage. And I turned to my wife and I said, well, we have nothing. We don't have a house.

We don't have anything like that. I said, but at least God has given us a vehicle. Don't you say that.

Next morning I was on my knees, and Janice came into my study and I was on my knees, and she said, I need to talk to you, daddy. I said, about what? She said, did you say last night that God gave us a vehicle? I said, yeah. I said, at least we've got a vehicle.

She said, would you come with me? We came into the garage and the vehicle was stolen. Be careful what you say, you know. But you know what, brother and sister? When we stepped into ministry, you know what I said to my wife? 20% of what God is sending to us is going to go to missions.

If it's \$1,000, \$200 is going to go to missions. And we have kept up this theme of, you know, we need to give sometimes until it hurts, you know. And so he speaks about giving.

In fact, the other day, there was a couple in desperate need, and I turned to Janice and I said, we need to help them. And she said, you know, I don't think we can do this. I don't think we can do this.

I said, we're going to need to help them. And she said, what do you think we should do? I said, my darling, write out a check for \$500. And I said, I want you to put it in an envelope and we're going to put it in the mail.

She wrote out a check of \$500. We got in the vehicle. We're going to visit someone.

And she dropped the check in the mail and she went to the mailbox and she opened it and there was a gift of \$500. And she said, what do you think? I said, we should have given them a thousand. You know, Abraham also had a wife, her name was Sarah.

So watch it. Giving, fasting. Now listen to what Jesus said.

He said, when you give, this is not the way you should give. Then he said, when you fast, this is not the way that you should fast. Now Jesus came, brother and sister, and listen to what he said.

He said, when you pray, this is the way that you should pray. It's fascinating, you know. And so what did he do? He gave unto them what you and I would refer to as the Lord's Prayer.

May I say to you this morning, I don't think that was the Lord's Prayer. And so what was it? It was the prayer he taught his disciples. Secondly, would you allow me to suggest to you this morning, I don't think he gave them that prayer to repeat.

He said, Gerard, is it something wrong? Is it wrong for me just to repeat what we call the Lord's Prayer? I'm not saying it's wrong. But brother and sister, I don't think he gave them that prayer just to repeat. You say, why do you say that? Well, let me explain to you.

The one that he gave in Matthew chapter 6 is not the same as the one in Luke chapter 11. So if we're just going to need to repeat it, why would he give us two different variations of this prayer? So you say, what's going on here? Well, you know, there's a wonderful phrase that you will come across. I want you to listen to it.

Jesus said, because the Gospel of Matthew was focused predominantly on Jewish believers. That was Matthew's thrust. Now this is what happened.

He said to them, when you pray, and here comes the Greek language. I love it. It's rufas uam.

He said, when you pray, you're going to pray according to these lines. And then you know what the Lord Jesus did? He gave unto them nine different ingredients in how to develop a personal and a private prayer life. That's what he did.

You say, why did he do that? Well, he gave unto them the pertinence of time. He said, when you pray. You see, brother and sister, time is a piece of eternity.

Do you know that in every single day, you and I, we have 96 slots of 15 minutes in every day. And time is a piece of eternity. And the Apostle Paul came and what did he say? He said, redeem the time because the days are evil.

So, what do I have to do? I need to analyze time. I need to utilize time. I need to maximize time.

We are helping pastors to develop personal, private prayer lives. Because they go to seminaries and they study theology, but they never learn how to walk with God, brother and sister. And then they come after six months in the ministry and they have nothing to say.

And they say, can you help me to develop a personal relationship with God? And so we begin to spend time with him. And I asked him, I said, I'm going to give you the reasons, the requirements, and the regulations. And we began to work with him all over the world.

And he said, what do you do? I asked him, I said, I want you to make a commitment. I'm going to hold you accountable. I want you to make a commitment.

I want you to spend three times a week, 30 minutes alone with God. And then they say, well, I can do it four or five times. I said, don't you do that? I said, you're just going to do that.

And I'm going to help you to go through that. How are you going to spend 30 minutes alone with God? And after six months, we spent time together and they have been 80% effective and accountable and have followed through. I said, now let's make an adjustment.

I want you to go to four or five days, 30 minutes a day alone with God. Or we're going to stay up to three days. But we're going to push it up to 45 minutes.

And this is the way. And brother and sister, we are helping them to cultivate a personal and a private prayer life. Why? Because of the essence of pride.

And I wonder this morning if I could ask you, you know, we know one another. I mean, you live in a farm here somewhere in the Adelaide Valley in Australia. But can I ask you, are you spending time with God? Early in the morning, deep in the night.

This is the Son of God, you know. Early in the morning, deep in the night, he went into a secret place and what did he do? He prayed. He spent time with his Father.

Why did he have to do that? Because he said, my Father will give it to you and so do I. He said, the Son. I mean, this is the Son of God. He said, the Son can do nothing unless you see the Father doing it.

What is he speaking about, brother and sister? He is discovering the will of his Father, day by day by day. And he never stepped out of the will of his Father for one single moment. Never.

This is life. Prayer, you know. Jesus said, when you pray, can I ask you, I'm not asking you what time or day or night, brother and sister, do you pray? We used to have Bible studies out there in the West Coast.

And we had one in Chilliwack, about an hour away from my home. And in our Bible study group, we had great times. One night, there was a man who wasn't a Christian who came and his name was Andy.

And I said to him, he said to me that night, can you explain to me how I can be saved? And I took three hours with 18 of our Bible study group sitting in this room. And I said to them, I want you just to pray with me if I do this. And they saw that night, in three hours time, how this man gloriously got saved in that meeting.

You know, it changed our Bible study in an incredible way. Because they actually saw in front of their eyes, God saving this man. Most people have never even led someone to Christ.

But in our little Bible study group, there was a little lady called Margaret Patterson. She was in her eighties. She was an amazing piece of human flesh.

She used to come to me. Oh, she was a character. She would come to me and she would say to me, She would say, the only way that people can be saved is through the King James Version of the Bible.

And I would say to her, Margaret, how were they saved before there was the King James Version of the Bible? And she wouldn't say a word for weeks, you know. She was a little character, you know. But you know, one night in the Bible study, she just came with these sudden questions and faced you up.

And she sometimes just, you know, catch you when you're not ready to answer. She said, Brother Gerard, what time in the morning do you pray? And you know, I should have just not said anything. I said, well most of the times, it's about five o'clock in the morning.

Have you ever said something and as you say it, you try to get those words and get them back in there? And I knew. And you know what happened, brother and sister? I should have never said that. You say why? I came in from Chicago and the flight came in about 12 o'clock in the middle of the night.

Grabbed the vehicle at the airport, came back to Janice and Monica. I was home by about 1 o'clock and I crawl into the house as quiet as I can. And went up into the bedroom, didn't turn the lights on, chains and everything.

And I crawl into the bed and Janice woke up and she said, what time is it? I said, it's about quarter past one. And she said, you're not going to get up at five tomorrow morning, okay? And I said, sure. And she said, I want you to sleep.

And so didn't sit here long enough, nothing. And you know what happened? Five o'clock in the morning, the phone rang. Oh brother.

And here's little Margaret Patterson. Brother Gerard, I know you are in a deep spirit of intercessory prayer. And I said, Margaret, I'm in a deep spirit of sleep.

She said, God, you told me you're praying. I said, not this morning. Time, brothers.

You cannot be something else. I mean, we've got some material here. The purpose of prayer.

The paternity of prayer. When you pray, you say, our Father. The priority of prayer.

You say, hallowed be thy name. The program of prayer. You say, thy kingdom come.

The plan of prayer. Thy will be done. The provision of prayer.

Give us this day our daily bread. The pardon of prayer. Forgive us our debts.

The protection of prayer. Lead us not into temptation. The preeminence of prayer.

Thy kingdom. And we can have nine hours in our system. Let me just give you one.

You say, what is it? The place of prayer. I love this, you know. You know what Jesus said? He said, when you pray, he said, go into your closet.

That's a wonderful word in the Greek language, you know. Four times, you come across it in the Greek language. You say, can you explain this word to me? You need to understand the context of this word, brother and sister.

Now, let me explain to you what I'm trying to say to you. Because this word, closet, speaks of two things. It speaks of a secret den.

And it speaks of a storehouse. That's the two meanings of those four passages in the Greek New Testament. But the context of its meaning is going on far deeper.

You say, why? Jesus was speaking to his own disciples. And so, when whatever he said to them in the Gospel of Matthew, they were perceiving that from the understanding or the perception or the perspective of the Old Testament. And so Christ came and he said, now when you're going to pray, this is you, on your own, you're going to pray personally.

And what is going to happen is you're going to find a closet, a secret place alone. And so, guess what the Jew thought? The only thing that he could think about was the holiest of all in the Old Testament. So, why do you say that? That was the place where the High Priesthood entered in once a year.

And the Bible says, not without blood. The High Priest was the man who was physically blameless, morally blameless. The High Priest was the man who was spiritually blameless in the understanding of the Old Testament.

And those disciples sat there and they heard Christ. Now they knew him. They watched him.

They knew that he knew the life and the holiest of all. Because he became the great High Priest. Now he said to them, you need to find a place like that.

And all they could think about was this place, this place. Once a year, on the great day of the atonement, the High Priest would go into the holiest of all. And in the tabernacle of God, he was going to have these garments and those bells, as it were, that were going to move and they would hear him in the holiest of all.

Why would they hear him? So that they would be conscious that he is still alive. And as he would go into the holiest of all, there would be a rope around his waist. Why would he be there? Because as he would make reconciliation for the sins of the people, they would be able to hear him.

And if something happened, if a kind of glory of God would come in the holiest of all and struck him dead, they would be able to pull him out of the holiest of all. It was the most sacred place, you know. So Jesus came and he said, I want you to get this closet.

And brethren and sisters, do you remember what happened when he died in the cross for us? Isn't this incredible? When he cried out that marvellous word, it is finished, which is just one word in the Greek language. And when he cried that word out, do you remember what happened? The veil of the temple was raised from the top to the bottom. The way into the holiest was open.

The writer to the Hebrews comes to us and he said, Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus through a new and a living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil that is too sacred. And he said, and having a high priest over the house of God, he said, let us draw near. How are we going to do it? With a true heart, full assurance of faith, and our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in the holiest of all.

So let me ask you this morning, do you know this little place alone with God? Can I be honest with you, and I won't be anything else? This place alone with God is the most precious place in my whole relationship with God. It's the place where he breaks my heart. It's the place where he reveals to me my need.

It's the place where he gives me a new and a fresh vision of himself. Let me close. You know what? It has one more meaning.

You say, what is it? It's not just a secret gang, brother and sister. You know what it is? It is a storehouse. You say, what is the storehouse of God? Have you discovered the greatness of God's storehouse? Ministering, speaking, searching my heart, breaking me into pieces.

I don't know about you over this weekend. You know, to me it's totally different for a number of many reasons. One of the most precious, some of the most precious times that I've had has been in the mornings.

I just sat in that trailer and just take walks. And all you do is to spend time alone with God. You see, the holiest could be anywhere.

You say, what are you saying? Because the holiest is determined by a relationship. It's not a place. It's a relationship that leads to a place.

And the place determines the relationship as I follow through with God in my relationship with Him. Amen.

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