

Intercessory Prayer

by Gerhard Du Toit

Gerhard Du Toit emphasizes the importance of intercessory prayer, highlighting its accessibility to ordinary people, its necessity for obedience, and its power in effecting change.

Duration: 33:39

Scripture: Luke 11:1

Topics: "Intercessory Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of witnessing the power of God's presence and the impact it had on his life. He emphasizes the importance of having a broken heart for people and the need for intercession through prayer. The speaker tells a story about an old man who prayed fervently for his town, and as a result, a revival broke out and many people were saved. The speaker also expresses his burden for the lost and the need for revival in the world today.

Transcript

I'm going to read from James chapter 5 and just for the sake of time, let's read from verse number 12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation. If any among you afflicted, let him pray.

If any merry, let him sing psalms. If any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven.

Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

And Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And Elijah prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.

I'm sure this morning that you recognize or you probably know that James was a half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the most significant thing about James is the fact that when he introduced himself to us

in his little epistle, that he did not introduce himself in that way, but he called himself a servant, a servant of God. And the little word servant is a very significant word in the Greek New Testament.

It is the little word *doulos*, and it's actually a word that has its meaning in the 21st chapter of the book of Exodus, when the Bible is speaking to us about the Jewish slave that worked for his master for something like six years, and then the Bible is saying to us that after the six years was his master under the obligation from the law to allow the slave to go out free. And then the slave would come to his master, and he would say to his master, I love my master, and I do not want to go out free. And his master would, in the presence of two witnesses, take the slave to the door and with an oar make a hole through his ear, and from that day on, he was called a bond slave or a love slave.

In other words, he came to the place where he said, I love my master, and I do not want to go out free. And that's how James saw himself, as a slave of the Lord Jesus. One who has abandoned his life, who has made himself available for whatever God's plan was for his relationship with God.

You know, in this little epistle, and I need to say to you, those of us who are students, that it's a tremendous sense of correspondence between this little epistle and the Sermon on the Mount. And it's quite significant. If you study the Sermon on the Mount, and you look at this little epistle, you discover so many little things that corresponds with one another.

But one of the things that we discover about this little epistle is the fact that it's saying unto us some wonderful things about the life and the ministry of intercessory prayer. Tradition is saying unto us that James had a nickname, and his nickname was Camel Knee. And it has been said that when he died, that they discovered these incredible marks on his knees, simply because of the tremendous life of intercessory prayer that this man must have exercised in his relationship with God.

Now, I would like to say to you this morning, you know, when we study the laws of biblical interpretation, it's quite significant that quite often will we discover that God does not necessarily speak to us in laws and in regulations as such, but that He quite often speaks to us in principles and in propositions. And you will discover in studying that, that quite often you will see that for every principle and for every proposition, it's God giving unto us an illustration. Now, the reason why I'm saying it to you this morning is simply because of the fact that James is saying unto us, he said, The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

And then he comes with the illustration. And the illustration is the life of the prophet Elijah. He said, Elijah was a man just like us we are.

And he said, Elijah prayed. And he said, God closed the heavens for three years and for six months. And the Bible says Elijah prayed again and God opened the heavens and he sent rain.

I would like to speak to you this morning, if I may, on this wonderful life or a ministry of what intercessory prayer is about. And it's quite significant if you study the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus that you will discover that you remember there was a time when the disciples came to the Lord Jesus Christ and they, and the Lord Jesus turned to them and He said to them, Who do the people say that I am? And you remember how they responded. They said to Jesus, there are some people that say you are the prophet Jeremiah, and there are others that are saying that you are the prophet Elijah.

My friends, have you ever asked yourselves why did they say that? You see, my brother and sister, in the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus, they saw the combination of these two Old Testament prophets. And as they look upon the life of the Lord Jesus, they saw something of the prophet of fire, and they saw something of the prophet of tears, that was the prophet Jeremiah. And they look upon the Lord Jesus and they saw in the life of Christ this tremendous life of intercessory prayer.

What I want us to do this morning, first of all, is to look at what the ministry of intercessory prayer is all about. You see, I think our problem in our tabernacle this Sunday morning is the fact that probably the most of us who are sitting here, you are sitting here this morning and you say to me, Gerard, I'm absolutely convinced in my heart that God has not called me to a life of intercessory prayer. And the first thing that I would like to mention to you is the fact my brother and my sister, a life of intercessory prayer is for ordinary people.

You see, there is no possibility this Sunday morning that you can sit in this morning session and kind of sit back and say, this is not the kind of a lifestyle that God has given me. Of course, I accept the fact that there are certain people that God has given to them a gift of intercessory prayer. There are certain people that God has separated unto a life of intercessory prayer.

But my friends, in spite of that, is there the possibility this morning that each and every one of us can find ourselves involved in such a lifestyle. The reason why I'm saying that to you is simply because of the biblical evidence. There are some tremendous examples in God's Word of people whom we know very little about.

For instance, Hannah in the Old Testament whom we know so little about. Maybe one or two chapters of the Old Testament has been given to her life, and yet we discover there was a life of tremendous intercessory prayer. You remember in Luke's Gospel, that amazing woman, her name was Hannah.

The prophetess in the Bible is speaking about her, and the Bible is saying to us about her that she served God day and night with prayers and with fasting. And my friends, this wonderful lifestyle of spending time in God's presence, my brother and my sister, it's a lifestyle for us as the people of God. I say that because a number of years ago I was involved in a weekend conference in Southern Africa where I was brought up, and the people were in tents and trailers, and the services was in a tent, and these were a group of conservative Dutch Reformed Christians in Southern Africa.

And the very first night of the first meeting, I discovered that there were about 50 people with exactly the same last name. In fact, I got up in my opening remarks and I said to them, I said, folks, I said, when we turn off the generator tonight in its darkness upon this camp, I said, I want to tell you that if you bump into anyone, just say, I'm sorry Mr. Watson, because there were so many of those people. And then I became absolutely fascinated how those people came to Christ.

And do you know what they told me? About 23 years earlier on, two of our faith mission workers went into that district to do a series of evangelistic services in the little town hall of a town with the name of Clan William. And the very first night of those meetings, the place was packed. There were about 400 or so people in this little town hall.

And those two evangelists, when they walked in, they said there were such a sense of the presence of God that they were literally too afraid to open their hymn books or their Bibles. The awesome awareness of the presence of God. And they began those series of services, my friends, and from the very first night

of those services, the Spirit of God began to break into those meetings, and in something like three weeks, close to 400 people were swept into the Kingdom of God.

Every night in those services, there was an elderly man in his early 80s sitting kind of right at the front, listening to God's Word as they preached God's Word, sitting with his head bowed in the spirit of prayer. One morning, one of those two workers turned to the other one and said, maybe we should go and ask the old man. Maybe he can tell us why, he said, that we are almost in the midst of the movement of the Spirit of God.

They went to his little cabin up in the Cedar Mountains. Knocked at the door of his little cabin. Opened the door.

The old man invited them in. They said, sir, you must know Jesus. Oh yes, he said, I love Him.

They said, sir, can you tell us why is it that God is working in such a way? The old man became very, very quiet. And he said to them, do you see this town? He said, this town is divided by kind of a little hill. And he said, every single morning for six days of the week, he said, I walk to the other side of the town.

And he said, there is a place where I kneel to pray. And he said, I look over this part of the town. And he said, the burden of God would come upon me.

And he said, as the burden of God would come upon me, he said, I pray and I supplicate and I prevail and I seek the face of God. Then he said, I cross the little hill. There is a rock where I kneel to pray.

He said, I look over that part of the town. And he said, the brokenness of God's Spirit comes upon me. And I intercede and I supplicate and I sob in the presence of God.

Those two evangelists recognized that they were on holy ground. One of them turned to the old man and said, sir, would you allow me to ask you how long you've been doing that? The old man dropped his head and the tears began to stream down his cheeks. He said, if I remember correctly, he said, I've been doing this for six days of the week, for the last 25 years.

You see, my brother and sister, listen. We are sitting this morning in this prairie tabernacle. And we want to see God at work in the hearts and the lives of men and women.

And yet, my friends, we do not recognize that our lives are so precious and vital for God that in my unique circumstances, God can begin to use me as His child in the life of intercessory prayer. It's for the ordinary person this Sunday morning. But secondly, our ministry of intercessory prayer, it's not only for the ordinary person, but you know what I've discovered? It's for an obedient people.

Listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ said. He said, He that will have to do My will shall know of the doctrine of what I am speaking of. Ah, my brother and my sister, I wonder this Sunday morning, would you allow me to ask you, are we living in absolute obedience in the presence of God? I remember listening to Dr. Stephen Alpert and he said, he said, partial obedience in the presence of God is absolute disobedience as I walk before God.

You ask yourself this morning, what's the secret of the life of the Lord Jesus? Why was it that the Son of God could turn His heart to His Father and say, Father, I thank You that You always listen to me. Why is it that His disciples never ever came to Him and said, Lord Jesus, will You teach us to preach? Will You

teach us how to win people to Christ? Will You teach us how to plant a church? No, my friends, they never asked that question. My brother and my sister, they ran to the Lord Jesus in Luke 11, and they got hold of Him, and they said to Him, Lord, will You teach us to pray? It was a life transparent before God.

And I wonder this morning, you know, God has given me a great burden for these students. And I want to tell you guys this morning as we go back to B.C., this burden is going to grow, and it's going to translate itself in a passion and in a desire to seek the face of God for your life. Young people, may I ask you this morning, do you know what it means to love and absolute obedience before God? Have you allowed the Spirit of God this weekend to search every aspect of your relationship with God? Is my life and its relationships on the altar for God? Is my will and its choices on the altar for God? Is my heart and its affections on the altar for God? Is my mind and its thoughts on the altar for God? It's a life of obedience before God.

And I don't know if this is theologically correct to say this to you, but you know I believe, and I've come to the place where I believe this firmly, my friends, 65 to 70% of the effectiveness of a life of intercessory prayer in the heaven that is open, listening to me as a child of God, simply has to do with a relationship that is rightly related to God. The Psalmist came to us and you know what he said? He said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, he said, the Lord will not hear. Oh folks, we can spend hours and days in intercessory prayer, but if I'm not transparent before God, my brother and my sister, we are wasting our time.

I mentioned about Dr. Andrew Murray, a South African. I read some time ago about his life. He crossed the street in the middle of Cape Town one day.

Suddenly he stopped in the middle of that street. Someone saw him and went up to him and said, Dr. Andrew Murray, why did you stop right in the middle of that street? The saintly old figure turned around and he said, he said, young man, he said, as I crossed that street, he said, I lost contact with God for one split second. And he said, I just want to stand there so that the contact with God can be restored again.

Many of us in the nineties, it sounds mystical, and yet God is speaking about this kind of relationship. Folks, are we obedient before God? You see, my brother and sister, listen, it's not what happened five or ten or fifteen years ago and you and my relationship with God. My friends, the question this Sunday morning is, is there an open heaven between me and God? I wonder these older people who are sitting here at our conference this morning, you've been serving the Lord Jesus maybe for twenty or for thirty or for forty years, can I ask you this morning, have you somehow met with God? You say, Pastor, are you saying to me have I gone to the prayer room? No, I'm not saying that.

I'm asking you this morning, somehow through this conference, have you sensed the Spirit of God touching your heart in a level where He has never ever touched your heart before? We were involved in a conference in Africa many years ago. There was an elderly lady in her early seventies I would say, and she never missed one of her sessions. And I was a young minister and I went up to her and I said to her, I said, why is it that you come to every single meeting? I said, in the afternoon surely you are tired.

Why don't you take a rest? Why don't you somehow just wait for the evening service and you will be freshened up and that kind of stuff. And she turned to me, and I still remember her little finger, and she pointed to me and she said, young man, she said, I don't know when God is going to break in. And she said, I have set my sails in such a way that when the wind of God's Spirit is going to come, she said, I want to launch out in His presence.

Has God broken into our lives this weekend? I was scared to death, you know, and this happens to me every time when I come to a conference like this, that there is the possibility that I can sit through service after service after service. And my friends, I become like the dark of the blacksmith. And when the man walked into the blacksmith's shop, the dark was sweeping under the table.

The sparks were flying. The noise was unbelievable. And the man turned to the blacksmith and he said, sir, how is this possible? How can this dark sleep right under this table? And do you know what he said? He said, you know, this is my dark.

He said, the first day in this shop, he said, I could not get in close to this shop. He said he was afraid he would run away. He said, but every day, he came closer and closer and closer.

He said, now, he's asleep and the sparks are now doing a thing to him. And I want to tell you this Sunday morning, listen folks, it's possible for us to sit through conference after conference, after conference after conference, and we sit and we say, the preaching was great. The fellowship was wonderful.

Uncle Bill and his worship and singing was tremendous. The school was great. The food was wonderful.

And we can't say that we have met with God. Is your heart open this morning for God to meet with you? It's for an obedient people. Thirdly, and this is what breaks my heart, I tell you, it's for an observant people.

Do you know what the Prophet Jeremiah said? He said, my eyes have affected my heart. Oh, I wonder this morning, my brother and my sister, have you ever asked God to give you a broken heart for people? Listen, students here this morning in this tabernacle, why have you come to Prairie Bible Institute? You need to ask yourselves this Sunday morning, what is my purpose for existing? Out in British Columbia, we do a lot of consultation with churches. In fact, at the moment, we are involved with a church intensively with about 1,100 members, and there are some massive problems.

And if God is not going to overrule, this church is going to be split right down the middle. And I turned to the staff and some of those elders the other day, and I said, just a moment, what is the reason for your existence? Listen, do you ever go to Yellowstone Park? You go into Yellowstone Park, there's a sign that says, don't feed the bears. And every single year people come in, what do they do? My friends, they feed the bears.

And every year, they are to shoot hundreds of these bears, the rangers. And do you know what they say when you ask them? They say, you know, the reason why we are to shoot them is because they are sitting alongside the road, and they are waiting for people to feed them, and the problem is, they've lost their reason for existence. Today in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are so many of us just like that.

I heard Howard Hendricks say some time ago there are only two kinds of people in the church. The pillars and the caterpillars. Those who help the church to stand.

Those that crawl in every Sunday morning, crawling every Sunday morning in, crawling out, stand at the door, shake your hand and say, Pastor, what a wonderful sermon! I'll see you next Sunday. My friends, they can't say anything more true than that. And I call it the glorification of the Worm Ceremony.

Can I ask you this morning, have you asked God to give you a vision of people? Have you read the life story of John Payton who went to the Aberdeen Islands, not the islands and islands of Scotland, the new Aberdeen Islands? My friends, the British government would not give him permission. They said, Payton,

we can't be responsible for your life on that island. There are cannibals.

We don't know what has happened. I said to myself when I read it, I said, I guess it was a situation where John Payton would ride in his bicycle on the island and the one cannibal would look at the other and say, Good night, we've got meals on wheels today. And my friends, he pleaded with him.

He said, God has called me to the new Aberdeen Islands. I've got a burden. I've got a vision.

I've got a longing to see these people coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. They dropped him on those islands with his wife left in there. His wife died.

And for three days with his rifle, he had to lay on the grave of his wife in order to chase these cannibals away. I don't know if I would see John Payton in heaven. I don't think so.

You know why? Because he'd be so close to the throne of God, I would not be able even to perceive him. But if I do, I would take his hand and sit at his feet and say, Mr. Payton, why did you do that? Do you know what he would say? He said, because of that person himself. We were involved in a weekend some time ago with one of the Chinese Alliance churches out in British Columbia.

And oh, I tell you, God broke into those meetings. And you know, these ethnic churches are the fastest growing churches out in British Columbia. I don't know the rest of Canada.

The Sunday morning, in fact, oh, my word, you know, they tried to pronounce my name, and good night, they crucified from every corner of the world. And I stopped. I said, folks, just a moment.

I said, just call me Sam Wong. So up until today, when they phoned me, they said, we want to speak to Sam Wong. The Sunday morning, I'll tell you what happened.

The Holy Spirit of God came and broke into that Sunday morning service. I was halfway through my little, simple, insignificant message. And I saw God was dealing.

And you know, God was all over the place. And you know, the Chinese people, many of them don't easily show emotion, but they were broken up before God. And I turned to them, and God was all over the place.

And I thought, now that's enough. Now it's time for us to seek the face of God. And I said, now we're going to spend time with God.

And the little Chinese pastor jumped up and he said, no, no, no. I said, what? He said, we're going to see God anyway, but we want to hear more. So, you know what happened that morning when God broke in? We were there until about 3, 34 o'clock in the afternoon, sobbing in the presence of God.

We came home and I turned to my wife and I said to my wife, I said, you know, I will never in my life ever be the same. She said, Gerard, what do you mean? I said, God has given me a heart for the Chinese people. You ask my wife, folks, three, four weeks later, every time when we walk down the road or in a shopping mall or whatever, and I see a Chinese person coming up to me, my heart broke.

I couldn't face them. One day she walked and I was gone and she found me in a little corner sobbing my heart out. She said, Daddy, what's wrong? I said, Mommy, it's these Chinese people.

They're lost. And I said, folks, people are going to hell in the fast lane this morning. And we see the bloodshed.

And we see on television 30,000 people being swept into eternity with an earthquake in India. And we see them tearing the pieces of those bodies apart. And we see the bloodshed of terrorism on television.

And we see people being slaughtered. And my brother and my sister, we got so used to it, that it's not affecting us anymore. Sometimes when we live out there in B.C., when the news comes on, I say to my wife, turn it off.

She said, Daddy, why? I said, because it's breaking my heart. Are you serving God this morning with a heart that is broken for people? You see, folks, observation affects intercession. My heart is longing to see God working on revival.

And there are nights that I'm on my face before God and say, God, how long? Because there are times that I feel I can't survive anymore. You see, twice in my life I've been in the midst of revival. My friends, I've seen what happened.

I've sensed the awesomeness of the presence of God. I saw this divine manifestation of God's order. And I saw that in 20 minutes, more took place than that which we've tried to do for God in 20 years.

Observation affects intercession. Young people, are you willing to ask Jesus this morning in this little session and say, Lord Jesus, will You give me a heart that is broken for people? When last have you spent a night in prayer for someone when the burden of God came upon your heart? And folks, I'm speaking to myself. This morning earlier as I looked through this material again and again, I said, Lord, you know, this breaks me.

I said, I don't know if You're going to break into our hearts this morning. I don't know these people. I don't know where they are.

I don't know if they are willing to allow God to break them. I said, but I know one thing, God, my heart is broken about this responsibility. Can you imagine what could happen if God gives every one of us a heart that is broken for people at the end of this conflict? That you and I begin to see people that weigh exactly as God see those people.

Observation affects intercession. My time is gone. I read some time ago about a man whose name was Tom.

Tom worked in a factory. One day the fellows were ridiculing the Christians from every possible corner and direction. And Tom jumped up and he said, he said, fellows, just a moment.

He said, I know there are Christians who are hypocrites, but I want to tell you that I really mean business with God. And he was just about ready to sit when a fellow jumped up and he said, Tom, just before you sit, can I ask you a question? He said, yes. He said, Tom, do you believe the Bible is God's Word? Do you believe God answers prayer? Yes, Tom said, I do.

He said, do you believe that we are lost and we go into hell, Tom? Yes, Tom said, I do. He said, Tom, if you say that God answers prayer, can I ask you, when last have you spent a night in prayer for those of us who are working here with you? Tom said to himself, well, that's a little bit of a lot to ask, you know. And he

said, boys, I need to tell you that I haven't really spent a night in prayer for you.

And the fellow turned to Tom and he said, Tom, when last have you spent two hours a day in prayer for us who are lost? We must be saved. Tom kind of became quiet. He said, no, I can't say that I've done that.

The fellow said, Albert, no, he said, I can't say that I've done that. And the guy turned to Tom and he pointed his finger right at Tom and he said, Tom, be absolutely honest with me now. Have you ever really prayed for those of us who are working with you? We're lost.

We're on our way to hell. Have you ever prayed for us? Tom just dropped his head and he said, fellows, I'm sorry to say, but I've never really prayed for you. And the man just turned around and he swung his finger right at Tom's heart and he said, Tom, these are exactly the kind of people that we've been talking about.

You see, my brother and sister, if you're going to ask God this morning to give you a broken heart, you know what that's going to mean? It's going to cost you something. God is going to take your life. And do you know what else what Chambers said? He said, there is a moment when we follow Jesus and the wonder of the beauty of His life and there is a moment when He changed His countenance and He has set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem and there is a moment that we see a different aspect of the face of Jesus Christ.

If you sit here this Sunday morning and you say, God, will You give me a heart that is broken? Listen, young folk. Listen, older people. Those of us in the faculty of the school.

Those of us in Canadian Revival Fellowship. Listen. God is going to make you part of the sufferings of Jesus.

God is going to bring you to a place of identification. And I don't know if this is biblical right to say this, but there are times when I pray for people who are lost, when I begin to confess their sins before God with that sense of identification. You say, Pastor, is God going to forgive their sins? No, my friend.

But I wonder sometimes if it's not going to make it easier for them eventually to acknowledge that they're lost in the presence of God. Observation. Are you willing this morning to ask Him to give you a heart that is broken? It's a simple prayer.

But it's a prayer that's going to carry you through. You know people want to come and help us out in British Columbia? And I interview these people and when they say to me, what can you offer me? I turn to them and I say, nothing. When they turn to me and say, Gerard, what can we give? I say, a heart that is broken before God.

That's how I survive. Are you willing to ask Him this morning to break your heart for the lives and the hearts of people? Let's bow in prayer.

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