

Prevailing Prayer

by Gerhard Du Toit

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prevailing prayer, accountability, and obedience in developing a powerful and effective prayer life.

Duration: 59:33

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:22, Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 37:3, Matthew 6:33, John 7:17, James 5:16

Topics: "Prevailing Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of evangelism in Africa and Scotland, where they would spend several weeks before making any invitations to allow people to be convicted by the Word of God. He emphasizes that the Holy Spirit works through the communication of God's Word to fertilize and manifest a life of the Word in ordinary people. The speaker also shares a personal story of his time in the military and as a chaplain, highlighting the importance of prayer and intercession for the souls of others. He concludes by sharing a story of an old man who prayed fervently for his town, and how God answered his prayers, emphasizing the power of prayer in bringing about revival.

Transcript

I was so blessed by what our brother shared in working amongst the Amish and the Mennonite people, Harold, that I would be willing to give him a session tomorrow afternoon to talk about the home situation. Anyway, we pray about that, but it was just a tremendous blessing to my own heart. James chapter 5, if you will.

I wonder if I'm not, am I too loud for you? Am I okay? It just sounds loud up here. Okay. James chapter 5, and we're going to read from verse number 12.

You know, I phoned my wife this afternoon, and she said, how's it going? I said, these men are worse than the Africans. So I will phone her tonight and say they're worse than the Pentecostals. So you should see the song leader.

Okay, James chapter 5, if you will. And let's read just for the sake of our time. Let's read from verse number 10.

Take my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering and affliction of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job,

and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and tender mercy.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by 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 to 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 him.

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

And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he 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 his soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.

You know, it's quite significant if you study this little epistle of James. He said, a sense in which I believe you'll discover that it is probably one of the most practical little epistles in the New Testament. I kind of feel, because of the fact that James, in one sense, is a half-brother of the Lord Jesus, sometimes as I look at this epistle and I look at this sermon and amount, are there sometimes some tremendous corresponding principles, as it were, that can be a tremendous blessing.

You see, James is speaking to us about the perfect law of liberty. And Christ is saying to us in the sermon and amount, that unless our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, that in no way that we shall be part of the kingdom of God. But one of the most significant things about James is simply this, that he did not refer to himself necessarily as being related to the Lord Jesus, but he called himself a servant of Christ.

And the word servant is a very, very significant word. It is the Greek word *doulos*, that really has its meaning within the Old Testament. And in the 21st chapter of the book of Exodus, will you discover that the Bible is speaking to us about the bond slave or the love slave, the Jewish slave who has worked for his master for something like six years, and in the word of God it's saying to us that that slave was under the obligation of the law after six years to allow that, rather the master was under the obligation of the law after six years to allow that slave to go out free.

But in the Bible it's saying to us that that slave would come to the place where he would say to himself, I love my master and I do not want to go out free and I want to stay with my master for the rest of my life, and he would go to his master and make that confession and then his master in the presence of two witnesses will take him to the door and make a hole through his ear with an oar and from that day he would be 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 I want to stay with my master for the rest of my life. Incidentally, if you read or study the epistles of the apostle Paul, quite often you come across this very same word, where Paul came to the place where he said, I love my master and I do not want to go out free.

One of the great things about the epistle of James is simply the fact that although it's called to us by some the first message to the church, well you discover that there are some tremendous lessons and principles that you and I can learn about the life and the ministry of intercessory prayer. In fact, there are some traditions that are saying to us that James' nickname was Camel Knee, and they are saying to us that when James died, that they find those amazing marks as it were on his knees and somehow came to the conclusion that here was a man of tremendous intercessory prayer. I would like to say to you this evening that if you study what we would consider as the laws of biblical interpretation, well you discover that quite often that God speaks to us in principles and in propositions.

And you will also realize that when God speaks to us, for instance in a principle or a proposition, that quite often it's a biblical truth to discover that he gives unto us an illustration. Now let me tell you why I'm saying that you will discover in the fifth chapter of James that the Bible is saying unto us that the prayer of the righteous man availeth much. And here comes the illustration.

He's saying unto us, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and Elijah prayed and as a result of the prayer of Elijah was for a moment that God closed the heavens above for a period of three years and six months and the Bible says Elijah prayed again and there was a moment that God opened the heavens above and God sent rain. I would like to speak to you tonight if I may so on what I would consider as a life and a ministry of intercessory prayer. And what I would like us to do, I want us to look at the attitude of prevailing in intercessory prayer.

I want us to consider the agony of a life of prevailing in prayer. In fact, if time would allow us, I want us to look at what we would consider as the victory of a life of prevailing in prayer. You see my brother, let me say to you this evening, I think one of our greatest problems as men or one of the reasons why you and I are not accountable in the presence of God when it comes to our responsibility in prayer is simply because of the attitude that we have when it comes to a life and a ministry of prevailing in prayer.

And the first thing that I would like to mention to you is simply this, that if you study the Word of God and if you study the history of a church you will discover that when God is speaking to us about a ministry of prevailing in prayer, that God is referring to all the people. God is speaking to you and me about people like just us ourselves. I think for instance in that amazing passage in the first chapter of the book of Samuel when we read about Hannah, that very interesting woman in the Old Testament, somehow it seems to me that the Bible is saying very little about the life of Hannah.

There are maybe one or two or three chapters where God is referring to the life of this woman and in the eyes of this world she was absolutely inadequate and she was absolutely insignificant. And yet my brethren you will discover that here was a woman who knew the secret of what it means to get through to God within a place of prayer. Can I ask you a question tonight? Have you ever asked yourself that when she came into the presence of God to pray, why was it that she asked God for a man child? Somehow it seems to me that this woman year after year as she went into the temple of God, she saw the condition of the people of God, she saw the sin within the temple of God, she saw the adultery that was going on and somehow year after year with a tremendous spiritual perception that she had was there a moment that she somehow got in her face before God and she said God if you will give unto me a man child.

She said I want to give a child to you and that child became Samuel and he became one of the great prophets of Israel. I think for instance of that amazing woman again in the first chapters of the gospel of Luke. Her name was Hannah the prophetess and you remember Hannah the prophetess was a woman

and God is saying to us that she served God with prayers and with fasting and maybe you sit here tonight my brother and you say when God is speaking to me about the ministry of intercessory prayer, somehow I can't see that this can be a plan of God for my life.

Maybe you sit here tonight and you say well there are certain people that are a George Buller or there is maybe a John Hyde of India or there is maybe a George Fitzfield but somehow as I look upon my life it seems to me that this is not God's lifestyle for me. I was involved in South Africa a number of years and I remember I was asked to do a conference or a weekend retreat at a place about 65 miles outside of the city of Cape Town and it was what was called the district of Clan William and the first night the people came in trailers these were conservative Dutch Reformed Christians and they stayed in these trailers and tents and the services as it was an attempt and I discovered that night when I began to preach that it just happened so that I found out that there were about 50 people who were at that weekend conference of exactly the same name. In fact I said to those people that night in my opening remarks, I said to them folks let me say to you tonight when we turn the generator off and in the darkness of this night if you bump into someone just say I'm sorry Mr. Watson because there were so many of those people.

And I began to ask myself how did those people come to Christ? And my friends you know what I discovered? I discovered about 23 years earlier on two of our faith mission evangelists went into the district of Clan William to do a series of evangelistic meetings for something like three weeks or so and those men said as we came into the town we discovered that there was an awesome sense of the presence of God. They said when we gathered for the services and the town hall the very first night the place was loaded with people. They said somehow there was such an awareness of God that they were too afraid to open their hymn books.

They were almost too afraid to open their Bibles because of the awesome awareness of God. Somehow those men began to preach God's word and something like three weeks or so 400 people were swept into the kingdom of God and every night in those services there was an elderly man in his early 80s who sat there with his gray hair and his head bowed. One morning one of those evangelists turned to the other and said we have never in our lives experienced this before.

He said somehow it seems to me that this is like a breath of revival. It seems God is working in a most amazing way. Why don't we go and ask the old man why is it that God is working like that? They went to his little cabin up in what was called the Cedar Mountains and as they knocked on the door of that cabin this old gentleman rushed to the door and he invited them into this little cabin and as they stepped into that cabin they recognized that they were standing in holy ground.

One of them turned to this old man and said sir can you tell us why God is working in such a way? The old man became very very quiet and he said sir have you prayed for this town? He said well God is simply answering prayer. He said will you tell us what has been happening? The old man turned to them and he said do you see this town? He said this town is divided by a kind of a hill and he said every day for six days of the week he said I climb over the hill to the other side of the town and he said there is a place where I kneel and I look over this part of the town and he said the burden of God would come upon me and he said I would pray and supplicate and intercede and he said sometimes for hours he said I would supplicate in the presence of God. Then he said there is a moment where I cross the hill and I look over that part of the town and he said there is a rock where I kneel and he said something of the burden of God would come upon me and I would find myself sometimes for hours and sometimes supplicate and starve and intercede and agonize for the souls of the people.

One of those two workers turned to him and said sir would you allow me to ask you how long have you been doing that? The old man dropped his head and broke down and through the tears the little words began to trickle through. He said if I remember correctly he said I have been doing this for six days of the week for the last 25 years. Gentlemen I want to say to you tonight there is a verse in the Bible and every time it breaks my heart when I look at it because the prophet is saying unto us when Zion prevails he brought forth her young.

God is saying unto us that they wanted to bring forth and there was not the power to bring them forth. I wonder tonight if you would allow me those of us who are pastors in this church and I know a little bit of what you are talking about but my brethren may I ask you this evening are there times in your congregation and in your life when you know something others this prevailing for the souls of men? It's for ordinary people you see. And we are living in a time today in the history of the church of the Lord Jesus where everything is instantaneous.

Can I share with you tonight that in the years of my experience of evangelism in Africa and the highness of Scotland and some of those evangelistic crusades last for up to 8 weeks that there was very seldom that we made any kind of an invitation before there were maybe 17 or 19 days that are passed so that people can be exposed to the conviction of the word of God. It's for ordinary people you see. And I think one of the most wonderful things that can happen these days as you and I and myself expose ourselves to the communication of God's word.

As the Holy Spirit of God will come who does witness to nothing else than the word and the precious blood as we expose ourselves my friends that the spirit of God will come and fertilize the seed of God's word in our lives so that it can bring forth the manifestation of the life of the word. It's for ordinary people. It's for you and it's for me.

I can't help but think again and again of that amazing man with the name of Robert Murray McShane for the simple reason that I preach in Dundee in Scotland. I had the joy of standing at the place where Robert Murray McShane preached and discover that here was a young man who died at the age of 27. But those people as they sat in the rich ministry on a Sunday morning and they listened, you know, they sat as he looked upon us as a congregation.

It somehow seems that he knew exactly what we were doing or what we were thinking about this last week. Robert Murray McShane died and the minister went to the church of McShane and he got hold of the old custodian or the caretaker. He said, will you tell me the secret of the life of this man? And he took him into the little place where McShane prayed and there was an old kind of a little carpet and there was a chair.

They speak of it as a stool in Scotland. And there on that carpet were two holes. And he said to this man, he said, I want you to put your two knees in those two holes.

And he did so. And he said, now I want you to cover your face. And he did so.

He said, now, he said, I want you to pray. And he said, as the burden of God comes. He said, I want you to break in the presence of God.

And he said, as you pray. He said, I want you to weep as the master wept. And I'm told that that minister was very embarrassed and almost wanted to walk out.

And the old custodian got him by the hand and he dragged him into the pulpit where McShane preached. And as he brought him into the pulpit, he said, I want you to open the family Bible. And he did so.

And there was hardly a page in that Bible that was not rippled by the, by the brokenness of McShane. And he said, I want you to put your elbows on it. And I want you to cover your face.

And he said, now, I want the burden of God to come. And he said, when the burden of God comes, he said, I want you to break. He said, that's how the master wept.

The same Robert Murray McShane who said, whatever a man is on his knees before God, is that, that is what that man will be in the pulpit and in the public. My brethren, may I say to you tonight, this is a prayer at once. And I think it's one of the most wonderful things that can happen these days.

If God the Holy Spirit would come to a number of us and we become accountable. I said in the church about two days ago or so, that there are men that are holding me accountable. They are not interested in my ministry.

They are not interested in the times that I preach. These are older men in the ministry. They are interested in what God is doing in my prayer life.

They are concerned about my relationship with God. If God can give some of us this great spirit of prayer, I would like to see what will happen in the next number of months when we seek the face of God in prayer. It's for all the people you see.

One of the most wonderful things that I have discovered is simply the fact that it's not only for all the people, but I've discovered that it is also for obedient people. You know what the Bible is saying to us tonight? God is saying to us, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. Can I give you a 94 translation? God is saying, if I regard iniquity in my heart, you're wasting your time.

I wonder tonight, my brethren, if I may ask you, is there any unconfessed sin in your life? I wonder tonight if I may ask you, because these are one of the great influences to prayer, if there is something between you and your wife, or something between you and your children, and somehow you are sitting here tonight, and you say amen, and you enjoy it, but yet in your heart, somehow you recognize that I'm not getting through to God. We've got a system in our own family, and I'm really looking forward to speak to my brother, but we've got a system in our own family where every morning, Janice and myself spend about half an hour with our little girl, Monica. We've got a system of accountability.

And I discover, and we're going to deal with this stuff. I mean, it's just a fact. I'm not going to ask you tonight, but we're going to look at it at some point and find out how many of you are praying with your wife.

I mean, I'm not asking you praying at the table, a little short prayer, but how many of you are spending quality time with your wife? I spend about 90% of my time out in Western Canada with pastors. My heart is broken for these men. They know that they can trust me, and we spend some time together, and I pray for them.

But can I tell you something tonight, my friends? Listen, some of the most loneliest women I've met have been the wives of pastors. We were in a church some time ago, and by the way, it was a Baptist church. When I listened to this pastor tonight, I thought, there's no one else here but Baptists.

Anyway, we were in this church on a Sunday morning. It was a Sunday to Sunday crusade out in Saskatchewan, and the pastor was gone. He's a great fellow.

He's selling in biblical exposition. He's got a great ministry in counseling. He's gone to the church, and I ran up to the kitchen just to get a glass of water.

Just as I came into the kitchen, his wife was there, and she's a beautiful little girl, just a precious soul. She turned to me, and she said, Gerard, can I see you for a moment? And I thought, uh-huh, this is it again. We sat down at the table, and I said, what is it, Tina? She said, you see my husband, he's a wonderful man.

She said, but my husband refused to pray with me. My brethren, may I say to you something tonight? You're not going to take your congregation further than you would be able to take your family. And I want to be honest with you this evening.

One of the most difficult areas of my life has simply been to discipline myself to spend quality time with my family. You know why? Because I'm a morning person. And my best times of God is between 5 and 8 in the morning.

And my wife is not a morning person. In fact, if I would try to wake Janice up at 7 in the morning and say, come and watch the sunrise with me, she will turn to me and say to me, listen, Daddy, if God wanted me to watch the sunrise at 7, he would have scheduled it much later. But I've got a responsibility, you see.

Can I tell you something tonight, my friends? Listen, there was a day when my wife walked into my study, my office. She said, Gerard, I need to talk to you. And we sat there, and I thought everything was fine.

I thought everything was great. I said, what is it, Janice? She said, I'm becoming very, very lonely, spiritually. I said, why? She said, you don't spend quality time with me.

I spoke to a group of men some time ago, about 16, at the weekend retreat. We dealt with some of this kind of stuff. Right in the middle of that session, a man jumped up, and I asked him, I said, how many of you are spending quality time with your wife? He jumped right up, and he said, I desperately need God.

25 others jumped up. That day they made a covenant with God. Are you spending time with your wife? I phoned my wife last night, and, you know, we are unbelievably busy out in British Columbia.

I mean, if God can't call you, I give you one to come and help me. Because I'm directing my conference center, and sometimes I'm involved in 50 or 60 churches a year, and it's a tremendous responsibility. And I phoned my wife last night, and one of the first things she said, she said, Monica wants to talk to you.

I said, sure. And I never talk to my little girl. She wouldn't go to bed unless I pray with her.

So I talked to her about this and that, and I said, now, Monica, let's pray. And I prayed with her on the phone. And boy, this is fun.

And then after I prayed with her, she ran and jumped on the couch. And my wife was laughing. I said, what is it, Janet? She said, she's sitting on the couch.

I said, oh. She said, she so much enjoyed it. I've got a responsibility, you see.

It's for obedient people. Can I ask you this Monday night, are you living in the obedience of the presence of God? I came across some great statements when it comes to the concept of obedience, about what Martin Luther said. He said, I said, I rather obey than doing miracles for God.

Someone said, revival is the beginning of a new obedience and the presence of God. Listen, my brethren, prayer is the relationship. And relationship means obedience.

And the Bible is saying to us very clear. You remember once Samuel chapter 15. This is what God is saying.

And Samuel said, have the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord. He said, behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of lambs. The Lord Jesus said in the Gospel of John.

He said, he that willeth to do my will shall know of the doctrine that I am speaking of. It's for obedient people. Are you walking in obedience this evening? Is there a sense of openness before God? Someone referred to Dr. Andrew Murray of South Africa.

This man who was so mightily used of God. One day he crossed the street in Cape Town. It was Adelaide Street in Cape Town and he crossed it.

And he stopped in the middle of the street. And someone saw him. This person walked up to him and said, sir, why did you stop in the middle of the street? Do you know what he said? He said, I said, I crossed that street.

He said, I lost contact with God for one split second. And he said, I wanted that contact with God to be restored again. Sounds mystical, doesn't it? It's obedient.

And I wonder this evening, gentlemen, if I may ask you this Monday night. I wonder if Satan has got some foothold in your life. If Satan has got some stronghold in your life.

If there is some area of your life, maybe some besetting sin. Maybe some emotional struggle that you are going through. Maybe some theological struggle that you are going through.

And somehow Satan is taking advance of your life. God said, I want to be here. I would never forget, I preached at a conference in Africa a number of years ago.

There was an elderly lady at those services. I mean, she was in her seventies. And it was services like this.

God was just about doing anything that you could think of. And we had about four or five services every day. And in my ignorance as a young fellow in the ministry, I walked up to her and I said, I said, you know, I don't think you should come to every service.

Why don't you take a break in the afternoon? And why don't you rest? And I would never forget that little woman swinging around and point her finger at me and said, young man. She said, I don't know when God is going to break through. She said, I set myself in such a way that when the wind of the Spirit will come, she said, I will be swept into His love.

You know what's one of my greatest fears in these days together? And listen, by tomorrow night we're almost through. But one of my greatest fears tonight is that, brethren, that there could be some of us who are going to sit through service after service. We are going to be exposed to the Word of God.

And we would say it's wonderful. It's right. It's God's Word.

And we come to the end like this. And we say the harvest is gone. The time has come.

And yet we have not met with God. You say, what are you saying? I'm saying to you it's possible that you can miss it. I'm saying to you it's possible that we could sit and gather inside this and the Spirit of God can breathe upon us and bring us back to the preciousness of the Word of God and yet not being affected by it.

I was involved in a series of lectures in Edinburgh in Scotland. What we speak of as a holiday convention. People came to this theological school.

And we had tremendous times. And the Spirit of God is breathing upon some of those gatherings. And you think there was a pregnancy in the atmosphere.

It just seems that if God was going to do something. Friday morning came and I gave my lecture and then the president of the school came and he gave his lecture and we had a prolonged time of prayer. And it was one of those prayer meetings.

I mean, you were just waiting. God was going to do something. And I had to go into the city of Edinburgh about 12, 15 minutes away.

And I waited and I waited and I didn't want to miss it. And there was a moment that I said to myself, I can't wait any longer. And I slipped into my little car and I was driving down Princes Street in Edinburgh.

And suddenly the Holy Spirit of God spoke to me. And said, I've just broken into the gathering. Sure.

I swung that little car around and I went flying back to that school. And when I got back to the school, the meeting was dispersed. They sent people to their rooms.

I mean, these people were all broken up seeking God. I remember I ran to the president's office and as I came into his office he sat behind a desk. And I look at him and he looked up and the tears were streaming down his cheeks and I knew.

And I said, Colin, what happened? He said, Gerard, he said, God broke through. I said, when? He said, five minutes after you left. You see, gentlemen, there is a moment where God makes of us.

But there are many subsequent infillings of the Holy Spirit. And one of the reasons why we've met like this these days is that God could come to our hearts again and again and again. Maybe you sit here and say, hey, that's a foreign language to me.

I mean, I don't understand the terminology of that. You just keep your heart open before God and you see what happens. And those of us who are pastors tonight, my brethren, may I say that to you.

I don't know how you can carry on in your ministry if there are not these times through the exposition of God's Word and the commitment to God's Word. I can't see how there could not be times that God would

move upon that congregation, somehow break into the hearts of people. And He brings a new obedience.

It's for an observant people. It's for ordinary people, just like you and me. I mean, it just about blew me out of the water today when I knew the Holy Spirit of God was bringing me into the Word of God.

And God said, I've got a life of intercessory prayer for you. And I said, you know, my understanding was, Lord, this means maybe 10 or 15 hours a day in prayer. And He said, no, it doesn't mean that.

You look at the life story of Charlestown and Spurgeon. They say to us that although George Muller of Bristol spent hours in prayer with Spurgeon, that he very seldom spent a half an hour in prayer himself. There was something about his life.

It's for observant people. It's a great, wonderful verse. In the prophecy of Jeremiah, don't you know what he said? He said, my eyes have affected my heart.

Gentlemen, may I say to you something tonight, and I mean, you need to know I would love you to death, but I need to say this to you. If you don't have a burden for people, if you are not concerned about the lives of men who are lost this evening simply because of the fact that God has never given you a broken heart for people. You see, observation affects intercession.

The prophet said, my eyes have affected my heart. Has God given you a heart that is broken? Broken for people? Have you read the life story of George Whitefield, that amazing man? Died at the age, if I remember correctly, 58. A man who used to pray, God give me soul, so take my soul away.

And do you know what they say to us about Whitefield? That the last three years of his life, that somehow Whitefield was so weak, that sometimes after he preached, that they thought this man was going to die, and they gave him a young man that was looking after him, and he was always living with Whitefield, and sometimes they say after he preached, that he was so drained, and he was so absolutely wiped out, that they had to lay him down on three chairs, and somehow pray over him, so that God would just touch him again, and maybe he can preach again. The day when George Whitefield died, at his funeral that young man stood to his feet, and he said, folks, he said, people, he said, whatever you heard of this man, he said, it's all true. He said, I watched him for three years.

He said, we would lay him down in his bed at night, and he said, somehow I just wonder if he would see the next morning. And he said, at around three or four in the morning, he said, I would hear something, and then I would see the great George Whitefield got on his knees before God, and those early hours of the morning, he was supplicating and interceding, and the presence of God. That's why he could preach to 120,000 people in Cumberland and Scotland.

So they could hear him two or three miles away. What was it? Was it Whitefield? Forget about it. It was the Spirit of God.

One of the greatest miracles for me that can happen, is in a conference like this, that God the Holy Spirit, my brethren, listen, can lift out an individual like you and me, and He can break us, and He can humble us, and He can bring us to the place where we are concerned about the glory of God, and He can burden us, and He can give us a spirit of prayer, and you and I can walk away here as a pastor or as a lay leader, and we can say in the days to come, it's not going to be desire that controls destiny, it's simply going to be determination, seeking the face of God in prayer. How does it happen? Well, God said, without a vision my people perish. You need to have a burden, you see.

I spent three wonderful years in Northern Ireland, and I mean, you need to understand Northern Ireland, you're dealing with the cream of the people of God. I mean, you need to go to appreciate that. I want to get John Curran into Northern Ireland.

I mean, he will get to Northern Ireland and you'll never see him again. It's an appreciation for the Word. You know why? In 1920, God began to use a Presbyterian minister with the name of William P. Nicholson.

And God met with Nicholson in the revival, you know where? In a little Salvation Army meeting in the corner of the street. And He said, I passed by, and He said, I look at this bunch of cranks, and I said to myself, they're way off. And the Holy Spirit of God said, Nicholson, your problem is pride.

And God said, I want you to humble yourself in that little street meeting, and I want you to confess that you're near its pride, and I want you to ask these people to pray for you. Nicholson said, in that little Salvation Army meeting, was a little boy who didn't have enough brains to give him a headache. He was called Darth Jimmy.

And God said, I want you to ask Darth Jimmy to pray for you. And God met with him in the revival in a little meeting, just like that. And do you know what happened, my brethren? The Spirit of God came upon Double P. Nicholson, and He began to preach, and thousands of people were converted in Northern Ireland.

And I spent three wonderful years in the north of Ireland, and wherever I went, I came across the converts of the late Reverend William P. Nicholson. And they stood, and they were strong, and they were prayer warriors, and they were people who were absolutely going through with God. And I will never forget, I came into a house on the other side of Newcastle, kind of south of Belfast, walking to this house, and I said to the lady of the house, I said, madam, did you know Mr. Nicholson? And her eyes just lightened up.

She said, yes, I did. I said, well, you tell me about him. She said, Gerard, I was but a young little girl, about six or eight years old.

And she pointed me in the house. She said, you see that room? She said, Double P. Nicholson stayed in that room. I said, tell me about him.

You know what she said? She said, one morning around six o'clock in the morning, she said, we heard something in that room. We wondered what was going on. She said, my mother and my father and myself, we slipped up the steps to wonder because we heard a commotion.

And she said, as we came to the door, and my father opened the door about six inches or so, and we glanced through the door, and she said, there was Nicholson on his knees and on his face before God. And she said, you know, it was the winter's morning, and he had covered himself with the sheets of the bed. And she said, he was praying, and he was interceding, and he was agonizing.

And she said, Gerard, as I watched him, something of the burden of God came upon him, and he supplicated, he interceded. And she said, as he prayed, he got so involved with God that he began to tear the sheets of that bed into pieces, as he supplicated before God. I stood back and I said to myself, forget about the physical manifestation.

What about that deep spiritual intensity of intercession? Has God given you a broken heart? Are they men, gentlemen, that you are praying for? Now, I don't want you to misunderstand, I don't think God wants us to

have worldly friends, but listen, if you don't have friends in the world, you're dead in the water. And every single year I asked the Lord, I said, Lord, I'm trusting you for 12 or for 15 men that you are going to bring into my life, that I can relate to these men, that I can pray for them, that I can share the gospel with them, as I try to minister them through my lifestyle, through just being transparent. Observation.

I spent about 18 months in my own country in what was called the National Defense Forces, and we were called up for military service. And I mean, goodnight, you talk about discipline. We had a minute and a half for breakfast in the morning.

We had a famous instructor and his famous words were, swallow now and chew later. Boy, will I ever forget that. And after my national service, I had to do chaplain's work every second year.

We were called up for three months. And my last chaplain's camp on the borders of Zambia, we were on the Zambezi River, it was a large river about a kilometer, kilometer and a half wide. And there were some beautiful fish, it's called tiger fish, they are fierce fighters if you are into fishing.

And I had great times in my office studying. One day two of the soldiers came in. And they sat down and they said, Padre, we saw something today.

I said, what? They said, and there are these majestic fish eagles in Africa. They said, we saw this fish eagle. And we watched him.

And do you know what the Bible is saying to us in Isaiah? The Bible is saying to us, They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. I said, what did you see? They said, we watched him. And they say that African fish eagle, when he gets old, he would scratch his beak against the cliff, so that it would be sharp.

He would scratch his claws, so that they would be sharp. He would bash his wings, so that those old feathers would fall out. I said, what did you see? They said, we saw the fish eagle today.

And he went down into the river, and he got older when there was huge tiger fish. And they said, we saw how he got his claws into that tiger fish. And as he got it into it, he began to lift that fish.

And they said, that fish was so heavy, but it was a strong bird. And they said, he began to fly to the other side of the river. And they said, Padre, we watched him through our binoculars.

He was old. And they said, there was a moment when he knew that he was in trouble, because the fish was too heavy. And that fish was bringing him down towards the water.

And they said, he tried to get his claws out, but he was so old, and they were so long, that he couldn't get them out. And he said, we saw him going into the river, and we saw the crocodiles descending upon him. It spoke to my heart, you know.

Are you sensitive towards God? I think one of the reasons why we are not sensitive towards people, is simply because we are not sensitive towards God. And he said, Tom, he said, these are exactly the kind of people that we've been talking about. Are you praying for people? I mean, go and get hold of the life story of George Muller of Bristol.

85,000 answers to prayer. 35,000 answers to prayer in 24 hours. Someone asked him, you know how long has he prayed for someone? 63 years, I'm told.

Why was it? Someone asked him, Mr. Muller, do you ever stop praying for people? He said, no, never, never. Why? He said, once I know I'm in the will of God when I pray for that person. He said, I never cease to stop praying.

Observation. My time is virtually gone. What is the agony of intercessory prayer? Fervent praying.

Fervent praying. Oh, you know, there is a phrase in the Old Testament prophets, boy do I love it, the oh, just that, that's something. That sense of fervency.

That sense of coming to grips with God. That sense of saying, Lord, we will not let thee go unless thou would bless us. Do you know something of that fervency? I tell you, my brothers, let me say to you tonight, I don't, I can't see what more God can do for this prayer at once.

I mean, we're talking about revival. Listen, we can preach ourselves blue in the faces about revival. We can be concerned about revival.

But unless we're going to get on our knees and pray through for revival, we are not going to see revival. It's fervent. I mentioned about Lewis this afternoon.

We don't know how many years those two ladies prayed. We don't know. Heaven alone will know.

It seems to me behind every movement of the Spirit of God, you know what I've discovered? There is a kneeling figure. Someone who has been praying, agonizing in the presence of God. My greatest fear in the 90s when it comes to the church, I tell you, I think we are in deep trouble.

You know why? Because the older people who knew something of this burden, who knew something of this passion, something of this sense, and I'm totally against this business that we take the young people out of our churches, and we take them away from the prayer meeting, and we say they must have their own little meeting. Do you know how I grew in my prayer life? I listened to men who knew the secret of getting through to God, and as they were praying and interceding and supplicating before God, something of that spirit of prayer come to rest upon my life. Fervency.

Fervency in prayer. Oh, what about Elijah? Boy, that's tremendous fervency. I mean, if you study his life, if you go to 1 Kings chapter 18, if you look at that great chapters of preparation in his life, and you see in 1 Kings chapter 18, the prayer was only something like 54 or 56 words, but it came from a heart that was so saturated and soaked before God.

What about Christ and Gethsemane? The Bible is saying to us that His sweat drops became as blood, as He agonized before His Father. What about the Acts of the Apostles? The Bible is saying they were fervently praying. In Acts chapter 4 and the crisis in the church, they were fervently praying.

And what happened? The place was shaken. In Acts chapter 12, they were earnestly praying. Fervency.

I will never in my life forget. His name was John Greer. He was about 73 years old when I met him, outside of Bellarmine County, Antrim in Northern Ireland, safe under Nicholson.

There were two weeks of meetings for Christians, and every morning, about five or six of these older men came together to pray with me. And every morning as we got on our knees and our faces before God, he was just a frail little figure. He's gone to be with the Lord now, but I remember I used to watch him, and this one would pray, and that one would pray, and this one would pray, and then suddenly John Greer would pray, and he would just lift up his head like this, and he would say, Lord Jesus, God is in our midst.

A young fellow in the ministry, open my eyes, and look at him. The burden of God would come upon him. Persevere.

Sometimes he would grab that chair where he was kneeling, and he would knock it, as the Spirit of God just flowed through his life, as he agonized, as he prayed, as he got through to God. An hour or so later, I would look in his heart, with an eye that is dry, and sometimes, by the time that John Greer came to the end of his prayer, I would look at my watch, and two and a half hours is gone, and we had to help him to sit, because his clothes were so soaked with sweat, as he agonized, so wiped out. I don't know tonight if you'll appreciate me saying this, but an hour or two hours of real intercessory, and listen gentlemen, prayer is not a weapon, it's a battlefield.

It's a war zone. And the bullets are flying, and the casualties are high. Intensity of ferocity.

Frequently. Focusing. Do you realize the story of resale intercession? Do you know what Leonard Raven said about resales? During the time when they prayed for the Bible college in Wales, the wife of resales would say, my husband started a Bible college worth 25 cents in our language, just more than two shillings.

And when God spoke to him about that theological school, she'd say, early in the morning, around six o'clock or so, my husband would go into his prayer room, and he would stay there until six o'clock at night, and she heard him as he supplicated before God. He said, God, you've spoken to my heart. We don't have a fence.

We're not going to borrow it. We're going to trust you. And he prayed every cent in to build the Bible school.

And do you know what they're saying to us? They're saying to us that the prayers of resales changed the course of the Second World War, believe it or not, because he got free to God. Thomas Goodwin, that great Puritan, said, those prayers that awaken God must also awaken us. Listen to Tozer.

He said, the sight of God when he appears in awesome majesty to the wandering eyes of the soul will bring the worshipper to his knees with fear and with gladness to fill him with such overwhelmed sense of divine greatness that he must spontaneously cry, only God is great. Listen to this. This is John Calvin.

Let us know that no one who prepares himself for prayer but those who are so impressed with the majesty of God. Lynette Ravenhill said, our prayer meetings today are nothing else than a dumping ground for our ills and our diseases. W.A. Tozer said, our prayer meetings is nothing and our prayers is nothing more than giving God a lot of information that he already knows.

Servancy and prayer. I wonder tonight, my brethren, if I may ask you, where do you stand when it comes to your prayer life? I'm not asking you, I'm not asking you how much time you spend in prayer. I'm asking you, do you have a prayer life? You see, it's really none of my business to find out how much time you spend in the presence of God.

That's really between you and God. But the question is, do you have a prayer life? Do you spend time with God? I said to Harold Saturday, I'm staying in a wonderful little house there close to the church where we are having meetings from Wednesday night on. And I said to him, Harold, I said, brother, if you come to that house and you don't find me on my knees, I want you to ask me, what have I been doing? I mean, I want to be accountable.

Are you seeking the face of God? Listen, gentlemen, if anything is going to happen in these meetings, it's going to happen as a result that we've got through to God. That means you need to get through to God and it means I need to get through to God. Firmness.

Focus. It means God wants me to be specific when I come into His presence. Let's pray.

Our Father, we are so amazed tonight by the sense of the awareness of the presence of God. And Lord, we sing tonight at the very outset of this gathering together that God is speaking to us in very amazing ways. And this is but the first half of the day that we are spending together.

And Lord, we ask tonight in Jesus' name that you will bring to us such a tremendous honesty. We ask for such a brokenness. Lord, I pray for such a conviction upon my heart and upon the heart of every one of us, every pastor, every person that's involved in leadership, every single soul.

We come tonight, Father God, to seek the face of God. My brethren, I wonder this evening, and we don't want to push this, but I wonder this evening, maybe in one way or another, God has been speaking to you from the very first session. And you really need to come and spend some time with God.

I wonder if you could maybe slip out wherever you are and come in here at the front or find a place somewhere and you say, I'm going to seek the face of God. I'm going to ask God to get through to the realm of my will so that I can make long-term commitment in my relationship with God. There's someone coming, I wonder if there are others, and you just want to slip out right here to the altar and you say, I need to come and spend time with God.

Just come. We don't want you to come if you don't really mean business of God, but you really sit here and you say, I know God has spoken to me. I want to come and spend some time with Him tonight.

I want God to break my heart this evening and do something that is so deep and so real in my relationship with God. Just come. Those of you who are sitting here, maybe not at the front, maybe you just want to kneel right where you are.

God, I want to seek your face. And you're going to become very, very personal and say, Lord, come to my heart. Those of us here at the front, you know, sometimes it's good to hear ourselves praying.

And just one after the other, if God has touched your heart tonight and if God has broken your heart and you want to open up tonight, we want to give an opportunity. Now, what we would like you to do, we don't want you to pray long because there are many of us who want to pray. And secondly, we don't want you to pray for us or for your church, but we want you to be specific.

Just as you are, you come to God. Just one after the other. I wonder if there is someone who would like to lead us in prayer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4394.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gerhard-du-toit/prevailing-prayer/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net