

(South West Baptist Church 2008) Old Testament Prayer

by Gerhard Du Toit

Gerhard Du Toit's sermon explores the depth and significance of prayer in the Old Testament, highlighting key figures like Abraham and Hannah as examples of intercessory prayer and God's initiative in communication with humanity.

Duration: 57:15

Scripture: Genesis 18:16-17

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a personal experience with his daughter who had a near-death encounter with a stallion. He shares how he prayed fervently during that time and when he asked his daughter what happened, she revealed that she could have been killed. This incident leads to a moment of realization for both the speaker and his daughter about God's plan for her life. The speaker then transitions to discussing the importance of the Old Testament and the New Testament in understanding the significance of Jesus' life and teachings. He emphasizes the role of prayer in Jesus' ministry and how it impacted the early disciples. The sermon concludes with a powerful testimony of a man who experienced a profound conversion after a moment of brokenness and prayer.

Transcript

I want you to turn back into your little circle, if you will, and I want you to open your Bible. I really trust that you brought your Bible with you, and it will be helpful if you want to bring a notebook, and then I would encourage you, I think, all these sessions that we are doing are recorded, you know, and if you think they are worthwhile to listen through the material, then you would be welcome to get those CDs. Also, if you don't have your Bible with you, you are going to need to say this morning, May God have mercy on my poor, wretched soul.

But I trust that you do. Listen, why don't we change our positions, and we just stand for the reading of God's Word. If you turn with me to Genesis 18, one of those 18 classic prayers in the Old Testament, and just a few verses from another classic prayer in the Old Testament, which is 1 Samuel 1. Genesis 18, and then if you could also somehow put your finger in 1 Samuel 1. Genesis 18, verse number 16.

The Bible says, And the men rose up from thence, and they looked toward Sodom, and Abram went with them to bring them on the way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abram that thing which I do, seeing that Abram shall surely become a great and a mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children, and also his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and to do judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abram that which he hath spoken of him. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, verse 20, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and I will see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know.

And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom, but Abram stood yet before the Lord. And Abram drew near and said, Will thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city. Will thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be it far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be it far from thee.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord God said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abram answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous.

Will thou destroy all the city for the lack of five? God said to him, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spoke unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for the sake of forty.

And he said unto him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Peradventure there shall be thirty found there. And God said to him, I will not do it if I find thirty there.

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord. Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.

And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure a ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.

And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communion with Abram. And Abram returned unto his place. Now, 1 Samuel 1, if you are able to turn over to that chapter.

Verse 9. 1 Samuel 1. So, Hannah rose up after that, eaten and shallow, and after their drink. Now, Eli, the priest, sat upon a seat by the post of the temple of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul.

And she prayed unto the Lord, and she wept sore. She bowed about and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid and remember me and not forget thy handmaid, but will give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life. And there shall no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass that as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now, Hannah, she spoke in her heart, but only her lips moved. But her voice was not heard.

Therefore, Eli thought that she was drunk. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunk and put away thy wine from thee? And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I

have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord.

Count not thy handmaid for a daughter if Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him. You may be seated.

You know, it's an amazing thing when we begin to study prayer in the Old Testament that there are a number of things that we need to come to grips with. And because of the limitation of just this one morning in the Old Testament, do I just want to mention those things to you that will give you an understanding when you study these almost more than 400 possible Old Testament prayers that has been given unto us in the Scriptures. And the few things that I would like to mention to you by a way of introduction is simply this, that there is a distinction between prayer in the different Old Testament books when we speak of the law and the prophets and the writings, or what we would refer to as the historical books, or rather the five books of Moses in the Old Testament, the historical books in the Old Testament, and the books of poetry in the Old Testament, and the prophets, the major, the minor prophets.

You know, the yearning of my heart was, and I said to God early today, that the only way that we have been able to do that is that if we would have started at 8 o'clock this morning and go through, do two sessions until lunchtime and have lunch together, and then take the afternoon and do another two sessions. And what I would have loved to do is to take one of the classic prayers out of the first five books of Moses and one of the classic prayers out of the historical books in the Old Testament, and then look at the depth of emotion, thanksgiving, praise in the books of poetry, and then finally spend our last session this afternoon in the prophets of the Old Testament when you deal with prayer, which of course it's not possible for us to do. But there is a very clear distinction as it relates to prayer.

But what I want to say to you, brother and sister, is that when you bring everything that the Old Testament is saying to us about prayer together, you will discover that everything as it relates to prayer in the Old Testament was manifested and revealed in the life of Christ and in His teachings on prayer. Why do I say that? I say that because the Old Testament is revealed for us in the New Testament, and the New Testament lies hidden for us in the Old Testament. And when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.

People don't realize the incredible importance of the four Gospels as it relates to the Old and the rest of the New Testament. Because what Christ did in the four Gospels as it relates to prayer, He brought everything together. It was manifested in His life.

And what He did in those three and a half years when the early disciples sat at His feet and when they came to Him in Luke 11 and never asked Him to teach them how to preach or to teach them how to be missionaries or pastors, but they asked this predominant thing. And there is such a tremendous reason why they asked Him this question in Luke 11. Because it opens the reality of what prayer was about in the life and the teachings of Christ.

And they came to Him and they said to Him, Lord, will You teach us how to pray? And people do not realize the importance of that. Because in His teachings and in His life of prayer, He laid the foundation for what prayer was going to become when the Holy Spirit was going to be poured out on the day of Pentecost. And then to discover that one of the great themes in the book of Acts is the theme of prayer and in the epistles of Paul and the general epistles.

So what I'm saying to you is this, that everything that the Old Testament is saying to us about prayer was for fault in Christ. That's why when we speak about those 11 Hebrew words, three times in the Old Testament with the prophets, when they prophesy about the Messiah, that they look upon the coming of the Messiah and they were so moved by His life of prayer that three times they called Christ a prayer. That's why God the Father said at numerous occasions in the four Gospels, when He was not able to withhold the glory of His satisfying reality of the life of Christ, that He said numerous times, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

And when He said that, He gave unto us the physical manifestation of that which was prayer about. Now, Christ came in John 17. And you remember in the high priestly prayer, I said at the camp over the weekend that one of the ways to study the Gospel of John is to discover in John's Gospel Christ as our New Testament tabernacle.

And when you study that in the New Testament, you come into John 17. And the reason I say that is because when the Apostle John said the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, in the Greek New Testament it's the Word for tabernacle. And in John 17, Christ stood up and in the high priestly prayer, this is what He said.

He said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify the Son, so that the Son may also glorify Him. And then He prayed and He said, Glorify Me with the glory which I had while I was with Thee.

And then He went on to say and He said, I have manifested Your name. And brother and sister, when you study the 16 Hebrew names of God in the Old Testament, you will discover that Christ became the manifestation of those names of God as they relate to prayer and His life and His ministry of intercessory prayer. Now, because of the fact that our time is so limited, let me just mention to you, for instance, in the first five books of Moses, you will discover that prayer became a conversation and a dialogue.

And as a result of that, you will discover that prayer was focused around the lives of people. For instance, Abel, when he brought the sacrifice to God. The shedding of the blood.

And the fact that the first act of worship cost him his life. The life of Noah in the Old Testament when the epistle to the Hebrews would come to us. And the writer to the Hebrews would make this statement, and he said, by faith, Noah prepared an ark.

Why did he do that? For the saving of his house. And God testifying of His gifts. And by that he was counted righteousness.

He received a warning from God. And you discover aspects of the prayer life of Noah which was very limited because of the space that was given to him in the book of Genesis. Then from Noah we move into the life of Abram that I am going to look upon in a moment or two.

And you discover the six clear distinctive manifestations of the prayer life of Abram. And you come to the realization that whenever it seems to us that Abram moved his tent, what did he do? He built an altar for God. And then when you move from Abram you came into the life of Isaac.

That was a weakling, if I may say that with respect. But you do discover in Genesis 24 the tremendous revelation of Eliezer, the servant of Isaac when he went to look for a wife for Isaac. And how clearly, distinctively, he prayed to the point that God would lead him to the one that was going to become the wife of Isaac.

And then of course, we come into the life of Jacob and we discover his prayer life and his wrestling with God before meeting his brother. The manifestation of his prayer life which takes us into the prayer life of Joseph. Not much was said about the prayer life of Joseph although the manifestation of the character of Joseph and his personality given to us great insights into his intimacy with God.

And then, brethren and sisters, we discover the majestic revelation of the prayer life of Moses and the Old Testament. Now, prayer was initiated by God. And if you want to come to grips with that, you need to come to grips with two things.

You need to study the prayer life of Moses in the Old Testament. And you will discover that 104 times, God spoke to Moses. Do you know how many times Moses spoke to God? A mere 25 times in the book of Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy.

You say, why do you say that, brother and sister? I'm saying that because in those first five books of Moses, prayer was initiated by God. You see, He is the initiator of prayer. He is the One that came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when He said, let us create man after our image and after our likeness.

And when He created them, what did He do? Did He just merely left them in the Garden of Eden? Not for one moment. What did God do? He came on a consistent basis in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the evening, which is the Hebrew word for the word spirit. And what did He do? He had fellowship with Adam and Eve.

He was the One that initiated prayer. And I want to tell you this morning, you know, tomorrow we are going to go and probably tomorrow night into those 248 passages that are speaking to us about prayer in the New Testament. We are going to try and do that.

And I will focus on 12 aspects of New Testament prayer. And one of the first aspects of New Testament prayer is what we refer to as fellowship praying. And we discover the beauty of what worship is about.

But here you see this initiation of God as it relates to prayer. Now, I think at the camp when we spent one day, I wanted to do four things, and we only got to one. And this morning, I don't want to go back to that, because some of those of you that were at the weekend are here back this morning.

And maybe you can't remember what I said on Saturday, which is quite common. But if you do can, we don't want to cover it again. What I wanted to do is to take another aspect.

And what I want to do, brother and sister, is to try to look at two aspects of Old Testament prayer. The first one is the intercessor. And the second concept is the burden of God.

So you see, where do we find these two possibilities of Old Testament prayer? We find them in the life of Abraham in the Old Testament. And we find it in the life of Hannah as it relates to the burden of God. So, first of all, let's spend a moment or so in the life of Abraham.

You know, Abraham was an incredible man. He's mentioned about 800 times in the totality of what the Scriptures is all about. He's mentioned the most in the New Testament.

His name has been saturated in the New Testament of the Old Testament saints and characters. And so when you look at Abraham's life, you will discover that in chapter 17 of the book of Genesis, we discover a

deep encounter that Abraham had with God that led to his life of prayer and that eventually took us into the great example of Calvary and the Old Testament which became the 22nd chapter of the book of Genesis. But you say, Gerard, what happened in chapter 17? God came to Abraham and God said unto Abraham, walk before Me, and you shall be perfect.

Now, we need to clarify something. Because the word that we are dealing with, He was not speaking about perfection, but the Hebrew word is the word halak. And so when it speaks of that word, of walking with God, it gives unto us the revelation of the Old Testament which is our New Testament understanding of a life in the fullness of the Spirit of God.

And so God threw this challenge out to Abraham that God wanted him to walk before Him. Incidentally, Abraham was the first person in the 22nd chapter of the book of Genesis, brother and sister, that God called twice in His name when He was willing to sacrifice Isaac and He was stopped. And God said to him, Abraham, Abraham.

But you say, what happened in the 18th chapter of Genesis? And I want you to try and break down some aspects of this chapter that you will not just see it from Abraham's perspective, but brother and sister, that you will see it from God's perspective. You see, you know our problem with the prayers of the Old Testament is simply this, that when you and I would study the prayers of the Old Testament, most of the times, you know what we do, and we make a drastic mistake, is that we study the prayers of the Old Testament and we say to ourselves, oh, I'm learning these marvelous lessons from Old Testament prayers. Brother and sister, if I would be allowed to say this to you this morning, you are maybe learning wonderful lessons, but you are missing 75% of the boat.

You say, why would you make this statement? Let me explain to you what I'm trying to say to you. The prayers of the Old Testament, brother and sister, are based upon four things. You say, Gerard, what are those four things? First of all, they are based upon the revelation of God to those individuals that were going to pray those prayers.

Secondly, they are not just based upon the revelation of God to those individuals, they are based upon an encounter that those individuals had with God because of the revelation of God to their life. Now, the essence of those New Testament prayers that if you would bring those first two concepts together, my brother and sister, what will happen is that when you discover the revelation of God to them, and when you discover what happened to them as a result of the revelation, these people were so affected by God that they wanted to do something for God. They were so moved with God.

You say, did they not pray during that period of progressively following God? Of course they did. But it doesn't bring you to the essence of what their whole prayer is all about. You see what happens.

The revelation of God leads to an encounter. The encounter with God leads to the exploits that they did for God. And then, brother and sister, they pray.

Now, when you study their prayers, do you know what happens when you study their prayers? You will discover that when you study their prayers, their prayers is taking you back to an understanding of the revelation of God. Their prayers is taking you back to their encounters with God. Their prayers is taking you back to that which they did for God.

And then, you discover the fullness and you look at it from two different perspectives. So, what about Abram? Well, this is fascinating. You say, what is it? You remember what God said about Abram? I love a statement.

Brother and sister, here is the secret of the intercessor in the Old Testament. God said, can I hide from Abram that which I contemplate to do? That's the heart of it. You see, here was a man.

Here was a man who had a relationship. And you know, it broke my heart when I was thinking about this. Because I've met people like that, you know.

That they have such a relationship with God. It is so deep. It is so unique.

It is so absolutely incredible that this statement would come to the surface. God said, can I hide from Abram that which I contemplate to do? He couldn't do it. Because there was a man.

And this man became the intercessor, you see. So, why did he become the intercessor? Brother and sister, it was not... And let me just mention this to you, if I may. The secret of understanding Genesis chapter 18 has nothing to do with the numbers that Abram brought into the presence of God.

When he said, if there are 50 righteous, or if there were 45 or 40, you say, then why did that happen? What was happening to Abram in the development of his life of intercession? Brother and sister, between those numbers, he was getting to know the character and the righteousness of God as it relates to prayer. So you say, what do we have to do? We need to put those numbers aside. Not that they're not important, but we need to see that every time when Abram would make... And you remember these amazing statements? He said, I am but dust and ashes.

He said, be not angry with me. He said, once more let I come to thee, as he made those statements. And when, as he would make those statements, and as those numbers would come right in the midst of it, brother and sister, when you go into the Old Testament theology of prayer, you discover the unfolding of the character of God as it relates to this thing of coming to Him as an intercessor.

So what did God say? He said, can I hide from Abram that which I contemplate to do? Can I ask you this morning a question? You know, it sometimes kind of gets personal, you know. And I'm speaking to myself, brother and sister, because we're dealing with circles here. And the first circle that we are dealing with is the circle that you and I draw around our own relationship with God.

That's Jerusalem, isn't it? Can I ask you this morning, how is it going in our little Jerusalem? Can I ask you that when it comes to this personal intimacy with God, because you see, no ministry is going further than my family. No ministry is going further than the person that is the closest to me on this planet. And so here it is, this intimacy that we are dealing with.

You know, our daughter, we've got one daughter, and her name is Monica. She's going to Bible college this year. She's 17.

And oh, she's just like me. She's like an irresistible force meeting the unmovable object, you know. I mean, she's the chip of the old block.

She's got the Afrikaner something in her. That's why we're such... I often say to Janice, you know Monica? I say to her, the only reason why Rome was not going to be built in three days is because Monica was not

going to be around. She's a block of determination.

And this daughter of mine, when we were expecting her, brother and sister, we were praying, because I was 35 when we got married. Janice was 33. And I cried to God.

We both. We were on our knees every night. Janice kneels there, and I kneel.

And we were praying, you know. We honor the earth. And so what's happening? But I tell you, although we would have loved to have a child, we prayed.

And we said, God, we don't want to have children, if we're going to populate hell. Lo and behold, there was a day when Monica was born, and because I wanted to become a vet in southern Africa, I went to a place called Onosapur, before I went into theology. And same with Monica.

She loves animals. And she loves horses. And because of the fact that she loves horses, I know Ron doesn't have much respect for horses, but she loves horses.

And my daughter works for these horses. And you know, one afternoon, Saturday afternoon, I was at home, and I was preparing to speak the next Sunday about two hours ago at Seattle. And Monica was working at the barns.

And she was working with these horses. She trained these horses. And a lady came with a horse worth \$75,000 and came to my daughter and said, I want you to train my horse for me.

And I said to Monica, we need more insurance in the horse than in you. And you know, anyway, that afternoon at 3 o'clock, I was on my knees praying. And you know this stuff.

Suddenly, this thing of the burden of God came upon me for my daughter. I thought, what's going on here? And brother and sister, it became so massive. It became so overwhelming.

And I just, I left everything. And I just flipped onto my face before God. And I said, Father, I have no idea what is happening.

I don't know why you are doing this to me, but I know there's something wrong. And I said, Father, I want to intercede. I want to pray.

And I prayed for her for about 45 minutes. And the burden lifted. And so when the burden lifted, and I don't know if you know this stuff, brother and sister, when you are in an intensive time of intercessory prayer, when you are through that time of intercessory prayer, you know how I feel sometimes? I feel it's like an orange that has been squeezed.

I mean, intense intercessory prayer when the burden of God is so real, an hour of that takes a lot more for me than three hours of preaching, you know. Preaching is exhausting. So, I had no idea what happened.

And 5 o'clock came, and I got into the vehicle and drove down to the barn about 15 minutes away and picked her up. They gave her \$10 an hour, and that's how she saved. And so she got into the vehicle.

And when she got into the vehicle, we drove, and she was dead quiet. And I said, How are you doing, my darling? And she said, I'm okay, Dad. I said, Monica, I've got a question.

And she said, What is it? I said, What happened around 3 o'clock? And you know, this 13 year old, just look at me. Some time ago, 13 or 14 years, she said, Just look at me. And she said, Why are you asking? I said, I want to know.

Well, she said, I could have been killed. I said, What do you mean? She said, Dad, I was working with this stallion. And she said, As I was working with him, he turned around and he kicked me right in my stomach.

And she said, As he kicked me in my stomach, she said, I was thrown. And as I was thrown, she said, He kicked again. And she said, His back hoof missed this side of my head by about an inch.

And she said, Why do you ask? I said, Well, let me tell you. From 3 o'clock to 3.45, she said, I said, I was on my face before God. And she looked at me and just began to cry.

I just got into a dirt road and parked the vehicle. And I said, Come to Daddy. And she fell into my arms and just wept.

And we prayed. And she said, Dad, I said, Yes? She said, God really has a plan for my life, doesn't He? And I said, Absolutely. We are going to find it.

We are going to follow it. We are going to trust Him to finish it. Let me ask you a question this morning.

Do you know the burden of God? I love this word, intercessor, you know. It's a Latin word. You know, we spoke about the Puritans.

The reason why many people can't read the Puritans, Brethren and Sisters, is because most of them were thinking in Latin while they were trying to write in English. It's tough, you know. You need to read them on your knees.

But this word, intercession, or intercessor, is a Latin word. And it's a combination of two words in Latin. You say, what does it mean? Intra and sidra.

You say, what is the word intra? The word intra means go between, among, being involved, and it speaks of an intervention. You say, Gerard, what about the word sidra? What does the word sidra mean? This word sidra, Brethren and Sisters, has got four different meanings. It means to go, to yield, to move, or to pay the price.

That's what this root word means. But this root word has four other meanings. And I want you to listen to it.

The first root concept means simply to go in between. This is what happens. It gives the picture of stepping in between violent enemies who are willing to face one another and killing each other.

That's what it means. The second meaning of this root understanding concept speaks of someone who yields himself among those who are weak and those who desperately need assistance. Now the third concept of this root understanding of intercession, this is what it means.

It speaks of moving in the direction of specific involvement regarding the needs of others and gives the picture of a good Samaritan. And the last meaning of this intercessor, it speaks of paying the price of intervention. Intercession is more a way of life than it is a type of prayer.

You say, what is it? It's the intercessor, you see. Can I ask you this morning? I wonder what will happen if God would come to your life and my life, brother and sister, and you say, what will happen to me? He will begin to wake us up in the middle of the night. One o'clock in the morning and suddenly the burden of God will be there and this intercessor will become a reality.

And He will put me in between. Now you say, what will happen when He puts me in between? You know, the Old Testament term in the prophets, the major prophets and the minor prophets, they use a term, brother and sister, and this is what they said. They would say, the burden of the Lord was upon me.

The burden of the Lord was upon me. Now, when you study this understanding as it relates to the intercessor, and when God comes in the Old Testament and He made a statement, and this is what He said, I was looking for someone to stand in the gap. That's what He speaks of.

And He said there was no one. And then when God would come and make this statement, and He speaks about the watchman and the war, and you discover the ministry of intercession. Now, brother and sister, can I tell you something this morning? There's nothing spectacular about this.

Nothing. Not one single soul is going to come to you or to me when God has set us aside for a life in the ministry of intercession. Not one single soul is going to come to us and pat you on the back and say, isn't this amazing? Isn't this amazing? God has given you this ministry.

They're not going to know about it. There's nothing spectacular about it. Not one simple thing.

And that you know when we speak about intercession and the life of Abram. And then the stages. He comes and he said, if there are 50, God said, I will not destroy it.

And then the numbers come down. And the revelation of God comes to the surface. And brother and sister, you know it had to do with his family.

You know, they were right there in Sodom and Gomorrah. And then it came down to the real, real issue. And he said, if there are 10, because now it becomes really personal.

And God said, Abram, if I find 10, I'm not going to destroy the city. I'm not going to do that. Well, he said, brother and sister, and I want you to understand this.

You know what Abram did? He came on the basis of the righteousness of God. When he came as an intercessor, he did not come to God and say, Father God, isn't it amazing to see the brutality of sin in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? No, no, he didn't see that. He didn't say, do you see the awfulness of homosexuality and the awfulness of Romans 1? He didn't say that.

But brother and sister, when he came to pray, you know what he said? He said, God, if we will find 50 righteous people. Brother and sister, can I say this to you this morning? When we are speaking about the life of an intercessor, because we're dealing with a sermon in the mount that is saying to us that it's not just the imparted righteousness of God, but we are dealing with the imputed righteousness of God. And when Jesus said, unless your righteousness will exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees in the south.

When you study this statement that came from the lips of Abram, and he said, if there are so many righteous, he knew that in the unfolding of the character of God, brother and sister, he knew that there is nothing that will stir the heart of God so deeply as when he would come to God on the basis of his

righteousness. What is the essence of his righteousness? It's the unfolding of his plan. And when we come to him on the unfolding of his plan, why? Because he hates sin.

He loves the sinner, but he hates the sin. And when we come to him on the unfolding of the basis of his righteousness, it stirs the heart of God. Let me ask you this morning in closing, the righteousness of God in us is there still a passion in your heart for his righteousness? Oh, brother and sister, when we see people... Isn't it amazing? You remember when the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, when He turned to those early disciples and He separated Himself from the rest of the world and He called... The Bible says that when He saw the multitudes, He went up into a mountain and when He was set, He called His disciples unto Him and He began to teach them.

What did He say to them? He said to them, Bless it. I mean, He saw within their lives the potential, you know. The sin issue was drastic.

It was brutal. It had to be dealt with. But He saw the potential of the possibilities of these men that were inadequate, many fishermen, uneducated.

They were just simple human disciples. And He saw it. And you know, when we come to God in prayer, brother and sister, I don't know if you've learned the secret.

When it comes to God in prayer, we pray. And you know Dr. Andrew Murray in the Life of the Intercessor made an unbelievable statement because you need to understand prayer in the Epistle to the Hebrews and to discover that in the 12 aspects of New Testament prayer, one of the most beautiful aspects is to discover that we are not on our own. What is Jesus doing at this present moment? The writer to the Hebrews said, He's sitting in the right hand of the throne of God.

And what is He doing? He's interceding for us. And you see in the High Priestly Ministry of Christ in prayer, it comes in the Epistle. That's one of the most beautiful aspects of the 12 aspects of New Testament prayer.

And when we discover this position and this intercession, it's to find the balance in how to pray for people. Dr. Andrew Murray makes an unbelievable observation when he spoke about the High Priestly Ministry of Prayer of Christ and he related to us. And Andrew Murray said that when God gives us a burden to pray for people, he said, somehow in this ministry of intercessory prayer has God given unto us the freedom to explore that which prayer is about.

We're going to look at that tomorrow when Jesus said, Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened.

And you discover three dimensions of what prayer is about in the New Testament. And Andrew Murray said, he said, when God gives us the burden to pray for someone and we begin to pray for this person, he said, then what God gives us the right to do is to ask God, to come into His presence and to ask God and to say to Him, God, will you reveal to me what is preventing this person from becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when God revealed to us... Now, we know it's sin.

It's the depravity of sin. It's the act of sin. It's the state.

But brethren and sisters, some people have missed their lives. And Andrew Murray said, when God revealed to us those things, he said, then what can happen? It's that we can come on the behalf of those

people like the prophets of the Old Testament and like Nehemiah and Esther and Moses. And we can come on behalf of those people and we can confess their sins before God.

Individually bring those things that is preventing them from coming to Christ, Andrew Murray said. And then he makes this observation. He said, it doesn't mean that God is going to forgive his sin.

Doesn't mean that. Not one bit. But what Andrew Murray said is that we discover in this priestly ministry of intercession that what is happening, God the Holy Spirit has the freedom and the right in His sovereign workings to come to the lives of those people and prepare the way for them to discover their last condition.

Do you understand what I mean? And here's the balance, you know. The balance of trusting God. And our time is gone.

You know, I want to share this with you. I studied in South Africa. And after my studies, I went into evangelism.

And so for five years, we were involved in evangelistic services and personal evangelism. And I spent three of those years in the Western Cape. And those years that I spent in the Western Cape, I did these evangelistic crusades.

Dutch Reformed Church, Baptist Churches, other places. Sometimes we just put up a tent in what was called Namibia today. It was used to be called Southwest Africa.

But brother and sister, I went into a community, a town with the name of Hermanus. It's about 65 miles from the city of Cape Town or the Cape Town Peninsula. And I came into this town of Hermanus.

I was asked to speak at the Bible study group. And that night when I came into this Bible study group, there were 25 people. And in that Bible study group, I discovered that there were two elderly ladies, Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie.

They were both in their 70s. And I didn't know that these two ladies were intercessors. You say, what do you mean they were intercessors? They were just saints.

And Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie every single morning would come together and they would pray from 11 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock in the afternoon from Monday to Friday. And oh, they were great. I mean, you know, when they pray, you know, they were just incredible.

I mean, they were just typical little Afrikaners. You know, in blocks of determination those old ladies, you know, if you tried to break into their house, they would have a pan and hit you in your head and you'd never recover from it. But you know, they prayed from 11 o'clock to 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

And I met Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie. And when I met Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie, I discovered that up to that point they prayed through for about 23 or 25 people that were gloriously converted. And so, you see, what would happen? They would get the names of these people and they would climb underneath the burden of the lives of these people.

And brother and sister, they would systematically dissect this burden of God and step by step pray them through. And they did it in a remarkable short time. Sometimes it was six months.

Sometimes it was a year. And I came and I had an interest in prayer. And I thought, man, I want to get to know these two elderly ladies.

And so I went to Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie because in this Bible study group there were these people and I said, when did you come to Christ? I came to Christ because Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie prayed me through. Oh! How did you come to Christ? I came to Christ because Auntie Barbie and Auntie Stassi prayed me through. And you know, they just prayed them through.

And they prayed them under conviction of sin. You know, many of these people had sleepless nights, you know, when they came to Christ. And I thought, I want to get to know these two elderly ladies.

And I went to Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie and I said, I want you to pray for me. And I said, don't put me on the list for unsafe. I knew Christ, thankfully.

I said, put me on another list and I want you to pray for me every day. And so they said, young man, if we pray for you, you're going to have a responsibility. I said, what is it? They said, we want you to come into this community of our manners.

And I spoke at night in prayer so they knew that we were together, you know. It's great when you click with people. And they said, you're going to need to come into this community four times a year.

And I said, oh. I said, that would be great. They said, you will do the Bible study.

You will spend the day with us in prayer, which is great, you know. I mean, this little guy praying with these two elderly ladies, you know. I mean, it was tremendous, you know.

And then they said, the other thing we will do, they said, we will give you a list of names of people that we have prayed for and we will put a little mark behind one or two of those names and we want you to go and spend an extended time with those people, explain to them the Gospel of Christ and lead them to Christ. So, you know, I, with my background, said, how do you know? It's the time for them to come. She said, we will pray them through.

You know. And I got to know them. Oh, brother and sister, I love Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie.

I tell you, one of the, I mean, I'm going to look for all the saints of the Old and New Testament, but I'm going to look for them, you know, one day in heaven. So, you know what happened? I would come into our monastery and Auntie Stassi and Auntie Barbie, I would go and visit them and I would speak, I would speak at the Bible study, spend the next day with these two ladies in prayer. Oh, you know, did they pray? I tell you.

And then, in the afternoon, they would say, okay, here's the list. And they would give me this list and they would say, this person, we believe God has helped us to pray through. So, go and visit this person.

And, brother and sister, I need to be honest with you today. Of all those years that I was there, there was only one person that didn't get through. That I said to them, no, this is not the time.

But, you know what happened? There was a man in Harmonis, his name was Freddy Dalhousie. He was a brutal character. He was what they called a bouncer, which means at the bars or those things, when someone creates a problem, he throws him right out of his place.

And he was a fisherman. And, you know, those fishermen, they were rough. And Freddy Dalhousie's wife was prayed through by Aunty Barbie and Aunty Stacey.

And she was gloriously saved. Now, she had six illegitimate children. And now she was married to him.

And she got saved and she was so broken. You know, I always find it difficult. People that came out of the depth of sin, you know, they understand the grace of God to a degree that many of us don't.

Because they know what God brought them out from. And she was on fire for God. And they were praying for Freddy Dalhousie.

But Freddy Dalhousie, brother and sister, had a reputation. You wouldn't go near this man. I mean, he was vicious.

And one day I got the list. Here was the list of names. And as I look at the list of names, there was the name of Freddy Dalhousie.

I thought, good night. I thought, what are they going to try to do here? And so I said to Aunty Stacey, what's up here? Oh, they said, you have no idea. We are praying for him.

I said, you just pray for him as many years as you want because I'm not sure if I want to go near him, you know. You know what happened, folks? I would come into Hermanus and I would visit Aunty Stacey and Aunty Barbie and spend our little times together. Aunty Barbie was great.

There was a thing that she made. You won't understand it. And it was potcook.

It was an African thing that you need to try because it's great. And I would go and stay with her and her husband and she would give me this. But you know, I would go and visit and they would say, here's the list.

So I look at the list and then Aunty Barbie would take a pencil of Aunty Stacey and she would make this name, this mark beyond the name. And when she would make this mark beyond the name, when she would not make a mark behind Freddie Dalhousie's name, I was so glad. Oh, I mean, you know, if it was a man destined for hell, he wouldn't even fit into the picture, you know.

I mean, he was wow! They prayed and they prayed and they prayed. It was my last year in the Western Cape. And I visited Aunty Stacey and Aunty Barbie and the afternoon when they gave me that list, she took that pencil and she marked it behind Freddie Dalhousie's name.

And I looked at it, you know, full of roast beef and unbelief. And I said, No. She said, What do you mean? I said, I'm not going.

Aunty Stacey said, What's going on with you? I said, Aunty Stacey, you know this man. You know, this could cost me my life, you know. She said, Listen, young man.

You have no idea that day after day after day as we were dissecting the burden of God, we were building up the promises of God. And she said, We got through to God for you. And I turned to Aunty Stacey and Aunty Barbie and I said, Are you sure? And they said, Yes.

Six o'clock that night, I came to the house of Freddie Dalhousie. His wife was a Christian and really broken up for him, living with him, but he's brutal. And he just came back from fishing, cleaned the fish and everything in Armanis and came back into the house.

He was tired. And six o'clock I had an appointment with him. And I came into that living room and brother and sister, I didn't know what to do.

I mean, this man was using the Lord's name in vain. I could have said to him, Mr. Dalhousie, this sounds like a religious meeting. I mean, it was just brutal.

And I sat there and I tried to have a conversation. I thought, God, I need to start somewhere. I tried to have a conversation.

I just don't want to jump in. I said to him, I said, Freddie, tell me about fishing. And he was tired.

He wasn't really interested. So, he just kind of looked at me. He tolerated me because he knew of what I was doing.

And then I said, so what else were you doing? And you know, he was just, get out of my life, that kind of an attitude. And I stopped and I just said, forget about it. And I said to him, I said, listen man, do you know why I'm here today? And he said, no.

I said, I've come to talk to you about your relationship with God. And I said, there are people that are praying for you. And I said, you're absolutely lost in the presence of God.

And I thought, this is it, you know. And brother and sister, you wouldn't believe it. We sat in that living room.

And as we sat in that living room, this strong man, I mean, he was a monster of a man. This strong man just bent over and he broke. And never forget, his wife was standing at the door and her eyes were just huge.

She could not understand it. And he was sobbing and sobbing and sobbing. You know, I'm not kidding you.

Maybe for 5 or 10 or 15 minutes, all I could do was looking at this man. It was just a mess. Just an absolute mess.

And I sat there stunned. And there was just a moment when he just had, he didn't have glasses, but he just did this. Cleaned his face up like this.

And he said, do you think God can save me? And he got converted. Right there. God saved him.

He was prayed through. Do you know what happened to Frederick Dalhousie? He got involved in a Christian ministry and his wife reaching out to the kind of people like themselves. And last time when I heard, they were just going on with God, you know.

Serving God. You see what happened? Brother and sister, they were prayed through to God. And they never seen some burden.

Come close for us and pray please.

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