

Intercessory Prayer

by Glenn Matthews

Glenn Matthews explores the principles of intercessory prayer through the story of Elijah, emphasizing involvement, faith, and the importance of addressing sin and guilt.

Duration: 1:26:57

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1, 1 Kings 17:17, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:4, Romans 4:1

Topics: "Intercessory Prayer", "Persistent Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses four principles that can be found in the letter to the Church of Rome. The first principle is involvement, emphasizing the importance of getting involved with others. The second principle is inquiry, urging listeners to inquire and seek understanding. The third principle is identification or intensity, highlighting the need for deep commitment and passion. The fourth principle is importunity, emphasizing the importance of persistent prayer. The preacher also shares a story about a woman named Clara Chapman and her unwavering faith. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the need to deal with sin honestly and seek forgiveness from God. The preacher references the story of Elijah and his actions on the mountain. The sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's power and to be persistent in their prayers.

Transcript

Open your Bibles, please, to the Old Testament, to the book of 1 Kings, Chapter 17. 1 Kings, Chapter 17. This evening on the grounds, one man said to another, Have you heard him preach? And the fellow said, No, but I've heard him try three times.

What bothered me is he was talking about me. But I tell you, anybody who can't preach to this crowd, and such spirit is here, and such great music, just congregational singing. I love to hear men sing.

If you can't preach after that, you ought to quit and sell used cars or something. In case you're interested, I have a 90 model Buick. I want to talk to you tonight on some principles of intercessory prayer.

I heard Dr. Fred Brown say that preaching on prophecy is like trying to eat a raw pumpkin. It's just too big, and you've got to cut off a little piece and chew on it. It's the same way with preaching on the subject of prayer.

It is just too big a subject for any one person to think that they would do adequate service to it in one lifetime, much less in one message. And I want to identify for you tonight, with the help of God, some principles of intercessory prayer. All my life, I heard messages on men ought always to pray.

Pray without ceasing. In everything, with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. You have not because you ask not.

You ask and receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your own lusts or desires. Chapter, verse, sermon on prayer and prayer and prayer. And I have read books on prayer, and I read books on prayer.

But in 1983, in a season of prayer, I had already been preaching for, well, since 1953, so it was 30 years. I had already been saved since 1947. I had gone through college and seminary, and I have to throw that in because the way I preach, you probably wouldn't know it if I didn't say it.

And I found myself floundering in intercessory prayer. And I read sermons on intercessory prayer, and to a point, they were good. And the denseness was on my part, not on the part of the person who had written.

And I asked God to teach me to pray intercessory prayers. Now, this is just one little slice of a big pie of prayer. And the Lord led me, of all places, to 1 Kings, chapter 17.

I began reading at verse 17. 1 Kings 17, 17. And it came to pass after these things.

And this message, really, should have been preceded by more than one message on the first 16 verses of this chapter. It was Ian Thomas whom I heard say, Elijah is the only man in the Old Testament who is introduced to us by the use of a conjunction. He appears in the pages of Scripture in the first verse of chapter 17 with the conjunction and.

It is as though the Holy Spirit knows him so well, he figures we ought to know him too. And that's the words of Ian Thomas. And Elijah the Tishbite, who is the inhabitants of Gilead.

He is a mountaineer. He is a hillbilly. And dear brother Vaughn, it is a scriptural fact that anybody not born in West Virginia needs to be born again.

Isn't that true? That's true. Well, I have to go ahead and tell you a couple other things and then we get serious. Wherever I go, I meet West Virginians who have moved away.

If they ever all come back at once, the whole earth will sink. Six feet, just sheer weight. But of all the stories that I've heard about why they left and why they left and why they left, there are two who stand out in my mind.

And one was in Lexington, North Carolina, where I was preaching and a fellow came to me after service and said, I'm from West Virginia. And I said, where? And he told me. And I said, how did you end up here? And he said, this is as far as one tank of gas would get to me.

True, true story. And the other was a man in Florida who said, I was born in West Virginia, but I left as soon as I found it was legal. True story.

But there was an idiot of West Virginia, poor fellow, really dumb, who left and moved to Ohio, raised the IQ of both states with one move, stayed there five years and came to Vincent, Virginia and taught school. Are

we even now? You know, if anybody ought to be privileged to laugh, it's God's people. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

All right, let's come to the verses. Elijah the hillbilly comes out of the mountains of Gilead, unknown, uninvited, unannounced, and walks into the palace of a wicked king in the city of Samaria and says, there ain't going to be no rain no more, no more, until I say so. And walked out knowing he had told the truth.

How would you like your first message to be on judgment before people who were going to receive the judgment of God? He left knowing he had told the truth. And God, instead of letting him stay in Samaria until the wells dried up and the people became thirsty and the famine hit, when he could have had a great city-wide revival, sent him to Cherith, the brook Cherith. I'll show it to you, come with me to Israel.

Why would God do that? He said to him, go hide yourself by the brook Cherith. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. A raven is a dirty bird.

It's an unclean bird. Cherith means a place of cutting, literally a cutting like you would cut out a gorge. There's a lot of us who need a lot of cutting before God can really use us.

And a man who wanted to preach, God sent him out to where there was nobody to preach to and messed up his theology something fierce when he made him eat what an unclean bird brought to it in its talons. Really messed him up. And he stayed there.

Even when the brook dried up, he stayed there. And then God said to him, go to Zarephath, which belonged to Ziodin. That's Lebanon.

And do you know to get to Zarephath, he had to go right through Samaria? And Ahab and Obadiah were out looking for him, and they couldn't even see him. He walked right through the middle of town. God hides these men, doesn't He? Boy, they're ready for revival now.

The famine is severe. They're ready for revival. No, you don't stop.

Just go right on to Zarephath. I've commanded a widow to feed thee there. That guy's something else.

He's fed by ravens and by widows and by angels. Surely this woman is rich, because I have stated Charith, and God has cut me down. There's an awfully lot of me that was swiddled away, and now I'm a lean, mean fighting machine, and God can use me now.

No, Zarephath. And to his utter amazement, the woman to whom God sent him was gathering wood to fix her last meal, and she and her son would then die. I have just a little cruze, just a little bit of oil in the bottom of the jug, and just a handful of meal in a barrel, and a bit of oil and a handful of meal, and when I see a barrel, I'm thinking of 55-gallon drum in my mind.

It marks a handful of little oil. And it's interesting, the woman is not rich. She's about to die.

And where did he meet her? He said, go make me some. She said, well, I'm just gathering two sticks. Didn't say three or four or five or one, but two.

And here is the need of man. A hungry prophet, a hungry widow, and her hungry son, and they're down to the last meal, and the little bit of oil and the little bit of meal marks their need. But where does the need of man and the power of God meet? I'll tell you where, at that place where two sticks cross.

At the cross. At the cross. Where I first saw the light.

And the burden of my heart rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight. Now I'm happy all the day.

And it wasn't a one-time miracle. The jug was not filled. The barrel was not filled.

It was an ongoing miracle. Every time they were ready to eat, there was just enough. That's the sufficiency of that grace of God.

Which would you rather have, a one-time miracle or an everyday miracle? Well, everything's going well. And really, this message that I've come to should have been preceded by what I have told you in the whole lot more. But it came to pass, verse 17, verse King 17, it came to pass after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick.

And his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. Nice Hebrew way of saying, he died. Isn't that strange? In the midst of an ongoing miracle, every meal enough flour, and every meal, every time it's time to eat, there's enough meal in the barrel, and there's enough oil in the jug.

And in the midst of the famine, they're doing quite well, thank you, and things are going well. And suddenly, her son becomes sick and dies. Happens quickly, doesn't it? I've seen death happen quickly.

I saw my father. I saw him have the heart attack. I was with him when he died.

Quickly. Quickly. What's the response to a family, quote, tragedy, end quote? A sudden illness and death.

What's the response? Appropriately enough, it is grief. It is sorrow. Paul did not say, I'm writing to you that you don't sorrow.

He said, I'm writing to you that you don't sorrow in the same manner as others, which have no hope. It's appropriate to sorrow. It's appropriate to express grief.

But this woman's response is not grief. This woman's response is anger. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee? Can you not hear the sarcasm? O thou man of God, art thou come to me to call my sin to remembrance or to slay my son? Whoa.

What sin are you talking about, lady? Her response is anger, not grief. Is this the pay that I get? I have nourished you, I have fed you, and how do you repay me? By killing my son? By calling my sin to remembrance? Isn't that strange? Anger. Why is the anger there? Because of the guilt.

It is unresolved guilt. There is nothing in the Scriptures that says this woman had been a terrible sinner. You've come to call my sin to remembrance, to bring it out of my subconscious into my conscious mind.

The anger is rooted in the guilt. And the reason the guilt is there, the guilt is the fruit. The root is un-forsaken, unforgiven sin.

Don't treat the guilt, that's the fruit. Handle the root. Get the sin under the blood and the guilt will be gone.

It's amazing how people deal with guilt. Years ago, late 60's, early 70's, I was interpreting for a deaf lady, mental patient. Deaf lady.

Very little speech. But what speech she had was so high piercing you didn't want her to talk verbally. Beautiful signer.

I was interpreting, and here was the psychiatrist. Psychiatrist, deaf lady, mental patient. First session, he is paranoid.

How do I know that you're telling her what I'm telling you? I said, you don't, do you? You have to trust me. He said, how can I trust you? I don't even know you. I said, well you have to trust me.

Unless you want to sit here and write it out and write on about a third grade reading level and get your concepts over to her and her express to you and you're going to be here hour upon hour to accomplish what we can accomplish in 50 minutes. So you're going to have to trust me. Okay.

So we start. Got nowhere. Next Wednesday, same thing.

Hardly any rapport. He was saying, tell her so and so. I said, no, no, no, don't.

I'm a pipe. The stuff just flows through me. Don't tell me to tell her.

You tell her. And it would just flow through me. Well, third session, he was a little more relaxed and she was a little more relaxed.

Fourth session, he was doing pretty good. I was pleased with him. And she finally began to open up.

And she explained in sign language, well, doctor, my problem is I have this very bad guilt. I am guilty. I feel guilt.

And he said, why? Real brilliant, right? Why? And I said, why? And she started. And 40 minutes went. And this is a real catharsis.

And she's just unburdening and getting it all out. And the tears are flowing. And she's just trembling.

And she's just confessing. And just blah, all of the garbage of her life. And he finally ended and said, tell me, doctor, how can I live with the guilt? What can I do about the guilt? He sat there and chewed on his cigar a while.

Looked very wise. And finally cleared his throat and said, well, and I said, well, I would just advise you to forget it. And I signed, I would advise you to forget it.

And she looked at me in her eyes. She said, who's crazy here? Me or him? The truth is, you can't forget it. You can file it in the back of your head under F for forgotten things.

And you can surround yourself with other things. And you've forgotten it consciously. But you let tragedy strike.

And that file door will fly open. And that folder will come out and hit you right in your face. And there is the sin that you've not dealt with.

You get rid of the sin and the guilt will be gone. Amen. That's not the message, is it? Some man or men needs to hear that.

It's amazing how we deal with sin. We cover it up. We rationalize it.

We explain it. We minimize it. No, no.

The only way you deal with sin is to confess it for what it is and ask God to forgive it. Well, I don't need to preach on that. Art thou come to me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son? Now, I must tell you, I am here shocked at Elijah.

This guy is something else. He is not noted for having been to a how to win friends and influence people course. Right? He's not noted for his compassion.

He's sitting up on top of a mountain and the king sends his 50 soldiers and a captain and says, the king said, come down. Oh, he did, did he? Zap and fire comes down. Kills all 51 of them.

How's that for compassion? The king sends another captain with another 50 and that 51 weighed over the bodies of 51 other dead ones and come up and said, the king said, come down. Oh, he did, did he? Zap. Boom.

Now there's 102 dead bodies there. The king appoints another captain and another 50 and that's the smartest man in the Bible. He got down on his knees and said, will you please come down? Smart man.

This is some strange man, this Elijah. He's not noted for his compassion. He's a man that can mock other people.

Talk about tolerance. Well, we've got to be tolerant of other views. He mocked the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Gros.

He mocked their false god. And after they had finished praying and cutting themselves and it's time, 3 o'clock in the evening, sacrifice, he repaired the altar, put the bullet, put water, and prayed 63 words and fire fell from heaven. Quite a guy.

And he's not noted for his compassion. And he could have said, look lady, I didn't have anything to do with the death of your boy. And if you don't want me here, I'll leave.

But I remind you, when I came here, you were ready to die. And it's not you who has sustained me. It's my presence in this house that has sustained you.

And if you don't want me here, to-do-do, I'm out of here and you'll die like your boy died. He could have said that and frankly, knowing him, I'm kind of surprised he didn't. But there is a tremendous point of compassion when he said, give me thy son.

And he took him out of her bosom and he carried him up into a loft where he, Elijah, abode and laid him upon his, Elijah's, own bed. And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also or even brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came into him again and he revived.

And Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the chamber into the house and delivered him unto his mother. And Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou

art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

Do you know that one indisputable proof of the legitimacy of your faith in Christ is that you get your prayers answered? One indisputable proof of the legitimacy of your profession of faith is that you get answers to prayer. She didn't say because of the miracle of the meal and the oil, but because of the answered prayer. That's what it says.

By this I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of God, the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth. I'll tell you another indisputable proof that you're born again is that you experience the chastening of God. We don't like to consider that one, but it's as legitimate as the other.

Now when I finish preaching after a while, I'm going to give you not so much as an invitation, as an opportunity. I'm going to give you an opportunity to enroll in a school. The cost of tuition is high.

It costs a lot of time, energy. You may have to spend some lonely times and cost even tears. You don't have to pay for the textbook.

You already have it. It's right here. And you don't have to worry about being on campus.

The campus is wherever you are. And the faculty is the Holy Spirit. And I'm going to give you an opportunity to enroll in the school of intercessory prayer.

But I want to tell you that the classes are open to anybody. Age is not a variable. Education is not a variable.

Money, not a variable. Health, not a variable. How long you've been saved, not a variable.

No variables. It's available to anybody and to everybody. But I must tell you, most of your class work will be done by yourself and nobody, for the most part, will ever see you grade.

And you have to work a long time to get your grade and you never graduate. Never graduate. And so now I'm ready to preach to you not as somebody who has graduated, no, but as somebody who's learning and who has learned more in the last 15 years than I had learned in the first 35 of my life.

Identify from this passage four principles of intercessory prayer. I'm not saying these are all of the principles. I'm saying the title is Some Principles of Intercessory Prayer.

And the first of these is the principle of involvement. They shall all begin with the letter I. Make it easy for you. The principle of involvement.

Elijah said to the woman, Give me thy son. Give me thy son. And evidently when she hesitated, he reached out and took the boy out of her arms.

Every word is important. Give me thy son. You want to become an intercessor.

We're not talking about praying for yourself. Lord bless me, my wife, my son, John, his wife, us four no more. You're not talking about that.

I'm talking about interceding for others. You want to be an intercessor. You must get involved with other people.

This is not his problem. And we're living in an age when it ain't my problem. I don't want to get involved.

I was in revival services. We had had four, five, six people saved that night. Good church, good service.

And it was benediction time. And the pastor was standing in front. And he had gotten testimonies from the people who had been saved.

I don't remember, but there were several adults who were saved that night. And we were rejoicing. And I was out of the platform and was standing over here.

And with my back to the first pew. And people were happy because this was a wonderful service. And he said, the pastor, come back tomorrow night.

Pray. Bring some unsaved friend with you tomorrow night. And we'll see God do again what He has done tonight.

And in my heart I said, Amen. And behind me, and God knows I was not eavesdropping. But I could not help but hear Sister Spiritual say, I don't have any unsaved friend.

In that tone of voice. And while the pastor was dismissing, or whoever was dismissing, I stood there and said, Dear God, help me to keep my mouth shut. And I was praying in unbelief.

Because as soon... Oh, Brother Matthews, I enjoyed the message. And I said, Thank you much. But I could not help overhearing what you said at the very end.

She said, What's that? You said, I don't have any unsaved friend. And she raised herself to the heights of her spirituality and said, Well, I don't. And I said, Dear Sister, you also have.

I don't know whether you thought about it, but the majority of the criticism addressed about Jesus was true. I have a message that the Lord has never let me preach. And I don't understand it because it's a great one.

But He's never let me... I've preached two great ones in my life. And would have hated to wake up both times. But... Serious, serious.

I know a lot of people who are infinitely better preachers than I am. But I don't know anybody who had a better gospel than I do. No way.

But the message is this. The gospel according to the critics of Christ. That's the title.

Most of what they said was true. Even though they said it in criticism. Now obviously when they said, This man cast out devils, but the prince of devils.

That's not true. But when they said, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. That's true, thank God.

I don't have any unsaved friends. Do you... You know, we've just about become so proficient that we can let this Christian baby be born in a Christian home, in a Christian hospital, and sent to a Christian nursery school, and to a Christian preschool, and to a Christian grade school, and to a Christian middle school, and high school, and to a Christian college, and put him to work in a Christian institution or an organization until he retires to a Christian nursing home, and bury him in a Christian cemetery. And if we're careful, he'll

never come in contact with any unsaved people.

Sort of a womb to the tomb protection plan. How are you going to win people if you don't get involved with people? How are you going to intercede unless you get out of the safety of your cocoon and get involved with somebody else's? You've got to get involved with somebody else's problems. You cannot live in your own little cocoon.

Dear friend, separation from the world does not infer isolation. Though you are now saved and you don't live like you used to, and you don't go with those folks to do the same things that you used to do, you've got to go to those folks and bring them to you and convince them that you love them now more though you don't do what you used to do than you did when you did what you used to do. You've got to love people.

You've got to get yourself involved where people hurt. It is so easy for us to just have nothing to do with people except those who look like us, dress like us, act like us, believe like us, talk like us, have everything in common with us and anybody who is not like us. We don't have anything to do with them.

And so we sit around looking at mirror images of ourselves and getting bored. Well, if the Lord burdens me, no dear friend, it's the going that will give you the burden. He that goeth forth and weepeth.

First you go, you'll weep. Develop it on your own. But you've got to get involved where people hurt.

If you're going to be an intercessor, it is a necessity you must get involved with other people. That's the first principle. Develop it on your own.

There is a second principle, verse 20. He had taken him up to the loft where he, Elijah, abode, and laid him upon his own bed. Verse 20, And he, Elijah, cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also or even brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son? The principle is that of inquiry.

Do you know what he's doing? He's doing what I was advised not to do when I was a boy. He's asking God why. My friend was Louis Belcher, and he was 13 years old, and he and I were best buddies, and Louis Belcher dropped dead at age 13 of a congenital heart problem that nobody knew he had.

I mean, he just flat dropped dead. And I was to be a pallbearer. And I said to my daddy, Why did God let him do that? And for all of his wisdom, he was not perfect.

And this is one time he was right, and he said, Son, we mustn't question God. And I thought, at age 13, why not? Is God so insecure on his throne that He's threatened by me asking Him why? Well, we mustn't ask God why. Who said? Chapter and verse.

That's exactly what Elijah is doing. Look at the passage. She said, Why have you come here? What is this, that you come to call my sin remembrance and to slay my son? But in her mind it's an exclamation point.

That's verse 18. And then verse 20, he is saying basically the same thing. Have you indeed brought me here to slay this woman's son? What's he doing? He's questioning God.

There are only two people in the world who have the right to call me father. And one of them is Ketah. She's 36.

And the other, almost 37. And the other is Christi. And Christi is almost 27.

And those are our daughters. Two children. And of all the people in the world, those are the only two people who have a right to call me father.

And those two, when little and even now, have every right to come to me and ask me whatever they want to. They're mine. And they both did.

Come and ask everything. Hard things. Now, I could say, I don't know.

And if I don't know, we'll find out. Or I could say, I do know. And the answer is.

Or I could say, I do know. But you're not ready for the answer. And until you're ready for the answer, all you've got to do is just trust me.

Hey, my heavenly Father is an infinitely better Father than I am. And if my children can ask me, I can ask my heavenly Father. Isn't that what He said? What thing soever ye desire when you pray? What thing? One of the things I want is why.

And so when I watched my father die, I said, why? And the Lord has given me some knowledge as why. And probably I'll not know all of the whys until I get to heaven. And then it won't matter.

Take your hat off, son. You're in the house. Thank you.

It bothers me when I see guys sitting in the house accusing me for being mean. But you might as well learn it once, and then you won't do it twice. Amen? Give me my hand for taking his hat off.

Amen. Alright. Thank you.

It just blurred it out. Have you ever said anything that you wish you could reach out and grab it and push it back? That's one of those instances. Thank you for your sweet spirit.

Where was I before I interrupted myself? Okay. The principle is inquiry. What is he doing? He is not questioning God to criticize God.

He is questioning God in an attempt to determine God's will. How are you going to intercede unless you know God's will? It is infinitely easier for you to pray for the salvation of unsaved people than it is for you to pray for saved people or for Christian institutions. Because you know what God's will is for unsaved people.

God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, says Peter 3.9. So you go ahead and pray for the salvation of unsaved people because you know God's will is that they be saved. And it's easier then to pray for the salvation of unsaved people than it is to pray for God to do what He's wanting to do with regard to saved people, individuals, churches, ministries, institutions, camps, etc. Because now you've come into the realm where you are praying in a triangle.

I'm going to tell you truthfully, getting things from God is easy. It is getting in the position to get them that's hard. When I'm praying for myself, my heart is right with God.

The prayer goes up and the answer comes straight back down. That's strictly vertical. Up and down.

When I'm right with God, I'm praying in the will of God. Up goes the prayer. Down comes the answer.

But when I'm engaging in intercessory prayer, watch me now. I am standing behind the podium. I am praying for myself.

It goes straight up. The answer comes straight down. There's only two people involved.

God and me. But when I'm praying for a third party over here, now there are three people involved. God, me, and this person, or persons, or ministry, or church, or school, or camp, or whatever.

Now it's becoming harder because I am praying vertically, asking God to deal with them over here and there on a horizontal relationship with me. And what I minister to them over here horizontally must be in agreement with what God is ministering to them from the top of that triangle to them. And how am I going to pray intelligently unless I know some facts? So don't come and say pray for me.

Because I'm going to say no. If you don't want to tell me more than pray for me, I don't know what to pray for you. For you see, the more I know, the more intelligently I can pray.

Ignorance is not prayer. The more intelligence I have about the person, the need, the situation, the more intelligently I can pray. Now if I... I want to know... Alright, here is Joe Christian.

His name is Glenn Matthews. Alright? Harold Vaughn is over here. Harold Vaughn is at the bottom of this pyramid, at the base.

He's Preacher Harold Vaughn. He's an evangelist. He is praying to God up there for God to work in me over here.

Now I'm Glenn Matthews, Joe Christian. I'm saved. I'm an evangelist.

I have a herniated disc in my spine, so they tell me. The neurosurgeon said, all the symptoms, all the pain since May the 12th, everything is there. You've got a herniated disc.

All I've got to do is an MRI and find out where it is and then we will do the surgery and take care of it. Fine, do the MRI. We did the MRI and it comes out normal.

And I've still got the pain. Now, I can do anything easier than I can sit and I can drive a lot and can't stand up and drive. And I hurt and I've been living on pain pills of Tylenol and such since May the 12th.

Now, I personally have been praying, Oh God, would You just take care of this? I think I'd be a better servant if it didn't hurt so much. And God said, shut up. Just put up with it.

That's exactly what He said. And so now I pray, God, help me to endure it! And when I get up to preach, relieve it enough so it don't bother me while I'm preaching. Now, hell gets burdened for me.

I say, hell, I want you to pray and God will help me with His hip. Aha! Good old hell, He's willing to pray. But He doesn't know what God's wanting to do with this.

You see? God may want me to carry this thing for a long time. I hope not. I know one thing it's done.

It's not only made me hurt, it's made me fall on my face before God and say, God, You've got to help me. I mean, there are times I drive down the road in a car with tears rolling down my face from pain. And you can't be an evangelist and stay home! And God says, put up with it! And so I'm putting up with it! I tell you what it's done.

It's made me depend more on the Lord and less on me. So maybe God doesn't want me to be healed of this pain now. Believe He can heal you? Absolutely.

He's healed me before of other things. He healed me of encephalitis. Viral encephalitis.

I didn't know a thing about it. And the healer says, if you've got the faith. Now I didn't have, I was out of my head.

Had a temperature of 104 for 10 days. Packed me in ice. My little church in Texas when I was passing and going to school and said, in Texas, my little church, my dad's church in West Virginia, the chairman of my deacon board called my dad and said, you know our pastor's sick.

My dad said, yeah, I know. We've been praying for him. The chairman of my deacon board said, old man, he said, you old folks are an hour ahead of us.

It's Wednesday. What time does your prayer service start? He said, we start at 7. He said, well, we don't start until 730. And we're an hour behind you.

Could you hold your people until 735 our time? That'd be 835 your time. Daddy said, why? He said, because if your people and our people will pray at the same time, I believe God will heal our preacher. I didn't know a thing about it.

My dad said, we'll do it. And at 835 in West Virginia, 735 in Texas, they prayed. My fever broke.

I didn't know a thing about the prayer until days later. Can God heal you? Absolutely. He's done it.

Maybe He wants me to put up with this. I don't know. But Harold can't really pray, God, heal him, unless he knows what the will of God is.

I'm saying this is work, brother. Don't come to me and say, pray for me. I've got enough people on the prayer list now.

I'm serious. It's work. I don't pray for anybody every day.

I can't. There's too many names. I'd break them down.

Days of week and certain people and certain schools and certain pastors and evangelists and missionaries and this and that and certain things each day of the week. But I don't pray for everybody every day. I can't.

What's he doing? He is inquiring what God is wanting to do. You've got to know. That's why you need to know.

The only way you're going to know is ask them and ask God to show you. Oh, it's work, isn't it? What do you think God's trying to do in this situation? Well, I think God, they said, they think. Is that what you think? Let me know.

That's work. You sure you want any of these things? There is a third principle. You finish the development of that one on your own.

And it is the principle call it either intensity or identification. Verse 21 He stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. He stretched himself upon the child three times.

Intensity. Identification. He does not put the boy on the bed and then him stand over by the door and say, O God, let the soul's child come.

He does not sit in the chair and pray, O God, let the soul of this child come into him again. He does not kneel and pray. He does not prostrate himself on the floor and pray.

He does not stand over the boy and put his hand on him and pray. He stretches his body over the dead body. This is Hebrew, people.

The boy is lying flat on his back and Elijah is belly to belly to him. That's how intense he is. Listen, dear friend.

Prayers that are prayed in the abstract will not be answered in the concrete. If you want God to do specific things, you better ask specific things. He is face to face.

He is identifying with this child. Let me ask you a question. How many of you are praying for some unsaved person? You know, there's somebody on your heart.

You're praying for an unsaved person. Oh, that's fantastic. Let's do an experiment.

It won't take long. I want you to get one unsaved person's name and face in your mind. Not two or ten, only one.

And if you've not been praying for them, then this will not work at all for you. But if you have been praying for one unsaved person, get that person's name and face in your mind. You got it? Close your eyes.

Close your eyes. In your mind, see that one unsaved person. In your mind, you see them.

Now, in your mind, put yourself in their body. How does it feel as a saved man to live in the body of an unsaved person? And when, in the course of their day, the name of God is taken in vain, how does your spirit react? And when they participate in sin, from thought and words to deeds, how does it feel for you as a saved person to be in the body of that unsaved person? Is your spirit not beginning to grieve? Keep your mind on that person and you in that person's body. And if a hundred years from now and your friend died and never got saved, where are you now in the body of that friend? Somebody tell me, where are you? In hell.

Go a thousand years and where are you? A million years. How does it feel? Keep your eyes closed. Come back to tonight.

Eyes closed. Same face. Same name.

In the body of that unsaved friend. But they've trusted Christ now and it's a hundred years from now. And now where are they? Huh? Isn't it nice in heaven? And a thousand years! And a million years! See what a difference? Open your eyes please.

And some of you men, not emotional ladies, but some of you heavy legged tough men are wiping tears. That took less than two and a half minutes. Do you know what that is? That's identification.

You're identifying with your unsaved friend. You've got to do it. You don't just pray abstractly.

And the more you can identify with that unsaved friend or with that friend or that ministry for whom you are praying, the more knowledge you have, the more identification you put with it, the more effective your prayer is going to become. And number last. The principle is, in verse 21 again, three times he cried unto the Lord.

The principle is you want a good biblical word? Importunity or incessancy. And he prayed, O Lord, let the soul of this child come into him again. And he got up off of him.

And he stood there and waited. And nothing happened. And he stretched himself out a second time.

And he prayed, O God, let the soul of this child come into him again. And he got up and he waited. And nothing happened.

And he got on his face again before that boy on him. And he prayed the third time, O God, let the soul of this child come into him again. And the third time the child revived.

What do you suppose would have happened had the third time he prayed that nothing happened? What do you think he would have done? Four times. Six times. Five.

Because God did not stop him at point number two. Inquiry. God did not say, Yes, I sent you here to slay her son.

Had God said that, he would have got up and carried that boy back down and said to the woman, Let's bury him. But God did not stop him. Hear me.

Once you know the will of God in a situation, you pray in a straight line until God puts up a detour sign or a stop sign. And you don't pray meanderingly. No.

If you know the will of God, you pray in that straight line. Three times. Let the soul of this child come into him again.

It is that incessancy, importunity, continual asking. How do you know? Because he is praying in the will of God. And the soul of the child revived.

Oh, by the way, just in case there is an unsaved man sitting here, the Gospel is here. This boy died not because of his own sin, but the sin of another. So did my Lord.

This boy was raised after three prayers. My Lord was raised after three days. And this boy was restored to the one who loved him.

So was my Lord. And by this, the man of God was verified. His claims as the man of God were verified.

By this I know the power of the man of God. And the Romans, the letter to the Church of Rome, verse 4, chapter 1, he is declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. There is the Gospel, dear friends.

You find it everywhere. Now, you've got four principles. I'm not saying these are all of them, but I am saying these are four.

Involvement. You've got to get into it. Involve with somebody.

Inquiry. In identification or intensity. And importunity.

And it says, just keep right on praying. And I wish you could have known her. Her name was Clara Chapman.

And God bless her memory. She lived up the hollow above us. But she didn't just live up the hollow.

She lived up the hollow and then up the hill. And her husband was Harvey. And he was the most wicked man that I've ever known in my life.

And we didn't have school buses. If you lived far from the school, too far to walk, you rode the train for the creek hollow, which is 13 miles long. And at the head of the hollow was a town of a thousand people and coal mines all up and down there.

First Brains Fork and Coal Fork and Big Bottom and Pad and Rinsford and Senko and Rattlesnake and Blunt all the way to Putney. And the little train, like Petticoat Junction, Campbell's Creek Coal Company, and it would run up all the way to Putney and turn around in the roundhouse and come back down to Reed at the mouth at the Kanawha River. And if you lived far away from school, too far to walk, the school county did not provide buses.

You rode the train. And Harvey was the conductor. And Harvey hated kids.

And you just looked across out. Harvey delighted and threw a yawl. He was mean.

The devil was afraid of Harvey. That's what we thought. I was scared of Harvey.

And dear Clara, everybody called her Chappy. We bought our milk from her cow. She had cows.

She'd come walking over the hill with pails, buckets of milk, raw milk. And we bought our milk from Chappy. She was Christian.

She was a member of Springfork Baptist Church. Harvey was mean. Harvey had him in one of those flathead Jeeps right after World War II.

Four-wheel thing. They were rare. And Harvey would come past her, coming down that muddy road down the hill.

And she'd have to hit the hillside in the ditch. So he'd hit it. And he'd go right past the church to where she was going and go to the bloody bucket.

That's the name of the beer joint. It gives you quality life where I live. And he'd get shot drunk.

And then he'd drive back home. Chappy was one of those women that was always old. My dear brother said about Chappy, said, the woman has a face that looks like cold gravy.

I said, what's that? He said, she's just got more wrinkles than a bowl of cold gravy. She was always old. I've seen Chappy come to church with big whelps on her face.

Black eyes. Testimony time. My brother and I sit on the front seat.

Chappy sits over on this side. Well, it's time to give testimony. Anybody want to say a word? First person up, Chappy.

I just want to say it's good to be saved. She'd grab ahold of the chair in front of her. Start rocking.

She said, I read this verse in the Bible today. I want to quote it to you. I just memorized it.

I want to quote it to you. Not quote, but quote. And she sometimes called the book of Job, the book of Job, the book of Job.

And she could mispronounce most of the words, but boy, she knew the Lord. And she'd quote us a verse. She'd say, now I want you to pray for Harvey.

I tell you, it's going to be wonderful when Harvey gets saved. When Harvey gets saved, I won't have to read the Bible by myself while he's gone to work because Harvey will read the Bible with me. Glory to God.

When Harvey gets saved, I won't have to offer thanks under my breath while I'm cooking the food because we'll sit down and eat together. Harvey will offer thanks with me. Oh, glory to God.

When Harvey gets saved, I won't have to walk down the hill and walk to church. Harvey will bring me to church. Oh, glory to God.

And then she'd sit down. Next Thursday night, time for a prayer meeting. Anybody have a test? Yeah, I want to tell you it sure is good to be saved.

And my brother and I would sit on the front bench and we'd rock. And we would mouth the words, now I want you to pray for Harvey. It's going to be wonderful when Harvey gets saved.

And we would say it. I mean, we listened to it for seven long years. Every Wednesday night.

Standing there with a black eye, telling how wonderful it was going to be when Harvey got saved. Oh, Harvey ain't going to get saved. He's mean.

Wicked. My father left there in 1948. We moved from there.

From there down to Alabama, to Tennessee, to college. Now I'm out in Texas, going to seminary, pastoring a church. My dad's back in West Virginia, pastoring in West Virginia.

And we have a bond, not just the father and son, but preacher and preacher. And one Sunday afternoon, I called him. The next Sunday afternoon, he calls me.

Why'd you preach this morning? How'd it go? And we talked like father and son, and like preacher and preacher. And one day, he said, Do you remember Harvey Chapman? I said, Who could forget Harvey? I was scared to death of him. He said, Guess what? I said, You aren't going to tell me Harvey got saved.

He said, Harvey got saved. Praise God. Well, finished seminary, came back to West Virginia, buried my dad in 64.

He started the radio broadcast himself. When he died, my uncle, Guy Schmidt, mountain preacher, he took it over. He kept it till 76.

I buried him. I took it over. I've had it ever since.

And I was preaching a revival meeting, and my uncle Guy Schmidt's body was lying in state. And I said to my wife, I've got to preach a funeral tomorrow, my uncle's funeral. And I can't go to the viewing of the body from 7 until 9, because I've got to go preach.

But I go right past the funeral home, so I'm going early. And I went early. And I greeted the director of the funeral home.

He's a friend. And I went in and stood for a while at the casket of my uncle, patting his cold, dead hand. I said, Oh, God, give me a little bit of his boldness.

Help me to bless his widow tomorrow, my aunt, and help me to preach the gospel like he would want me to preach. And I prayed and thanked God for him. Fearless preacher.

And I got ready to leave, and I turned, wiped the tears from my eyes, and sitting over in the corner, way over in the corner, was this little old dried-up, pruned face, wrinkled skin, little old woman, hearing aids in both ears, cataract lenses, and a walker in front of her. And I looked at her and I said, That can't be. But that's Chapman.

Clara Chapman. Oh, I thought she had been dead years ago. I went over and I sat down beside her.

And I said, Excuse me? Huh? Turned up that hearing aid. I said, Are you Clara Chapman? She said, Sure. Who are you? I said, I'm Ralph and Flora's boy, Glenn.

Oh, Glennie! I wouldn't have known you. Oh, you look just like your daddy now that I see you. Hear you on the radio.

Keep on preaching. You ain't as good as your daddy, but keep at it. That's exactly what she said.

Exactly, exactly what she said. I hear it all the time in West Virginia. I'm telling you the truth.

I looked at the clock. I'm running late. I've got to go up the river to that church.

And I said, Chappie. I kissed her and I got up to leave. And I got as far as from here to Brendan, away from her, ten feet.

Late or not. And I walked back and I sat down beside her. I said, Chappie, I want to ask you something.

She said, What's that? I said, Did Harvey ever get famed? She said, Why, sure. I said, Chappie, What was it like when Harvey got famed? Before God, I am telling you, she reached out and put both hands on that walker. And started rocking.

And she said, Why, it was wonderful when Harvey got famed. And suddenly, I was a little boy on the front row of Springfork Baptist Church. And I could see that woman standing testifying how wonderful it was

going to be when Harvey got famed.

I said, Chappie, what was it like? She said, Oh, it was wonderful when Harvey got famed. It was something, I tell you, we'd sit down to eat and Harvey would offer thanks, bless God. I didn't have to pray at the stove.

Harvey would offer thanks. And when we got ready to come to church, Harvey would be out in the truck honking the horn saying, Come on, Chappie, we're going to be late. And when it was testimony time, Harvey would beat me up and end up testifying.

I said, Oh, Chappie, that's wonderful. Tears rolling down our faces. And I said, How did he die? Was he sick? She said, Oh, no, he wasn't sick.

I said, What happened? She said, One night he said, Chappie, let's get ready for bed. And I knew what that meant. That meant sit down and he'd go read the Bible to me.

And he sat down in his chair. And I sat down in my chair. And he started reading the Bible.

And he read the Bible. And then he started praying. And he stopped praying.

And I finally looked up, and he wasn't moving. And I walked over and touched him. I said, Harvey, are you alright? He was dead.

He started his prayer here and ended in glory. Hallelujah! And he's rocking that rocker back and forth. I'm wiping the tears.

I'm shouting, Hallelujah! The funeral director come in, stuck his head around him. Just waved and went by. I said, Chappie, I've got to go.

I'm late. I kissed her. I got up to leave.

I got about 20 feet away. And I turned around and went back. I said, Chappie, can I ask you one more thing? She said, What's that? I said, How long did you pray for Harvey? She said, Just 32 years.

I walked out toward the car. Holy Spirit said to me, Okay, Mr. Smarty, you with all your Greek and your Hebrew, and you with all your psychology, and you with all your training, and you with all your experience, that little woman who reads about a third grade level knows more about intercessory prayer than you know. Once you know you're praying in the will of God, you just keep right on.

Until Nancy came, and her name was Martha Kincaid. And she was a West Virginia woman. And she and Lewis were members of the first church that I ever pastored.

I was 22 years old, pastoring full time. They were retired. He was a retired monast.

We got ready to leave that church to go to seminary. And the last day, we had lunch at their house. And we got ready to leave their house in the afternoon.

And Lewis and Martha put their arms around Fleeta and me. And she said, You're my young'uns. You're my pastor.

You've been my pastor. But you're my young'uns. And I just want you to know that as long as I live and I've got a mind, I'm going to be praying every day for you young'uns through the years, Christmas card.

Pray for you every day. Let's love you young'uns. Read, write during the years.

She wouldn't answer because she didn't write that well to begin with. Didn't spell well. Couldn't hardly read her handwriting.

She's getting old. We got a letter, a Christmas card. It said, Dear Young'uns, My grandkids, she's living in Florida with them then, My grandkids say I'm getting senile.

And she misspelled it. I guess I am. Because the longer the day goes on, the more forgetful I become.

That's why I always pray for you young'uns first thing in the morning. And when she finally died in the hospital, in the bed with her was a little cigar box. And in the cigar box was a little New Testament, a little handkerchief, and a picture of my wife and me, her young'uns.

She wasn't our relative. She was one of our other mothers. And you never heard of Martha Kincaid.

And you never heard of Clara Chapman. But I tell you when those two saints came through the gates, heaven knew about them. Martha Kincaid never taught a Sunday school class in her life, but she was an intercessor.

I just quit. I never finished this message. I just quit.

Anybody here want to enroll in the school of intercessory prayer? The hours are long. It's work. And quite often you have to work a long time before you see any answers.

And I tell you there's plenty of room in the class. It's not crowded. And it doesn't matter whether you're old or young, how long you've been saved, how well you are or sick you are.

It doesn't even matter how much Bible you know right now. If you want to be an intercessor, you can be. Bow your heads with me please.

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