

# (Radical Jesus) 30 Radical Prayer

by Glenn Meldrum

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in the life of a Christian and the consequences of a prayerless life.*

**Duration:** 24:41

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:2, Micah 6:8, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 10:36, John 13:23, 2 Peter 1:3, Revelation 3:18

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a close relationship with God. He compares it to the intimacy between Abraham and God, as well as the Apostle John leaning on Jesus' bosom. The speaker highlights that many Christians lack God's heart for the world because they have not gotten close enough to Him. He emphasizes that knowing and loving God requires investing one's life and being willing to give up everything. The sermon also addresses the need for a genuine relationship with Jesus, as well as the consequences of living a spiritually bankrupt life. The speaker quotes from Isaiah 55, urging listeners to seek God and not waste their efforts on things that do not satisfy. The sermon concludes with a powerful statement from George Whitfield, highlighting the importance of preaching about a real and felt Christ.

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## Transcript

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Last week we ended 2015 beginning to look at the radical nature of prayer. I took the whole podcast to firmly establish that Jesus is the ultimate example of what the prayer life of a true Christian should resemble. We also looked at some of the differences between how Jesus prayed and how we pray, and the substance of that difference centered upon the fact that Jesus was God incarnate and we are mere mortals in desperate need of God.

Nonetheless, Jesus was the perfect model of the prayer life for those first disciples, and that standard and calling has not changed for true followers of Jesus to this very day. Prayer is not an option for the genuine follower of Jesus. It is a mandatory requirement.

In our pop church culture of cheap grace, such a statement may make you very uncomfortable, but that does not change the truth of the matter. When Jesus was teaching the people on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, he did not say, if you pray, but when you pray, because prayer was and still is an expected part of being a true follower of Jesus. Living a prayer life is a non-negotiable part of true discipleship, which means that if you want to be a follower of Jesus, then you must become a person of prayer.

We are called to live a prayer life, which means that prayer is to define our lives, that everything we do comes out of our prayer life and the relationship we have with Jesus. Most people pray at some time in their life or may even do so occasionally, but that does not mean that they are a follower of Jesus or will make heaven their home. As I said last week, those who do not live a life of prayer cannot be true disciples of Jesus because discipleship is all about relationship and true prayer is always relational.

Not just that, salvation itself is all about relationship. All real Christians were once enemies of Christ due to their willful rebellion against God. Through the cross of Christ, repentance and the forgiveness of sins has been offered to us so we could be forgiven of our sins and be adopted as sons and daughters.

Paul told us in Colossians chapter 1, If you continue in your faith, establish and firm, not move from the hope held out in the gospel. Salvation is all about being reconciled to God, which equals fellowship with the living God. And notice that Paul presented a very important condition, if you continue in the faith, which means we must remain in a living fellowship with God.

With all the false teaching on cheap grace that is spewed from pulpits today, the necessity of living in holy fellowship with a holy God has not changed. Through the preaching of cheap grace, the demands of the cross and of the true faith are replaced with a spineless religion that does not place upon the people any obligations, or at least any that would be costly or upset their selfish lives. Since everything in the lukewarm religion of the day is all about our best life now, the preachers of cheap grace keep people from the very truths they need to make heaven their home.

Look at the lukewarm church today and you will see a prayerless church. Without much prayer we cannot know God as we should or walk holy before him, because only through prayer do we have access to God's throne of grace. I am so very glad that when we look at Jesus, we see the total opposite of what the cheap grace easy-believers and preachers are advocating.

He is not afraid to command people to count the cost of their salvation and that they had to pick up their cross to forsake all to follow him. Prayer is also an integral part of counting the cost to follow Jesus. Anyone that believes or advocates that because we are saved by grace, we do not have any obligations placed upon us is thoroughly deceived and demonstrates their gross ignorance of God's word through such assertions.

We can see from the life of Christ and through his teaching that he fully realized that the effectiveness of prayer is directly tied to the quality of our relationship with God. To build a quality relationship with God demands the investment of our lives, heart, mind, strength, and time. Jesus even said in multiple ways that it would cost us everything, and I just happen to believe that Jesus knew what he was talking about and fully meant what he said.

Many times what people claim that works with God will not work with men. Let me make an example here. Just as there cannot be a real relationship between two people that do not know each other, so there cannot be a real relationship between God and those people who do not want to invest their lives in

knowing and loving God.

To know God in a real and intimate way will cost you everything. The Lord told us in the 55th chapter of Isaiah, Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen to me and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest affair. What Jesus offers us is absolutely free.

Yet we cannot get away from the fact that it will cost us everything. And those preachers that do not preach the truth offer their hearers a cheap grace that costs nothing and can give nothing. To the lukewarm church of Revelation 3, Jesus declared, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so you can become rich, and white clothes to wear so you can cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to put on your eyes so you can see.

The Laodicean church claimed to be rich, wealthy, and in need of nothing. And so you would have found that they were a prayerless people and they were part of a prayerless church. But Jesus stated the truth.

You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Because they did not see their tremendous need, they were not a people in prayer, because it takes a clear understanding of our neediness for us to become a people that are much in prayer. The history of the church offers clear and numerous proofs that those saints who knew how to move heaven to change earth lived in close fellowship with their beloved Lord.

This is just a fact, and that is the only way it works. Some may claim that there are exceptions to this rule, but this is not so. The God that does not change has established that the only way how people enter into fellowship with Him, and how they sustain that fellowship, and how they advance the spiritual kingdom of God, is through the spiritual means He has established.

The Lord will not negotiate over these unalterable truths. Either we say yes to God and prove that yes by our lives, or we say no to Him either by words or deeds. Those saints that knew and used the power of prayer had entered Christ's school of prayer and learned how to draw near to God.

They sat at Christ's feet and learned the power of sweet communion with the living God. This is where powerful prayer begins, in the place of deep abiding fellowship with God, where people grow to love Him more than self-sin pleasure in the world. It is in Christ's school of prayer that we learn how to intercede for the souls of perishing humanity, like Abraham of old, who agonized over those who would perish in fire and brimstone because of their persistent pursuit of evil.

The Lord shared with Abraham the just judgment He was going to pour out upon the inhabitants of Sodom and the city of the plains. Why was He going to show this to Abraham? Because Abraham could be moved by the heart of God because he lived near God. If the Lord shared with you the fact that people are rushing to hell, what would you do with such knowledge? Would you intercede like Abraham or sit in front of the TV to watch another football game or some immoral movies or TV series? In Christ's school of prayer, people also learn how to live like the apostle John, who leaned his head on the Savior's bosom and heard the heartbeat of God.

The fact is that most Christians do not have God's heart for a perishing world because they have not gotten close enough to Him to lean their head on His holy bosom. They live at a distance and do not

comprehend what they have lost as a result. To be so busy with the world that we have no time for Jesus will leave us in a spiritually bankrupt condition.

When people live at a distance, there is always a price to pay for their lukewarmness, and the price that must be paid is that they will not know the joy of living near Jesus. And in Christ's school of prayer, we will learn why Paul turned the world upside down. Did he turn the world upside down because he was a brilliant thinker, a highly motivated man, or a great administrator or organizer? No, it was because he was a man who had the cry, I want to know Christ, which is all about relationship.

He was a man driven to know the Lord in a deep, profound way, and the results of that relationship we see in the spiritual fruitfulness. The power Paul possessed came about because he was mighty through intercession, and that is what opened the world he ministered in to the gospel. Everything, and I mean everything, of true eternal value comes through prayer, which totally depends upon the relationship we have with Jesus.

And whatever we truly lack in this life is because we have not been much in prayer with him. Let me ask a rhetorical question here. What does it mean to be a true Christian, a bona fide follower of Jesus? It simply means that a person has entered into a real relationship with the living God through the blood of Christ, and is growing in Christ's likeness day by day as he or she seeks to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

This is why it is absolutely impossible to have an ongoing relationship with God if we have little or no communication with him. There is no such thing as a prayerless Christian. They do not exist because they have never existed.

We are told in Luke 11, verse 1, one day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples. One thing we can learn from this verse is that prayer is taught in one way or another.

Praying pastors produce praying churches, while prayerless pastors produce prayerless churches. Both kinds of pastors are reproducing themselves in the lives of the congregation, and the size of the congregation does not determine the spiritual condition of the pastor. There are men that pastor tens of thousands of people, but do not preach the gospel.

And if you had a prayer meeting, you would be hard-pressed to find even 20 to 50 people attend. And I will almost guarantee you that the pastor would not be there. Prayerless pastors produce prayerless churches, because they can only reproduce what they are.

Prayerless churches teach people to be prayerless people. In the end, this means that the pastor is growing a church of unsaved people. This is a very scary thought.

When you see praying churches, it's because the pastor has a passion for God, and that passion for God will do one of three things in the people. They will either become praying people in passionate pursuit of God, like the pastor, or they will leave the church to find a dead congregation that is not bothered by their lukewarmness, that is a byproduct of their prayerlessness. Or they will strive to drive a praying pastor out of the church, so they can have a prayerless dead social club, instead of a living congregation that is part of the living body of Christ.

It is a fact that the prayer life of a church rises or falls upon the prayer life of the pastor. This also means that the pastor is totally accountable before God with what he does with prayer. Prayerless pastors minister out of the flesh or sinful nature, not through the power of the Holy Spirit.

They may shout, spit, and jump when they preach, but that does not mean they are anointed. Prayerless pastors can only give their congregation death, because the flesh or sinful nature can only give death. This is why Charles Spurgeon declared, it should be one of our first cares that we ourselves should be saved men.

If the preachers, teachers, and professors are not praying men, then they are not saved men. Let that thought sink into your head and heart. Paul has some very strong words to say about this in Romans chapter 8, verses 5 through 8. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires.

But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God.

It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. What Paul is speaking about concerns pastors as much as it does the rest of the professing church.

The situation is only scarier for a pastor because when a pastor is prayerless, then he infects the entire congregation with the spiritual death that has taken hold of him, and he will answer to God for this. This indicates that all his sermons come out of the flesh or sinful nature. Let's take this a little further.

A prayerless pastor can only minister out of the flesh, so all his ministry, counseling, planning, and outreach are actually works of the flesh. They may be religious functions, but that does not mean God has any part of what the pastor and people are doing. It also means that a prayerless pastor cannot lead a church into the will of God because a prayerless pastor will never know the will of God.

His prayerlessness leads him to do the work of ministry through the flesh, which will never accomplish the will of God. John Anderson made this powerful point. The lawyer's mistakes go to jail.

The doctor's mistakes go to the cemetery. But the minister's mistakes go to hell. That's a serious issue, isn't it? Those people that can sit under a prayerless pastor and be part of a prayerless church are in that kind of church for a reason.

They do not want to be spiritual people. They do not want to live a life of prayer with a praying people. They are rushing to hell and doing so by going to a dead church.

People can justify why they attend spiritually dead churches, but the simple fact is that they are in dead churches because they do not want to be in on-fire praying churches. Those who are in any kind of ministry but are not in constant communion with the Lord are not men and women of God. Like I said earlier, the size of the church, personal income, position, or fame does not mean a person is living a life of prayer.

And if they are not living a life of prayer, then they are not a man or woman of God, no matter who they are or what they say. Because a person hosts a Christian TV show as part of a Christian band or pastoring a megachurch does not mean they are living the prayer life. And if they are not living a life of prayer, then

they are not men and women of God.

Only a person of prayer can be called a man or woman of God, period. There are no exceptions. There are no shortcuts.

There's no other ways. The anointed preacher George Whitefield powerfully stated, For I am verily persuaded that preachers talk of an unknown, unfelt Christ, and the reasons why congregations have been so dead is because they have dead men preaching to them, O that the Lord would quicken and revive them for his own namesake, for how can dead men beget living children? What a powerful statement. Some people may be mad at me over what I have just said, but you need to ask yourself why.

Have I said anything that is unbiblical? Or has the truth I spoke grated against your lukewarm version of Christianity? The Christian life rises or falls upon the relationship we have with Jesus. I dealt with that at the beginning of the lesson, so I'm not going to repeat it all. When we love Jesus, we want to be with Jesus.

And when we do not love him, we will not want to spend time with him. It's just that simple. Men and women of God are made on their knees, not in Bible school, seminary, or in front of TV cameras.

Education may provide a person with some helpful knowledge for ministry, but it does not qualify a person for ministry. There are a lot of educated pastors, teachers, and professors that are prayerless men and women. And though they may teach out of Scripture and be experts in ancient languages, it does not offset their prayerlessness.

There's a very important principle here that we need to lay hold of. We cannot divorce a person from the work or the message. The anointing of God rests upon men and women of God, and men and women of God are always men and women that live a life of prayer, which signifies that all they do flows out of their prayer life.

So prayerless pastors, teachers, and professors can only give out of the flesh because the anointing does not rest upon them. They may give facts and orthodox doctrine, but without the anointing, all that comes out of them is death. I like what Leonard Ravenhill said, Ministers who do not spend two hours a day in prayer are not worth a dime a dozen, degrees or no degrees.

All those who have failed in the school of prayer have failed in every aspect of ministry in Christian life. To be a man or woman of God, we must be like Jesus. And Christlikeness also means that we are much in prayer like Jesus was.

We cannot be Christlike and prayerless, since the very idea is the total opposite of all that Christ was and did. Through Christ's example, we learn that we need to be much in prayer if we want to walk in the power and victory of the Spirit. His example also teaches us the joy that is found in prayer.

By sitting at Jesus' feet, we learn how to enjoy the awesome presence of God. And as you learn how to enjoy His wonderful presence, you will never want to live without it again. When the life of God is pulsating through our inner being, then prayer will be the driving force of our life.

I have seen churches that were houses of prayer because a praying pastor was correctly leading the congregation. These churches were alive, and the presence of God was there in a tangible way. I have also known of college professors that after being confronted by the power of the Holy Spirit and authentic

revival, realized that they had been hypocrites by teaching God's Word without the power of God.

One such professor repents to all of his old students whenever he comes across them because he came to understand that he had failed them by not being a man of God himself or by being a man of prayer. I have known of a prayerless pastor that pastored a large prayerless church. He attended an authentic revival and came to the knowledge that he had never known Christ even though he was raised in a Christian home, went to a Christian college, and was ordained by a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled denomination.

He got genuinely saved, and I knew that he would not be in the church he pastored for very long before they kicked him out. They had an unsaved pastor who pastored an unsaved congregation, and the last thing such a congregation would want was a truly saved pastor calling them to get saved when they thought they were right with God. Now the principle I have been sharing about how the spiritual condition of a pastor directly affects the congregation is also true when it comes to families.

According to the prayer life of the father and mother will be the spiritual climate of the home. Homes that are filled with contention and strife are not homes filled with the Spirit of God because they are not homes defined by prayer and the pursuit of God. I actually put the greatest responsibility for successful marriages upon the husbands because they are called of God to be the priests of the home that leads the wife and children into a right relationship with God.

Paul told us in Ephesians 5, verses 25 and 26, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word. There's a very important powerful principle that is presented to us in these verses that husbands are to love their wives as Jesus loves the church. How does Jesus love the church? He gave himself up for her.

In other words, he loves the church with a selfless love which tells us that he loves them for their own well-being, not for his. Apply this truth to marriages and you will have fantastic marriages. And every time a marriage fails, it fails because in one way or another, the husband failed to live out this biblical truth.

When husbands and fathers fail to be men of prayer, then all they have to give their wife and children are the works of the flesh which can only bring death, death to the marriage, and the spiritual death to the children. Selfishness always destroys. And unless we walk nearer to God, the prominent feature of our fallen character is selfishness.

Every sin that we can commit is selfish in nature, and I mean every sin. The only way we can conquer our selfish fallen nature is to walk near to Jesus so that we can experience his transforming grace. And to walk near Jesus, we must be a people that live a life of prayer.

I've seen this all the time while ministering across the U.S. and into Europe where the wife walks with Jesus while the husband lives a worldly or outright unsaved life. Here you have men that refuse to walk with Jesus, and they do not care what ramifications it has upon his wife and children. A wife will never be as strong in the face as she could be if her husband walked with God.

And when the husband fails to be the godly head of the home, he will define his home by his ungodliness, which will negatively affect the rest of the family. The way God designed marriage to work can only be accomplished when the husband and wife walk with Jesus, with the husband being the spiritual head of the home. Apart from a Christ-centered marriage, the marriage will never be what God created it to be.

When the children are raised in a home with one saved parent and the other unsaved, they are torn between the worldly parent and this godly one. This is a terrible thing to put children through. Children should not be forced to choose between one godless parent and a godly one.

When a selfish husband and father continues in his selfish life, he greatly harms his wife and children. This is also true when a godless mother refused to walk with God. She will do tremendous damage to her children and to her husband.

This is a very sad thing that happens far too often. Jesus made the startling statement in Matthew chapter 10, verses 35 and 36. For I have come to turn a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

A man's enemies will be the members of his own household. A family can only function correctly when it comes under the rule of God. And the Lord would rather tear a family apart to save some than for the entire family to go to hell.

The Apostle Peter told us in 2 Peter 1.3, His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. This is a wonderful promise that the Lord will give us all the Holy Spirit power necessary to live the victorious Christian life. We must grasp the truth that Peter is saying here, that the divine power that makes people victorious over sin, compromise and the world is only available through our knowledge of Jesus.

How does that knowledge of Jesus come to people? Through a strong growing knowledge of the scriptures and a vibrant life of prayer. We have at our disposal the infinite power of an infinite God. So why do so many people that claim to be Christian live defeated lives and have defeated marriages? You could have sitting in your garage a million dollar Maserati that can go over 200 miles an hour.

But if you do not fill the tank with gas and turn the ignition on, then it will do absolutely nothing other than sit in your garage and collect dust. You may boast on how fast the car can go and how fun it would be if you could drive it. But you would not be speaking from experience because the car only sits in your garage.

All that power, but no ability to apply it to your life. We have at our disposal the fullness of God's divine power so that we can live the victorious Christian life. But if we live defeated lives, there's no one to blame but ourselves.

The principal reason why people do not walk in victory is because they do not want to walk in victory, since they love their sin and do not want to forsake all to gain Christ. If they pressed into Jesus by living a life of vibrant prayer, they would be tapping into the only source of infinite power available so that they could live the victorious Christian life. And they could, through the power of the Spirit, touch a perishing world.

The choice is ours. The promises have been given. And God is faithful to keep His promises.

Either we walk in the victory that Jesus owns by divine right as God and through His death and resurrection, or we will live defeated lives, have defeated marriages, defeated children, be part of a defeated, lukewarm church, and live in a pagan, defeated nation. At the center of this issue is what we do on our knees. Let me close with a powerful statement from William MacDonald.

God seems to place a special value on prayer when it costs us something. Those who rise early in the morning enjoy fellowship with the One who likewise arose early to receive His instructions for the day from His Father. Likewise, those who are in such deadly earnest that they are willing to pray through the night enjoy power with God that cannot be denied.

Prayer that costs us nothing is worth nothing. It is simply a byproduct of cheap Christianity.

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