

Preeminence of Prayer in the Life of Jesus

by Harold Vaughan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in the life of Jesus and in the Christian life, highlighting the significance of the aloneness of prayer for a deep and meaningful connection with God.

Duration: 41:52

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:17, Luke 3:21, Luke 9:18, Hebrews 5:7

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the significance of Jesus' final words on the cross: 'It is finished.' He explains that these words were a prayer to God, declaring that the work of redemption was complete. Jesus' prayer was a culmination of his sacrifice and the fulfillment of God's plan. The preacher highlights the importance of prayer and the need for believers to have a deep, heartfelt connection with God, rather than just intellectualizing their faith. He encourages intensity in prayer, emphasizing that it is not just about going through the motions, but about engaging our hearts and aligning ourselves with God's will.

Transcript

The scripture says, never a man spoke like this man, referring to Christ. But it might well have been written, never a man prayed like this man. James Stewart said prayer was not only an important part of the life of Jesus, he said it was his life, the very breath of his being.

And as we see this morning, we're going to find that the prayer life of Jesus was far richer than a mere list of requests and preferences. It was far more than a reading of the grocery list, as it were, to his heavenly father, but it touched the very depths of his being. Of all the gospel writers, Luke tells us more of the prayer life of Jesus than any of the others.

So I invite your attention this morning to Luke chapter 3, and keep your Bible open because we're going to turn to several passages in the gospel of Luke. I want you to note first of all this morning what I'm calling the preeminence of prayer in the life of Jesus. The preeminence of prayer in the life of Jesus.

Luke chapter 3 and verse 21. The preeminence of prayer in the life of Jesus. Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized and prayed, the heaven was open and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him.

And a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved son. In thee, I am well pleased. Note that word in verse 21.

It came to pass when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and prayed. I don't know if you can remember what you were doing or thinking when you got baptized, but the Bible says Jesus being baptized was praying. Understand that baptism for Jesus was a very, a very, a very crisis situation.

Because when our Lord was baptized, it was nothing short of a prophecy of his coming death, burial, and resurrection. And when our Lord got baptized, it was a foretelling of his imminent death, his burial, and his resurrection. But the Bible says that at that crisis hour, Jesus being baptized was praying.

I believe that Jesus was baptized in prayer long before he got baptized in water, that he was immersed in communion with his heavenly father long before he ever got immersed in the Jordan River. In fact, I would say that Jesus, the chief characteristic in his life, is that he was a man of prayer, supremely, preeminently, primarily a praying man. Now, there's much that could be said about Jesus.

And if you tried to say it all, the whole world could not even contain the books that could be written of him. But above every other thing, and beyond every other thing, and behind every other thing, Jesus was first and foremost a praying man. Now, Jesus preached, but he prayed first.

Jesus healed people, but he prayed first. Jesus cast out evil spirits, but he prayed first. Jesus did his father's will and died on the cross, but he prayed to blood in Gethsemane before he did it.

He was preeminently a praying man. I believe that our Lord Jesus operated in an environment, a climate, an aura of prayer. That our Lord was so in communion with God that his life was just saturated.

It's the Christian's vital breath, they say, prayer. And Jesus lived in an environment of prayer. You know, when we send our astronauts into orbit on the space shuttle, we don't send them up there unprepared.

They have to have the atmosphere of earth in order to exist. You take a human being and put them in space without oxygen to breathe, he will die. You take a fish out of water, he will die.

My boy and I went fishing some years ago now, third cast, it was 5.30 in the morning, pitch black, couldn't see a thing. And I laid into one and got one ombre, and I could tell it was a pretty good one because it kept stripping line out. And finally, we got the thing up beside the boat, a big striped bass, 20 pounder, I might add.

Let me reemphasize that excellent point. 20 pounder brother right there beside the boat, got that thing in and man, he was all over the place, thrashing all around. And you take a fish out of water for a few minutes and he's not thrashing around.

He might twitch his tail every now and then, and then you leave it out of water for several minutes and he's not even twitching his tail. You take a fish out of water and what happens? He dies. You take a human being out of earth's atmosphere, what happens? He dies.

And you take a Christian out of prayer and what happens? He dies. What's the first thing to go when a man gets away from God? Attending church on Sunday morning? No. Tithing? No.

What's the first thing to go when a person gets away from God? Is it not their prayer light? And what's the first thing to return when a man meets God afresh? Is it not his prayer light? No man is any greater than his prayer light. No man is any greater than his prayer light. No woman is any greater than her prayer light.

And no church could ever be any greater than its prayer light. My dear people, Jesus was baptized in prayer. He lived in prayer.

He even died in prayer. He was preeminently a praying man. But I want you to notice something else.

The practice of prayer in the life of Christ. Look over in Luke five and verse 15, Luke chapter five and verse 15. The practice of prayer in the life of our Lord.

Luke five and verse 15. But so much the more there went a fame abroad of him and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.

These men went up on the mountain up there on the lake there for three days. Well, here Jesus withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. People are coming to Jesus, thronging Jesus.

And here he's slipping off to the wilderness for prayer. Look in chapter six and verse 12, Luke chapter six and verse 12. And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God.

Jesus spending all night in prayer. Some of your men just about made a night of it the other night up to three o'clock in the morning in prayer. Well, here, Jesus spending the whole night in prayer up long before sunrise in prayer, study where Jesus liked to pray.

You'll find he liked to go to the desert, to the garden, to the mountains and to the wilderness. He liked the quiet, solitary place, a hard place to come by around the Atlanta area. Amen.

But brother, that's where Jesus liked to be. Well, you studied the posture he prayed in. You'll find that he prayed sometimes standing on other occasions, kneeling, yet at other times, prostrate down on his face, which just goes to show it's not the posture of your body that counts when you pray as much as it is the condition of your heart that counts when you pray.

Put it down, friend. Prayer is not the words that you utter. Prayer is the state of your soul.

And before you can get through to God with your words, your heart needs to be clean in the presence of God. You know, I believe I really believe that a praying heart is one of the great evidences that a person has passed from death into life. I really believe this, that God has no children who do not communicate with him.

All God's children talk to their heavenly father. It's one of the great evidences that a person has indeed passed from death into life and been born of the spirit of God. I hope you understand this morning, dear friend, that the Christian life is not just a set of rules and principles, but brother, the Christian life is the new principle, the life of God being coming into your heart.

And brother, when that happens, you have a prayer life and you communicate with your heavenly father. My family and I, we travel together. We try to keep our family together as much as possible.

I remember back in the old days, we had an Airstream travel trailer. Don't get one, but we had one back in the old days. And I remember one night we were out in some church somewhere on the country somewhere, no doubt.

And I remember it was pitch black that night. I, in those days, I used to be a night owl. I was up.

I was up at all hours of the night. My wife has always been an early riser. Uh, when we're home today, even today, my wife is still up at five 15 every morning for prayer and Bible study.

I have a real hard time with these kinds of people. Don't you? I mean, brother, they're just disgusting, but a brother, uh, back in those days, I tended to be the late night person. And we were laying there in bed in that Airstream travel trailer.

There was no sun, no, no, no moonlight, no starlight, no streetlight. It was pitch black. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

And I thought I had a profound thought. So I figured I better share it with my wife. Seeing as how that was such a rare occurrence.

So I said to my wife, I said, honey, I want to ask you something. I said, honey, do you know here we're laying in bed in pitch black. I said, honey, do you know how you can know I believe you exist? I thought that was a profound thought and she didn't catch on to this line of profound thinking.

And I said, well, honey, do you know how you can know? I believe you're there stone silence, brother. She didn't have anything to say. And I rephrased it again.

I said, well, honey, do you know how you can know? I love you. And she grasped right onto that. I said, well, honey, it's very simple.

I said, I can't see you, but I believe you're there. I believe you're real. I believe you exist.

And the proof of it is I'm carrying on this conversation with you. I said, honey, if I didn't believe you were there, if I didn't believe you were real, if I didn't believe you existed, I wouldn't be talking about it. I believe you're there.

I believe you're real. I believe you exist. And the proof of it is I'm I'm talking with you.

You know, it'd be a really silly thing for me to talk about how much I love my wife. If I never talked to my wife, rather ridiculous for me to talk about how much I love my children. If I never communicate with my children.

And dear people, if you really believe that God exists and you really believe that God is there, there will be times when you will be found communicating with this God. Bunyan said, if thou art not a praying man, thou art not even a Christian. If thou art not a praying man, thou art not even a Christian.

Prayer is soul speech. It's your heart going out to God. All the great evidence of the new birth.

You know, something about children is that they cannot communicate long before they can articulate. All children have a way, you know, I remember in the old days, my boys, my older boys were little, little, little guys, you know, and I'd be in church somewhere talking to somebody and they would come up and

invariably what would they do? Here they are down here like this. And they'd pull on my trousers like this.

And what did they want? They wanted daddy's attention. I'd look down there and then what would they do? Throw up their arms. Now, what do they want? Well, they wanted dad's attention and they wanted dad to pick him up, but they didn't know how to put that in words.

Hey, dad, pick me up. Dad, take me in your arms. And even though they couldn't verbalize it, they could not articulate it.

They could communicate with their father's heart. They could get his attention and they could communicate with their daddy's heart. I knew what they wanted.

And friend, I want to tell you, if you're saved this morning by the grace of God, there's something in you that cries out to something in God. It's the spirit called Abba Father. You know what Abba Father means? I'll tell you what it means.

It means up, daddy, up. Because sometimes you cannot put in words what's in your soul. But dear friend, if you're born of the spirit of God and you're walking in the spirit, I'm telling you, you don't even have to verbalize it.

God gets your heart because he sees and he knows our hearts. Oh, I believe this is one of the great evidences of the new birth. I believe that I believe that one indication that the prayer meeting is the weakest meeting in the Baptist church is indicative of the fact that we're self-sufficient and self-righteous and we have abandoned our dependence upon our God.

I mean, how much prayer really goes on in these days? If you're not careful, the bigger you get, the more polished and the more program you're going to have and the less power of God you're likely to have if we do not stay humble before God in the place of prayer. What would happen tomorrow morning if we got out of our beds and at 5:15 or at even a more reasonable hour and we open our Bibles and we open our Bibles and we discover something happened overnight that somehow every reference to prayer had been taken out of the Bible. Oh, we read further and we find out every reference to the Holy Spirit had been taken out of the Bible.

Man, a lot of blank places in here. And this is not going to happen, by the way, but what if it did? We got out of bed tomorrow morning, every reference to prayer, every reference to the power of the Holy Spirit taken out of this book. I want to ask you if there were no such thing as prayer, if there were no such thing as the Holy Spirit, what difference would it make in your heart if there was no such thing as prayer? What difference would it make in your home if there were no such thing as prayer? What difference would it make in your church if there was no such thing as prayer? Oh, my dear people, in some places, if prayer and the Holy Spirit took off, the whole thing would shut down.

But most places, they wouldn't miss a lick because what's being done is not being done in the power and energy of the Holy Ghost of God. But brother, it's just man-made carryings on. And dear people, I want to tell you that Jesus Christ practiced prayer continually.

He said, when you pray, he said, don't go pray on the Capitol steps for crying out loud. Go in your closet and find a secret place and pray to your father in secret. And your father, which hears in secret, shall reward the openly.

I want to tell you that every great achievement in the life of Jesus was preceded by prayer. Every great achievement in the life of Jesus was preceded by prayer. Jesus prayed and fed 4,000 miracle.

Jesus prayed and fed 5,000 miracle. Jesus prayed and walked on water miracle. Jesus prayed and Lazarus came forth from the grave miracle.

Every great achievement in the life of Jesus was preceded by prayer. But did you realize that every great achievement in the life of Jesus was preceded by prayer? You check it out. He never did a miracle, taught a great message, healed somebody, cast out a demon.

But what it seems he slips off to the quiet place to thank God, I believe, for showing himself strong in his behalf. He sought the solitude of prayer. I want you to see it.

Luke nine and verse 18, the solitude or the aloneness of prayer. Luke chapter nine, verse 18, Luke chapter nine, verse 18. Now there are no contradictions in the Bible, but there are some apparent contradictions.

In other words, they look like contradictions, but they're really not. And here's an apparent contradiction. So I want you to read that loud.

I'm reading from King James version. If you have that or something close, read along with me and see if you can pick up on this apparent, not a real, but an apparent contradiction. Luke nine, 18.

Let's read. And it came to pass as he was alone, praying his disciples were with him. Now stop right there.

And it came to pass as he was alone, praying his disciples were with him alone, praying disciples with him. Friend, I want to ask you, how could Jesus have been alone praying if the disciples were with him? Here's what I think happened. Jesus was there.

Disciples are there. The disciples are well aware. Jesus is there.

Jesus is totally aware that God, the father is there, but he's totally oblivious to the fact that the disciples are there. The disciples are with Jesus, but Jesus is not with the disciples. Jesus is caught up in an unshakable concentration upon communion with his heavenly father.

And he's totally unaware of the fact that the disciples are there. One man said the true prayer is when your awareness of God exceeds your awareness of men. True prayer is when your awareness of God exceeds your awareness of men.

How many of you have ever been in a prayer meeting and it's coming your turn to pray and you're over there trying to figure out what you're going to say. Have you ever been there? You were the kind of pre rehearsing, you know, how you're going to launch out with some remote scripture text, perhaps to impress the brethren that you're a real student of the word of God. Or are you over there coming with some sort of a clever way to launch? Have you ever been there? Friends? Well, you're not alone praying when you're like that, are you? No.

Oh, true prayers when your awareness of God exceeds your awareness of men. I remember I was up in a prayer meeting one time in Maine and the spirit of God came into this church. I'll just say this, dear people.

It sure is good to be in town when God is. I mean, it's good to be in town when God is and God gave the spirit of prayer to this crowd and they would fast the noon hour and 40, 50 and a and a and a paper mill town would come and seek the face of God. And I remember one afternoon prayer meeting this old boy.

He blurted out in the middle of the prayer meeting this kind of prayer. He said, God, I'm willing to do anything to get right with you, Lord. He said, God, I'm willing to do anything, even if I have to go to jail.

Well, that's a whole lot different than the old standard, bless the gift and the giver and those that have and those that don't, isn't it? That's a whole lot different than that kind of prayer. That guy was alone praying. Thank God we were, we were with him, but he wasn't with us.

He was caught up in an unshakable concentration upon his heavenly father. It's the aloneness of prayer. And that's what, that's what, that's what it is, friend.

It doesn't make any difference whether you're in a great multitude of people, you know, you can be in a company, you can be in a crowd and not be in company. You can live in a big city and be very much alone. And friend, it doesn't make any difference if you're praying with some others or you're out walking the street or out in a field or wherever you happen to be.

When you pray, it's just you and God, it's the aloneness of prayer. It's the aloneness of prayer. Sometimes, you know, we're better, we're better off to get the new, new convert to pray before he learns all the slogans and the cliches.

Oh, that course is often say my prayers, but do I ever pray? Oh, well, we do a lot of, listen, quit saying your prayers and start praying your prayers. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much brother. That needs to be hard in it.

I'll tell you why prayer is so hard. Dear people, I'll tell you why prayer is so hard. The reason prayer is so hard is because it's the only thing you've got to be right with God in order to do.

You don't have to be right with God in order to come to church on Sunday morning. You don't have to be right with God in order to give 10% of your income. It helps, but you really don't have to be right with God.

But I'll tell you something, friend, if your heart's not clean with God, then no wonder there's no soul breathings. No wonder there's no soul fellowship. Why? Because the spirit of God is grieved and we only have the spirit of prayer.

Oh, brother, it's the aloneness. It's the solitude. It's the solitude of prayer, but I get that.

I want you to notice something else. The alteration of prayer, Luke 9, 28, look at this, the alteration or the transformation of prayer, Luke 9, 28. And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray.

He took his right hand man and went up in the mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered and his raiment was white and glistening. Now look at that.

Jesus was not transfigured while he was preaching. He was transfigured while he was praying. It came to pass that, that, that he prayed the fashion of his countenance.

The very facial expression of Jesus was transfigured while he was praying. Hey, did you know there's no places transforming as the place of prayer? There's no places transforming as the place of prayer. You realize, dear people, you can come to church for 30 years and never really be changed in your soul.

I've met people like that. You realize you can, you can hear singing and not be changed. You can hear preaching and teaching and not be changed.

You can do the preaching and singing and teaching and not be changed, but there's no way you can come judgment day, honest to God on a consistent basis without being changed from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of God. Prayer does not change God. Prayer changes us.

Prayer is not overcoming reluctance in God. Prayer is not twisting the arm of deity to do our will. Prayer is not my way of getting my will done in heaven.

Prayer is God's way of getting his will done on earth. But he can't find people who will come into vital union with him that his purposes might be realized that would not be realized any other way. Well, I was on prayer meeting one time up in Maine and this brother came to me and God came to his church in a marvelous way.

And here's what he said, the pastor's testimony. He said, Harold, I've been praying really serious for three months concerning revival in our church. I've been praying for three months about revival in our church.

But he said, here's what he said. He said, you know, since I really started seriously praying, he said, God hadn't done a single thing for the people I've been praying for. He said, God hadn't done a single thing for the people I prayed for, but he said, my, how God has been working me over since I really started seriously praying.

I think he's on to something. You realize the first person to be changed by prayer is not the person prayed for. The first person to be changed is the person doing the praying.

And if you've been praying for people, a bunch of people for a long time, and God hadn't done anything, maybe before there can be any change there, maybe there needs to be a little change right here. I first came to the Lord. I, I, I tried to sit God on everybody in my family, you know, Oh God changed my mom and dad, Lord.

And Oh God changed my brother. And, Oh, and I was trying to get God to change everybody else. And God didn't change anybody.

And after a few years of that, I finally dawned on me. Wait a minute. Maybe there needs to be an alteration in my motivation, my attitude.

Maybe I just want God to change them to make it easy on me. Maybe I need some adjustment before they can have any adjustments. Dear people.

There's no places transforming as the place of prayer. Oh, PT Forsythe said, we do not pray in order to live the Christian life, but rather we live the Christian life in order to pray. And I want you to think about this one.

The Bible says the fashion of his countenance was altered. Now I want you to hear me on this point. Do you realize that the very facial expression of Jesus Christ was transfigured? How many of you think we

could all use a little facial overhaul every now and then, if you've ever sat in the choir and stared out on Sunday morning, you know, I'm telling you the truth.

Oh, brother, I'm not talking about pasting on a plastic smile. I'm not talking about a cosmetic fix up. I'm talking about God doing something in your heart that shows up on your face.

And brother, when God touches your heart, sometimes you have a countenance that's touched by God. Brother Mark Gerard comes in our place sometimes, and sometimes he comes in with a glow on his face. Well, I know he met with God and we need this every now and then we need, we need that.

In fact, we need this about every day. The alteration of prayer. If you would spend 30 days, 30 minutes a day for the next six months and serious heartfelt judgment day, honest prayer, you might not notice any change in your life, but your family members would notice a change in your life.

When God changes you, it's not all at one time. It's a little bit at a time. You are changed from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of God, the alteration of prayer.

But look at this one, thankfulness and prayer. Look in Luke 22, Luke 22. We just want to touch on this.

Luke 22 verse 17, thankfulness and prayer in the life of Christ, Luke 22, 17, thankfulness and prayer in the life of Christ, Luke 22, 17. And he took the cup and gave thanks. And that was the new Testament in his blood.

Look in verse 19, Luke 22, 19. And he took bread and gave thanks and break it and gave unto them saying, this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

Do you realize what he's doing here? Dear people, he's taking that cup representative of his blood, which is about to be shed. And he's giving thanks for the shedding of his own blood in advance. He took the bread, a symbol of his body, which was going to be broken on the tree.

And he gave thanks for the breaking of his own body. He thanked the father for his own death in advance. Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ and everything.

Give thanks. I want to ask you this morning, are you a thankful person? I mean, have you, have you, have you thanked God today that you could get out of bed? I mean, have you thanked God today? Have you entered into his gates with thanksgiving yet? Brother, have you come into his courts with praise yet? Oh man, Jesus, thanking the father for his own death, thankfulness and prayer, thankfulness and prayer. You know, it's not what happens to us.

It's what happens in us that really counts. I'll tell you something. It's not really what happens on the outside that is telling as much as what happens on the inside that will really tell the final story.

Gratitude to God. My dear people, Jesus Christ gave thanks for his own death. Can't we thank God for our blessings and our problems as well.

Thankfulness and prayer. You're going to hear more about that in Sunday school, but look at this one, Luke, Luke 22 39 intensity and prayer in the life of Jesus intensity and prayer in the life of Jesus, Luke 22 in verse 39. Now notice this.

And he came out and went as he was want to the Mount of Olives and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, pray that you enter not into temptation and was withdrawn from them about a stone's test and kneel down and prayed. And he gasped out this prayer father, if I'll be willing, remove this cup for me.

He was contemplating the cup of sin. He that knew no sin was about to be made sin. And he said, remove this cup for me.

If it'd be possible, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. I'll tell you, he died in Gethsemane before he ever died on Calvary. Then look in verse 43, and there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Now I really like this, an angel strengthening him and being in an agony, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly. Jesus agonized in prayer.

He labored in prayer. He wrestled in prayer. My dear people, the Bible tells us here that he was in such a fervent spirit of prayer that he, he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

What does this mean? He was under such an awful burden that the capillaries of his forehead burst out and he hemorrhaged blood and sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground as he contemplated this awful price that would be paid on the cross. Brother, the Bible teaches here he sweated blood, says in the book of Hebrews, that was strong crying and tears. He made intercession.

And for those of you that are opposed to all emotion in the Christian life, you better check up on how Jesus prayed with strong crying and tears. He made intercession. I believe this may be the most intense prayer meeting Jesus had.

I do not believe it was the only intense prayer meeting our Lord Jesus ever had. I do not believe that. Oh, my dear people.

He labored in prayer. Somebody asked Stephen Oldford one time, how did you build that church in New York city, Calvary Baptist church? He said, I'll tell you how we built the church bit knees, wet eyes and broken hearts, bit knees, wet eyes and broken hearts. And if I could say this this morning, very kindly that the thing that is missing today from our cerebral religion is bit knees, wet eyes and broken hearts.

And we're in a generation where we have so intellectualized the faith we've gotten away from the burden of God in the place of prayer, in the prayer closet, bit knees, wet eyes, broken hearts. Oh, brother, we need for God to come and minister our hearts every now and then you check out this prayer life of Jesus laboring in prayer was strong, crying and tears, making intercession. You contrast that though, with this ministry, you'll be shocked.

You'll be shocked. You know, Jesus was fairly laid back when it came to public ministry. He's late half the time.

Lazarus died before he even got there. He wasn't upset about anything. You know, I don't think that Jesus was wore out after he gave the sermon on the Mount.

I don't think you need to go to the dry cleaners or anything after he went to the sermon on the brother. I don't, you know what I'm saying? He, by and large, he got, he got exercised every now and then, like when he cast the money changers out of the temple, he got all excited, but by and large, I don't think he entertained the people by the way he spoke. I think he kept their attention by the content of what he said.

He spoke as one that had authority. I don't think Jesus was hopping around from rock to rock, pouncing on people and bopping their heads, slaying them in the spirit. Like some of these clowns on television, brother.

I don't think Jesus ever did anything like that. He didn't put on some sort of a sideshow slaying in the spirit. God help us.

No, but, but brother, he might've been, he might've been kind of laid back in his ministry by and large, but I'll tell you something. He wasn't laid back in the place of prayer, strong, crying in tears, making intercession, being in an agony. He labored more fervently, brother.

I want to tell you that the Lord Jesus Christ, listen to this. He was earnest in prayer and easy in ministry by and large, earnest in prayer, easy in ministry. You know what I noticed about us in America? If we tend to be anything, we tend to be earnest in ministry and very easy in prayer.

The exact opposite of Jesus earnest in ministry. Oh yes, but very easy in prayer. Now I'm not advocating becoming passive in ministry, but here's what I believe.

I believe that we prayed more, we could do less and have more happen of an eternal sort. That's what I really believe. And I'm not advocating sitting around being passive.

No, no, not at all. But brother, this place of earnestness, this place of earnestness in prayer, John Bunyan said, when thou prayest rather, let thy heart be without words than thy words without a heart. Thomas Brooks said, cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven.

And if they freeze, they're going to fall back down to earth and never make it intensity, intensity in prayer. And I want to tell you something. It's going to be an intense meeting when we gather around the judgment seat of Christ.

And I'm of the firm persuasion that we in America could use some intense dealings with the Holy God in preparation right now before that great and mighty day intensity, intensity, intensity in prayer. It's not just going through the motion. It's not just praying through the list.

It's not just saying the words, but brother, it's getting to the point where our hearts are so engaged and caught up in the will of God and the spirit of God that brother, we pray that God could do on earth, but he couldn't do any other way. Intensity, intensity in prayer. And dear people, it's not just volume and it's not just emotion.

That's not what I'm talking about, but I'm talking about putting your whole heart into it. Hezekiah, when he got that letter from Sennacherib, he spread that thing out before the Lord. He spread his heart out before God.

And the psalmist said, I poured out my soul to the Lord. Brother, we need times when we pour our heart out to God. We pour our soul out to God.

Brother, we just ended in this place of prayer and here we are telling God the truth. Lord, it's not formal, repetitious, ritualistic praying, but it's a pouring out of our soul to God. I ask you, dear people, do you know what it is for the burden of God to come on you in the place of prayer? Can I ask you something? When's the last time you ever wept over a lost soul that was going to burn on a lake of fire for eternity? When was the last time, dear sir, that you ever wept in the presence of God over a lost soul? If we're not careful, we'll become a bunch of self-righteous, sophisticated, intellectual snobs.

And we'll lose a heart for people. And we get to the point where we got the external, the outside of the cup looking really good, but on the inside, void of the love of God and a broken heart. Jesus, my friend, wept over this city.

You ever go and weep over your city? Well, there was a city to weep over. Here's one. Intensity, intensity, intensity in prayer.

Oh, but I got to encourage you with this last point and that being continuance in prayer, continuance in prayer in the life of Christ. Hebrews seven says we have a high priest, holy, harmless, undefiled by sinners. The Bible says he's able to say, save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever live it to make intercession for them.

Now get this. He ever live it to make intercession for them. Jesus lived by prayer.

He even died in prayer. You know, around Easter time, they always talk about the seven sayings from the cross. It'd be more accurate to talk about the four or five prayers from the cross.

They weren't sayings. They were prayers. Remember how he prayed when he knew no sin was put upon that cross and suspended between heaven and earth.

You remember how he prayed when he said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. That was a prayer.

Prayer is verbal communication from man to God. Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

It was a prayer. Remember the second prayer he prayed when God turned his back on his son, when he that knew no sin became sin for us, when God he don't his own son, the all humanity of all time. And somehow God poured out his wrath and his judgment upon unholy sin.

Let me tell you something, friend. God doesn't forgive sin. God judges sin.

And he'll either judge it in his son or he'll judge it in you. And the cross was a judgment and God judged sin in his son by that sacrificial atoning death, that substitutionary death on the cross. And you remember how he prayed then he said, my God, he didn't say father this time, because for the first time in eternity, he's cut off.

He said, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me, God? And there in the midst of hell, he was praying in the midst of torment. He was praying in the midst of that awful judgment on sin. He was praying amazing.

Then he gave the greatest three word announcement that's ever been made. When he said it is finished. He wouldn't talk into the cowering disciples over in the shadows or Peter warming at the enemy's fire.

He wouldn't talk into those wicked soldiers, gambling away his garments. When he said it is finished, it was a prayer to the heavenly father. And what he was saying is Lord, the work you gave me to do, it is done.

Redemption is complete, complete. The price has been paid. It is finished.

And brother, the last thing he ever did before he gave up the ghost was when he said these words into thy hands, I commend my spirit. It's done. I'm out of here into thy hands.

I commend my spirit. He gave up the ghost. He died praying, but you know something? That's not the end of the prayer life of Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is still praying ever living to make intercession. Remember what he said to John Peter? One time he said, Peter, the saints desire to sit you like a bag of wheat, but be a good cheer. I prayed for the, I know Peter got sifted.

You remember old Peter said Peter was the first promise keeper. Remember what he said? He said, the Lord, the all men deny you. I will even die for your Lord.

You can count on me. I'm in I'm rededicated man. And how'd he make out first opportunity cursing, denying the Lord.

No, he was, he was a promise breaker, just like the rest of us promise breaker. What got Peter through? Was it, was it Peter's promises or Jesus prayers? Was this Peter's commitment? We put too much emphasis on our part. We need to pull a more emphasis on God's part friend.

No friend. It was a prayer life of Jesus. You remember he prayed for his followers there that were with him, but you know, he prayed for all believers in advance and John 17, you know what he said? He said, father, I pray not for these only.

I'm not just praying for this little band of disciples I can see right here, but I'm praying also for them that will believe on my name through their word. I'm praying. I'm praying for all.

I think he looked down through the animals of time and he saw every born again soul. And he prayed for us in advance. If no, we did it right there in John 17.

I pray also for them that will believe on my name through their word. But you know, what's even better than that? That's not the end of the prayer life of Jesus. He's still at it.

What's the son of God been doing the last 2000 years? Somebody said, well, he's been building a mansion and it ought to be a whopper. He's been on it for two millennium. Now it ought to be really something, you know, those old Southern silly Southern songs.

We come up with a mansion over the hilltop and all this kind of stuff, brother. Oh, it ought to be a real doozy, man. He's been working on it for a long time.

Let me tell you something, friend. Jesus is not running a construction project in glory. He's not over there with a helmet on, uh, getting this thing straightened out.

He spoke eternity in the universe into existence. And brother, he spoke all that stuff into existence. What's been occupying him these last 2000 years ever living to make intercession for the saints, according to the will of God seated right at the father's right hand, brother breathing out to the heavenly father that the will of God would be done and pour down blessings upon his children.

He ever lives to make intercession for us. If you have nobody else that cared enough to pray for you today, if you're born again, brother, rest assured, you've got one seated at the father's right hand. Whoever lives to make intercession for you, according to the will of God, your heart ought to be warm this morning, friend, that the son of God, he's been touched by the feelings of our infirmities yet without sin.

And he knows what we're going through, brother. I believe he prays for God to send angels down with grace to pour out on us ever living to make intercession. Let me give you a quote by Sanders.

Listen to this quote, 30 years of living, 30 years of living, three years of serving one tremendous act of dying 1900 years of praying. What an emphasis on prayer, what an emphasis on prayer, 30 years of living, three years of serving one tremendous act of dying 1900 years of praying. What an emphasis on prayer.

What an emphasis on prayer. Do you see it? This is the main occupation of Jesus Christ on planet earth incarnate. And now seated at the father's right hand.

What is it ever living to make intercession for the saints? According to the will of God. Ah, brother, he's preeminently a praying man. I'm telling you, he's a praying man.

Now, thank God we have a man representative man at the father's right hand ever living to make intercession for us, brother. Listen, we've got Jesus praying for us. It says in Romans that the holy spirit makes groanings that can't even be uttered.

You see, what does that mean? I'm not real sure, but I'll tell you this. I believe we've got two out of the three of the Trinity praying for us. And if God be for us, who can be against us and come to any avail.

We got this thing on a downhill slide. We just need to get the right perspective on it, brother. I want to tell you, man, that God's the God's not against his people.

He's for his people. And Jesus prays for his people. And Luke 11, the disciples come to Jesus.

And they're just bowled over with the prayer life of Jesus. You can't believe it. And Luke 11, they said to Jesus, Lord, teach us to pray.

Very interesting. They didn't say, Lord, teach us to do ministry, teach us to preach, teach us to do that. No Lord, teach us to pray.

And what they were saying was this Lord, the kind of praying you're doing, we don't know anything about it, but we're willing to learn about 15 years ago. I said to God, I said, Lord, I don't know anything about praying and probably most of what I know is wrong, but Lord, I'm willing to unlearn what I've already learned. That's not right.

And I'm willing to relearn what is right. If you'd please teach me to pray. If I prayed that I prayed that thousands of times, you know, I discovered, I discovered that God was more anxious for me to pray than I was.

And if anybody would ever get in a position where they're teachable, that he will send the Holy spirit will lead and guide into all truth and no where more so than in the area of prayer. Lord, teach me to pray. I wonder if there's some people here this morning that need to pray that prayer.

Lord teach me to pray. I wonder if there's anybody here that doesn't need to pray that prayer or teach me to pray. I'll give you a little tip this morning.

If the only time you pray is when you get in a bind, you can't get out of on your own and you're looking for God to bail you out. If that's the only time you pray, you need to make your calling an election. Sure, sir, because our God is not a Santa Claus and he's not a slot machine and he's not a cosmic genie.

And if the only time you pray is to get divine assistance, to get out of a jam, you need to get born again this morning. You need to be saved. And dear Christian, dear child of God, don't we all need to turn our hearts toward heaven and say, oh God, teach me to pray.

If your prayer life has been on the rocks, if you've grown cold on God, if you're out of touch with God.

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