

Reminding God

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in driving church growth and spiritual revival, and encourages listeners to draw near to God and wait for His response.

Duration: 33:53

Scripture: Acts 4:31

Topics: "Prayer Emphasis", "Faithfulness Of God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing near to God in prayer and humility, highlighting the need for churches to prioritize prayer meetings and create accessible times for congregants to seek God. It encourages pastors to consider changing Sunday services to include more time for prayer, emphasizing the power of waiting on God and trusting in His promises. The speaker shares personal testimonies of God's faithfulness in answering prayers and calls for a focused intercession for prodigal children and loved ones.

Transcript

I just want to say some things quickly and then lead us to pray about a specific matter that I think would be good for all of us. I could just say, hearing Brother Sammy speak and then my precious sister Nancy and Brother Byron, these are, along with the other speakers, Brother Roberts and others who I don't know so well, these are very precious people that you're blessed by hearing from. Amen? You just notice the three that spoke here, their sincerity, their reality, the fruit that God has given them, just excellent.

In a day of so much acting and hype, it's so refreshing and good to be around people who just love the Lord from their heart. Amen? And inspires all of us to just be real and follow after God. I could just say two things here that I just feel impressed for whatever reason to say.

Number one is, you know what Brother Sammy was saying, what they're all saying is, to sum it up from the book of James, draw near to God and he will draw near to us. The condition is draw near to God and then he'll draw near to us. How many want him to draw near to our churches and our ministry? Well then, draw near to God in prayer and humbling ourselves and always walking in the light of his presence.

Draw near to God. For those pastors that are here, you know that prayer, like Spurgeon said, is the engine that drives any church. Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher, as great an orator as he was, said that his prayer meeting was the engine that drove his church.

Today there are very few churches that have a prayer meeting, a meeting devoted just to prayer. Maybe that's one of the causes of the spiritual apathy that we have. For those of you who do not have a prayer meeting, you need to pray and ask God about that.

And one of the battles is that, I know this from a thousand conversations with pastors, is that, well, nobody will come, which tells a lot about the spiritual temperature of that church, whoever that pastor might be. So that with all the oratory and with all the good doctrine and all the church activities, when you just call people to be alone with God and to pray, nobody has an appetite for that, which is very revealing. But, you know, you can't curse the darkness, you've got to light a candle.

So what's the solution? May I suggest, beside God leading you to start a day, a night, a meeting, for the whole church, something accessible to the whole church, not at six in the morning that sounds very ascetic and very, you know, wow, we're getting serious with God and then hardly anybody can come, mothers with kids and so on and so forth, especially in the inner city, people can't, half our congregation doesn't have cars, so that wouldn't be very practical. They work. The point is a night, a time that's accessible to everyone where people can get serious about calling on God.

If pastors sometimes start that and nobody comes and now there's a double whammy because the thing dies out after a couple of months because no one comes, which means a lot of work has to be done. I would just like to suggest to someone, and this is, you know, I just feel impressed to say this. You know, you ought to think about changing your Sunday services.

Less preaching and more time given to prayer. What is an altar service, calling people forward to wait and pray? What is an altar service? It's nothing but a mini prayer meeting or a prayer meeting. Oh, but people got to spend two hours with God if you're really serious.

Listen, that talk is going to go nowhere. Paul knew that when people couldn't eat meat, he gave them milk. You meet people where they are.

You don't live in some mountain far away. Jesus told parables to people. Jesus met people where they were.

We have to meet people where they are and take them to the next step. All in favor say aye. So to say, well, people aren't serious about God.

Okay, so what are we going to do about it? Just to stand there and say, oh, the whole world is going to hell in a handbasket. That's not going to change anything. And it could reek of self-righteousness and spiritual pride.

So we meet people where they are. And sometimes you might want to change your Sunday service and preach a little shorter and leave more time for people to pray. Because then when God starts answering prayer and a spirit of prayer comes upon the people.

Remember, prayer is really a spirit of prayer. Without the Holy Spirit, you can't pray. For we know not how we ought to pray.

And Paul says, first person plural, we, including him, who wrote the New Testament most of it. We, I, Paul, don't know how to pray without the help of the Holy Spirit. We don't have the fervency.

We don't have the faith. We don't have the utterance that we need. So we need the Holy Spirit.

That doesn't come overnight. You don't have instant God. You got to wait on God.

Look to God as we're going to see here in a second. So I just want to suggest, why don't you start bringing prayer in as more as an element in your Sunday services. For God's house is not a house of preaching, nor a house of teaching, nor a house of singing.

But it is called a house of what? So I, I would make an argument to anyone here, and I think I would be fairly well defended by the Bible. How could we have a New Testament meeting without a strong element of prayer? If the Bible says that the whole purpose of Christ's coming was, therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, how could you have a meeting like these insipid meetings that are now developing where there's announcements and songs and then a lecture, like Mormons, a lecture, and then praise God, amen, go home, and no one's changed. No one makes contact with God.

So brothers, I just challenge you. You be led by God. I don't have any formula.

I'm certainly, in our church, there's no paradigm for anything. But everyone's got to find their own way, and God is going to show you the temperature of your church so that you can take it to the next level from glory to glory and from faith to faith. It's not going to happen overnight.

It didn't get that way overnight, but we've got to just start moving in the right direction. Come on, do I hear an amen? So I just want to say that. Think about changing your Sunday services as the Lord leads you.

Less preaching, because if our sermons would have done it, it would have happened a long time ago. Oh my, we're not short on sermons. But a lot of pastors get nervous to give up the microphone.

They have to control, and they're afraid. You know, what might happen? Someone might start to cry or get loud or whatever. So let everything be done to edification, and if mistakes are made, so... Why is 1 Corinthians written to us? Because mistakes can be made.

But you don't throw out the baby again with the bathwater. You say, God, lead us and show us how to draw near to you. Oh, I want to draw near to God.

So remember that. My house shall be called a house of prayer, not just for the prayer meeting night, and that might be something God leads you to do. Number two, it's very good to sing songs that have the name of Jesus in it.

I'm very disturbed by whole song services that go on with eight songs somewhere I was preaching. Eight songs all from the Psalter with no mention of the name of Jesus. You would think you were living in the Old Testament and, you know, we're going to go over to Ezekiel's house after the meeting to have a meal.

We're living in the New Testament, and the name that the demons tremble at is the name of Jesus. We're supposed to be singing better songs than the Psalter has. Let's sing the songs of the Psalms.

Those are good songs. But David couldn't write a song about Jesus because Jesus hadn't come yet. He couldn't write about the blood and the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit because they hadn't happened yet in the New Testament covenant sense.

Right? So I love... In fact, let's do it right now. Everybody stand up. Watch how better you feel.

Everybody sing with me. All hail the king Let angels prostrate fall Everyone. Bring forth the royal diadem And crown him Lord of all Bring forth the royal diadem And crown him Lord of all Close your eyes and sing it again loud.

All hail the king Bring forth the royal diadem And crown him Lord of all And all the people said, You may be seated. I was very nervous in that meeting because I had to preach and there were eight songs, most of which I never knew, but that's OK, but that's another thing. Be careful of this new cutting edge.

We got to sing the newest chorus that no one knows. And the worship leaders were not even watching if the people were singing and entering because they had their agenda already prepackaged and programmed of what they were going to sing no matter what the atmosphere was. Not a good way to run a meeting, by the way.

If God could lead the Israelites for 40 years, I think he can lead us spontaneously through one service. How many say amen? And nobody was watching while the people were singing. I never heard the name of Jesus.

That's very strange. We cast out demons in Jesus' name. We pray in Jesus' name.

When a girl full of the devil came on a Tuesday night years ago to our church and we didn't know she was full of these demons until they brought her forward and then she exploded as they brought her forward in front of me in front of the whole prayer meeting and grabbed me and threw me against the front of the platform at which point I grabbed her and threw her down on the ground and these voices started speaking out let her alone, let her alone, she's ours just like in a movie, I mean not her head spinning around but her eyes just going weird on me and this horrible voice coming out of her and we didn't pray over her in the name of the creator or Lord God or any of these fathers. We prayed in the name of Jesus. There is power in the name of Jesus and when you honor the name of Jesus you draw the presence of the Holy Spirit because Jesus said he will glorify me.

Wherever Jesus is being glorified the Holy Spirit is beckoned and drawn. If you glorify your church or your message or your vision there will be a withdrawal of the Spirit. He has come to glorify Christ.

Could I get a loud Amen here? Okay, I just want to memorize a verse with you, okay? I don't need to open my Bible for it because I want to teach it to you. It's become one of my favorite verses. Psalm 119 verse 49.

You don't need to turn to it. You're going to memorize it with me. Remember, you're going to memorize it from the NIV whether you like it or not, okay? I know how some of you feel about that but so be it.

Remember, listen. Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope.

Come on, louder. Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. One more time so that we memorize.

Psalm 119 verse 49. Remember. That tells us three things about God that I want to leave you with here briefly and then let's pray about something.

Number one, it suggests to us that before God does almost anything he speaks about it before he does it. The psalmist here is praying and he's saying remember your word. Remember some promise that you made to me.

Remember that thing you either spoke to me by your spirit or some promise that you made alive which was applied by the spirit to me in a unique way. Remember that word for you have given me hope through that word. In other words, before you did it, it hasn't happened yet, remember your word that you spoke about that you would do.

We see this always everywhere in the Bible, Old and New Testaments. Before God does something, he speaks about it. Before the first coming of Christ, he speaks about it.

Before the Holy Spirit is poured out, it's promised, it's spoken about Old and New. In the last days God will pour out his spirit. It didn't happen yet, but it was promised.

The second coming of the Lord, promised. So many things in the Bible. Paul on his missionary journeys, you know, don't be afraid while he was in Corinth.

Don't be afraid. No one is going to touch you. I have many people in this city.

A prophetic intimation, sometimes a stronger promise from the word of God. My wife was 14 or 15 years old worshipping God one day, making the bed with her mother. Her mother left the room.

She was just making the bed, helping her mother. She was worshipping God and doing that. Suddenly she got a vision in her heart and she saw herself as an adult standing in front of hundreds of people of mixed colors, leading them in worship and leading them in singing.

Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. God was giving her a prophetic intimation of a ministry that he would have for her. And during hard times and when the devil attacks and says you can't do it, remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope.

Nancy had this desire to do this. She just said when she was a child. Remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope.

Byron the same thing. Brother Sammy the same thing. So before God does something, behold I do a new thing but I announce it to you before it happens God says in one of the prophets.

So we have to be always as we read the Bible ready for God to make that alive to us in a way it's not just ink on a page. It's not just truth. Sometimes God takes a verse and applies it to our life in a wonderful way.

How many have ever had that happen? Say amen. How many have ever read the Bible and you read a verse like 100 times and suddenly you read it the 101st time and it just jumps up at you and it's like God saying yes now for you this. Right? So remember your word.

Now the Psalmist is, you know a lot of Psalm 119 which is the longest chapter in the Bible a lot of it is just declarations about God's word but a lot of those verses are and they're so deep they're so rich they're so wonderful. I have never appreciated them the way I should because of my own lack of maturity and carnality. You know in recent days I've been appreciating them more.

God's doing deeper work with these verses in my life. I can declare that. But this, a lot of these verses are prayers.

You know he's calling on God. It's a prayer and this is part of a prayer. He's not talking to us declaring something about God's word.

Your word is this, a light, a lamp. He's now saying remember your word to your servant. You don't hear people pray that often that way do you? Remember your word to your servant for you've given me hope.

Remember that thing you made real to me about Iran for you have given me hope. Hasn't happened yet but you've given me hope. So before God does almost anything he speaks about it so that when it happens we'll give him all the glory and no one will say oh that's an accident.

Isn't that funny how that happened? No, no, God spoke about it before so he'll get all the honor and praise and glory. Isn't he wonderful that way? Notice number two. There is a waiting time between the speaking of the word and the fulfillment of the word.

In fact that's why the psalmist is praying. It hasn't happened yet. Remember your word.

Remember your promise. Remember that intimation that you gave for you have given me hope. You've built up my expectations.

You've encouraged me along the way when things have looked dark. Now remember your word to your servant now. So that's the hardest part of faith brothers and sisters isn't it? The hardest part of faith is the weight of faith.

God puts a desire for people for revival for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and they begin to pray and it not only doesn't come things get worse. How many have ever prayed for something and almost immediately after really praying about it it got worse instead of getting better? Oh yes. And God's watching and waiting to see what we'll do.

My friend Dave Wilkerson once told me he said Jim the hardest part of faith is waiting and the hardest part of waiting is the last half hour. That's a good sentence. It's to wait to the end and keep believing.

You know I believe yes I read this morning in my devotions Isaiah 30 I think it's verse let me just turn to it real quick because I wasn't sure if I share this with you and then a man prayed for me before this meeting Brother Jerry and the only verse he quoted as he prayed for me is this verse I tell you what God obviously wants me to give you this verse. Oh my I mean he had that whole Bible to pick from and he picks the one verse that I asked the Lord about.

Yes yeah Isaiah 30 18 you can look at it later Yet the Lord longs or waits to be gracious to you He rises to show you compassion for the Lord is the God of justice blessed are all who wait for Him the Lord waits to be gracious to you blessed are all it's a double waiting game the Lord waits and longs and yearns to be gracious and show you mercy He's the God of justice how happy and spiritually prosperous are those who wait for Him who don't give up and quit who keep on believing remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope in other words it hasn't happened yet but I'm waiting God I am waiting for you to fulfill this you made that real to me there is going to be a spirit of revival in my church you are going to turn things around you have made that real to me now I'm not

letting you go until you bless me and I will wait for you God what a blessed thing it is to wait and a lot of us are so impatient you know Joseph waited all those years to see the fulfillment imagine him in prison in Egypt after Potiphar's wife lied about him and now he's walking around in there I can imagine the devil just saying to him what a joke where's your dream about everybody bowing down to you you're a joke ah remember your word remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope how many know God is always going to have the last word come on is God going to have the last word yes He will blessed are those who wait for Him who hope expectantly who are watching at the doors of their heart to see He's coming yes He will God is going to come I don't care how it looks I

don't care how bad it looks now nowhere is this more true than with our children or people that we are praying for that we love who need to be turned around the tendency is to quit and give up I am amazed as I travel around the country how many parents and grandparents have made a treaty with the unbelief of their children nobody is standing in the gap nobody is laying hold of God nobody is reminding God remember your word I dedicated that child that child is going to get away from God over my dead body remember your word to your servant those of you might or might not know a lot of years ago my daughter's oldest girl is 35 but when she was 17 16, 17 into almost 18 she got away from us got away from God and my wife and I went through a two and a half year long nightmare of agonizing and

praying and I tried everything talking, screaming, crying manipulation tried everything a lot of things I should have never done but it's hard when you're pastoring a church starting other new churches overseeing things Carol's doing albums we're renting Radio City Music Hall and Carnegie Hall doing outreaches to see people reach with the gospel and then your oldest girl the joy of your heart is away from God you don't even out of the house eventually you don't know where she is I would cry from the time I left my house until I got to church too many Sundays and Tuesdays and other days to even number them and I would have to cry out to God in the car as my car approached the building oh God pull me together this Sunday service these services today two, three, four eventually we had in

this other building that we were in oh God this service can't be about me and my problems I gotta minister to your people they need to be fed your word so God hold me together it was hard he would many times just come by his grace and just hold me together within a block of the church where I could function nobody knew or a lot of people didn't know and how many times in my own words would I say to God God remember your word to your servant for you has given me hope because when Chrissy was dedicated there were prophetic intimations made that God's hand was upon her and now she's the mother of three children her husband is a pastor she's directing a choir just like her mom just like her mom can't read or write music but perfect pitch writes songs directs the choir the old joke in our

church about my wife is she doesn't know what she's doing she just keeps doing it every week and Chrissy's the same cut out of the same cloth but it didn't look that way when she was away rebellious up was down down was up God turned that around finally and brought deliverance through a prayer meeting that we had in the church well let me just change this and do what I feel impressed to do here while we were praying about Acts 4 the place was shaken where they prayed and they were all refilled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness while we went to pray and call and cry out to God as a church a woman who was sensitive brother if you somebody come and just play something here we'll go to prayer has we were all calling on God a woman who heard from God sensitive sent

up a note and said I believe we should stop the prayer meeting and pray and agree about your daughter and I hadn't talked to my daughter in four months because God made real to me no more talking to her

you talk just to me but when you when I do this when I bring her back you will tell everyone everywhere where I send you when I impress you you will tell everyone that I'm able to bring recover stolen property so I stopped the meeting I turned it to my associate one of my associates I said lead in prayer that people stood and it turned into by the grace of God by the power of the Holy Spirit into a labor room and that building there it was filled on a Tuesday night prayer meeting maybe fourteen thirteen, fourteen hundred people they began to cry out like a woman giving birth for my

daughter I told them my daughter thinks up is down down is up she's around the wrong people that she met in my church that's one of the things about in the inner city you have to be just so careful and Satan knew that was a vulnerability with me I love my wife by the grace of God I don't want to be rich and famous but very vulnerable at that moment with my daughter I thought I would go crazy at times that's the truth it's hard to preach when your spirit one time I was preaching and it's like my spirit went to the throne of grace and I started interceding for Chrissy while I was preaching now that's hard I had asked God God help me because how can I pray and preach at the same time I need to preach well anyway we interceded for Chrissy oh my goodness it overwhelmed me my tear ducts were

dry because I had cried and cried and cried but God heard the cry of those people that night it was just about the next morning I was shaving and my wife burst in my bathroom door and says Chrissy's here I haven't seen her in four or five months she's downstairs but you better go she wants you I went down and there she was crawling on the kitchen floor on her hands and knees so broken so repentant when I went there she grabbed the hole of my pants leg I pulled her up to myself I could see that her visage had changed and she said Daddy Daddy I've sinned against God I've sinned against you I've sinned against myself oh God God's forgiven me but God woke me up last night in a dream and he showed me where I was heading at a hundred miles an hour toward an abyss that had no bottom but Daddy he

stopped me at the edge and instead of yelling at me he put his arms around me and he loved me and he told me he loved me and Daddy who did you have praying last night for me that's the truth who did you have praying for you I said what do you mean Chrissy who did you have praying I said well a meeting went and we prayed and she said Daddy that's the night he woke me up remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope God loves to be reminded notice the audacity of the psalmist people forget things how could God who's perfect forget anything and yet the psalmist is saying remember as if God could forget remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope are you going to frustrate me are you going to make promises to me and then not do them now that has to have

application for our ministries for revival for visitation for Nancy's ministry for what Brother Sam is doing for the great work Byron is doing but I want to focus in on our children would you close your eyes with me if you have a son or a daughter who's not serving God is not in relationship with the Lord or if you have a grandson or a granddaughter that you have loved prayed over their crib dedicated to the Lord whatever and they are not where they need to be and you know it and there's no why deny it why go into denial and only God can bring them back and you have prayed for them you have dedicated them and you want to stand in the gap today and say Lord remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope concerning my daughter and my son and now the enemy is making a move

against them I want you to stand and come up here to the front if you have a son or a daughter or a grandson or a granddaughter just come up get out of your seat and come brother Byron is going to come up on the platform come right up here close in the middle come right to the middle to slide over here so we all can get as many here amen that's the right song brother Pass me not O Gent till Savior sing Hear my

humble cry While on thou art called Do not pass me by come on lift your voice and sing Savior save lift your hand and just sing that chorus again Savior sing Savior tell God remember your word to your servant remember your word to your servant

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