

The Secret to Prayer

by Jon Courson

The secret to prayer is praying God's will, not your own, and trusting in His love and sacrifice for you.

Duration: 51:31

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:21, Psalm 136:1, Isaiah 35:1-3, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 35:8, Isaiah 35:10

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of praising God and parading to His will. He references a story from the Bible where King Jehoshaphat and his people faced a great army. Instead of being fearful, they appointed singers to go before them and praise the Lord. As they praised, God gave them victory over their enemies and they were able to gather abundant riches. The speaker encourages listeners to pray for God's will, praise Him even before seeing the answers, and parade to His will by trusting in His promises.

Transcript

I want to talk to you about the secret to prayer. The secret to prayer. Prayer is, for many people, oftentimes, or all the times, rather perplexing.

We believe in prayer. We're thankful for prayer. We're committed to prayer.

But we have questions about prayer. We're often perplexed by prayer. That is why so many prayers seem to go unanswered.

Why so often we pray and it doesn't seem to make much of a difference. And we wonder about it or we're perplexed by it. Not that we grow cynical or critical, but sometimes it can produce sort of an apathetical approach to our own prayer lives because we really aren't convinced that God answers prayer.

I want to suggest to you today that there is a secret to prayer that I believe, I know, produces 100% answers. I mean it's a way to pray where you can be assured as you do, as you follow this pattern, this paradigm, you can know with certainty your prayers will be answered 100% of the time. Now hopefully that interests some of you.

You mean to say you have the audacity to sit there today, John, and say that prayers can be answered 100% of the time? Absolutely. Let's take a look at our text and let me explain to you how this looks, how this works, and may it radically change you and change me in our understanding of prayer as we consider

the secret to prayer found here in 2 Chronicles chapter 20. 2 Chronicles 20.

And it came to pass, verse 1, it came to pass after this also that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon and with them other beside the Ammonites, and we'll see that those would be the Edomites from Edom, they came against Jehoshaphat the king of Judah to battle against him. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat saying there cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea, that would be the Dead Sea, on this side of Syria and behold they be in Hazazon Tamar which is En Gedi. Many of you have been with us to En Gedi.

These three countries, the Edomites and the Moabites and the Ammonites that were on the east side of the Dead Sea and the east side of the Jordan River have crossed over the Jordan and now they're coming against Judah and King Jehoshaphat. Will Jehoshaphat, verse 3, hearing about this coalition of nations invading his country, feared and set himself to seek the Lord. He proclaimed a fast throughout all of Judah and Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

Then verse 5, the King Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court and he said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever? And they dwelt therein and they built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name saying, verse 9, if when evil cometh upon us as the sword judgment or pestilence or famine we stand in this house and in thy presence for thy name is in this house and cry unto thee in our affliction then thou wilt hear and help. And now, verse 10, behold the children of Ammon the Ammonites and Moab the Moabites and Mount Seir or Edom the Edomites whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt but they turned from them and destroyed them. Not we didn't invade them is what's being said here.

You wouldn't let us invade them when we came out of Egypt led by Moses all those years ago. We didn't bother them but now behold, verse 11, I say how do they reward us? They come to cast us out of thy possession which thou has given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company, this confederation of armies that cometh against us.

Neither know we what to do but, verse 12, don't you love this, our eyes are upon you. And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children. Then, verse 14, upon Jehaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Gael, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Aaron, upon him, Jehaziel, came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation.

And Jehaziel, verse 15, speaking by the spirit, in the spirit, said, hearken ye all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and thou King Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you. Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, these armies. Watch this last phrase in verse 15, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Tomorrow go ye down against them or march towards them. Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz and you shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel. Verse 17, and you shall not need to fight in this battle.

Set yourselves or take your places and stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you. Oh Judah and Jerusalem, fear not nor be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them for the Lord will be with you.

Well, when Jehoshaphat heard that prophetic word, it says he bowed his head, verse 18, with his face to the ground. And all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. And the Levites, verse 19, the children of the Kohathites and the children of the Korahites, well, they stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice, Pentecostal hoedown, praising the Lord with a loud voice on high.

Then, verse 20 says, they rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, hear me, oh Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established. Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

And when he had consulted, talked with the people, he appointed, verse 21, check this out, you know the story, it still amazes me. He appointed singers unto the Lord that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out in front of the army, before the army. And they sang, praise the Lord, his mercy endures forever.

Well, verse 22, the plot thickens. When they began to sing and to praise the Lord, the Lord set ambushments against the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, which were come out against Judah. And those three countries were smitten.

They were discombobulated when they heard praise ascending. When the praisers, the choir, the worshipers marched out onto the battlefield, praise the Lord, his mercy endures forever. Worship the Lord and the beauty of holiness.

This caused these three countries to become disoriented when they heard that, what kind of a strategy is this, where people are coming onto the battlefield, not with swords in hand, but songs on high, just worshiping the Lord. And it caused them to fight one against the other, these three nations that were against Judah. The children of Ammon and of Moab stood up against those of Mount Seir or the Edomites to slay and destroy them.

And when they made the end of the inhabitants of Seir or the Edomites, then they destroyed each other. So this is a great story. This is just a great, great story.

So when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude where the armies of these three countries had been set in array. And behold, they were dead bodies, fallen to the earth. None of them escaped.

And when Jehoshaphat and his people got there after the worshipers were coming before them, they came just to take away the spoil, the goods. They found amongst all these dead bodies, abundance of riches, precious jewels, which they stripped off and took away and carried off for themselves. It took them three days, verse 25 says, to gather up the loot, to get the goods that were left behind or on the bodies of those dead armies.

On the fourth day, verse 26, they assembled themselves in the valley of Barakah. The word Barakah is a Hebrew word which means blessing. Here they are in the valley of blessing.

There they blessed the Lord. Therefore, the name of the same place was called the valley of Barakah or the valley of blessing, even to this day. Verse 27 says, well, after that they returned every man from Judah and Jerusalem and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them to go again to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

And they came, verse 28, to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets into the house of the Lord. And the fear of the Lord was upon all the kingdoms of those countries when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. Finally, verse 30, so the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet for his God gave him rest round about.

I mean, that is a great story. They sought the Lord and the Lord heard them and delivered them from all their fears. Even as we sing around here that song frequently.

Three things I'd like you to take note of from this story. Three things that are embedded in this story. Three things that are essential to this story that cause you and me to see the secret to prayer.

Prayer that prevails. Prayer that will be answered 100% of the time. Prayer that overcomes overwhelming odds.

Prayer that brings down what seems to be an impossible victory. Prayer. First of all, note if you would, number one, they were praying as Jehoshaphat led them in Jerusalem, they were praying for God's will.

This is such a key. They were praying for God's will. We don't know what to do, Jehoshaphat prayed.

The situation is ominous. The odds are overwhelmingly against us. Three nations confederated together have invaded our country.

Lord, we don't know what to do. We don't know what the answer is. We don't have a strategy.

We don't possess great ability. We don't know what to do. But he says, Lord, verse 12, we don't know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.

Jehoshaphat did not give instructions to the Lord. About Lord, we have these three armies that are coming against us. What do you say that you mobilize the Egyptians and the Syrians to come from behind them and to go against them? And that way it could take pressure off our front flank and maybe then we could mount a counterattack from the north and then perhaps we could drive away first the Moabites and that would give us an advantage to battle against the Edomites.

No. Notice how he prayed. We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you.

This is the way to pray. Prayer is not giving God instructions. So often we come up with our plans, our thoughts, not that we can't converse with the Father.

We can. We should. We do about things that are on our minds, perhaps, but we don't come to God and say, Hey, here's my plan.

Bless it. Here's my thoughts. Do it.

Jesus in Matthew chapter six said, When you pray, pray our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth. Lord, it's about your kingdom. You do whatever you

want to do.

It's your will that needs to happen. It's your will that needs to unfold, not our will. In fact, Jesus prayed exactly that prayer.

When he was at a crossroads, he was in the garden of Gethsemane, facing crucifixion, facing the absorption of the wrath of God, his Father, that God would feel for all the sin that was ever done, righteously so, now poured out upon the Son propitiuously. And Jesus said, Father, knowing the next day, that's what would await him, the cross of Calvary. If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, what gang? Not my will, but thy will be done. Your will be done. There is a school of thought that's growing in the Northern California, Southern Oregon area, because some churches are just big on this, saying, that's not the way to pray.

That lacks faith. Just say what you want and pray what you think and expect God to do the miraculous. I call that foolishness.

Why? The Greeks used to say, when the gods want to punish a man, they answer his prayers. See, we think we know what's the best plan or what needs to take place. We don't.

We can't. We won't. We can conversate as we should and get to with the Father, but ultimately, here's the prayer that God answers 100% of the time.

Not my will, but thy will be done. Whatever you want to do, however you want to work, we're not here demanding from you in the name of robust faith. We're here coming to you in humility as your sons and daughters saying, Father knows best.

Well, then, if that's the way you're going to pray, just, Lord, we don't know what to do. Our eyes are just upon you. Do whatever you choose.

Well, my goodness, why even bother to pray? Because James chapter 4, mark it down, James chapter 4 says this, right there in the first verses of James 4. It says, you have not because you ask not. If I don't ask, I won't get. But then James goes on to say, but you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your own lusts.

Now, don't think of lusts as being just some kind of a sensual, carnal thing. Lust means your own desires. Here's my desire.

Here's my plan. Here's my observation. Here's my way of thinking.

Here's what I feel needs to happen. Here's what I'm believing for. Here's what I'm claiming.

James says, you have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your own lusts. Well, then how am I to pray? Father, I'm here standing before you just like old Jehoshaphat.

And I'm surrounded by these problems, Edomites and Moabites and Ammonites and Gigabytes and Termites and Flashlights and all the rest. I'm surrounded on every side. And I got stuff coming against me and stuff breaking my heart or stuff that's pushing hard or whatever it might be.

Father, I don't know what to do. My eyes are on you. Here's some suggestions, Lord, but not my will.

I don't want you to do my plan or my suggestion or my thinking. I submit to you. I don't really know what to do.

I tell you so many times we pray with passion and fervor only to discover 10 years later, praise the Lord. He didn't answer that stupid prayer. What kind of fool was I to think I could figure it out? The way to pray is with humility, realizing that you are a big idiot, that I am a big idiot, that we see through a glass very darkly.

And Lord, I don't know what to do, but my eyes are upon you. Well, can you trust the Lord with that? Can you trust the Lord with that kind of mentality? Shouldn't you have a go for it, step out, claim it, work it up? No, no. I trust my Lord.

Why? Turn with me to Romans chapter eight. Would you turn there to Romans chapter eight and mark this down too in your notes if you're taking them or in your mind if you're able to retain these things. Romans chapter eight, great chapter, so much there.

And of course right in the middle of this grand chapter, Romans eight, is this treasure, verse 28. Romans 8, 28. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Everything is working together for good if you love God, and I know you do. If you are one of the called, and I know you are. He says this after reiterating in the next few verses that we've been predestinated, elected, justified, glorified, all these great things.

He says this, man, verse 31, what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? And then where I want you to note or look at or be reminded of, he that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? If you doubt you can trust God and just leave it with him without trying to demand your way or have your way, but simply to say, Lord, I leave it with you, not my will but yours be done. Well, can I trust him with that? Romans 8, 32 says he loves you to death. He didn't spare his own son.

He didn't spare himself. God, great is the mystery, became a man. The man became a lamb, the lamb of God who takes away my sin.

He was ripped apart. He was shredded. He was beaten beyond recognition.

He paid the price for my sin, not just physically but spiritually. He loves me to death. So when I have questions, when I'm going through trials, I simply make a cross-examination in the trial, in the courtroom of my own debate.

The cross-examination is I examine the cross and I say, Lord, if you loved me to that degree, if you loved me to that degree, for God commended his love towards us, Paul declared in that even while we were what gang? Sinners. Christ died for us. If he loves me to that degree, and Larry, he loves you to that degree, you personally in his mind and on his heart when he hung on that tree, you personally taking the hit for each one of your sins, all four of them, each one of your sins.

And we know all of us have a multiplicity, an innumerable amount of sin and iniquity. And he took the hit. He paid the price.

He loves me to that degree. So Paul says, if he didn't spare his own son, he's going to freely give you all good things. Okay, great.

Let it be. Let it be. Let it be.

That's words of wisdom. Let it be. Well, the caveat there is this.

You need to ask. You have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not because you ask after your own lusts or your plans, your desires, your view, your impression, your thoughts.

Instead of praying like Jesus prayed when he was at the crossroads, pressured, facing it, not my will, but thy will be done. Father, you know best. That's the secret to prayer.

That's the secret to prayer. Praying God's will. Father, as I sit there in my chair with my gas fire going, just talking things over with my father and just say, Lord, I don't really know what to do about this.

We're not making progress, it seems to me. Things aren't getting worked out like I think they should. I don't know what to do, but my eyes are on you and you love me to that degree.

I can trust you implicitly. Absolutely. I can trust you.

I don't have to figure it out or work it up. I just come to you in faith that you are God, that you are good. Number two, and I'll speed this up.

The second thing I want you to draw from this story is not just they're praying for God's will, but praising is God's will. They're praying for God's will in the temple. They come together, don't give God a plan, they just tell him of the situation, and Lord, we need you.

Then they go out from there, hearing the prophetic word, they make their way, sending the choir to lead the way into that situation. Praising is God's will. Praying for God's will.

Praising, number two, is God's will. Praising when? Before you see any kind of answer, any kind of hope, any kind of possibilities, any kind of strategy, any kind of provision, any kind of solution, any kind of whatever. You praise him before.

This is God's will. How do I know? First Thessalonians chapter 5, 17 and 18 says this, pray without ceasing. Number one, in everything, who knows, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Now that's what the Bible says. People say, what's the will of God? You can say to anybody that asks you, I know what God's will is for you. You do? Yep.

Really? Uh-huh. What? In everything, give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I mean, you could open a business up, a ministry service, finding God's will guaranteed, \$100 per minute.

Don't do that. I'm kidding. What's God's will? What's God's will? True.

In everything, give thanks. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Praising is God's will.

So they start praising the Lord. The choir goes out, praising the Lord. And the enemy is disoriented, discombobulated, disturbed, distressed, not knowing how to deal with this.

People praising the Lord, praise you the Lord for his what? Mercy endures forever. Not his rewards will come our way if we're really, really, really, really good, but his mercy endures forever. Day by day, morning by morning, the Bible says, new mercies I see.

So you just praise him. You give him the problem. Lord, I don't know what to do, but my eyes are on you.

Not my will, but your will be done. And amen. And now, Lord, I'm just going to go through the rest of the morning praising you.

Praise the Lord. He is good. His mercy is new.

His grace is great. He's going to come through. He promised to.

He always has. He always does. He always will.

Oh, bless the Lord. Oh, my soul. Oh, my soul.

Worship his holy name. Oh, you just begin to worship and praise. But the problem's still there, right? But the three armies that want to destroy us and annihilate our nation, they're still there.

Obamacare is still the law. She left me no forwarding address. He praised the Lord.

Lord, you know what you're doing. I don't. But I know who you are.

I don't know what you're up to, but I know who you are. You're my father and you care about me and you love me to pieces and you love me to death. I'm going to praise you this morning.

I'm going to not be worried about it or fretting over it or talking negatively to those around me. It's never going to work out. I'm just so bummed.

There's no way this is going to work. I have that tendency. Ask my wife.

I have to learn this lesson over and over and over again. Bless the Lord. Oh, my soul.

David said talking to himself, get it in gear, shake it off, kick it in, start blessing the Lord. That's why we have praise here every day to get out of our complaining, doubting, unbelieving, depressing rut and start to come to the table. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my greatest fame, I count but loss and I pour contempt on all my pride, thinking I know what to do and how to fix this and what should take place next.

I just pour contempt on all that. I surveyed the cross and I realized, Lord, forbid it, Lord, that I should boast except in the cross that Christ bore. So I pray.

I start my day early. I have to. And I talk things over with my father with an open Bible and a little gas fire and usually a great big bear sitting at my feet.

And I just talk out loud. And my great big bear dog, he just snores. He's used to me praying.

He just lays there and snores. And I just talk things over with the Father. And like you, I too have heavy burdens.

We all do. The old saying is so true, be nice to everyone because everyone you meet is fighting a tough battle. Everybody is.

Everybody is. And I talk things over with the Father out loud. I have to pray out loud because if I don't, my mind wanders or my head starts to nod.

And Bob, I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses. And the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And He walks with me and talks with me.

And He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has, has ever. No.

And then I get in my little rolling dog house car. It's one of those Scion toaster cars, square boxes. 2005.

I got it because my dog can get into it in the back. And my mom can sit in the front. It's low.

Love you, Mom. And I get to drive out here and just worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. I've cast my cares on Him.

I've talked things over with Him. And I make my way and have communion amongst other worshipers, prayer warriors day by day. Number three, and finally, in this story, we see the secret to prayer is praying in God's will, number one.

Number two, praising is God's will. Before the answers come, before you see a solution, before the victory is there, before anything changes, you praise him, you praise him. It's called the sacrifice of praise by him.

Therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving what thanks to his name. The third thing we see here after praying for God's will, and then praising is God's will is parading to God's will. What do you mean parading to God's will? Brief, but essential.

They made their way from Jerusalem with the choir going out in song, but notice what it says as they made their way. It says, verse 21, he appointed singers, Jehoshaphat did to the Lord that should praise the beauty of what gang? Holiness. As they went out before the army and to sing, praise the Lord, his mercy endures forever.

Praying for God's will, number one. Praising is God's will, number two. Parading to God's will.

The parade goes, listen, the parade travels, listen, the parade route, listen, the parade to answered prayer, the parade to taking over the great spoil that took them four days to gather, that blew their minds, blessed their hearts, filled them with joy. The way, the route, the parade route is this. It says that they should praise the beauty of holiness.

Huh? Turn with me to our final passage, Isaiah chapter 35. Would you turn there? If you're able to turn there fairly quickly, Isaiah 35. Check this out.

It's a promise eschatologically or prophetically for Israel one day physically. It's a promise these days, this day, today, for you and me spiritually, but please take note of this chapter. Parading to God's will, there's only one way to it.

You might be praying for God's will and praising is God's will, but the third key to our story that Jehoshaphat understood by the spirit of the Lord is parading to God's will. Listen to this. Verse one of

chapter 35 of Isaiah.

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them. The desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose. It shall blossom abundantly.

Rejoice even with joy, with singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it. The excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of God.

So verse three, strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart or a heart full of worries and anxieties, be strong, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense. He will come and save you.

The eyes of the blind shall be opened. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The lame man shall leap as a heart.

The tongue of the dumb shall sing for in the wilderness shall waters break out, streams in the desert. Verse seven, the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water in the habitation of dragons, where each lay there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. Verse eight, underline this, note this, star this, remember this, memorize this, whatever.

And a highway shall be there, the parade route for all this good stuff of deserts blooming and lame guys walking and blind people seeing and roses blossoming and all the rest. Listen to this, a highway shall be there and a way it shall be called the way of, what kids? Holiness. Huh? Praying for God's will.

Father, not my will but your will be done. You know what's best. Praising is God's will.

And now I've put that on you and I'm going to give thanks to you that Lord, you're good and your mercy endures forever. Now parading to God's will. It's the highway of holiness, the way of holiness.

Watch verse eight, the unclean shall not pass over it or not going to go down it, but it shall be for those, those who, those who are wanting holiness. The wayfaring men or the evil minded men, fools, shall not err therein or won't go there. Wanderers and evil people say, I don't want to walk on the highway of holiness.

I want to party. I want to be entertained by the world's thing. I want to talk like the world, walk like the world, be a part of the world.

That's, that's, that's my thing, man. Oh, I'll go to church on Sunday. I'll even go on Wednesday sometimes.

But man, you got to be realistic. Watch what the Lord here says. These are the blessings that the fool, the wandering person will never receive because they don't walk on the parade route to Baraka, the parade route to the valley of blessing, the parade route where the victory is, where the spoils are, where the joy will be.

It's called the parade route is the highway of holiness. They won't walk there. The highway shall be there.

It shall be called the way of holiness. And also when you're on the highway of holiness, the way of holiness, that's the parade route. Praise you, the Lord.

His mercy endures forever. Jehoshaphat said, worship the Lord for the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness with the beauty of holiness, holy living, saying no to sin and carnality and stupidity and

compromise and the world's ways. James said in the same chapter, he talked about prayer.

You have not because you ask not and you ask and receive not because you ask and miss, he says, for to be friends with the world is to be the enemy of God. Don't get mad at me. That's what the Bible says in James chapter four.

Right after he talks about prayer that prevails, he goes, But understand this. If you're friendly with the world, the world's ways, the world's systems, the world's music, the world's entertainment, the world's fashion, the world's thing. If that's what you get a kick out of, if that's where you're drawn to, if that's your thing to, then you're going down a parade route that's going to lead to depression, despair and disaster.

But if you choose to say not pharisaical, not judgmentally looking at others, but simply saying for me, I need to walk on the highway of holiness. There'll be what? Verse nine. Look at our text.

Verse nine of Isaiah 35. There'll be what? No lion there. And I'm not lying.

The devil is a roaring lion. Where is he? He's walking around everywhere, but he can't be effective on the highway of holiness. Is your life holy? Are you holier today than you were a year ago? I don't mean again, pharisaical, but do you just live for the things of God, live for good things, things that are pure and just and righteous and true and excellent? Or are you tantalized and titillated and drawn to the things of the world? James says, if that's the case, to be friends with the world, you're going against God.

You're not marching with God. You're not going to end up in the place where God can bless you. And precious Applegators, that's why we come here.

We come here to say, Lord, I'm back at your table. I'm back with your people. I'm back in your house to say, Lord, your mercy endures forever.

Be merciful to me, a sinner. But I understand, Lord, if I don't change directions and get off the parade path that I'm on, I'm headed for disaster. The only way there's going to be no lion there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up there on upon the highway of holiness.

It shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk their verse 10 and the ransomed or redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing. Shall what gang flee away? We sing a variation of that found in Isaiah 51.

This is God's heart, sorrow and mourning fleeing away. Depression, despair, just life being a drag, unhappiness, discontentment flees away. Where? This is the chapter that that refers to, to take the highway of holiness.

And so in chapter 20, your prayers, my prayers, our prayers will be answered every time, anytime, all the time. When what? When I'm praying for God's will to be done, not mine. Maybe it's not God's will to heal that person of that sickness in my time, according to my thinking.

Maybe God has another plan. What do I know? God, you see, here's my thoughts, but you know, not my will, but your will be done. Call it out.

Tell it to Jesus who prayed exactly that way in his moment of greatest need, the crossroads before the cross of Calvary, praying for God's will. Secondly, praising is God's will. Once you say amen, you start

praising him, thanking him, worshiping him, not for manipulation, but simply appreciation.

I'm not trying to manipulate you, Lord, to try and get you to do what I suggested. I just appreciate whatever you do. It's good for me.

You'll withhold no good thing from those that love you. Praying for God's will to be done, praising is God's will to be done, and parading to God's will on the highway of holiness. If I'm not living a holy life, all bets are off.

David said, if I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. God, in his mercy, will not allow you to sin successfully, and your prayers will bounce off the ceiling. Why? Because the Father's saying, Johnny, something's wrong.

Something's out of order here, and I want to deal with that, lest it hurt you really badly. Okay, Father, I promise you this. I really do.

If this is the way that we choose to pray for God's will, not ours, praying for God's will, praising is God's will, and now I'm going to start praising him immediately before anything happens or whether anything happens. I'm going to praise him because this is God's will, and parading to the valley of blessing on the highway of holiness. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

He's holy. Be ye holy, even as I am holy, the Lord says, and as you do, there's no lion there, no ravenous beast there, but you make your way to the place where the desert blooms, where the dumb speak, where good things are awaiting me and awaiting you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25107.mp3>

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