

Intercessory Prayer - Part 2

by Leonard Ravenhill

Intercessory prayer is essential for revival, and it requires a body of praying people who are willing to carry the burden and go through the pain and inconvenience of revival.

Duration: 29:23

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 6:6, Matthew 23:15, Luke 18:1, Acts 2:1

Topics: "Intercessory Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being zealous and passionate in spreading the word of God. He criticizes those who claim to have the best thing in the world but do not fully commit to it. The speaker shares examples of individuals in history who fervently prayed for revival and saw results. He also highlights the disruptive nature of revival, causing discomfort and dislocation in people's lives. The sermon encourages listeners to be dedicated and willing to sacrifice for the cause of spreading the gospel.

Transcript

The whole balance of the New Testament is to the church. God's problem is the church. It still is.

Individuals, because that's what the church is made up of, obviously. Getting men to hear God's voice, getting men to do God's will, and the difficult thing is that you think that God makes all his best people in loneliness. The proof of your love for God is how much time you spend with him, not how much you spend in meetings, not how much you spend even chasing drug addicts and all the others, and that's a great job.

I did a bit of it in New York, tried it out myself. My sons all went through that program, they're all in mission fields around the world today. But how much time do I spend listening to God? You see, true prayer is, it's a two-way communication.

I speak to God, God speaks to me. I unload on God, God unloads on me. I don't know why God needs me to pray.

I shared a number of times, I shared meetings with one of the greatest Christian educators ever in this country, I think, Dr. Edmund of Wheaton College. We were in a conference one day and Dr. R. R. Brown said, hey, tell the people about your experience in Uruguay. Well, he went down as a missionary.

He's a very brilliant man, he had learned the language, he had done studies, and he was ready to go. And he hadn't been there too long before he was sick and dying. His wife watched him.

She, two dresses, one that she was wearing and a wedding dress. She got some berries and a lot of old junk and made a black dye and she put a wedding dress in it and hung it up to dry. He was so near death, they dug his grave.

She went back to her husband, he great blobs of sweat on his brow and he was gurgling with a death rattle in his throat. And her mind was spinning. Why have we trained so many years? Why is all this money being spent? Why that? Why the other? All clouding her mind.

And she looks, she got a wet cloth and put it on his forehead and he sat straight up and he said, bring my clothes. Then she nearly died. What in the world happened? Oh, it's one of those lightnings people get, you know, they suddenly revive for half an hour.

Doctor will say that, I guess. And then out they go. Well, he lived many years after.

He was up in Boston telling the story of how God brought deliverance to him. It was this, it was a real little old lady, not a fictional character, came up with a little dog-eared book about this size that she got in Woolworths or somewhere, all beaten up. And she said, could I ask you a question? And he said, yes mother, what is it? What day did you say you were dying? So and so.

What time? Oh, what time was it in Uruguay? What time would it be in Boston? And so the little wrinkled face lit up and she said, there it is, you see, two o'clock in the morning. God said, get up and pray the devil's trying to kill Raymond Edmund in Uruguay. And she got up and prayed.

I said to him after, you know doctor, when you get to heaven. And God opens the register and he says, from that day onward, of course, you became one of the greatest educators in America. You trained three thousand students and a thousand went into the ministry and through them a hundred thousand people were saved.

Now I'm going to give you a reward. You see, you trained three thousand men. Fifteen hundred belong to the little old lady and fifteen hundred are yours.

You trained a thousand preachers. Five hundred belong to her and five hundred to you. Fifty thousand people were saved through their ministries.

Twenty five thousand for you. I said, do you think God's going to give you the whole reward? Not on your life. You'd have died apart from her.

She was as much to you as the mother that brought you in the world. She snatched you for some reason. I don't know why God asks that.

I remember many times I prayed early in the morning. Usually we met at five o'clock to pray with the dear man that had revival in the Hebrides, Duncan Campbell. He said one day he went to a place and he heard a farmer praying and this old boy, he listened.

The old man was praying about Greece. Greece. If you showed the man a map of the world, he wouldn't know where Greece was.

The only Greece he knew about was something you put in the frying pan or something. He didn't know. Greece? Afterwards he said, why were you praying about Greece? I don't know.

I got a burden in the spirit. God said, you pray. There's someone in Greece now that really, really, really isn't a bad seed.

Pray, pray, pray. I prayed till I got released he said. Two or three years afterwards he was in a meeting listening to a missionary and this man said, you know, about three years ago I was in Greece and I was in serious trouble.

He told the man who'd done the praying. The man went to see him. They copied, made, you know, checked up, found it was the very day, the very same day that God burdened a man away in a little island off the coast of Scotland to pray for a man in Greece.

He didn't even know his name. He couldn't have pronounced it if he knew it anyhow. But he didn't know the name of the man.

He could always say, Greece, I've got a burden for Greece. That's how God works. I don't know how the spirit makes communion.

I know I get some strange things but I don't care. I'd rather be strange than be like most folk anyhow. But why not be strange? The Lord tells you things, carry on with what God tells you.

But notice again will you hear that this woman, well we could spend a lot of time, we wouldn't do that, but the barren women brought forth the most wonderful sons. Samson's mother was a barren woman. Remember, can you imagine a man going into his wife and he says, hey I've got something to tell you.

She says, darling we're not moving again are we? And he says, no no dear, no no, I know it's a job being a preacher. No we're not moving this time, I've got better news than that. You know I've just got over that last move we had, just wore me out.

Well I've got better news than that. Well what is it? Now don't laugh when I tell you will you? No, you're going to have a baby. I'm going to what? I'll be 80 next week and I'm going to have a baby.

I mean oh come on, now don't fool like that. I mean you're 100 years old and I'm 80. Wait till I write and tell my mother this, what's she going to say? She'll say, you see I told him, never should have married a preacher, they're nuts, they're crazy.

No no no no. It's easy to read it isn't it? She laughed. Laughed what? The laugh of faith or the laugh of unbelief? She brought forth a child.

Did you notice afterwards when God said, take thy son, he was very careful about it because Abraham had another son. She said, my darling look here, I mean I know you're a wonderful man, you spend a lot of time praying but this vision you have now is nuts. I mean I'm having no baby.

But I'll tell you what the custom is you know, you can take one of the servants here, which was quite a custom in those days, choose the nicest girl, let her have a child by you and as soon as the baby's born, put it on my knees and legally that baby's mine, which was the way it was done in those days. Isn't that stupid? Have you ever noticed that there's a lapse from the time that Sarah spoke, God didn't talk to him for 14 years, you ever notice that? You better watch who you listen to. Oh we're going to have a baby.

You know later when God said, as I said recently before, remember God doesn't ask you to worship without sacrifice. I would have said, I'm going up there to offer my son. Abraham didn't say that.

Pardon me, he didn't say, I'm going to sacrifice, he said, I'm going to offer my son. God says, I don't want your son. Have you noticed God never recognized what is of the flesh, he never recognized Ishmael.

He said, take thine only son. Normally it was the first son that got, the first son didn't inherit anything. Why? Because he was a product of the flesh, that's why.

And God totally ignored him, I don't want Ishmael. Boy he's caused some trouble, that Ishmael hasn't he? You ask Henry Kissinger. Those Arabs are still going to be our biggest headache, don't you worry about that, we've got some problems coming up.

Just one son, saddle the whole universe with the Arabs. Yeah, God says, I'm going to give you a son. And then God says, I'm going to take him back.

If you want a good book on prayer, read mine, it's one I didn't write, it's the one I composed of the writings. A Treasury of Prayer by Dr. E.M. Bounds. E.M. Bounds said in one place, that God, E.M. Bounds said yes, in one place he said, God killed Stonewall Jackson, because he knew how to pray.

Now don't argue with me about it, argue with him when you see him. Stonewall Jackson learned the science of prayer. Every major prayer he prayed, God answered, exactly as Stonewall wanted it.

Well he prayed that the South would win against the North, they didn't, I don't know why, but there it is. And he said God had to do one of two things, either break a law, not give, or give what he didn't want to give, or he had to kill Stonewall Jackson. So he killed him.

You know God answers prayer, and sometimes he gives you what you want. He did that with Israel, didn't he? They prayed, they were mad, they wanted a king, they wanted lots of things, he gave it, but he sent leanness into their souls. God will give way to your flesh sometimes, you insist, you cry, you mourn.

I know a man that spent a whole night and a day in prayer, fasting prayer, fighting with God at the side of his bed, because the doctor said that the child wouldn't live. He hurled every promise of God, he vowed, he got angry, wouldn't sleep, his wife thought he was going demented, and the child lived. He was three years of age, they lived in a small town, he was one of the most respected men in town, he was considered a great Christian, 18 years of age, his daughter came home pregnant and told him a very sad story.

He went back to the same bedroom and spent as much time crying and telling God he was sorry he made a demand on him. I wish he'd gone to heaven as a pure little babe, rather than live and disgrace me and the family and the church and everything. He granted his request, he sent leanness into his soul.

You see the Spirit is such a gentle person that he'll warn us, but you can't trample on him, he'll go, you don't have to trample on him. And one of his offices again is, he is the spirit of prayer, as it says again in Jude, praying in the Holy Ghost. Now there are three things about natural birth that you have about spiritual birth.

The first is conception, the second is gestation and the third is birth, you can't change the order. Now the woman is concerned, she must have a child and she prayed and she was in bitterness of spirit. Well tell me, do you ever get bitter? I mean apart from anybody hurting your feelings? Again to me, one of the outstanding things in the life of Paul was the 17th chapter of Acts, where he went down the intellectual capital of the world and the roads on either side were lined with temples to strange gods and it says in the

sleepy Elizabethan English of the authorized version, his spirit was stirred, it isn't strong enough.

The Greek implies and the Amplified says he was angry. At what? At all these temples. First of all the people are all deluded and going to hell, secondly look at their, look at the cost of them, thirdly look at their devotion.

I preached at the great Curacao conference in Japan a few years ago. About two years afterwards, we were in Rockford Illinois where our good friend Harry Conn lives and I went to a church to hear a man speak. He was the man who chaired the missionary conference in Curacao.

After the meeting I said to him, well it's nice to see you again and where have you been and he said, well you know these days of travel. He said, I was in Japan last night, I caught a jet and I'm here. I said how are things and so forth and so on and then I said to him, you had quite a haircut.

He said, yeah I got it in Japan, things are cheaper in Japan you know. So I decided to have a haircut while I was there and he said, but boy that was an experience. I said, why? Did you cut your ear or something? No, no, no.

He said, the man got me all toweled up and whatnot and started working and he said, you're a Yankee. He said, well I'm an American. Oh, you're an American.

You're a tourist? No, not a tourist. Oh, businessman? No, not a businessman. Well, what? Well, he said, I'm a missionary in your country.

Oh, you're a missionary. Ah good, I am a missionary too. Oh, I thought you were a barber.

Barber, they have eight in the morning till five at night. Go home, take supper, bathe. Six o'clock I go out, pockets filled with this new coat they have.

It was new anyhow. Zagagaki, which is a combination of religion and politics. We're going to sweep Christianity out of Japan and out of this area.

We're going to conquer the world. You go out at seven o'clock at night? Yeah. Oh, I'm out by seven.

Oh, how long do you stay out? Well, I get home for two in the morning. Two? I go in houses. I give, like you give Bible lectures.

I give instruction. I leave them a record. I leave them literature and I go out every night from seven till, well, I get home at two.

No, no, no. You don't go to bed till two o'clock. I didn't say that.

You did. I didn't. What did you say? I said, I get home at two.

And then I have a shrine in the corner of my room. I pull the curtain and I fall before my God to renew my strength. Sounds a bit like Isaiah 40, they that wait upon the Lord to renew their strength.

And he said, I need from two o'clock till four o'clock to compose myself and draw my energies from God. I go to bed at four and I get up at seven thirty. The missionary said, I felt as I was going down in my chair, it missed the top of my head.

I felt so embarrassed. Then I said, well, listen, how long have you done this anyhow? He said, oh, I'm in my seventh year. Seventh year? You mean you've kept that up? Yes, sir.

This is a thing that's going to change the world. Man, it's worth living for or dying for. We look down our noses and say, we've got the best thing in the world, but we sleep on it half the time, don't we? You wonder that Jesus says, there are some people that they're so zealous, they'll come to sea and land to make one more convert, sevenfold more a child of hell and themselves.

But they're breathless doing it. I can't find any trace in history where revival has come. It has to come through, first of all, through conception.

That's why I said last night, I believe the Apostle Paul was spiritually pregnant. The Holy Ghost came on him and conceived those churches that he was going to birth afterwards. The church at Corinth, the church at Rome, Epictetus and so forth, Galatia.

He conceived them. They were born in him, as well as those epistles. Now the problem with the ladies, no, this is, we men don't know a thing about this.

Somebody said almost facetiously, if a couple got married and a woman had the first baby and husband had the second, there'd never be a third. Well, maybe that's true. You see, the scripture God uses, he uses it of Israel.

She traveled in birth. Now the obvious thing, and this is where we go wrong. Oh boy, there'll be more miscarriages in revival than any or all the women in the world put together.

You see, once that woman has conceived that child, she's got to carry that child a certain period. And you know what? The nearer she gets to birth of that child, the more her life gets out of kilter. She doesn't want to eat what she usually eats.

She wants to eat something she didn't eat. We used to read in the newspaper in England, the queen has canceled all her engagements for the next six months. Oh, oh, she's pregnant again.

She likes to ride horses, but if she leaps over that fence and she falls, she might injure that child. Jacqueline Kennedy, you remember that thing, that woman, and she used to like to go water skiing, but she gave up water skiing because she was going to have a child. She said that, I might have a collapse, the water, you know, I may spill over, that ski hit me, the child may be deformed, so forth and so on.

And so she stays with the child until the time of birth. The nearer she gets to the child being born, very often she doesn't sleep well at night. The old guy there, you know, night after night, and she can't sleep.

He says, are you all right dear? She said, yes. He knows she isn't, he doesn't say, I'll go help you, I'll get you a drink or something, forget it. She's pregnant, so what? And the longer she, the more she gets towards the time of that child being born, it becomes obviously increasingly more painful.

That's why somebody said, if a man had the second child and knew what travail is, of course now there's a lot of stuff goes around, it isn't as bad as it used to be, I get, but by the same token that's not true in the spiritual realm. You see, it's carrying that child, it's the burden that comes. Every revival, I think every revival without exception has been birthed amongst young men and women.

There's a town called Ahochal in Ireland. An old Irishman says you need a bad throat to say it. Ahochal, Ahochal.

I went to Peter the Conference there and they show you with reverence, you see that hedge over there, where that hedge meets that, that's where those four young men met night after night after night praying for revival. You go into Wales and they show you a place up on the hills where about three or four young men met night after night. They were only 18, 19, 20, something around there and they prayed night after night after night.

Wouldn't let God go, would not take no for an answer. They prayed as far as humanly possible, they prayed that revival into birth. But I'll tell you what, if you're thinking of revival at your church without any inconvenience, forget it.

Revival dislocates everything. Dr. Torsey used to say, you know Len, we've never had revival in our country that anybody remembers. I'm sure he was right in his definition when he said that revival changes the moral climate of a community.

It isn't that it gave us six new members in the church and five hundred dollars extra when we finished and a few more people sitting there, that's not revival. Maybe blessing, maybe help, it is not revival. Revival changes the moral climate of a community.

You know nowadays it's nothing for a group. Some of the big groups spent a million dollars on a crusade. I remember the time when they were almost terrified that they spent two hundred thousand.

But now they spend a million, don't bat an eye, a million and a half. They go on tv for a night, three nights cost you a million dollars. These big shops do it.

I don't know what good it does, maybe help some old folk in bed and whatnot, bless them and they need it. But I don't see any lasting results out of that kind of thing. You see God is only, God is only honored, God is only obligated to bless what's in his word.

And he has, he has, he has laid down the condition. The condition is that the body, the church which is his body. Why didn't Jesus come down in the clouds? He's going to come down like that soon.

Why didn't he come the first time? He came through a body, a virgin, a pure woman. Revival came through a body, a bunch of men. And I guess women in the upper room, about a hundred and twenty.

Jesus says, a body is thou prepared for me. So you find a body. I'm going to pray, I don't tell, tell me this if you see him.

But I'm going to pray, God will give you a bunch of real praying people here, intercessory people, that don't want to go out on the streets, to uphold those who are on the streets. I'm praying, do you know I'm praying? You don't have to pray this. It's my ground anyhow.

But I'm going to pray that God will put a pillar of fire over this agape place. That you won't have to go a hundred miles, people will come a hundred miles, two hundred miles, three hundred miles. When the Holy Ghost came on, on the people in Wales.

Or if you like to go further back when the, no a little further forward as we think of it now. When the Holy Spirit came on that group of people in Azusa Street in California in 1907. You know some of the most

distinguished people in England went to see the fire burn.

You never have to advertise a fire. Every time you announce in your church, in the newspaper, somebody's coming to your church, all you do is advertising your bankruptcy. You don't have to advertise a fire.

You let the glory of God come and fill this place. You get some men with, that don't want to be considered prophets, but they are prophets. Men that don't want to be considered apostles.

Men that don't want to be considered outstanding. Let them come. And if they come, the biggest men are always the easiest to live with.

They're always the lowliest men to live with. Let them come and settle in a place like this. Folk will come from the ends of the earth and I mean that.

Revival costs a lot. Do you know there's, I can give you a simple reason why we don't have a, I give you one simple sentence and tell you why we don't have revival in America. Do you know why we don't have it? Well I'll tell you, because we're content to live without it, that's all.

As soon as we get like this woman, what did she do? She wept, she was grieved, she fasted, she prayed. She says, I have a complaint. Well I say before God, what else could she have? She's got almost the very pains of hell upon her.

I want a child, I must have a child, I fast for the child, I pray for the child, I weep for the child. Now isn't it beautiful that this woman prayed and never said a word? That's the highest form of prayer there is, just like worship. The highest form of worship is you don't say a word.

You gaze on his holiness, his majesty, his beauty. It's speechless. You don't go to sleep over it either.

Well you know the hard thing, I mean what does Psalm 1, it talks about blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the young God, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful and so it goes on. And what? Standeth in the way of sinners. And well of course, the scripture says you're to stand the contradiction of sinners.

That's not difficult, it's a criticism of the saints that gets you down. They're better at it than the sinners. They can criticize and ridicule and scorn better than any old sinner you ever heard in your life.

Hannah came to church and she prayed. And Eli said, you know what that woman's been coming for months now. I'd like to know where she gets the liquor because every time she comes in she's drunk.

She mutters never says a word, never asked me any advice. Me? A great preacher and she never asked for my opinion, never says anything to me. Eli marked her mouth, her lips moved but a voice was not heard.

There's a poem, it's a secular poem but I think it's right on target, on this very subject where a poet says what am I? An infant crying in the night. An infant crying for a light with no language but a cry. Mother's getting back into bed, father said, who are you of? Yes I was of.

Why? Oh I heard him cry. What did he want? Darling he was hungry, want it feeding. Ah is he all right? Yeah he's all right.

Half an hour after he decides it's time to rehearse for the choir or something and he sings out the dog of his voice. Mother says, he's crying again, is he hungry? Mother goes and attends to him and said, no dear he wasn't hungry, he was uncomfortable, he needed his diaper changing. Ah is that him crying again? Yes.

What does he want now? Changing? Is he hungry? No he's frightened. I put the light on and he stopped right there. They call it what? A woman's tuition.

The poet got it straight, what am I? An infant crying for a light. Wouldn't it be something if your six months baby shouted, mom I'm hungry. He'd say, oh what in the world is wrong? Huh? So what does he do? He does all he can do.

He cries away and you say, oh he's hungry, boy I'll have to get up, it's cold but I'll go feed him, he's hungry. Huh? He yells a bit later, I'm wet through. No he doesn't, he just lays there and you go and you say, oh wow, he was swimming, man he's a mess.

Let's get him changed and you change him. You go another time, he doesn't yell, I want a light. But you know for somehow he's nervous, you put the light on and he stopped.

He has no language but a cry. You see that's why you read about men like Moses.

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