

The Nature of Powerful Praying

by Lou Sutera

This sermon emphasizes the importance of powerful praying, which is characterized by fervency, passion, and believing, and highlights the consequences of prayerlessness.

Duration: 59:25

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story of a man who couldn't sleep because he wanted to know how to become a child of God. This story emphasizes the importance of truly seeing and understanding who God is. The speaker encourages the audience to create their own concordance of God's characteristics in the book of Psalms to gain a deeper understanding of His nature. The sermon also highlights the need for fervent and passionate prayer, as well as the limitless possibilities of experiencing God's grace and power through prayer.

Transcript

Give me a little more volume. I have a little head cold hitting me, but that's all. Not too much now, because I'll get excited, you know.

When I went home last night, I thought I was going to be preaching something else tonight, and the Lord just sort of changed it. And I'm glad He did, because I think it's fitting into what God wants us to hear. Sister, I want you to get up and tell this crowd what you told me about this week.

Yeah. Say it loud now. Tell them.

Yeah. She thought it was so significant that it all fits in at the same time. Interesting.

Tonight, I ended last night, 2 Chronicles 7, 14, where God begins in reviving His people. You don't need to turn. Just quickly.

I said this is where God begins in reviving His people. If my people which are called by my name shall, what? Humble themselves. What's the next thing? And pray.

An interesting call for prayer right now, and we're right there ready to pray. Now, and pray. Problem is, prayerlessness is a serious issue in the church today.

Very little praying going on. So, I thought this was interesting. I found a little something that came across my desk, and it was the priest and the taxi cab driver.

They finally got up to the St. Peter's, you know, to enter in. And the priest was sort of pushed to the side a little bit, and he had to wait, because St. Peter was really honoring the taxi cab driver. And he gave him a high-level place in heaven.

You know, this is just interesting. And so finally, when the priest got there, he was so concerned to St. Peter. He said, how come you give this taxi cab driver such an honored place and way ahead of me? And he said, I spent all my life talking about the Bible.

I talk about Jesus, and I talk about God, and yet you give this taxi cab driver so much attention. Well, St. Peter said, the reason is, I gave him a higher level, because when you speak to people about God in your church, everybody goes to sleep. Right? But when the taxi cab drives the people, everybody goes to praying.

So, and pray. Right? So they pray when a taxi cab driver drives. Ah, but then there was an overweight man.

You know, overweight man had concern about losing weight. So, what did he do? He decided he was going to go on a diet. And the best way was to change his driving route.

Because he used to drive right around the bakery shop. And he'd see all those goodies in there, and there he'd go. So he figured the best thing, first of all, I've got to change my route, my driving.

And then he goes on this diet. And all of his employees, they recognized he was doing such a good job at this thing. Good job.

And then one day, he came in with a big coffee cake. And they jumped all over him and said, what's this all about? You're on this diet and doing so well, and then here you come in with this. And didn't trouble him at all.

He had that nice cherub look on his face. Didn't bother him at all. He said, I want to tell you, this is a very special coffee cake.

This is a very special one. He said, I accidentally drove around the shop. And I saw those goodies in the window.

And I looked at them, and I thought to myself, and I said, God, if you want me to have one of them, will you please, God, have a parking place right in front of that place? And he said, guess what? The eighth time I drove around the block, there was a parking place. Ah, and pray. Now, it's interesting, because when I felt to change the message that I would give tonight, to come on this and pray, in the light of our praying and so forth, I went to my computer and I had an email in that came from Dr. Charles Stanley, from the First Baptist Church there in Atlanta.

And they were advertising, and I thought, what a confirmation. And they were advertising, they were saying, by the ultimate conversation. That's the name of this.

By the ultimate conversation. And what was it? Praying with impact. Praying with impact.

And it was almost like God said, there it is. You're on the right thing for tonight. And pray.

So, what we're talking about. Well, you know, the little girl has her version of prayer. Of the Lord's Prayer.

You know how children, they really get it. And the little girl, the little girl's version was, And lead us not into temptation. And she went on to pray, but deliver us from evil.

Ah. God answers not evil, but knee mail. Amen? Knee mail.

Now, in the light of that, I want to give you two powerful statements. That relate to, and pray. Oh, the devil doesn't want the church to hear this.

But listen to this. The man who's the head of the National Prayer Committee in the United States. He said these words.

He's been all over the United States talking about calling God's people to pray. And he said these words. Incredibly, we come into the throne room of heaven.

He said, it's unbelievable that we have this privilege. He said, incredibly, we come into the throne room of heaven. When we pray.

What a privilege. He said, Jesus Christ has literally given to us. Access.

Listen to this now. To the control center of the universe. That's too much for us to grasp.

The control center of the universe, he said. He said, sadly, as I travel across the country, I don't hear bold praying. I hear wimpy praying.

There's no power. There's no confidence. There's no faith.

Here's a second statement. There are no limits set up in this world to the possibilities of experiencing the graceful and loving actions of the Lord. There are no limits.

Nothing in this world can limit us seeing the graceful actions and the possibilities of God's power in this world. Except through poor praying. So, I think tonight, let's pray, Lord, save us from poor praying.

Save us. Dr. Warren Wisbee wrote a book and the title of the book was, Something Happens When Churches Pray. Title of a book.

I wish I could read you some excerpts of that. So, let's talk tonight. I want to give you three aspects of what powerful praying is all about.

I hope God speaks to us and uses this word. First of all, I suggest that powerful praying has to be fervent, passionate praying. Fervent, passionate praying.

Now, we won't take time to turn because you know these verses. Way back in the book of James where it talks about Elijah. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

First of all, before it says, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. There's the word. The effectual fervent.

Fervent. Red hot heat kind of praying. Of a righteous man avails much.

And then it tells us something about Elijah. And it says, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. Don't you like that? I like that.

Do you know why? Because finally we've got somebody in the Bible who's a human being just like you and me. Right? Somehow we think these men of the Bible are super spiritual and they were super men spiritually. And that's why God had them to write a nice book like this.

But I like when he comes along and says, I want to talk to you about one just like you and me. Subject. Subject to like passions like you and me.

Huh. He's just like you and me. But he prayed fervently.

He prayed fervently that it might not rain. And it rained not in the space of three years or six months. And then he prayed again.

And then the heavens opened rain. Amazing. Amazing.

But those words, fervently, passionately. I think fervently, passionately. It says in Colossians 4.12, it says, Paul who was referring to Epaphras, a fellow servant of his, it says these words about him.

He says he was laboring fervently for you in prayers. What? That you might stand perfect and complete in the will of God. But laboring fervently.

So I had to find out something about those words. Laboring fervently. Because that's the way Elijah prayed.

The effectual fervent person. I had to find out something about that word. And what does it really mean? And I found out that laboring fervently, it has the, it's a translation from the Greek word that relates to the Olympics.

Way back in the original Olympics, in the gymnastic events of wrestling. And it's the straining. One wrestler strains himself, every muscle in his body.

Straining to win in that wrestling match. What a tremendous issue. What a, the strain of the man to win over his opponent.

And that's the word. Laboring fervently. I think it's the same thing that Jeremiah 33.3 says.

He says these words. Call on me. You know what that's all about, Jeremiah 33? It was a desperate situation with the people of God.

And we come to Jeremiah. Jeremiah's in prison. But God gives Jeremiah a promise to give to the people of God.

And God says, Jeremiah, tell the people this. Even though it was a dark hour. Tell the people this.

Call unto me. Tell them to call unto me. And he says, call unto me and I will answer thee.

And I will show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. Now, it really means I will show thee great and stupendous things the like of which thou hast never seen before. Wow.

Great and mighty things that thou knowest not. Now, I thought to myself, what kind of calling brings God to answer like that? There must be something in that word call unto me. There's something maybe much different from the way we pray because somehow we pray and don't get it.

What's in that word? So, I found out in the Hebrew translation because the Old Testament's in Hebrew. I found out in the Hebrew translation, call unto me. You know what it means? It means to make an outcry as a person in distress.

Oh. It was a desperate situation. Things were desperate.

And God says, tell the people to call unto me. And it's like making an outcry as a person in distress. Tremendous indeed.

So, I'm suggesting that Dr. Charles Stanley, he goes on to say, praying with a burden. Praying with a burden is probably the most neglected aspect of prayer. As a result, he said, we pray burdenless prayers.

We repeat the same old request over and over. There's no heart. There's no urgency.

And there's no expectancy. Hmm. Dr. James Stewart said, this is the sin of America today.

What? The spirit of intercession and travail is lacking in our prayers. So, I just give you, there's got to be something different about the kind of praying we do. Burdenless praying.

No expectancy in our prayer. Then, secondly, I suggest to you that powerful praying has to be believing praying. Believing praying.

Listen to John Wesley. John Wesley said, God will do nothing on earth except through believing praying. What a statement.

Well, another man said, faith praying or believing praying is expecting the present and listening Lord to do something. That's faith praying. Expecting God to do something.

Believing and expecting. So, some scripture verses. Here you turn.

You don't need to turn. Listen. Matthew 9.29. According to your, all you know, faith, be it unto you.

Got it? Mark 9.23. Jesus said to him, if thou tends to believe, all things are possible to him that believes. Oh, we know them, don't we? I like those verses. But I'll tell you what I like even better than those verses.

I like the verses that talk about with God, all things are possible. Isn't that nice? The other one tells me I've got to believe and all things are possible if I believe. That's fine.

But where do I find these verses where it says with God, all things are possible? You know where we find them? Interesting, where God gets in the situation and shows us that with God all things are possible. You know where they are in the Bible? After two human impossibilities. Isn't that amazing? We just read those verses and we get so used to them.

But it's interesting to find that they follow two human impossibilities. And I won't take time to go into them. But then it says, here's the description of two human impossibilities, but each time, but with God, all things are possible.

Interesting. Well, we come to Mark 11.22-24. It says about praying and believing that you can move mountains and the sea. But it says, if you ask anything in my name, if you believe, it shall be done unto you.

There it is. Those verses, we won't take time to look at them, but you know they're there. If you believe.

Okay. Now, in the light of this, I find a very interesting verse in the Old Testament that starts out with a prayer. Now, how do we pray? We pray, dear Lord Jesus, and we can start in.

How do you like this for a beginning of a prayer? In Psalm 52, verse 6, it says, O thou that hearest prayer. How do you like that for a faith statement in prayer? Right off the bat, it recognizes a God who hears prayer. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Interesting. A faith statement, even in the beginning of praying. But then, you know, we go to Acts chapter 12, and you know the story there.

They were having a prayer meeting. And what are they praying for? Well, they're praying for Peter to get out of prison. Remember that one? And they were there praying fervently for Peter to get out of prison.

And there's a knock at the gate. And they send somebody to the gate. And it goes open, it goes fine.

And he comes back and tells, Peter's at the gate! Oh, no, they said, it's a ghost. They're praying for him to get there. When he gets there, they call him a ghost.

Right? Amazing bunch, aren't they? Ah, finally, they said, oh, wrote a dark man. They even said, she's off her rocker. You know what I mean? When you say, he's at the gate.

No. No. Finally, finally, when they go there themselves, they finally say, oh, it's his angel.

Well, they're getting there. That's better than nothing. Better than a ghost.

It's his angel. But their prayers, they were astonished by the fact that God answered their prayer, even in the lack of faith. Sometimes God is good to us like that.

Sometimes he surprises us, even in our lack of faith. He puts a serendipity on us and we get it anyway. He's good to us.

There they were. Amazing, isn't it? In my country, I heard about an area where they had a bunch of farmers. And these farmers were needing rain because their crops needed rain.

And so, they were praying for rain. They were not getting rain. Finally, they got so desperate.

You know, when it gets desperate, there's only one thing to do. What? Pray. Oh, they know.

So, they call a prayer meeting. So, all the farmers got together and called a prayer meeting. They're going to pray for rain, right? You know what, men and women? Only one guy went there with an umbrella.

All the other guys got soaked on the way home. Amen? Ah, take your umbrella with you. Joy Dawson, a tremendous woman of God in our country, has written powerful words on prayer.

You know what? She said these words. Thank God in faith for the remarkable prayer meeting you're going to have even before you get there. Fill your car with faith on the way to the prayer meeting even before you get there.

When Ralph and I a few years ago had a series of meetings in Michigan, central Michigan, there was a Christian radio station right close to where we were having the meetings. And they were carrying the report of what God was doing to the whole countryside. 45, 60 miles out, they were hearing what God was doing in this little place called Rives Junction, Michigan.

And you know, people 50 miles away were hearing it, and they wanted to get in on it. And one lady said to her husband, Honey, he was a trucker, and he drives truck all day, but he comes home from driving, and she said, You've got to take me over there. And what I hear going on on the radio, you've got to take me over there.

I've got to go and see it. He's all grumpy and grouchy. He says, I've been working all day, been driving all day, and I'm all tired and all this.

But, oh, you've got to take me. She's in begging, begs and begs. And then finally, he gives in.

And then, but she says these words. But I hear they have more than one meeting. They have the meeting, and then they have what they call an after meeting, an afterglow, where they just meet, and then they talk about what God has done in their lives, you know.

And he says, I want to stay for that too. Oh, now he's going up in smoke a little bit, you know what I mean? Go, stay for that too. He said, well, finally they came to a compromise that I'll tell you what, I will take you, and I'll go into that first meeting, but that afterglow business, you just let me sleep in the car.

I'm tired. I think he probably figured if I don't do it all at once, she's going to be after me another night to go that 50-mile drive, you know. So, I might as well get it all done at once.

And so, her figure was, I want to get my money's worth. Whatever's going on, I want to get it all done. So, there we have the situation.

At the same time, 50 miles away, her pastor's wife was hearing these testimonies on the radio, what God was doing in this revival. And the pastor's wife thought to herself, my husband, he was out making calls among the people. When he comes in, she said to him, honey, listen, what I hear going on over there, you go there and see what God's doing, and then you come back and tell us.

Get in and tell us what's going on. It was Wednesday night. He said, get somebody else even to take the permit, but you go and find out and come back and tell us what's going on.

So, here we are. Now, we're having the meeting. And after the meeting, we're in this, what they call the afterglow.

We have 40, 50 people there in this afterglow. Just sitting in a circle and just telling what God was doing for them. Giving testimony, how God was changing their lives.

One after another, after another, after another. And here's this lady, whose husband, he was a deacon in the church, by the way. And he was a deacon who had quit deacon a long time ago.

You know what I mean? A backslidden deacon. Anything worse than that? I don't know. But anyway, he was a deacon like that and grumpy and all the rest of it.

So, she, in this environment where they're giving testimony of what God is doing, and how God is changing the lives of people, she thought this was a safe place. I'm going to ask these people to pray for my husband. This undeacon, deacon husband of mine, backslidden and all the rest of it.

I'm just describing what she said about him. So, she opens her mouth and asks these people to pray for her husband and describes him like I've described. Well, somebody said, where is he? Ah, where is he? He's out in the parking lot, sleeping in a car.

And, you know, these are people who'd seen God perform such powerful things in the lives of people. Just like taking, pushing that wall over with your physical hand. You know, things they thought were impossible and lives of people that needed to be changed, that they thought never happened, was happening.

And I'm leaving a lot out just to, that's a general statement. I could give you so many illustrations of that. But anyway, she said, so one of those fellows said, where is he? Out in the parking lot.

And he and another guy, two of those tigers there, who could believe God for about anything, out they went, out the door, out into a parking lot, out in the dark night. Before that, they said, what kind of a car is he in? She had to figure out which car, right? He said, he's in a gray Buick. A gray Buick.

So how'd they go in the dark night to look in a gray Buick? For a bachelor's sleeping deacon, right? And so, you know what? This lady, she was just now, oh man, can you imagine what she was thinking? Who are these guys running out there after my husband? And she was thinking about that 50 mile drive back home that night, right? What her husband was going to give to her for sending these guys out after him. But you know what, men and women? I think when it gets that bad, I could see what she was feeling. Folks, I think we better pray.

And so I turned all those 40, 50 people on their knees and we went to pray. And oh, they were praying. They were praying and praying.

Oh God, you did it for John and Archimedes. You can get them. And on and on they're praying.

Got it? Now, while we're praying, I'm on my knees and somebody taps me on the shoulder. And here I look up. Who is it? One of those two tigers that went out after him.

And he whispered in my ear because everybody's praying. He said, Lou, we've got him. Yeah.

Lou, we've got him. And Lou, he wants to get right with God. Oh, wow.

What a thing. Now they're all on their knees praying. And one brother's over here praying.

He says, oh God, you heard her say. She's praying how mean he was and how backslidden he was and how cold. He's standing right here.

He's standing right here. Oh God, you heard him. I'm not.

And I'm praying. Oh God, tell that brother to stop praying. You know? You know? Because there's a verse in the Bible that was being answered.

And it's Isaiah 65, 24. It says, and it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer. And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

While he was speaking, God was here. Here he was. I said, folks, he's here.

And he wants to get right with God. He wants to get right with God. You know what happened? We put down a chair here.

One for him. And then his wife was there. One for her.

And they had the daughter there. And we put three chairs down. And we got those three chairs down.

And guess what happened? Somebody from that side of the room comes and plops right on his knees on one of those chairs. Who is this? Remember I told you that pastor's wife told her husband to go there and see what's going on? Do you know what? That was the pastor from 50 miles away. Their pastor.

Where this was one of his deacons. That's coming to get right with God. Now, men and women, isn't that the right place for a pastor to be when your deacon is wanting to get right with God? Huh? You're wrong this time.

He did not come for his deacon. He came for himself. And you know what? He was the first one to pray.

And he prayed. He said, when Lou said he's here and he wants to get right with God, he said, I said, oh no, Lord. Forgive me for my unbelief.

He said, I didn't think you could do anything for that deacon. Even though I prayed so long for him, I have wept tears on my office floor. Tears had gone.

I've laid prostrate on my office floor and wept into the rug of my carpet. Tears asking God to change him. And when Lou said he's here, I said, oh no, I didn't.

And God showed me I have been praying in unbelief. The pastor was the first one to get right with God. And then the deacon and the wife, men and women, we kill the fatted calf about 2 or 3 in the morning.

What a time of touching God in such a way. I suggest to you that prayer, men and women, without expectancy, is unbelief in disguise. That's really what it is.

We pray and don't expect a thing. We are praying in unbelief. Prayer without expectancy is unbelief in disguise.

James 1.6 tells us to ask in faith, listen, without doubting. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. Now listen.

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. And you know what the next statement is? He is a double-minded man which is what? Unstable in all his ways. Now I want to tell you something.

How many times you read the Bible and all at once something jumps out at you? How many times have you quoted the statement to somebody, telling somebody, counseling somebody, and you've used the statement, a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways? How many times? You know what? I want to stop you tonight because God stopped me on it. You know where that scripture is? It follows unbelieving

praying. And God says, you are a double-minded man because you're praying to me there, you're asking me to do something, but you're unbelieving.

How do you like that for double-mindedness? And that's where that statement is in the Bible. When is God going to speak to us to bring it right there? The double-mindedness represented by unbelieving praying. No expectancy in prayer.

And that's where that scripture is in the Word of God. One man said Satan's trick is this, is to make the situation look so impossible that we get discouraged and we quit praying. And the reason he does this, men and women, is that he absolutely has no defense against powerful praying.

And so he discourages us. A man of another generation, a Methodist preacher, Charles Allen, of another generation said, if ever a person says a situation is hopeless, maybe here you've almost written some situations off, and you come to a place where you say a situation is hopeless, if you ever come to us like that, you know what he said? This is the same as slamming the door in the face of Almighty God, when you say a situation is hopeless. You're slamming the door in the face of Almighty God.

In that moment, he says, you're saying that this is beyond anything God can do. In that moment, he says, Christ is no longer supreme, no matter what your Bible says about Him. Andrew Murray puts it like this.

He said, we must begin to do something. What? Believe that God, we must begin to believe that God, in the mystery of prayer, has entrusted us with a force that can move the heavenly world and bring its power down to earth. When do we start believing that? Watchman Nee said it.

Our prayers, what do they do? We know God is sovereign, but what about our prayers? What do they do? And there's so much we can say about this, but I just want to give you a thought or two about it. Here it is. Our prayers lay the track down, the tracks down on which God's power can come.

Like a mighty locomotive, God's power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without the rails. And our prayers are laying down the tracks for God's power to come. But here's one of the most powerful statements in the book, *Destined for the Throne* by Bielheimer.

Listen. The church, through believing prayer, that's what we're talking about, believing prayer, holds the balance of power, both in world affairs and in the salvation of lost souls, and that the fate of the world is in the hands of nameless Christians like the world will never hear about you and me. Through powerful praying.

Believing praying. What a statement. Men and women, these statements are too big for us to grab, but they're in tune with what everything we read in the Bible about the kind of God that we have.

Now, that's interesting in the verse. In the light of what I'm saying now, here's another verse that jumped out at me. I never thought I'd put it in the context of I'm putting it tonight.

Here's a verse that you've quoted many times and we've used so many times, and it's Romans 14.23. Don't turn. You probably haven't memorized. Romans 14.23, and it says these words.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. It's one of those, what I quoted last night, one of those seven that the Bible calls sin. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Now, hear that. Now, men and women, what about when we pray in unbelief? What are we doing? How do you like that? Sinful praying. Serious stuff, isn't it? We're praying for God to do something, and in unbelief, we're actually sinning while we're praying, men and women.

Sinful praying. Perhaps we talk about repentance, don't we? Sister talks about repentance, and we're talking about repentance. I wonder if repentance needs to start right there.

We need to repent of the fact that we have been unbelieving believers. Unbelieving prayers. Praying in unbelief is sinful praying.

You know what? I find in the New Testament, the word believe is 247 times. I find in the New Testament, the word faith is 244 times. You put those together, and you have almost 500 times in the New Testament.

Believe and faith. No wonder praying in unbelief is therefore sinful praying. A friend of mine just recently wrote a book, and there's the book.

I like this book. There it is. There's the book, right there.

No, that's the book cover, and there's the table of contents. I just took a picture of it because I thought I wanted to show you something. How do I like this for a title of a book? A personal friend of ours wrote it.

What's faith got to do with it? That's the title of the book. What's faith got to do with it? And what we just said. And the statement, everything.

What's faith got to do with it? Can you see the word? Everything. Everything. Title of the book.

So, I had to figure out what chapter is going to have with this. If faith's got to do with everything, here it is. Chapter 1. Understanding by faith.

Worshipping by faith. Walking by faith. Preparing for your life, your family's salvation by faith.

Obedying God by faith. Conceiving the promise by faith. Facing unfulfilled dreams by faith.

Parenting by faith. Making right choices by faith. Listen to this one.

Facing adversity by faith. And you know, the last chapter has to be finishing by faith. Right? What does faith have to do with it? Everything.

Are you hearing me? Oh, that God would convict us tonight of our unbelieving, unexpectedcy in our praying. Praying in unbelief. Do we need repentance to start there? We wonder why.

We don't see answers to prayer. Start there. Now the third one.

First of all, fervent praying. Secondly, believing praying. And thirdly, I suggest, specific, focused praying.

Specific, focused praying. Well, you know the Scriptures. And I'm not... It would take time to turn, but you know them all so well.

Oh, you know. Matthew 7, 7 to 11. Ask, seek, and knock.

Right? If you ask, you knock, and you seek, it shall be given to you. And ask, seek, and knock. Sounds like very specific, doesn't it? Specific.

And you know how specific it gets? God says, if you fathers, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. What is that all about? If your son comes and asks you, if you give him bread, do you give him a stone? If he asks for fish, do you give him a serpent? What is he asking bread? That's specific. He's asking fish.

That's specific. What do you give him? Is there anything you want? No. No.

If you, and we in our evilness, we human beings, we give that specific request. It says, if you do that, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things than we ask Him? What is the context? Specific asking. And then the specific giving.

Why? You go into Matthew 18, where it says, if two or three shall agree on and touching any one thing. I like that for specific group praying. Agree about one thing.

It shall be given him. There it is. The Apostle Paul, way back in Romans 15, he asked the Roman church to pray for him.

And it's interesting. You know what he did? He asked them to pray for him, and he gave them three very specific things to pray for him about. Ah.

Thought that was interesting indeed. So, in the light of that, I want you to turn to Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10.

Interesting. Look at this one. Mark chapter 10.

You brought your Bibles? Mark chapter 10. The last few verses. And here's the story of blind Bartimaeus.

He's coming to Jesus. Mark chapter 10. Verse 47.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. Many charged him to hold his peace, but he cried out the more. Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And then verse 49 of Mark chapter 10. And Jesus stood still, and commanded that he be brought to him. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer, be of good comfort.

Rise, he called for thee. And Origen made the grave. He got his attention.

Got it? He, casting away his garment, he rose up and he came to Jesus. Now, here we are. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? I'll be done before they get the Bibles, brother.

Alright. What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? That's a question. Jesus said, what do you want? The question said, what do you want? Listen to the blind man's answer.

And the blind man said unto him, Lord, whatever you want to give me would be fine with me. I'd be happy for anything you want to give me. Right? No.

The blind man said unto him, What? That I might receive my sight. I'm going to ask you a question. Can you get any more specific than that? Pretty specific.

Oh, you say, well, what do you expect a blind man to ask for? Yeah? That's right. But I love something about Jesus' answer. It gives me a cue into this thing.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way. He didn't say go your way because I've healed you. I'll heal you.

Thy faith. There's the word. Thy faith hath made thee whole.

You know what? I have an idea. My Lord is honoring the specificity of His request. Faith.

That's what we just said. And Jesus healed him on that basis. Now, many women, in that issue, I suggest something.

We say faith without works is dead. Don't we? We use that scripture? All right. I suggest to you, prayer without faith is dead.

That's what we've been talking about. Prayer without faith is dead. We just got done saying that.

I want to take you one step further. I believe much of our praying without specifics is unfaith praying. Praying without specifics is dead praying in so many realms.

Now, I know there's some situation where there can be generalized praying. But I'm talking about the majority of our praying has to get into specifics. I'll tell you why, many women.

Prayer without specifics is dead faith. It doesn't take any faith to pray the generalized praying that most of us do all the time. We have such general prayer requests.

How do you know when God answers your prayer when you have such a general prayer request? But I want to tell you something. When you have to name a name and you give a specific request, that is a totally different kind of praying. We've got to get rid of this half-hearted generalized praying that's so characteristic of so many of us.

And in its place, we've got to put specific requests. That's what we just went through in the Word of God. God said be specific in the request.

Specific requests. A number of years ago, we were in a little town in Northfield, Minnesota preaching. And I was saying to the people, get specific.

Put names on your prayer requests. Tell God what you want. And I was using a name.

I said, when you pray, pray, God save Mr. Smith. You know, I'm just saying. I hope there's not a Smith here tonight.

But I hope you get sick. Are you a Smith? There it is, Lord help her. Her maiden name was Smith.

Okay, then she became rich. Wow. Alright, okay.

I said, pray, God save Mr. Smith. God save Mr. Smith. I could have used Williams, Jones, you know, any of those common names.

But I just figured Smith was a common one. God save Mr. Smith. And you know, while I was saying that, I could feel I was doing something wrong.

I could feel it. Ralph was sitting back over here, and the pastor was over here. And you know what? Mental telepathy or something.

I knew I was doing something wrong. The pastor didn't have very many hairs on his head, but I could feel the few he had were standing up talking to each other. I could feel it.

And they had a conversation behind me. And when I got done, I turned around and said, finally, alright brother pastor, tell me, what did I do wrong? He said, the pastor said, oh, I was wishing all the time you would have changed the name. What do you mean, changed the name? I wish you would have used Williams, Jones, anyone.

I said, why? He said, Mr. Smith. You kept saying, God save Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith is the most wretched, wicked sinner in this town.

I said, isn't that wonderful. I had the right name. Yeah.

And he said, yes, but brother Lou, this is the first night Mr. Smith has ever been in this church. He's here tonight. Had the right name, didn't we? You know, Ralph and I have the privilege, there are many holy moments in a minister's life and our life.

One of those holy moments, when we're just 19, 20, 21 years of age, just starting out in the ministry. We're out in Southern California and people said, when you're out here, you've got to go to see the Suppy's Memorial Rest Home. Suppy's Memorial Rest Home.

Why? Suppy's Memorial Rest Home, that's a story and a half. Here's an elderly woman, had no money, but had a burden. And her burden was to create a home for missionaries who would come home on furlough and have a place to stay and even some who didn't have a place when they retired and needed a home to stay in.

God, give me, God, give me money. Give me money to build that kind of a home. And people said, you've got to go see Mrs. Suppy's.

What a woman of faith. And go see the rest home. So we were out there and we took their word and went to see her.

And what a holy moment when she placed her hand and prayed on us that God would anoint us for the ministry. But I remember she said these words. She said, you know how I got this rest home? She said, I asked God to give me \$50,000 to build this rest home.

Years ago, you know, when \$50,000 could do something. I asked God to give me \$50,000 to build this rest home. And I asked God for it.

And you know what? I no sooner asked God for it, and here come the geologists or the guys that know what's underneath your house, you know, the oil and the gas or whatever. And they say, you're on some wealthy property. There's good stuff underneath you here.

And he said, would you be interested in us tapping it and see what we can pull up out here? Oh yeah. She asked God for \$50,000, right? He said, oh yeah. And they tap it and here comes the money.

\$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 and stopped. No more. That's it.

Isn't that what she asked for? She said to Ralph and Lou, she said, Ralph and Lou, I don't know why to this day I didn't ask God for \$100,000. Ooh. You know, I don't know if it was last night I talked to you about a little crusade in Virginia in two Methodist churches where as a result of the revival and they got right with God, they started a prayer on Thursday night.

And I told you that they had so many answers to prayer in one year, that little prayer group had 151 answers to prayer in one year. And when we got back there a year later, I told you about it, they gave us a list of the names, specific people that they prayed for and answers. There's the list folks.

I didn't realize I had my files. There they are. I'm not talking Dixie.

There's the list of the people one year later and they had a celebration service and they had helium balloons and they filled 151 of them and celebrated a year later and sent them up back to heaven in thanksgiving to God. Specific folks. You're looking.

That's the first time I've ever showed the list. There it is. How do you like that? Specific requests.

Oh, Ralph and I were in a little town in Michigan having morning prayer meetings, evening service and one lady said, Ralph said, any prayer requests? And the lady said, yes. Let's pray that God save Mr. Sturkin. Who is Mr. Sturkin? You know who he is.

Mrs. Sturkin's husband. Got it? Well, I say that because Mrs. Sturkin was sitting over here in the prayer meeting and she didn't ask for a request for a husband but this dear sister is asking for a request for this sister's husband. Got it? Oh, you should have seen the expression on Mrs. Sturkin's face when this one had such a desire to see her husband saved.

That's wonderful. God bless you. And in the prayer meeting, Ralph felt led of the Lord to say, he grabbed that, didn't know anything about what's going on here, but he grabbed that request, just sort of burdened and said, let's grab that one and make that a real matter of prayer.

And they went to praying and now Mrs. Sturkin looks at Ralph. Oh, Brother Ralph, I appreciate your zeal but you know, about now you've got a little more intelligence, a little more zeal than intelligence. Let's pray that God save him this week.

Oh, that's right. They prayed, let's God, Ralph got up and said, let's pray God save him this week. And she said, oh, Brother Ralph, yeah, I know God will save him but to say God save him, you just don't know him.

You've got more zeal now until you don't know him. A 60-year-old man never prayed a prayer in his life, went to church on Sunday morning only to please his wife, sat next to the window, hoped the weather was up so the window could be up so he could watch the traffic and there he is. Ralph and I got there and the pastor said, there's a man we watched, don't offend him, we're just glad he at least comes on Sunday morning describing this guy.

Got it? Found out by Friday that Ralph and I were invited to his home to have ham dinner at Sturkin's home. So he was there. We had ham dinner and we prayed and had ham dinner and so forth.

We invited him to come that night. We were giving our life story that Ralph gave Sunday night. And we invited him out.

Now, you know, they're praying God save him this week. We're already to Friday night, folks. Friday night.

And they're praying God save him this week. And so, he promises to come. We give our life story and gave the invitation and folks went to the program to be saved, but he didn't.

He didn't go. That's Friday night. And they're praying God save him this week.

Do you know what, men and women? In the middle of the night, he couldn't sleep a wink. His wife was fast asleep. At 4 o'clock in the morning, he couldn't sleep a wink.

He shakes his wife. He says, Honey, honey, wake up, wake up, wake up. Get out of bed and pray with me.

I can't even wait until tomorrow. Tell me how to become a child of God. She leads her husband to the Lord at 4 a.m. Would you love to have been in the church in the prayer meeting the next morning? At 10 o'clock, the door swings open.

Here comes Mrs. Storkin. And right behind him comes the answer to prayer. Comes to the prayer meeting.

He's about 8 hours old. The answer to prayer comes to the prayer meeting. And they're sitting in a circle.

They're sitting in a circle. And they're going around praying. And it comes to him he never prayed a prayer in his life.

Nobody told him he didn't have to pray. So, he said, Open is not dear God. What you did to me in the middle of the night, oh God, thank You.

But, oh God, you know what? I've got some cronies, friends of mine, my drinking buddies. He said, You get ready for Mr. Naaman. He's going to be in that field there.

And I'm going to go see him out there today. And that one will be over there, God. And that one will be over there.

And that one. And he named him, named him. I took out a pencil and paper and I started writing those names down.

I was getting the 10 most wanted list. Yeah, that's the kind of guys they were. He comes to the end of his prayer.

Nobody told him to pray. In the name of Jesus, we ask you to amen. He didn't know that language.

He never prayed. He comes to the end of his prayer. He said, I'll say goodbye to you, God.

That's about all for now. Goodbye, God. I'll come back.

I'll come back later and talk to you later. Goodbye, God. Isn't that a shame? Terrible.

Pray like that. So, I said to him, Mr. Sturkin, tonight when we come to the meeting, when we say anybody have a testimony, tell what God done, I want you to stand up and tell the crowd. Oh, I don't know if I could do that.

I said, okay, take this hymn book with you and if you get a little time this afternoon, see if you find a song in that hymn book that represents what God did to you. And when I said, anybody have a testimony, just stand up and read those words and say, this is what happened to me in the middle of the night. Sit down.

Oh, well, maybe I could do that. He took the hymn book home with him. And of all the songs in that hymn book, which one would he find? A man who never sang any songs.

Wonderful grace of Jesus reaching the most defiled. One verse, and two verses, and three verses. And by the way, when we got to the meeting that night, the place was packed.

It was packed. It wasn't packed the night before when we were giving our life story. But it was packed the next day.

Why such a crowd? Because they didn't believe it. They hadn't come to see it. The word got all over town that Mr. Sterkin was converted and they had to come to see it.

He was that kind of a drinking, alcoholic sort of a guy. And God did that marvelous thing. They came to see it.

The place was packed. And we said, anybody have a testimony? He finally gets up. And he finds that song and he starts to read.

One verse, two verses, three verses. Instead of simply saying, that's what happened to me in the middle of the night and sitting down, he turned loose on that crowd. And he's a Dutchman like those guys over there.

And when they got started, he turned on that crowd and Ralph and I thought we'd never get the meeting back again. He poured it on him. And oh, the next morning, his brother-in-law was out in the barn milking the cows.

And he's milking the cows and 57-year-old brother-in-law. And the Holy Spirit of God says to him, don't you need the same thing that happened to your brother-in-law last night? Oh, yes, God. And he's squeezing those things whatever he's squeezing.

I'm a city slick, so I don't know that business. And he's squeezing. Come on, cows, hurry up, get done.

Maybe some tears are falling in the bucket, you know, or something else. Oh, God, oh, God, it gets safe milking the cows. He said, oh, hurry up, I can hardly wait to go and tell my wife what happened to me.

And she's over the kitchen stove. And she's making good farmer's breakfast, bacon and eggs. And the Holy Spirit of God said, don't you need the same thing that happened to your brother-in-law? And cooking the bacon and eggs, she gives her heart to Jesus over the stove.

Oh, she says, I can hardly wait for my husband to come in to tell him what happened to me. What a collision when those two met. Would you have loved to have been in church that Sunday morning when those two got up and gave testimony? Oh, the Holy Spirit of God came on the scene.

I'll tell you what happened. We were supposed to close the crusade that night. We had to extend it one whole week.

And before that next week was over, before that next week was over, we had the joy of seeing 13 of Mr. Sturgeon's relatives converted. I've stopped there on that story because it goes far beyond that. That's enough on that story of the effect of that situation in that life.

Oh, men and women, that we would recognize this context that God is saying, that we find out and create the most wanted list. One man said, many of our prayers go to God's dead letter office because of lack of address. Dr. Howard Hendricks says, my feeling is where prayer focuses, power falls.

John Newton says, thou art coming to a king, large petitions with thee bring, for God's love and power are such thou canst never ask too much. William Booth, Salvation Army. God loves with a great love.

Who? The man whose heart is bursting with what? A passion for the impossible. That's the one God's looking for. Effectual praying, men and women.

Basically, we're talking about fervent praying, believing praying, specific praying, but basically I suggest to you tonight that basically effective praying relates to our having a right concept of the God to whom we're praying and then a right commitment to the God before whom we pray. That's our problem. What have we done to God? With God, all things are possible.

We don't believe it. We've brought Him down to such a low level. We've humanized Him to such a place that we need a new view of who He is, a right concept of who God is.

A kindergarten teacher told all the children to draw a picture, draw a picture, draw a picture, and she walked them through watching the pictures the children were drawing. Got it? You know? And she finds this one little child. There was a picture the child was drawing and it blew the teacher away.

What's that you're doing? She said to the child, What are you drawing? And the child said, I'm drawing God. You're drawing God. The teacher said, Well, nobody knows what God looks like.

Nobody knows what God looks like. And the child never looked up and didn't bat an eyelash. She said, They will in a minute! There's our problem, men and women.

We need to see God for who He is. And I want to give you an assignment, I'll tell you. Why don't you make your own concordance about who God is through the book of Psalms? And you start in.

And you write where it says His hand. Put hand and write the reference. And where it says His feet, put feet right there.

And put His voice. Put it there. And you just put every characteristic you find on God in the book of Psalms.

And make your own concordance on God in Psalms. And when you're done, I'll tell you, you'll have a whole different view of who our God is. And then you'll say, Oh, with that God, everything is possible.

C.T. Studd prayed, Lord, make us not nibblers, but grabbers of the impossible. Men and women, the Lord needs to deliver us from the ordinary and that we can believe God that something will happen that has no human explanation, but G-O-D, God. That's what we need to believe for.

Amen? Dear Lord, I thank You for my brothers and sisters. And I thank You for speaking to us tonight, Lord. And I thank You for the way You have worked in place after place when we get a hold of these truths, when we get a hold of who God is anew and afresh.

Oh God, I pray come back to us in all that You are. Walk amongst us. I pray feel at home amongst all of Your people.

And let us as Your people feel at home in Your presence. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord, for what You're saying here tonight.

While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, how many of my brothers and sisters say, I'll tell you something, God has spoken to me tonight. God has spoken to me tonight. I see what my praying has been all about.

And where it says, humble themselves and pray. Last night God dealt with us with a spirit of pride, but tonight we're understanding what kind of praying that God is waiting for from His people. And I need to do some asking God to forgive me for my unbelieving praying, my lack of expectancy when I pray.

That's unbelieving praying. And you say, Lou, God has spoken to me. Pray for me tonight.

Pray for me. Could I see the hands of my brothers and sisters who have heard God's voice tonight all over this meeting? God bless you, brothers and sisters, all over this meeting here tonight. Dear Lord, I thank You for my brothers and sisters that Thou has spoken to.

And let us, Lord, tonight, make Your house truly a house of prayer in a wonderful, wonderful way. Come upon us. Come amongst us.

And let this be an hour where You hear the cries of Your people in repentance first. The beginning of this repentant time. And then, Lord, to believe You for what You will do.

Thank You, Father. In Your name I pray. Amen.

I want us to close this meeting in a totally different way. I want us to separate and do like we did the other night. And let's get in groups of four and five.

And let's have prayer meetings all over this sanctuary. Maybe you can have two groups over here and maybe two groups over there. Or three groups or whatever.

And let's... You go around in your prayer group of four or five people and ask God to forgive you. Ask God to forgive you. You pray for your own heart about what you've heard here tonight.

And then, whatever the Lord leads you to pray. So, go ahead. Move chairs around and let's make God's house in this... We're fasting and praying.

Let's make God's house a place of prayer. Anywhere you get with four or five brothers.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24590.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/lou-sutera/the-nature-of-powerful-praying/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net