

# Sermon -- Prayer

by Martin Knapp

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*The sermon emphasizes the conditions necessary for effective prayer, including purity of heart, absence of anger, and unwavering faith in God.*

**Scripture:** Malachi 3:8, John 14:13, Ephesians 2:18, 1 Timothy 2:8, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Effective Prayer", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Revelation. J. H. Weber preaches on the importance of prayer, focusing on the conditions for successful praying as outlined in 1 Timothy 2:8. He emphasizes the need for believers to lift up holy hands, cleanse their hearts, pay their dues, and give generously to God without wrath or doubting. Weber highlights the significance of praying in the name of Jesus and seeking the Holy Spirit's conviction for the unsaved, rather than asking for their conversion directly.

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## Transcript

A Sermon On Prayer, Preached By Rev. J. H. Weber At The First Methodist Episcopal Church, Adrian, Mich.

If you will open your Bibles, and turn to I Tim. 2:8, you will read these words: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

There are two kinds of prayer that are represented in this book, the prayer of the child of God and the prayer of the sinner. It is the prayer of the child of God that we especially want to speak about this morning.

With everything in this life you will find a condition, and you see that the very text itself suggests a condition to successful praying. The first condition in our text then is, "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." Now, it means something to lift up holy hands. James said, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners! Purify your hearts, ye double-minded!" So, then, the first thing God wishes us to do, when we come to Him, is to get these hands of ours clean; and it means so much to lift up holy hands.

How can you lift up holy hands before God, if you go forth into this world, and men see by your actions, by your walk, by your conversation, by your contact with humanity, that these hands of yours are unclean? The world has a light to expect of you and me clean hands. Suppose they see a man just as anxious and gasping, just as penurious and as little, stooping to just as low things as the men of the world will in the tricks of trade, in the tricks of the various walks of life-if they see that you stoop to these things, and do the

very same things that they do, they like to say, "That man is no better than I am," and they have a right to judge thus.

And when you say lifting up holy hands, it means a great deal. It means, my brother, that if you make a church subscription that you are to pay that bill, as much as you would pay your grocer or clothier, or the dry goods man. I have known Christian people before now who were in the church, and who pretended to lift up holy hands; one, for instance, giving a church subscription to build a new church; they were very enthusiastic, and they put down their names for thus and so. It was put in the hands of the committee, and that committee was given power to act and do as they thought best. They changed the plan; perhaps they changed something that was not in the original plan, and thought it would be best; and before now, do you know, I have known those who were Christians, those who called themselves, at least, Christians, who would go back on their subscription and say "I won't pay it."

Now, God cannot bless anything of that kind at all. Then again, I have known others who have gone into the church, and they have subscribed so much for the preacher's salary. The stewards have gone out and made the assessment, and when the time came to pay, he would not pay it. Why? The preacher began to preach real plain, and it began to cut right and left; he began to hew to the mark; you were guilty and you said he preached that sermon especially for you; and you went home like spoiled babies and went to finding fault, saying this thing and that thing and that other thing; and when the time came for you to pay your church subscription for the preacher's salary, instead of paying the ten dollars you subscribed, you paid, perhaps, four or five. And then you stayed away from church.

And then you call yourself a Christian. Do you expect God can prosper a man who will do that? No, sir. You cannot lift up holy hands and be a successful Christian, my brother and sister, unless you do as James said, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners!" Then again, how can a man be a successful Christian who does not give God one-tenth? The Bible word is one-tenth, and I dare say there are not twenty people in the house that give one-tenth to God. He says, "Ye have robbed me of tithes and offerings," and it is so.

Do you know if the church of God today were living up to her high privileges in Christ Jesus, and were giving like the old Jew did—and you all know that the Jew of old gave one-tenth; the sacrifices were many and the approbation of God was sent; his smiles were on every hand, and Israel prospered, and the land brought forth, and everything they laid their hands to was successful, and they prospered and went on and Israel stood before the nations as no other nation in the world. Now, then, my brother, if you do not give one-tenth to God, you are a robber.

"Ye have robbed me." And, oh, how many Christian people, who call themselves Christians, who try to palm themselves off on God as Christians, do not give God one-tenth! Now, I believe that if a man would give God one-tenth, that He will do just as He says He will do here. For instance, He says, "Honor the Lord with the firstfruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." So it is to honor God. He says, "Honor Me and I will honor you."

But if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly; if you sow abundantly, you will reap abundantly; so God says. And if you will just take and read Deut. 28, you will find that my Father says, if you will keep His commandments, and His commandments are, one-tenth of all thine increase, then He says, "Blessed shall thou be in the city, and blessed shall thou be in the field; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy cattle, and the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep."

Just to think of it. If you will take that and honor God. You must not expect God to prosper you if you do not do as He says you are to do. You remember in the first Psalm -- let me just read it to you; wonderful, is it not? "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Think of it.

Now, then, don't you know, my brother and sister, that if you don't honor God, as sure as God is in heaven He will not honor you. I heard of a man, one time, who said, "I want to honor God, but I cannot give on tenth, because I am in debt." That is just the way to get out of debt. What would you think if you should go to your grocer yonder, saying to him, "Well, I cannot pay you because I am in debt"? You owe Jesus one-tenth, just as you owe the grocer yonder. One-tenth belongs to God. It came from God; everything is His; the cattle on a thousand hills. Possessing all things, He will grant all things abundantly, or else He will take them away from you. And I believe the reason so many of you people are poor is because you do not honor God with the first fruits of all your increase. I am sure of it, because God says so.

Well, "lifting up holy hands." A great many people, if they had it to spare, would give it to God, but they will not make any sacrifices at all. Look at that widow yonder in the temple. She only has a little, and she drops it in yonder, and Jesus said, "She hath cast more in than they all." Why? She is there in her poverty, she is there in want, but she honors God. And I will venture to say that God just opened the river of prosperity before that woman, and that incident has come down, and will go down, as long as time shall last in this world, and the hundreds, perhaps the thousands, that the rich men dropped in were never noticed at all. See, I have a friend up in Hillsdale who only earns five dollars a week, and he has a wife; but he says, "Mr. Weber, I must honor God with one-tenth," and every week he goes down in his pocket, and takes out fifty cents and gives it to God. He says, ' Mr. Weber, my wife complains sometimes, and she says, 'Now, husband, we ought not to do it;' but, Bro. Weber," he said, "I am going to be a whole Christian; I have been sanctified; I have given my wife and myself, my home and my tools and my property, and everything I have, to God, and one-tenth belongs to Him." And do you know, that man is prospering, and I tell you it will not be long until you see that man getting rich. I have some friends down in the country below Bronson, and after they heard this sermon, they said, "Now, Bro. Weber, we have been Christians, but we have not prospered as we might have prospered had we honored God. Now we are going to honor God with the first fruits of all our increase; we are going to give God one-tenth." And he told me he never had such a successful year in all his life, and never made so much money; and, do you know, that that man and every one of his children and his wife, and everything that is about him, is consecrated to God.

Now, if I were a farmer -- I tell you I would be a city fool in the country -- but I will tell you how I would farm. I would get down and say, "My Father, in the name of Jesus, let the Holy Ghost show me what I shall plant in this field." I would find out; and if the Lord told me to put onions in that field, as much as I hate onions, I would put onions in that field; I would fill it up with onions. First, I would take and plow it, and then harrow it. Then I would go into the middle or might go into the corners of the field--and I would get down and say, "Father, in the name of Jesus, sanctify this seed I am going to put into this ground." Then I would put it in. And then, again, after I had the seed in, I would go into the field and I would pray and ask God to water it with the rains of heaven and bless it with the sunshine of His love, and prosper the fruit that I had put in; and then every day, around my family altar, I would pray for my cattle, I would pray for my crops, I would pray for my stock, and I would pray for my family; and I believe that when the time came, that I would have an abundant crop.

And then I would not be as mean as the man I read of one time. He had a great cranberry marsh, and it ran out; there were just a few cranberries the year before, and he said, "I guess I will give that cranberry marsh

to God the coming year." All right. Well, the coming year, there was never known such a crop of cranberries as was found on that marsh. He went down and looked at it, and he said, "I never saw such a crop in my life." He said, "It is too much to give to God; I will not give it to Him." He was like that old Negro and his boy, who had been out on an island where they had found a great treasure, and they were coming home in a boat, and while they were in the boat a storm began to rage, and the waves began to dash and splash in the boat, and the old Negro got down in the boat, and said, "Lord, if you will take me over to the other side, I will give you half I have got." Well, the storm kept on; in fact, it increased all the time, and the poor fellow thought he was going down every moment, and he got down again, and he said, "Lord, if you will take me over, I will give you all I have got." He was almost like another Negro that I read about at another time. He wanted to get very humble, and he thought the way to get humble was to go alongside a great big stone wall; and he prayed and said, "Lord, throw down this wall on this black man; throw it on me and kill me and crush the life out of me." There was a man there who heard him pray, so he just took a piece of a brickbat and threw it at him, and it hit him, and he said, "Lord, can't you take a joke?" This was about the way with this other colored man who was in the boat. Then his boy said, "Papa, I would not do that;" and the old man says, "Keep still; when we get over there we won't give him nothing." This is about the way with a great many people. "O Lord, if you will just bless me, if you just prosper me, I will give you one-tenth;" but about the time that the one-tenth is to be given, it is, "ought is ought, two is two, and there is nothing coming to you." All goes down. Can you expect to be successful that way? Can you? No, sir. God does not prosper men that do that way. You cannot lift up holy hands. You must lift up holy hands if you are going to have every prayer you put up answered.

Suppose I, as a farmer, put in a crop of corn. Well, I pray over it, just as I said before. If, for instance, I fed that corn yonder to the hogs. Supposing I have one hundred hogs and the time comes for me to market them. I pick out, not ten of the runts, I pick out ten of the fattest and the very best, and then I would take the money to God and say, "Lord, here it is;" and I would not use a cent of it. I would be afraid that I would be a thief. Why, if you steal from God, it is just the same as stealing from men; and if you do not give to God one-tenth, you are a thief. So the Lord says here, and I believe just what God says.

"I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." Lord, it belongs to you; I will give it to you. Why, I heard of a man out East, who every year used to give one hundred dollars to the missionary cause, and he was a prosperous man. But the year came around and he was taken sick. He had been such a good man in the mill, and he did so much for the mill, his employers concluded they would pay him all the same while he was sick. They kept on paying him a long time, but he continued sick, so they said, 'Well, we will continue him on half-pay," so they gave him half-pay. And every year the steward came around for one hundred dollars for God, and they got it. He had saved quite a little money, and he used up that. Then the mill men said, "Well, we cannot afford to pay a man who does not work for us," so they stopped altogether; and the little money he had was about used up. And they came around again, and he had two or three hundred dollars in the bank, and he was still sick, not knowing where to get the next dollar. The stewards came around, and he put down one hundred dollars. The people said, "It is wrong." The pastor came to him and re-monstrated and said, "You ought not to give it." But he says, "God says for me to give it." Why, they said, "You will starve." "No," he said, "My Father will prosper me; He will give to me. I am His child and He has promised to take care of me." After he had paid the one hundred dollars, in a few days after, a great, long envelope came from some attorney. One of his rich relatives had died and left him an immense fortune. So God provided for him.

I tell you, my brother and sister, you honor God. Why, if God told me to take every dollar I had in my pocket, everything I have, I believe I would do, and I would give it to Him, and I know that my Father would take care of me; He says He will.

Now, then, first condition: Lifting up holy hands. Second condition: Without wrath. Now, you may be able to give one-tenth; perhaps you do give one-tenth and you have prospered; but oh, my brother, how about the wrath? Are you jealous of that sister? Are you jealous of that brother? Have you wrath in your heart against that sister, because she does not live as you think she ought to live? Because she has been put at the head of the missionary society, and you have not? Because that man was made trustee, and you were thrown out?

Because that one was made a class leader, and the class taken from you? Ah, my brother, we are to have no wrath. Have you wrath in your heart against that business man yonder, who is in the same business you are in? Do you pass him by and not notice him? Have you wrath in your heart at that sister yonder? Have you a great high fence built between you and her? Do you say to your little children, "Don't you speak to that neighbor's children there!" Do you talk about your neighbor so?

If that is in your heart, God says, it is of the flesh. And you know as well as I do, as I quoted it to you in Galatians, that God Almighty has said, "They that do these things shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Now, I have seen Christian people, that is, professed Christian people, before now, they have had all the characteristics, it would seem, of thorough Christians, but they had that contemptible thing in their hearts, wrath. "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath."

There is that sister who talked about you. She tried to ruin your character; she tried, as it were, to keep you out of your position. She lied about you. Now, are you to have wrath in your heart against her? No, no, no! Why, do you know the meanest man that lives in this world, the man who has done the most against me, tried to tear down my character, tried to tear down my reputation, tried to tear down, as it were, the work of God that I am trying to build up, do you know I could fall at the feet of the worst enemy I have and, if it would save his soul, I believe I could lick up the spittle at his feet; for I pray for my enemies, and try to do good to them that spitefully assail me.

And that is one reason that when they try to get me into a paper controversy I say "No, I will leave it with God." God says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Then, again, he says, "The triumphing of the wicked is short." And sometimes I have seen men spread themselves, it would seem as though they were about to cast me overboard and kill me, and I have just put my reputation, I have just put my character, I have just put everything I had into God's hands, and I have said, "Sink or swim, survive or perish, Lord Jesus, I am Thine."

And that is one reason that you see that the work of God goes right on. I tell them I am the moon. You remember the story I told you about the moon and the dog. The dog used to bark at the moon, but the moon did not mind it at all; the little dog died and the moon went right on. I am the moon, bless the Lord. Going right on, working for the glory of God.

First condition: Lifting up holy hands. Second condition: Without wrath. Third condition: And doubting.

But that is one of the most difficult, one of the hardest points that it is possible for people to get hold of. I have known men to give one-tenth; I have known them to profess the blessing of entire sanctification. Yesterday, there was a minister up to see me. He does not belong to our church, he belongs to another

church; we were talking, and he said, "Brother Weber, if you only touched our lines." I said, "Well, you cannot tell me a sin you denounce that I do not. You tell me one I do not denounce, and if I do not denounce it, my name is not Weber." Now, we have been talking about experience, etc., but let us take the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians and read it over, and in the seventh verse it says, "Beware of all things, believe all things." Now, I said to this minister, "You were down at Quincy holding meetings for about six weeks; you say that you are entirely sanctified of God; that you believe God. Now, if that had been so, you would have turned that town upside down, and they did not have a single conversion scarcely; so you do not believe all things, don't you see?"

So my brother and sister, God says that he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. Doubting? Oh, yes, I get down like that old woman and I say, 'Lord remove that mountain,' and I get up the next day in the morning and look for it, and the mountain is there. It is just as I expected. Don't believe it, don't believe it! Better believe, my brother and sister, that this roof will cave in; better believe, my brother and sister, that your very life shall be taken, than disbelieve God. For my Father has said that "Whatsoever ye ask in My name, I will give you." Now, we have just found out "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting." Now, my hands are clean; I give God one-tenth; I do not owe these store-keepers; I pay my honest debts; I have no wrath in my heart; I do not doubt God. Now, I am just in a condition to pray. Before I was not in a condition to pray. Now, then, I will get down to pray; so I will say, just as Jesus said, "Father!" Why? Jesus says, "My Father is greater than I." Now, we will see how we have to pray.

Now I want you to take and turn in your Bibles and notice very carefully the fourteenth chapter of John and the sixth verse, and the last clause, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Now again, I want you to turn over to Romans, five, two, "By whom also we have access." Now, I want you to notice that word "access" especially. "Access!" Now, turn over to Ephesians, two, eighteen, "For through Him, we both have access, by one Spirit unto the Father." Notice the word "access" again, please. Ephesians, three, twelve, "In whom we have boldness and access." Now then again, I want you to turn back to the sixteenth chapter of John and the twenty-third verse. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name." The twenty-fourth verse, "Hitherto, you have asked nothing in My name." Why? Why, Jesus Christ was not an intercessor yet; He was not a mediator between God and man yet. But at the time He became intercessor, the day when He became mediator; in the twenty-sixth verse he says, "At that day ye shall ask the Father in My name." Now, let me see. Through Him we have access; by whom we have boldness and access. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

If I want to get in the presence of God at the very opening of my prayer, what shall I do? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in My name, He will give it you." "Hitherto, ye have asked nothing in My name; at that day ye shall ask in My name." Now, how will I pray? At the very opening of my prayer, "Father, in the name of Jesus. Now I am right in the presence of God. I go on and pray and pray, don't you see, Bro. Morgan. I am not near God yet. Most all people will end up their prayer and say, "For Jesus' sake." You cannot find that in a prayer in the Bible; I defy you to do it. A young man said to me, "Mr. Weber, why not say, 'For Jesus' sake.'" Because the Bible does not say so in a single prayer. It says, in the name of Jesus. Now, it is going to be hard for you, older Christians, to unlearn what you have learned; you will go on praying just like you have prayed before; but if you will take this simple way that God lays down here, and every time you pray, say "Father, in the name of Jesus." Now I am right in the presence of God. "Now, what do you want, my child?" Ask not, as some ministers say to ask, largely; that is not in the Bible at all; but ask that your joy may be full." Now, let me see. Let us turn over to the

fourteenth chapter of John, the twenty-sixth verse. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name." Now, then, I have a son who is unconverted, or a husband unconverted, or a friend unconverted. I get down and say, "Father, in the name of Jesus, convert my husband." No, sir. You will not dare to pray such a prayer as that; you cannot find that in a single prayer in the Bible. Why, I have heard people get down and say, "Oh, God, convert everybody in this town." If I believed that God could convert everybody in this town, Bro. Morgan, and would not do it, I would rather be a mean, little, contemptible infidel. Jesus said, "I pray not for the world," and I do not propose to do it. But I will give you a little prayer that is infallible. But you say to me, "Mr. Weber, are not all things possible to God?" No, they are not. God cannot make the parallel lines on this book meet; I defy Him to do it. God cannot create a yearling in a minute; He might create an animal a thousand times larger, but in order to create a yearling, how long must it live? A year, must it not? If He could not create a yearling in a minute, can God create a dry watermelon? It is impossible. Now, there are things which are impossible with God, and it is just as much impossible for God to convert you, sinner, unless you are willing, as it is for God to create a yearling in a minute.

But now, I am going to give you a little prayer that is infallible. But, Jesus says, the Comforter—that is the Holy Ghost,—whom the Father will send in My name. Over here in the sixteenth chapter of John, beginning at the seventh verse, we read, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you, and when He is come." -- Who? The Holy Ghost "He will reprove or convict the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment." Now, I have a husband, I have a son, I have a friend; how will I pray? "Father, in the name of Jesus, send the Holy Ghost to convict him or her of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." And that prayer is infallible. I tell you, all the devils in hell cannot thwart that prayer. The Holy Ghost can convict them whether they will be convicted or not, but the God of the Bible cannot convert them, if they do not want to be converted. Right here, sinner, let me say, if you are damned, and you go to hell, with all the weeping devils and howling fiends in hell, it will be because you want to go. So, therefore, I never pray and ask God to convert a single man or woman, unless they stand up and come to this altar, or say to me privately, "Bro. Weber, I want to be converted, I want to be saved." Then I can bring a blessing down, by prayer, into their soul.

Now, brother and sister, are you going to pray like you used to pray? If you do, you will just be that same little bit of an insignificant Christian that you have always been. But if you will say, "I will pray as the Bible teaches me; I will lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting, and I will begin at the opening of my prayer in the name of Jesus," every man and woman I have ever seen, who kept that up, and has practiced that, I have always seen them to be purified, and to be such Christians as they never were before. Now, I will leave it with you. What will you do? My Father, in the name of Jesus, let the Holy Ghost rivet it on our hearts. Sanctify it, Father, to Thy glory. Father, we do praise Thee, that Thy Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus, is coming to the people, to point out, to tell them, to show them the way to our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Blessed Father, just as we are, help these dear, precious fathers and mothers, to go home and pray as the Bible teaches them. Amen.

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