

# Pressing in to Touch God

by Michael Durham

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of approaching Christ with great desire and intensity in prayer, and that just drawing near to God is not enough to experience God's power and love in our lives.*

**Duration:** 52:52

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18, Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, Mark 5:25-34, John 15:5, Romans 8:28

**Topics:** "Experiencing God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:25-34. The sermon explores the theme of pressing in to touch God and emphasizes the power and transformation that comes from encountering Him. The preacher highlights the importance of faith and persistence in seeking God, drawing examples from the biblical text. The sermon also draws parallels between the woman's plight and the state of a church that has lost its vitality, emphasizing the need for spiritual renewal.

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## Transcript

The text we pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from is the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 5. Mark's Gospel, Chapter 5, verses 25-34. I want to speak on the theme, Who Touched Me? Pressing in to touch God. Who Touched Me? Mark Chapter 5, we'll begin reading with verse 25, And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch bloody's clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body, that she was healed of that plague.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude throng in thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.

Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. The touch of God. Who here doesn't want the touch of God? We all covet the touch of the pierced hand.

Each of us pray that his hand touches our ministries, our lives, our children, our families, our churches. We bring our heartache and our desperations to the Lord, and as Jairus of old said, My daughter is even now dead, but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. Lay thy hand upon her.

Oh Lord, lay thy hand upon my son's dead spirit, and he shall live. Lay thy hand upon our lukewarm church, and it shall live. Lord, lay thy hand upon my dull heart, and it shall live.

We want God's touch. We need God's touch. We long for it.

But in our text, the Lord does not touch the needy soul. Rather, the needy touched him. A reversal of what is normal, perhaps a reversal in our way of thinking.

We pray for God's touch when perhaps we ought to draw near to God to touch him. Does our view of God's sovereignty make us less intentional about the touch of God? Think about it. Do we reason he will extend his hand in power when he chooses? Perhaps we unconsciously, notice my words, it's strategic, perhaps unconsciously, it's not on the front of our mind.

We're not even cognizant that we think this way, but perhaps unconsciously we think there's no need to bother until he is ready. Yes, I believe in God's sovereign timing, but that should not minimize my hunger and thirst for the blessing of his nearness. Whatever happened to the understanding of God's sovereignty that says God can bestow the blessing anytime, even now.

And to set to seek the Lord until he answers. Have we a perverted view of God's providence that does not make allowance for the scriptures that say things like this, and ye shall seek me when you and find me when you search for me with all your heart. So the question is, how do we draw near to Christ? It's amazing how this day has really been focused on this very thing, has it not? There is a proof of God's sovereignty and his providence.

But as we focus this afternoon on this text, my question to you is, how do we draw near to Christ? How do we enter the inner sanctuary, the sanctum sanctorum, the holy of holies? How do you do that? But before we answer that question, let me first begin by submitting for your consideration that the miracles of our Lord Jesus that are recorded in the scripture are strategic. Our Lord performed thousands upon thousands of miracles. Even as John said, if all that Jesus did was recorded, not all the books in the world could contain them.

So my question is, of all the miraculous works of the Lord, why do we have the few that are recorded? Why these? And I think the answer is appropriately in what John calls the miracles of Jesus. He calls them signs and wonders. The miracles that we have recorded, like this one, are strategic in that they best illustrate Christ and his redemptive mission.

They are signs directing us to who he is and therefore who we are and what he wants to do in his redemptive plan. They are signs. And in the case of this miracle, we see not only the plight of sinful mankind, but we also see the plight of a church that has lost its vitality.

Let me direct your attention to this dear lady. This lady's plight is like a church's plight that has lost its vitality. Mark chapter five, verse 25 says that one day, at one time, she had experienced vitality.

A certain woman which had an issue of blood, 12 years, she had not always been in this weakened state. There was a day in her memory, she remembers getting up and feeling good, having plenty of energy, not

anemic, but with the loss of blood that she suffers now. She remembers a time when her health was hers and she thought little about it.

Now she appreciates what she had, but there was a time she never thought about it. She has lost her vitality. There are many churches, maybe some of you represent such a church that's lost its once held vitality.

Many of our churches in this area, I don't know if you're aware of this, came out of the second great awakening and many of the revivals that followed that second great awakening. I know Union Baptist Church is over 200 years old and perhaps there are others. Or your church was planted as a result of the afterglow of some of those great moves of God.

They were vibrant, they were evangelistic, they were in themselves new church plants, planting new churches because God was saving, God was working. Where are they today in comparison? A church that's lost its vitality, it's forgotten its source, it has wandered from the very paths that it was established in. But not only had she lost her vitality, she had turned to human resources for vitality.

Look at verse 26. It had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. She turned to human resources.

She turned to that which she thought might be helpful and remedy her condition, but all failed. And not only did they could not heal her, but they exhausted all of her financial resources. She was the worst for all of their care, rather than helped.

And today it is not uncommon, it's the norm for pastors and churches and ministries to turn to human resources to restore spiritual vitality. But the flesh cannot produce that which is spiritual. You sow to the flesh, you will always reap corruption.

You reap the flesh. Here we have churches turning to Manhattan Fifth Avenue marketers, learning to market the church strategically, like a business and offer its wares and goods, thinking that will draw the men. Or we turn to celebrity preachers.

If we can get that man, that man, he can come and maybe he can revive us and maybe he can stimulate us. Maybe we'll have him for a weekend seminar and it'll teach our people how to grow this church or denominational program. Or the one that seems to be the craze today, music.

If we just get the right music, if we just get the right kind of praise team and worship leader, then the young people will come. We'll give them the contemporary stuff. I'm not against contemporary biblical scriptural worship music, but it isn't the answer.

It's like this dear woman turning to the physicians, having squandered all of her resources and no better. But perhaps the one that you might be surprised that I would put in my list of human resources is correct doctrine. How many times do we think we just get the doctrine right? We can just teach people the truth.

That'll solve the problem. I remember thinking that very thing, too. I remember when I went to Oak Grove, I thought if I can just give them the gospel and I preach it like they probably have not heard it, a sound gospel, biblical gospel, that'll make the difference.

I had a very, after 23 years, I had a very theologically astute congregation. But I learned something. Correct doctrine won't even bring back vitality.

I know that may shock you. You may want to argue with me and you may want to put up a defense. But my dear friends, I know it's true.

Scripture and a understanding of it is not all that's necessary. It's necessary, but not all. This dear woman, you can teach your people correct doctrine and you must, you must be sound.

Timothy, take heed to yourself and to your doctrine. This is not a message contrary to good doctrine. No, no.

Sound doctrine is a necessity, but it's not all that's necessary to restore vitality. There are a lot of biblically correct churches these days. There's been a resurgence in the gospel.

My, I remember 20 years ago preaching on the gospel and there wasn't any books of modern books that is on the gospel today. We have plenty of resources, but are our churches any better? Is there any spiritual vitality? Are people coming to the light of Jesus Christ? Is spiritual maturity developing? Well, these are questions we need to ask ourselves and be faced with the answers. And so I want to direct your attention to the text and tell you and share with you that the power is not just in drawing near to Jesus.

And that might surprise you, especially coming from me. The power is not in just drawing near to Jesus. Look at verse 30 and 31.

And Jesus, immediately knowing himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned about in the press and said, who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude throng in thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? What is the question that one of the other gospel writers tells us it was Peter who vocalized it. What was the touching? What was the question? Why are you asking who touched me? Indicative that everybody there, all those who were around him, were crowding him. It was a throng, it was a multitude, and they were all pressing to get near Jesus.

So the question is a rhetorical one. What do you mean who touched me? Everybody's touching you. But they didn't receive the power that the one woman did.

It's just not drawing near to Jesus. Many draw near to God by religion itself. People come, have a sudden experience in their life where they say, you know, we need to go to church.

This usually happens when people, young couples start having their first children. They decide, you know, we need to rear our children in church. And so they begin to look for a church.

They begin to try to draw near. They come closer to the things of God. But drawing near is not sufficient.

Nor is it sufficient to just draw near to God in prayer. Many a good Christian draws near by prayer but leaves the prayer closet unchanged. Preacher, let's be real.

You pray. You try to establish spiritual disciplines. And you pray, you pray regularly.

Tell me about your prayer life. What's it like? Is the power of God granted in that time alone with him? Do you experience his intimacy? Is there something happened that quickens you, brings vitality and spiritual vim and vigor? Or do you leave the closet of prayer the same as you entered it? Just drawing near to God



spiritual experiences, spiritual experiences. The Mormons have their heart strangely warmed, experience others have their their mystique.

Offering spirituality, offering mystical experiences, satan can produce any feeling you want. It's not just feeling God presence. Often we experience the presence of God in our worship services, But let me ask you, how many of your people leave changed by those experiences? Or do we just come back to do it all over again next week? Honestly, our worship experiences often leave us unchanged.

Not even feeling a wonderful experience in worship is the answer. I mean, I'm thankful for worship experiences that do touch the heart and give some warmth, but why don't they last? Why is it a church can advertise having a revival and they all are excited for a few days, maybe for a few weeks, but the sensationalism subsides and the emotions deflate and they're right back to the same church, same problem, same people, same aggravations, the same hardness and dullness of heart. Just feeling good, feeling God's presence is not enough.

Not going into your prayer closet just to feel good is the answer. There's only one way to touch God and receive power. And this woman is a lesson of that.

It's a lesson in prayer, a right way to pray, a way which touches God. This woman is a lesson of that. Of all the people that touched him, only she received something.

Only she received power. Jesus said, ask and it shall be given you. Ask and it shall be given you.

Now we know that that's not a blank and open promise to answer every request, even those outside of God's will. That's not what Jesus meant. We know that.

But it is a general principle of the kingdom. Now listen closely. God's giving is inseparably linked with our asking.

God's giving is inseparably linked with our asking. It's ours to ask. It is God's to give.

That's the kingdom's rule. That's the principle upon which he has destined this kingdom to operate. John Wesley said it this way.

God does nothing but an answer to prayer. I don't know if that's always the case, but I would say it is the rule. And only exceptions do one thing.

Prove the rule. This is the way the kingdom is operated. She came and she came and she approached the Lord Jesus.

And I think she's an example of how we should as we draw near to him in prayer. Number one, she approached Christ with great desire. She was so desirous to be well.

She spent all her money. She exhausted her finances. She wanted to be well.

Now what does this got to do with prayer? I think it has a great deal to do with prayer. Mark 11, 24, Jesus says, therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when you pray, believe that you receive them and ye shall have. Now, I know if you're not following along in the new, the King James, do not follow

along in the authorized version.

It doesn't read that way. But what you need to know is that that word ask or pray, depending on what your translation is. Is a word that means to ask with craving, to pray with great desire.

It's just not asking. It's just not praying. It's not saying your prayers.

It's asking with an intense desire, a craving, an earnestness, a kind of craving that says, I will not be denied. I will not be passed over. I need thee, O Lord, and I will not turn you loose until you bless me.

It's a desire. And ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search with me your whole heart. She approached with a great desire.

Now I bring this up because I do believe it is instrumental in touching God and receiving power. I think this is where 80% of our problem is. We lack intensity of desire about the things we pray.

I'm confessing to you today that I found myself this last year and a half repenting over a great deal of my ministry. Repenting. Dear friend of mine told me many years ago.

Conrad Murrell went to be with the Lord earlier this year. But that passage in 1st Corinthians 3. When Paul warns those builders how they build on the foundation. To make sure they build with the appropriate materials, gold, silver, precious jewels, not wood, hay, stubble, because the day will reveal it.

He said, I don't think it's talking about the judgment in heaven. I think he means the day means now. With time, God will expose.

I'm confessing that a lot of my ministry these last few years. While others may thought it was successful, I see a lot of wood. I've seen a lot of hay.

I've seen a lot of stubble. I remember praying for the things you now pray for as pastors. And with some desire, but not with the intensity.

But I could not do anything else but pray until God heard me. That's the kind of desire I think Jesus means. I know there's a lot of things we have to do as pastors and preachers.

I know that there's meetings and committees and visitation and preparation for sermons. And all the fellowships and things that we create for ourselves to do. But some of that can be left alone.

They're good, but they're not best. What's best? To be alone with God until God, God's powers released. And a man will only do that when he hungers for it.

As the deer pants after the waterbrook, so my soul, not my circumstances, my soul pants for thee. When shall I come before my God? I make my bed a bed of tears. He said, where are you God? Where are you? He can't sleep at night.

Why? Because the desire is too intense. It chases slumber and sleep away. He can't eat.

Why? Because he has no appetite. The desire for God is stronger than the desire for food. That's the kind of word I think Jesus means here.

What thinks over you desire when you pray. We want to see people saved, don't we? I don't mean to condemn. I am just asking God to expose us and share with you what I've learned.

Preaching from my own experience as it cooperates with scripture. I pray for lost souls too. But I was always comfortable in my bed at night.

Did I really desire to see people converted? I talked about it a lot. I preached about it a lot. Tried to preach to my folks and help them to catch the same fervor.

But did I really desire it? Because if I did, would I not sing more? And some of you are thinking right now. Well, this just doesn't fit my understanding of God's providence and sovereignty. I know it probably doesn't.

But can you find fault with the text? Aren't we to be scripture driven? Isn't the text to drive our theology? Or should we let systems drive our understanding of scriptures? God forbid. And you shall seek me and find me when you shall search for me with all your heart. When desire is there, God's heart is stirred.

But only did she desire approaching with great desire. She approached Christ with desperation. You knew I would get that in there.

Some of you know me. And look at the situation. It's there.

It's not me inserting my own conviction. No, there was no one else to help. She had exhausted all of her resources.

She had tried the physicians. She had done all the home remedies and wives tales that people had suggested to her. Nothing worked.

And so Christ was her only resource and hope. Desperation. It is the fuel of faith.

It's the fuel of faith. Remember the important widow of Luke 18. What do you see there? Desperation once again as well with desire.

Here's a woman who will not let the unjust judge have rest. She sues him daily. She pounds him.

She seeks his justice. And the dear man said, though I regard not God nor man, this woman wearies me. I'll grant her her request.

She got justice. Why did Jesus tell that parable? He is saying to you, no, it's not the number of times you pray. It's the times you pray with desperation.

Come on, brother. That's what Jesus wants you to see. Do you pray with desperation? Well, how can you if you don't have great desire? The two go together.

Prayer is fueled by this desire and this desperation. The friend at midnight. There's another story in Luke 11.

A friend, a guest comes at midnight from a long journey. Only if you understand the culture do you know that it is with great dishonor when a guest arrives and you do not offer them something to eat. And there are cultures just like that still yet today.

Believe you me, I know I've been in some of them where we made four visits within three hours in the dinner hour and I ate four dinners that night. It's just the custom. That's how they show their hospitality.

It's midnight. He has nothing. It's an unexpected guest.

But boy, his love for his guest, he is willing to arouse his neighbor who is also a friend and he arouses that friend thinking that that friend will hear my request and granted. There's no evidence in the text that there was a doubt in his mind. But he doesn't get what he thought at first.

And so what does he do? He continues to knock. He continues to plead. Desperation fuels the prayer.

I've got to have bread. I've got to offer my guest something to eat. And finally, the man arises, though in bed with his children, he gives.

The Syrophenician woman, she wouldn't take no for an answer. Why? Because she was desperate. Her daughter was back home, demon possessed.

I don't know if you've ever seen a demon possessed person, but if you have, you'll get desperate. Jesus even called her a dog. You know what she did? She started barking.

I'll do anything to get my miracle, to get the touch of God. Yes, Lord. But even the little dogs get the crumbs from the children's table.

She approached with desperation. How desperate are we to see a move of God in our churches? Are we so desperate that we're willing to spend the night in prayer? And don't misunderstand. I'm not saying you spend tonight all night in prayer.

God will then give you what you're asking. It's not a formula. It's not a methodology.

I'm talking about attitudes of the heart. Are you desperate enough to get along with God and not come out to God? Gives you power. All the things that's been brought up today.

I think this is the answer. To get alone with God until God grants power. But next, she approached Christ in faith, desire, desperation, and faith.

But remember, faith is fueled by desperation. Look at verse 27 and 28. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind and touched his garment.

For she said, if I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. When she had heard of Jesus, she'd heard, she heard. How shall they believe unless they hear? She heard and faith came to her by hearing the truth of Christ.

Faith is always linked to the word of God. That's why we teach sound doctrine. It's not to make them intellectually theologians.

It's to link them to God by faith. That's the purpose of doctrine. That you might know your God and know that he is capable and able.

She heard, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. She heard because the spirit of God did something. And we'll talk about that in just a moment.

But she heard in the gust of God blew. The gust, the wind of the spirit blew upon those testimonies. She heard and faith was quickened and granted to her, given to her by what she heard.

Faith is the means of receiving, my dear friends. This is the statement of our Lord. This is not a cute theological theatric that I'm trying to give you.

No, this is the word of God. Listen, Matthew 21, 22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive.

That's our Lord's promise. You shall receive. There's no question about it.

Now, I know the qualifications and they're right that we state them. It has to be according to the will of God. No, but what's that's not a big deal.

Why would I be asking for something that's not God's will? Why would you be asking for something that's not God's will? And knowingly ask it. No, you wouldn't do that. Knowingly ask Andre the will of God.

And if you would, we've got some more serious problems. God is trying to tell you something here. I believe this is my only reason for being here today to tell you, regardless of what you think about the messenger.

The message is still eternal and unchanging. He loves to answer your prayers. If you'll simply believe, because that's the only way he will move.

For without faith, it's impossible to please him. But they were versus the true too. With faith, God is always pleased.

And he responds. You cannot have faith and not have received. That's another way of saying what Jesus said.

In fact, you will always receive before you actually possess. What do I mean by that? Well, I mean this. You will always possess it in your heart long before you ever get in possess in your hand.

Faith is that attitude of assurance that says, yes, now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen. What is this pulpit made of? It's made of wood. That's its essence.

It's a substance. If faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence, the proof, the argumentation of things not seen, what does it mean? It means faith is the very substance of the thing you've longed for. It's the very proof of the thing that you may not have in your hand right now, but you've got it in your soul.

And Jesus said that's the only way you can pray and receive. That's the only kind of faith praying that honors him. But here's our problem.

We have such a dim and small view of God that it is extraordinarily difficult to believe before we've actually possessed. I like to ask people this question. When do you believe God has answered your prayer? When he answers.

And I like to respond and say, well, the devil can do that. Anybody can believe it when it's already there. But God says you're to believe that you have received and you will receive.

And why is it that difficult for us? Well, I think it's been said, and I think it's right. We must not conceive of prayers overcoming God's reluctance, but as laying hold of his highest willingness. Let me say that again.

We must not conceive of prayer as overcoming God's reluctance, but as laying hold of his highest willingness. For so many years, prayer, my view of prayer, and I'm not faulting anybody for it but myself, is that God had a grip on what I wanted. And prayer loosened the grip and opened the hand that I might receive it.

Now, I don't know that I ever read that anywhere. I don't know that I would have even said that. In fact, I think I would be safe in saying, not exaggerating, I would never have said something like that.

But I'm telling you, that's where my heart was. That was what really I didn't believe until God began to show me that he is more desirous to answer my prayers than I am desirous that he would answer them. He wants to bless me.

He wants to be that good father who gives good things to his children. Listen to John 14, 13. John 14, 13.

And whatsoever, this is our Lord, ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the father may be glorified in the son. Do you realize that this is the first of four occasions in that lengthy discourse in John? Last part of 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. This is the first of four occasions Jesus promised answered prayer in one message.

He begged four occasions where he promised answered prayer. And in those four occasions, he states it five times, five times that he and the father will answer our request. Let me give them to you.

It's in the next verse. Verse 14 is the next one. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.

John 15, 7. If he abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will. And it will be done unto you in your ESV. It says, and he shall ask what you wish.

Forgive that desire. Wish John 15, 16. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever.

Here's your fruitfulness. Now listen closely. This is huge.

Here's fruitfulness defined by Michael Durham, by Jesus Christ, our Lord, our captain, and that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he may give it to you. I have to be reminded of this because prior to this meeting, I was in prayer asking God to make this time with you fruitful. And if I'm not careful, I'll slip back into the old way of thinking, thinking that the word preached in power produces the fruit.

No, Jesus says the fruit is God answering your prayer that when you preach, the word will have power. It's not in our cleverly detailed outlines. In other words, it's not in your crafted manuscripts.

If you get the illustration just right, if you say it just this way, if you say it in a winsome manner there, that's going to grab the attention of that dear soul. No, no, no. Jesus said fruitfulness is in the closet of prayer.

In the closet of prayer is where the battle is raged and won. And I go to the pulpit to reap the spoils that I have earned in the closet of prayer. But earn was a poor choice of words.

Forgive me. Because that too is a wrong attitude of prayer. Prayer is going to a God who loves, who has as his highest willingness to bless you with good things.

Good. See, prayer earns nothing. Prayer achieves nothing.

Prayer is just going to a benefactor who loves to give benefits. And you believe that. And when he sees faith, he responds.

He can't help it. It cheers and delights him so. Your prayer doesn't ungrasp the hand of God.

There's no reluctance. Why do you think you're even praying for it? I believe in the sovereignty of God. Yes, sir.

I believe that God is so sovereign that he even leads me in my prayers to ask things that are in accordance to his will so that he may grant them and be glorified in the granting of those requests. That's what Jesus said. In John, 15, seven verse eight, he says that the father, the whole thing is that God will be glorified.

But then there's John, 16, 23. And in that day, you shall ask nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you whatsoever you shall ask the father of my name, he will give it to you.

Brothers, do you think with assurance and ponder on God's magnificent glory? Now, don't you agree that our prayers are so often ineffectual and fruitless and even prayerless? Our prayers are prayerless. If this is the definition of prayer, because we do not realize the great and exceeding riches of his glory, we must learn to think bigger thoughts about our God. I think that's why we do not pray with faith.

Our view of God is not accurate still yet. So little, so small. But when you see him in his glory, when you get those glimpses in the word and in prayer or in conversations with another brother, when God opens your eyes to see the beauty and winsomeness of Jesus Christ, my friends, faith is no longer difficult.

In fact, it's natural at that point. Faith is a natural response to see the glory of God. How can my faith increase to see more of his glory and beauty? That's it.

Where do you do that? In the secret place. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty. That's where faith is the product, not of your will or mind.

No, no. It's the product of the spirit of God. Listen to Romans 8 26.

Romans 8 26. Likewise, the spirit also help with our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings. Which cannot be governed.

Do you know what that verse says? It says none of us know how to pray. I don't know how to pray. I don't know what I should pray for.

But the spirit helps us to pray. Now I have a question for you. Can you pray without the Holy Spirit's help? Can you pray without the Holy Spirit's help? According to Paul, no.

It's a prayerless prayer. Why? Because it's nothing but the offering of the flesh. And now, once again, I see puffs of smoke and smell the I smell it a lot of my praying in the past.

Prayed in my strength, trying to do my best, trying to get into the attitude of prayer without the aid of the Holy Spirit. No true prayer without the aid of the spirit. Where there is much prayer, there is much of the spirit where there's little prayer.

There's little of the Holy Spirit. And where there's little of the spirit, there is little fruitfulness. No wonder our churches have lost their vitality.

No wonder we're just making it. No wonder the status quo is wearing us out. No wonder we wonder, should there, is there a greener pasture? Maybe I'm kicking against the goals here.

No, my friend, God called you where you are. And he called you to get along with him and to touch him. Don't wait for God's touch.

Don't wait for him to decide it's time to break out on you and your church. No, desire it. Be desperate for it.

He says, heaven is open. There's no bars to the gates of heaven for the child of God. Access, says the apostle Paul in Romans 5.2, you've been granted entrance.

Access into the faith, by faith into this grace wherein we stand. That we may do what? Rejoice in the glory of God. You can see that glory as you press in to touch him by faith, by faith.

I want to end on an encouraging note, but this message is very heavy. I know it is. It's so contrary to the way we do.

Every one of you would agree it's not contrary to your theology. In the end, it really isn't. There may be some minor differences, but in the end, the thrust in the vein of what I've said today, you could not argue against, nor would you.

But because of this word, your heart is discouraged. You're cast down. You feel conviction.

You feel guilt. I want to share something that I think was hopeful to you. Are you ready? And indeed, failures are your Lord's loving kindness.

God's being good to you, to teach you that without me, you could do nothing. He's loving on you. Your frustration this afternoon with your church and with your ministry, that's truly God.

It took me a while to understand that. I felt like I was running to a brick wall all the time, just banging my head and the wall never moved. And you can ram your head into the wall enough times, you'll finally, if you have any sense, say, this isn't going to work.

And I remember those days of getting before the Lord hours and hours and hours and hours for nearly a month and a half saying, God, where are you? Where are you? Where are you? And one day, God told me, I've been here all along. You running your head in that wall was me teaching you. The arm of the flesh is too weak.

We don't trust in horses or princes. We put our faith in the Lord. Are you frustrated today? Are you feeling fruitless today? Have you looked back in recent past and you see failure after failure? Thank God, my brother, and listen, listen today.

Those are all indications teaching you what we know intellectually, but we do not know experientially. We by ourselves cannot do the work of the ministry. Paul cries out in the first chapter of the second Corinthians, who is sufficient for these things? But then he says in the third chapter, but God has made us sufficient.

God has made us sufficient. God is our strength. Will you press through? Will you desire him? And will you be desperate enough like this dear woman to say, live or die, hell or high water or perish or survive? I've got to touch God.

I know I believe this book. I know my God's character. When you touch him, you will receive power.

And you will see God and his power released in your life and ministry. May God do it. Amen.

Let's pray. Then we'll have a time of prayer. Father, we are grateful that you strategically had this miracle recorded to speak to us today.

It's one of the reasons why that whole event took place. It's why it was recorded by the right gospel writers to speak to us. We believe that because we believe you love us.

We believe you're that good to have done something like this just for us and for others who've gone before and those who will come after us. You want us. You want us to draw near to you, but just not draw near.

You want us to seek you and to experience you, but just not to come and get an experience or a feeling. You want us to draw near to you by faith, a faith of desire, desperate, a faith that's ignited and the wind of the spirit has blown upon and aided. And we come this afternoon to let you do in us whatever.

If you have to, if you have to cut us down to size and you have to bend our backs over, in brokenness and humility. Here we are. We know you can't hurt us.

You love us too much in Christ. We believe you. We're trusting in you.

We're clinging to you. Lord, help us even now. Holy spirit to pray as we ought to pray.

We don't want to offer up our flesh. We don't want to give you Lord. Just prayers that are empty of any spirit or truth.

Help these dear brothers help me. Lord, we need you. Oh yes, we need the every hour, every moment.

Thank you that we have you. You never leave us. You never forsake us.

It almost seems that song is needless, but it is a reminder of our true resource you. And we confess it today in your son's name. Father, to whom we thank you and praise you for.

I love you. I bless you. You're so wonderful and amazing father.

And I thank you that you deal with us as sons. Even chasing in us as sons for your great namesake and for our sake as well. And it's in your son's name.

I do pray. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29351.mp3>

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