

# Not in the Manual

by Paul Ravenhill

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*The sermon explores the depth and sincerity of prayer, particularly in times of trial, emphasizing that true worship and communication with God transcend formalities.*

**Duration:** 9:53

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:8, Psalm 126:5, Acts 16:25

**Topics:** "Effective Prayer", "Worship Styles"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prayer and seeking God's face. He highlights that the Bible does not provide specific instructions on how to pray, but rather encourages a sincere heart and seeking God in praises. The preacher shares a story about a prophecy that came true, demonstrating that when we are in impossible situations and with God, something of God will come forth. He also mentions the significance of using both traditional hymns and contemporary choruses in worship, comparing them to battle axes and daggers respectively.

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## Transcript

In Paul and Silas, then, in the midnight, it says they prayed. I wish we could all, someday, before we die and leave this earth, pray. In the deepest sense of the word.

I said before, one of the old writers said, God will never deny anything to the man that goes to heaven with his petition. That I walk that distance. That I go through all that it costs.

Until that I know I'm before God, and I'm saying to God Almighty, God, this is my prayer. Once again, it's so easy to get a light understanding of things. And we need it only because we're afraid to come into the cost of reaching through to the real thing.

Once again, before, we've said we can never see light until we see darkness. We can never see the positive until we've seen the negative. And we can only see this side in the measure that we've seen this side.

And they prayed. These are people in the darkness of the night. These are people with their feet in the stops.

These are people with their backs bleeding. Maybe the tears streaming down in pain. Yet, somehow, although their feet were fast, I believe their hands were raised, and they're saying, God! You called us,

Lord.

You sent a man. You sent a messenger. You gave us the audible voice, inviting us to come over and Lord, we're here.

They're God. They're not quitting praying. Now all their earthly resources have come to an end.

Their liberty has been taken away. Their strength has been taken away. They can no longer speak.

They can no longer reach out to people. When everything's been taken away, then they appeal to heaven. God, God.

You know, it doesn't matter how we pray. In fact, the Bible never tells us really how to pray. Except in a general way.

Seek my face. But it never tells us how to seek him. Seek him in praises and a few other general indications.

About a sincere heart. About different things. But it never says, you know, do this and this and this.

And then this and this and this. Twelve steps of prayer. It never does that.

Why? Because somehow we find it. When our soul comes into a place of agony. And when in the agony we don't step back.

And lean against the earthly things. But step out like Peter and walk on the water. And say, God, even if it's water.

Even if there are waves and even if there's a storm. Even if the wind is plucking at my clothes and threatening to throw me down into the depths. I'm going on.

They prayed. It talks about Elijah and James. Prayed fervently.

One of the old translations. At least according to that, I never actually read it myself. But he said it says.

One of the old translations says, praying he prayed. That's pretty good. Because I'm sure a lot of times the Lord could have said, Paul, praying he wasted time.

Praying his mind wandered. Praying he had no faith. Praying he wasn't really committed to see that come to pass.

It's kind of like, you know, well, let's take a chance. If you throw enough. What was it the Italians used to say? Spaghetti.

Some will stick to the wall. You know, let's keep on going. Yeah, pray.

Lord, please do this. Lord, bless them. Oh, a revival in Africa.

You know, but even then. I don't have that sense of knowing that it was my prayer that had something to do with it. It just happened.

How about that? What do you know? But like I said, it's different. The situation with that man in the north of Argentina for eight years. Prayed and said, God, I want this.

Comes to the point of despair and God gives him word. Child, I'm going to give you. And then when his eyes actually see it.

I remember my brother telling about it. Events in his life years ago. He was a young worker.

Wasn't really a pastor. Young worker. We were working together.

No, we weren't at that time. Anyway, he was out there in Teen Challenge in New York. And somebody came in and prophesied.

And prayed. And he said, I see you. Came behind him where he was sitting.

I don't know if he put his hand or what. And he said, I see you standing in front of a multitude. He said, God's going to send you to rulers.

And he said, I see you standing before a multitude. And they're sitting on the grass in ranks. And he said, they're not black.

They're not white. And he said, I see you there. And he said, you're speaking the word of God.

And David tells about it. He said, I was crying because I was saying, Lord, this guy doesn't know what he's saying. Because that's not me.

And this will never come to pass. He doesn't know, you know, how insufficient I am. And he said, years passed by.

And he was working in the South Seas with Waiwan at that time. And they got an invitation to go over to the Tonga Islands. Because the Queen had died.

And there was a coronation ceremony. And the king or the government invited them to send teams in to evangelize among the multitudes at that time. And he said, one day it was his turn to preach.

And he said, it was in front of the king's palace. A wide open space of green grass. And as he got up, he said, the people were seated on the ground.

And they were seated in ranks and seated in order. And they were South Sea Islanders. And they were, what would you call it, coffee colored people.

They weren't white. They weren't black. And as he started to speak, and it was in his message, the king came up.

Onto the balcony of the palace, which was really a big house, is all it was. He came out and he was there on the balcony. And he never thought of it until afterward.

And then he remembered the prophecy. God brought it all to pass. There was nothing he did.

He couldn't have engineered the invitation. He couldn't have chosen the place. He couldn't have made the people gather.

God brought it all to pass. I was just reading today an old writer on this very theme. I looked up to see what he had to say about it.

He said, you know, the same for us. He said, if we get in that impossible situation, if we're with God, there's going to be something of God. Something of God that will come forth.

That's what it's all about. They prayed. They mentioned the name of God.

They weren't talking about the earthly things. I don't know, I just wish we had time to take this whole thing. They prayed and sang praises.

My culture shock lots of times has to do with the singing praises. I come out of a meeting and somebody says, I want a nice atmosphere. I say, what atmosphere? What atmosphere are you talking about? I want a nice praise and worship.

What praise? What worship? Praise and worship is an exercise of the spirit, not of the mouth. And I'm not, you know, I've got a friend who likes the old hymns. Well, they're fine.

I'm not against choruses. We'll sort it all out later. I'm not against choruses.

You remember that, who was it, Ehud? That went and killed the king of Moab when the Israelites were under the Moabites. He made him a dagger. He made him a little bowie knife and he had it under his thing.

There's a time, they say, at least Sir Walter Scott in one of his books talks about Richard the Lionheart. He had this battle axe. He was a man of tremendous physique.

And they say he had this battle axe which an ordinary man couldn't use. This great big axe which he'd go into the battle swinging right and left. He said with one blow he could cut through a bar of steel.

Yeah, right. Has to be a cynical guy always. But anyway, whether he could or not, we kind of think this is ministry.

Yeah, there's a place for the dagger too. If you get the dagger in the right place. So there's a place for the great old hymns and the battle axes of the church and there's a place for the choruses.

Were you following me or did you lost me? The choruses are like the daggers. Many times it'll say it all in a few words. Paul and Silas prayed.

I don't know at what point, but there came a point when the things started to change. You know, we use our hymns, we use our choruses differently in South America. Why don't you play for me? Put it real low and real slow.

Maybe it started inside, not outside.

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