

Genuine Prayer

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the necessity of genuine prayer and communion with God for true spiritual revival and strength in ministry.

Duration: 1:19:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:7, Mark 1:25, Mark 1:28-29

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Mark and its fast-paced narrative of Jesus' life. He highlights the use of the word 'immediately' to describe Jesus' actions and the busy nature of his ministry. The preacher emphasizes the importance of spending time alone with Jesus and developing a personal relationship with him. He also discusses the need for passion and sincerity in worship and preaching, using examples to illustrate the impact of genuine devotion to God.

Transcript

Oh my goodness, it was probably 25 years ago. I went into a place that's very, very old. It was about 8,500 year old.

It was a store where if you were a minister, you could get a suit for like half price. And I was going to get my first suit, and I was looking around, all of a sudden the door opened up. It was one of those old doors with the bell on them, and the door opened, you hear the bell go off, and then it clangs again, and there was an old man standing there, an old man.

And he just looked at me for a while. And then all of a sudden he asked me, he said, boy, you been called to preach? And I thought to myself, well how did he know that? And I said, yes sir. And he said, well then let's sit down and let me tell you how the old men preach.

And he pointed out to a lot that had a building on it, and he said it used to have a lot on it back in the 50's. And he said he used to set up his tent on that lot. And he said, son, I would preach, and I would preach, and I would preach.

And I wouldn't even offer the sinner a hope. I would just plow, and plow, and plow, until the Holy Spirit began to move among us. And I said, well sir, how did you know when the Holy Spirit was beginning to move among you? And he said, well, I was plowing over there for two or three weeks, and someone

walked up to me and gave me, I think he said \$25 or \$50, to buy me a suit in this store.

And he said when I walked into the store, the man behind the counter, who was the clerk and all, that took care of you and waited on you, when he turned around and looked at me, fell on the floor, and said, who can save me from my sin? And he said, son, I knew the power of God had fallen upon the place. You see, you don't want revival. You don't.

You want to have a few meetings. Learn a few things. But you don't want revival.

Because it will absolutely turn your life inside out. Everything will change. And I know that when I come to a place.

I know that. If God were to truly come down, everything in your life would change. He may send some of you to die as martyrs.

He may tell some of you to sell everything you have and give it to the poor. You see, he's not a tame lion. And when God truly comes down, revival truly breaks out.

One of the key issues is lordship and the cost of discipleship. There's only been a few times preaching in the states over the years where meetings had to be extended and extended. Because people truly wanted revival.

Crying out to God to be changed. Crying out to God to have more than just an intellectual grasp upon a certain truth, but for that truth to become a vibrant reality in their life. Do you really want revival? Then seek Him.

Seek Him with all your heart. With all your heart. I remember the first pastor I sat under, James Weaver.

He was kind of a cross between a Baptist and a Wesleyan holiness, I guess you could say. And when I was called into the ministry, I went to his office. He was a big man.

He was a loving man, but very, very powerful. Power of God on his life. And I said, Pastor Weaver, God's called me to preach.

And I'm saying this for some of you young guys. And he looked at me, turned around, and he said, boy... You could call people boy back then and no one got mad. He said, boy, can you be alone? Can you be alone? And I thought he meant that if I truly, truly followed God and I truly preached the truth, that I would be alone.

But that's not what he meant at all. He meant something quite different. Can you be alone with God? You see, I've seen all throughout my 25 years all kinds of little boys who want to play preaching.

And they all get together and they discuss their theologies and their ideas. And they criticize and they pontificate and they do all that they do. Go to retreats and go to conferences and read this book and that book and the latest trend or the oldest truth.

But how many of them are willing to walk out into a wilderness for seven days and throw rocks at the heavens until God comes down? To walk alone with God. You see, if you're called, young men, into the ministry, really called, then the place where you're going to spend most of your time, not even your wife can go with you. That is, of course, if you're really going to preach.

Now, you can be a church growth expert. You can handle a church like it was a six flags over Jesus and make it grow. But if you're going to walk with God, you're going to spend a whole lot of time alone.

Alone. With Him. With Him.

And not just studying good books. Even the flesh can love good books. Because good books can make us smart.

If we're very smart, we'll get to speak in all the conferences. Not just good books. Paul did not come to people with an eloquence of speech, but with power.

Power of a godly life. The power of a gospel that was strong to say. I want us to look for just a moment.

I want us to go to the book of Mark. Chapter 1. I wasn't going to preach on this. I thought maybe I would mention it, but only the Lord knows how long we'll need to stay here.

It says in chapter 1 of the book of Mark. Now, before I read, let me say this about Mark. If you read the gospel of Mark properly, you will be wore out when you're finished.

Everyone says that. If you read the book of Mark properly, you will be wore out. Why? Because the book of Mark is set up like a bunch of quick photographs of Christ.

A bunch of snapshots of Christ. And he's fond of using the word immediately. Jesus is doing this, and then immediately Jesus is doing that.

And then immediately Jesus is doing this. And it's just these quick, fast snapshots of the life of Christ. It's so busy.

It's exhausting. So in chapter 1, we see all these things. Christ preaching the gospel.

Christ calling men to follow Him. Christ, in verse 25, rebuking a demon and casting him out. Christ, again, teaching with authority.

And in verse 28, immediately the news about Him spreading everywhere into all surrounding districts of Galilee. And immediately in verse 29, they came out of the synagogue and came into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Now, Simon's mother-in-law was lying with a fever, and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her.

Now look at this. You see this? Immediately. Immediately.

Now, if you know anything about ministry, you know this. Well, first of all, when the woman touched Jesus who had the hemorrhage, Jesus noticed, in the old translation, it says that virtue went forth from Him. That virtue came out of Him.

Power came out of Him. There is a real sense that even for us, mere men, and women who minister, if you're ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, according to your gifts, it will wear you out. It's like virtue going out of you so that at the end of the day, you're literally wore out.

Try to preach on the streets all day or walk around and visit homes all day long. Counseling all day long. Preach six or seven times all day long.

Virtue, strength, power goes out from you. And we can see that Christ seems to have no rest. There's no intermission between all this.

It says that He's casting out a demon. Immediately news goes out. Verse 29, immediately they came into the house.

Immediately they spoke with Jesus about Simon's mother-in-law. Verse 31, and He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited upon them. So here we have a Christ.

And now that we come to our passage, in verse 32, He's done the work of 20 men. He's done the work of 20 men. We get to verse 32, then evening came.

After the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons.

And He was not permitting the demons to speak because they knew who He was. Now, you've got to understand that most paintings of Christ, well, all, not most, all paintings and figures of Christ borderline on blasphemy. You'll know where I stand on this.

I hate them. We're not to make images. You can't contain His glory in a painting.

I'll never forget one time, in India, a man was handing out tracts, Gospel tracts, and an Indian woman came up and took one of them. She happened to be a believer. He didn't know it.

She took the tract and she's walking down the road. And all of a sudden, she came back weeping. The man said, what's wrong? And she turned the tract around and there was an artist's rendition of Christ.

And she said, oh, sir, my heart is so broken. I thought He was much more glorious than this. So any picture of Christ is a perversion.

Now, you know I preach in a lot of places once. You say, well, I like it. It doesn't matter what you like.

It doesn't represent Him. It doesn't represent His glory. It doesn't represent His beauty.

It's nothing. But most artists' renditions of Christ have Him so meek and timid and so at poise. He's so comfortable.

He's walking daintily here and daintily there. But that is not the case here. This is a wild storm of humanity that is crashing down upon Him.

A wild storm of humanity. I remember one time I would preach in the Andes Mountains quite frequently. And we had a pastor's conference in a place called Santa Rosa outside of Ayia Vaca.

Way up in the mountains. And there were about 1,500 mountain men and women gathered there. Very poor.

Never had the opportunity of a doctor or medicine or clinics. We were preaching, but the word got out that I had brought a doctor with me. You should have seen what happened to that crowd.

For three days, that doctor was in a room and almost couldn't get out. And people, one by one, would visit him. People standing in long lines, not for an hour, but for two days.

Sleeping in the line. People who were normally very timid and kind, pushing one another. All knowing, this is my only chance.

This is the first time a doctor's ever been near this place. We've got to see him. So what you've got to see is around Christ, what's going on is utter madness.

People who know their children are sick and they have no opportunity whatsoever to see them healed unless this Messiah, this Christ, touches them. It is a madhouse. It is violent.

It is horrid. People are turning into animals doing everything they can. Probably trying to come through the window, knock down the door.

Whatever they have to do. And one after one, Christ is dealing with them. He's healing sicknesses.

He's casting out demons. He's doing this and that. And virtue is going out of Him.

Now it says, it started when evening came and the sun had set. They began bringing to Him all who were ill. They were bringing them with purpose.

Don't worry, son. I'll get you through. You're going to see Him.

He's going to heal you. And so He is utterly and completely wore out. Never forget that Jesus Christ was God.

Truly and verily God. Jesus Christ was man. True humanity.

And He suffered all things as humanity except without sin. You could only just sometimes imagine what it would be like to minister like this. So He started in the evening after the sun had set.

Verse 33, the whole city had gathered at the door. Verse 34, He healed them. Now look at verse 35.

In the morning, while it was still dark. What time was it? I mean, do you honestly think that at midnight everyone said, well, let's go home. We don't want to bother the Messiah.

Do you think that's what they did? I don't know, but I have to almost suppose that in order for Jesus to get out of the house in the morning, almost something supernatural had to happen. Because in our conferences, I'll never forget when we brought the doctor there, we would get up at 3 and 4 in the morning and people would still be standing there waiting, trying to look inside the house to see if there was any glimpse of the doctor getting up. So Christ spends most of the night ministering.

Now, if anyone ever had an excuse for not praying, it was Christ. If anyone ever had an excuse for not getting up early, it was Christ. But look what He does.

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place. Now, I want you to think about something. This is the Son of God.

He has no taint of sin. There is no wax in His ears. There is nothing blinding His eyes.

He's always looking at the Father. He's always hearing His voice. And yet, He recognizes the need to go off to a secluded place.

The greatest need probably for most of us in this church is to get away from the noise and the banging and the clanging and the confusion, even of religious things, and go to a secluded, quiet place. Reminded of a poem of Christ coming into Jerusalem. It says, Weak from the journey, the long passing days, hungry to worship, to join in the praise, shock met with anger that burned on His face as He entered the wasteland of that barren place.

And the author goes on to talk about how Christ makes a chord, begins to chase, to throw people out of the temple. And then it says, Noise and confusion gave way to His Word. At last, sacred silence so God could be heard.

That would describe most of our churches today. Like a man who has ten cymbals tied to his knees and his elbows and a horn and a drum and a this and a that and there's so much noise. But who's hearing God? Is God even heard? Even in all our correct theology, is anyone even hearing God? Sometimes the best thing we can do is just shut up and wait.

Sometimes the best thing a church can do is just to come together and fall on its face before God and cry out until He tells them what to do. We're so quick to run to men about everything. Run to God! Run to God.

Run to God. No one who tarries at His door will be left without an answer. But you must understand this, this Christian who desires instantaneous everything without effort, that waiting at His door may be a long time, but it's worth the wait.

So he goes off to a secluded place and was praying there. He was praying there. Prayer is not the same thing as intercession.

Intercession is an aspect of prayer. But it is not the full orb of prayer. Most people today have the idea that prayer is asking God for things.

And not just for yourself, for others, for the world, for this, for that, for the kingdom, everything. Prayer, intercession. If all your prayer life is intercession, you won't be praying long.

I tell young men, you need to pray with your boots on and your boots off. You need to read the Bible with your boots on and your boots off. What do I mean by that? First of all, it would be very helpful to you if you understand something.

Intercession is not fun. Intercession is not easy. And it's not supposed to be.

Intercession is work. It is battle. It is fighting.

Most people don't intercede because they think it's not their gift, because it's not easy. It's not easy for anyone. It's supposed to be hard.

Intercession is praying with your boots on. But if that's all the praying you do, God, sooner or later, becomes nothing different than the slot machines you have all over Las Vegas. Put a coin in, pull the handle, and see what God will do.

Prayer is not just intercession. Prayer is communion. It is communion with God.

It is walking with God. It is spending time with God. It is thinking great thoughts about God.

One of the great problems, Catholicism, which never was a church, but Catholicism has left us with so many wrong ideas. And one of them is the idea of the secular and the sacred. That there are secular things in our life and sacred things in our life.

And there are areas that are secular and areas that are sacred. That's not true. If you are a Christian, everything is sacred.

That is why everything you do, you are to do for the glory of God. And that is why everything you do, in everything you do, you are to be in communion with God. Frank Lombok, who taught the entire islands of the Philippines to read.

And he did so for a great purpose, so that they could read the Bible. When I was over at the Philippines, I mentioned his name. Students still knew who he was.

Frank Lombok. If ever there was a man who was used to do a lot of busy things, it was him. But if you read Frank Lombok's diary, you find out that he had only one goal in life.

His one great goal was to spend one entire day only thinking about Christ without one interruption. So all the while he was teaching people to read, all the while he was typing manuscripts, all the while he was doing everything he was, traversing the islands of the Philippines, his one great goal was, oh God, give me one day when all I think of is You. The only one I commune with is You.

That was his goal. So much for the idea that they are so heavenly minded they are no earthly good. Because his greatest goal was to be completely and perfectly heavenly minded, and he accomplished more than most men.

To be alone with God. To commune with God. To commune with God upon your bed.

You have trouble sleeping. Wonderful! Then pray! I meet people all the time that say they have trouble sleeping. I say, how is your prayer life? Man, when I pray I just fall asleep.

I say, then pray and you'll sleep a lot more. But just to be with Him. To be with Him.

Someone was sharing with me today, and it's so true, but it just, the Puritans always thought thoughts about God. It was thinking about Him. Everything had to do with Him.

Mathematics has to do with Him. Physics has to do with Him. Geology has to do with Him.

Everything has to... Math, English, literature has to do with Him. Because the only reason there is order and grammar is because there is a God. So it's communing with God.

Communing with Him. Listening. Isn't it amazing how rude we are to God? Just absolutely rude.

I teach my children, when they walk into a room, they do not walk into that room talking. Especially when they see two adults talking. They do not walk into that room talking.

They walk into that room listening. Or if you're to meet some dignitary, you don't walk up to him. Well, I wouldn't say that because the young people today don't seem to understand anything about respecting elders because they usually walk up to them with their mouth flapping as they get each step nearer.

But we know that it is proper when we come to a dignitary. If you were to meet with the president, regardless of what you feel about politics, you know, keep your mouth shut. Let him speak first.

And yet we bow our knees and hit the ground running, don't we, with our mouth. The moment we bow our knees, we're talking, talking, talking, talking, talking, talking, talking. People are always saying, well, God never speaks to me.

Well, maybe if you were quiet for a while, He might. It's the idea of being alone with Him. I realized that I truly loved my wife when I realized that I could just sit there by her.

Didn't have to say anything. Didn't have to go anywhere. Didn't have to eat.

Just sit. Just enough. Just to be with God.

Just to walk with Him. Jesus went to a secluded place and was praying there. I'm sure it's general here and not informing us very specifically how He was praying.

I'm sure He was doing all sorts of praying. He was worshipping. Worshipping.

He was filled with gratitude. Joy. Hope.

You see, here's something that you need to understand that's very, very important, especially for ministers or those of you who are thinking about going into the ministry. Most ministers' idea of a vacation is running away from God. I need to get away.

Get away from what? Well, you know, I just need to lay the Bible down a little bit. I need to stop praying a little bit. You know, I just need to get away from it all for a while.

What is your source of strength? It is only a relationship with Him and His Word. Evangelist I heard of a while back. A godly man, he was going to preach in a church and he got off the airplane and the pastors met him and said, let's go play golf.

Nothing wrong with playing golf. The man said, fine, let's go play golf. So they go play golf.

The revival wasn't beginning or the meetings weren't beginning until the next day. They went and played golf. Why anyone would play that game, I don't know, but that's what they did.

Well, they went to play golf. And the evangelist is out there. It's a beautiful day and he began to talk about Jesus.

The pastor looked at him and said, look, we're not talking shop out here. But realize that can be in your heart in a hidden way. It can.

I'm tired. Oh, where do you plan on getting strength? Away from Jesus? Looking at the ocean? Sunset is going to give you strength? I'll tell you what will give you strength. Being alone with God and His Word.

You say, but the Word will wear you out. Yes, if you only study the Word with your boots on. There's two ways to look at the Word.

You study it with your boots on. It's said of Alexander McLaren, who's one of the greatest preachers, was known to spend 60 hours on one sermon that he studied always with his boots on. He said, study is hard

work.

And hard work is what I do. When I do hard work, I have my boots on. But if all you do is study the Word in order to exegete and determine what the Greek is saying and what's happening in the original and what does this mean theologically, you are going to be in a whole lot of trouble.

There's got to be a sense in which you just read this Word and delight in it. You just feed upon it. The pastor's wife is a very good cook, but it would have taken all the fun out of it if I had just sat there the whole time and had her explain to me how all this happened.

I don't care how it happened. I just want to eat it. It's the same way.

There is a time for studying the Word with your boots on. There is a time for studying the Word when it's just reading what your father has said, what your elder brother has said, the Holy Spirit has said, just rejoicing in it, feeding upon it. You remember when you were a brand new Christian and you didn't know anything? You couldn't even find the book of Philippians.

But the Word of God was so dear to you. Do you remember that? And then you got smart, started looking at it as a technical book instead of a love letter. Well, it's both, but it is both.

He was praying, and He was drawing strength. He was drawing strength. You need strength.

And you need strength on a daily basis. My wife came to me one time. She says, you just got to sit down.

I said, okay. She said, now just listen. I said, okay.

She said, you know how you've got like a sin in your life, like a besetting sin that's really bothering you and you seem to have no power over it? And I said, yes. And what do you do? I'll tell you what you do. That's the way my wife is.

She asks you the question, then she answers it. That's a gift women have. What do you do? I'll tell you what you do.

You start praying, don't you? Well, of course you do. You start praying, and you start reading Scripture, and you start crying out to God. And what happens? Well, I'll tell you what happens, Paul.

You get deliverance, don't you? You get victory over that sin. And I said, well, yes. And she goes, and then what happens? I'll tell you what happens.

You get confident. You think you've got once and for all victory over that sin, and then it's no sooner two weeks, three weeks pass by, and that sin's got a hold of you again, and you're struggling with it. She said, do you want to know why? And I said, yes, I do.

She said, God doesn't want you to depend upon Him to get a once and for all victory and then become independent of Him again. He wants you going every day. And after all of her excitement calmed down, I said, well, let's just think about this.

At the beginning of the month, have you ever heard someone say, you know, I've got a lot to do this month, and I figured it out that in one month, if you add up all the times I'm eating in one month, it comes out to about 37 hours. So what I'm going to do is the first two days or day and a half of this month, I'm

going to eat. I'm going to eat for 37 hours so that I won't have to eat again the entire month.

But it doesn't work that way, does it? You eat for 37 hours? As it seems like some of you do that on a daily basis. You eat for 37 hours? You're sick, but the next morning you get up and what do you want? To eat again. To eat again.

You see, we are built, even our mechanism of eating, of needing food, we can't just store it up like a camel stores up water. We have to eat every day to walk in victory. We must come to Him every day.

We must seek a secluded place every day. We must draw from His Word every day. We must meet Him in prayer every day.

And not just a quiet time. I hate quiet times. I hate them.

Why? It's like me telling my wife, now, 24 hours a day, you're going to be in the closet, but at 7 o'clock in the morning, for 15 minutes, I'm going to pull you out and talk to you for a while. I talk to her for 15 minutes, now, dear, it's time to get back in the closet. That's the way sometimes, quiet times, they become that.

And that's not good. Is it good to have a time when we meet with the Lord? Yes. Is it good to have a time, a specific place? Yes.

All that's true. But what I'm saying is be very, very careful when your entire relationship with Jesus Christ can be summed up in a quiet time. Sometimes when... I used to go hunting with a dear friend of mine.

There was a certain place where we would meet every morning. We were hunting. We'd meet around 4 at a certain crossroad.

And then I would jump in his truck and then the rest of the day we're hunting. That's the way it's supposed to function. Your time in the morning with the Lord is just to meet with Him at that crossroad and then spend the rest of your day with Him.

You see. Now some people tell me, well, you know, I've just practiced the presence of God all day. I don't need to do that.

You're not telling the truth. Because I've learned that being able to practice the presence of God all day flows out of being with the Lord in those sacred, special times. So to learn to practice the presence of God comes from the discipline of meeting with Him, reading His Word, praying, seeking His face, just being quiet.

I had this professor one time and it sounded a little goofy, but I agree with him. He said, Paul, I want you to become so clear in your mind, so quiet before God that you can sit out in the middle of a field and hear a caterpillar chewing on clover from a hundred yards away. Listen! Listen to Him.

He is a person. You know that, don't you? And so, I went to a secluded place and was praying there. Now, look in verse 36.

Simon and his companions searched for Him. They found Him and said to Him, Everyone is looking for You. Now, I don't want to read too much into this, but it looks like guilt trip to me.

Jesus, what are You doing out here by Yourself? Don't You know that there are all kinds of people out here hurting? There is so much ministry to do and You are out here all by Yourself in this secluded place having a quiet time? There is stuff to do! Boy, that's You, isn't it? There is so much to do today. I love what Martin Luther supposedly said. He said, I have so much to do today, I'll never get done unless I pray at least three hours.

You see? Listen to me. I think it was a Japanese man who was asked about evangelicalism in America. And this is what he said.

He said, When I see a Buddhist priest, monk, I think, holy man. When I see an evangelical pastor, I think, businessman. It's true.

Strategist. Intellectual. John Piper wrote a book, *We Are Not Professionals*.

I want to take it a little bit farther. We are prophets. Not that we are creating new revelation or anything like that.

That's absolutely absurd. But to be men of God, we do not grow churches by strategies. We do not attend conferences and learn about cultural sensitivity so we can reach generation X, Y, or Z. We dwell with God.

And when we come to men, we come to men with a word from God. And that is the difference between American evangelicalism today and the preaching of yesteryear. The prophet comes from God with a word to the people.

But in modern day Christianity, the preacher studies the people to find out what they need to hear from God. Or more, what they want to hear from God. They're saying, Jesus, don't you know there's all kinds of things to do? Oh, my dear friend.

God, you can waste, you can waste a hundred disobedient years and never accomplish anything. God can take one obedient moment of yours and change the world. Everyone talks about the sovereignty of God.

God is sovereign in salvation. Yes, He is. But my question to you, is He sovereign in anything else? Or do you have to run around frantically with your head cut off like a chicken, running into walls, doing all sorts of things? Or can you just rest and be quiet? The Hudson Taylor, their compound was being attacked by the Red Army, I believe it was.

It was during the revolution. Everyone's running around frantically in the compound knowing they're going to die. And a guy busts into Hudson Taylor's office and he's just there singing hymns, seated at the desk.

Guns going off and everything. The missionary goes, What are you doing? He goes, What do you want me to do? I don't have a gun. And if I had one, I wouldn't use it.

I'm not a fighter. We're surrounded by an army. What do you want me to do? If I'm going to die, I'm going to die by going out singing hymns.

There's nothing I can do. But my God can. And He did.

So, He was alone with him. Do you not have time to be alone with Him? I can answer that. How much time are you alone with Him? Brother Paul, my relationship just seems so hollow.

Yeah, when you don't spend time with someone, it pretty much gets that way. Isn't it amazing that your relationship with Christ most of the time becomes most hollow when you go through three years of seminary? It's not the seminary's fault necessarily. I don't have anything against seminaries.

But students become preoccupied with what? Learning. Instead of being preoccupied with a person. A person.

A person. I want you to look at something for a moment. Let's go to Luke 11.

Verse 1. It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray. Now, if I want to learn how to do physics, I would go talk to Albert Einstein. You just have to study his life for just a little bit.

You go, you got a problem on a physics exam? Go talk to him. If I want to learn how to play basketball, I know who I'm going to. Michael Jordan.

I'm going to Michael Jordan. Why? You can just look at his life and you know if there's one thing he knows about, it's basketball. I want to learn how to play golf.

Go to Tiger Wood. Why? Just look at his life. Isn't it amazing that the disciples never came to Jesus and said, teach us to preach? They never came and said, teach us to cast out demons.

They never came and said, teach us to walk on water or raise the dead. But they came to Him and said, teach us to pray. That tells me the most impressive thing about the life of Jesus Christ was His prayer life.

He prayed like nobody prays. Teach us to pray. I'll always ask this sometimes when I'm in a conference with a group of pastors, I'll say, pastors, when was the last time someone walked up to you and said, teach us to pray? Teach me to pray.

Isn't that convicting? How do you do that? You ought to look at your life and not just say, where did you read that? But how is that so manifested in your life? A man set on fire is going to draw attention. People are going to be drawn. How is it that He is this way? Preaching is not just about a cold exposition of the truth.

That's what it's become nowadays. If I correctly interpret this text coldly and bluntly and sincerely and correctly, then I can step down from here and I've done my job. There's also an element of the man filled with the Holy Spirit, impassioned with the things of God.

It's the same way with worship. I was teaching, I think it was the state of Kentucky worship leaders one time. I thought, why on earth have they got me teaching on worship? I can't sing.

And I said, men, I want to teach you about how to lead worship. I said, have you ever been to New York or Chicago or a city where everyone's walking on the sidewalks? Well, go there sometime and walk on the sidewalk. And just anywhere on that sidewalk when it's filled up with people, just stop and look up and keep looking up and keep looking up.

And what's going to happen? People are going to begin to walk by you and they're going to go, they're going to look at you and go, they're going to look at you. And even if there's nothing up there, they're just going to keep looking depending on how sincere you are, depending on how much passion is in your heart. If you're just going like this.

But if you're going... every person's going to look at you. It's going to do the very same thing. That's how you direct worship.

You're so filled with God and you're so mesmerized with God and you're caring so much about God and so impassioned by God, the congregation takes a look at you and goes, that's worship. That's also preaching. Great thoughts.

Great things about God. They looked at Jesus. Teach us to pray.

Why? Because that's what He did. That's what He was good at. You see, it's life.

Not just truth. Life. Not just correct.

Alive. Now, let's go for a moment back to Matthew 6. We all know about verse 5. When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward in full.

This is not against praying in public. It's speaking against a wrong heart. An unconverted heart.

An unregenerate heart. A heart that seeks the glory of men. You know one of the most dangerous things, if not the most dangerous verse in the entire Bible, the verse that ought to scare us to death, is when God says He'll give men the desires of their heart.

You say, well, what's wrong with that? God gave the Pharisees the desires of their heart. They desired in their heart the glory of men. God gave them their reward in full and then they went to hell.

If your desires are not right, then God giving you the desires of your heart can be judgment. Turns them over. But He says don't be that way.

And He said in verse 6, But when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. But where's the multimedia presentation? It's not here.

Well, you see, He's going into the inner room. An inner room was a place where people would put their treasure. Why? Because if you dig through the wall of the house on the outside, you're in the house, but you're not in the inner room.

And the inner room usually did not have any windows. It just had a door. And when it was shut, it was pitch black.

He was saying that true worship does not need any carnal, external motivation. And yet that is what our churches are full of. Every sort of thing going on in order to get people to do what they ought to be doing, and they will be doing, if they're truly born again, and that is worship and pray.

He says you should not rely on any external thing. Go in your inner room. Pitch black.

It doesn't mean you have to always pray in a pitch black room, but it does mean this. If you're having to be motivated by something other than just a heart besought with God, then be careful. Be careful.

Also be careful. You could do a lot. You know, a church growth expert could come in here and really soup you guys up a little bit.

There's a lot of things here that could really make worship a lot more attractive. Attractive to whom? To God? Or to carnal men? He says you don't need that. You don't need that.

He goes on also and he says, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Secret prayer. Secret.

All alone. That's where power comes from. All alone.

There is where wisdom comes from. All the things that you need comes from that secret place with God. All battles are won in that secret place with God.

Everything that has to be done, every need you will ever have in your ministry is met right there in that secret place with God. You say, we've got a problem here. We've got a problem there.

Then get in your secret place and stay there until God tells you what to do. Or we've got a need. Then get there until the need is met.

The one who cuts himself off from the arm of the flesh and its help and meets with God alone in the secret place, there's power. There's power. He can and will do anything.

I was reading with Jim Ellis a while back something that he had written. He was quoting a friend of his who said, God delights in vindicating the confidence of His children. That when His children say, no, I will not seek carnal help.

I will not go back to Egypt, that broken reed. I will seek Him. Years ago when I was in Peru and the church started growing and kind of became a thing and everything was all exciting and people were just, it was just amazing.

And a Peruvian pastor came to me, Jesus Hurtado. He sat down in front of me. He said, Paul, your people are full of idolatry.

And I said, what do you mean, sir? Where? He said, I'm looking at it. You're the idol. They got a problem, they come to you.

They need counseling, they come to you. They need this, they need that, they come to you. And what do you do? You open up your Bible, you teach them.

First things first. Go to brother Paul and find the answer. It's idolatry.

He said, when they come to you and ask you, pastor, I've got a question about this, then ask them, what has God shown you in His Word? Well, I haven't looked. Well, then go look. And come back in a week and tell me what you find.

But I don't even know where to look. Okay? Here are several verses. Take them, go home and look them up.

Pray, fast, call out to God. Your first recourse is not man. No matter who you are.

Your first recourse is God. It's always to be God. You go to Him.

And then after you go to Him, you come to the pastor and the pastor says, tell me what God has shown you in His Word. And maybe you'll be off on some things. So then the pastor can step in and help you begin to understand things.

Send you back to seek God again. See, we've always got them seeking us. There's only one God and one mediator between God and man and we are not Him.

Go to God! Go to God! A dear brother in Kansas was telling me about a famous, well, he's not famous to the world, but a famous evangelist to the godly. A very godly man, very godly evangelist. And they were standing there and someone came up to the pastor and said, Pastor, I need to come to you about my salvation.

And the evangelist said, No you don't! Go to God! Now he says, And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetitions as the Gentiles do. For they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Isn't it amazing? I think it was Wimber who started the Vineyard Movement.

Theologically, I'm not with them or with him. I do have a lot more respect for him. But he was talking about the first time he ever went to church.

And he was a total pagan. He didn't even know he couldn't smoke while the preaching was going on. So he walks in the first time he's ever been in a church in his entire life.

And the pastor is at the back door. And the pastor says, How are you doing? He said, I'm doing good, thank you. Well, it's great to have you here.

It really is. If you need anything, just give me a holler. I'd love to talk to you.

Wimber walked in and thought, That's good. And then all of a sudden, the service started and the pastor comes up to the podium and bows his head to pray and said, Our great God and heavenly Father, we come to you now in the name of... And Wimber goes, Hey, what happened to his voice? Why are you talking like that now? He couldn't understand. I'll tell you what was going on.

Religion was going on. Religion. I hear people pray sometimes and their face twists up and their voice changes and they repeat the same phrase about 37,000 times.

He did not say to pray like that. Oh, Jesus, help me, help me, help me, help me, help me, Jesus. Help me, help me, help me, help me, help me, Jesus.

Help me, help me, help me. That's not the way he said to pray. He said, Don't pray like the Gentiles do, which means this, don't pray like people who don't know God.

You're praying to a sovereign God. You're praying to an omniscient God. One of my favorite prayers when all hell is breaking loose around me and I don't know what to do is to find that quiet moment at 3 in the morning and get down on my knees and look up into heaven and say, You know, oh Lord.

You know, it is enough. You're not heard for your many words. You're not heard for your repetition.

We have such an omnipotent, omniscient God. He knows. Lord, do you have some time I'd like to explain to you this issue so that you pretty much know where everything is going right now.

I kind of wish you to put in here also to preachers, when you pray, don't preach pray. Sometimes, let's pray now. The sermon's done.

The preacher says, let's pray. He starts preaching again. Don't do that.

If you're going to pray, pray. If you're going to preach, preach. But don't mix the two.

He says, don't. Be like Gentiles that suppose they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

That ought to instill in us such magnificent peace. Unbelievable peace. My Father knows.

I can go to Him. I can rest in Him. The disciples in the boat.

Jesus asleep. Storm comes up. Frantic.

Frantic. Wild. Fear.

Terror. I would have done the same thing, I'm sure. But what they should have been doing was this.

They should have been sitting there, going. Well, He said we're going to the other side. He didn't say we were going to get halfway there and drown.

So I think everything's going to be okay. But no. Running around.

Frantic. Fearful. Because they had not heard the Word of their God.

People frantic and fearful today because they do not know their God. They may be able to quote all about omniscience and all about Trinity and all about sovereignty, but they've never been in the Book of Psalms in the moment of anguish to find gems that would calm the storm. Pray then in this way.

Isn't it amazing? Catholicism, again, has stole this prayer from us. We won't pray it because they pray it. And they pray it wrongly.

Just like Jesus told them not to pray. He said don't do repetitions. Don't do vain repetitions.

Don't do it. Go home. Say the Lord's Prayer 37 times.

He said no, don't do that. Better than saying the Lord's Prayer, it would be great to say the model prayer. If you want to know how to pray, pray then in this way.

But evangelicals, listen. You want to know how to pray? I need to know how to pray. Let's read a book.

You need to know how to pray? Yeah, read this book. And what Jesus told, He said, do you want to know how to pray? Okay, pray then in this way, our Father who art in Heaven. I use the term psychology here loosely.

But the perfect psychology of prayer is given to us in these lines. What should we be thinking when we approach God as a child of God? Here's the perfect psychology of prayer. Our Father.

Abba Father. Abba Father. The term is an intimate child term.

Daddy. Showing great love. Behold what manner of love.

We should be called the children of God. That type of love. Our Father.

That's the one side. The other side is your Father is in Heaven. He's the Lord of glory.

He's the King of kings. You see, I am not my son's best friend. I'm not supposed to be.

I'm something much higher. I'm his dad. I'm his father.

I love him. And the other one. And the other one.

I love them. I will die for them. I will play with them.

I will take them fishing. But me and Ian and Evan and Rowan don't got our own thing going. I'm their dad.

And they can come to me knowing that I will spill every ounce of blood in my body for them. But at the same time when they come to me, they need to come to me knowing I'm their father, not their buddy. You see.

They can run to me. The moment they open up their eyes, I hope that their hands just shoot straight forward like that. Without a doubt in their mind that their dad's going to run across the room and grab them and hug them and kiss them.

That's what they need to know. But they don't say yeah to me. They don't smack me on the shoulder.

I'm their father. Unless, of course, I give them permission during wrestling time after dinner. I'm reminded of the famous picture, photograph of John Kennedy sitting in the Oval Office.

Most powerful office, most powerful man at the time. And you see from the photograph, you can see the desk, President Kennedy behind it, the awesomeness of the office. And you know where the part of the desk that you can see all the way through where the legs go, where you stick your legs through and there playing is his little son with a toy.

And so here's an office where the greatest men in the world would tremble to have to enter in there and talk to the President of the United States, but there's his little boy playing between his legs. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord high and lifted up and His train filled the temple and above Him stood the seraph, each one having six wings. With two they covered their face, with two they covered their feet, and with two they did fly.

And one cried unto the other, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory and the post of the door moved at the voice of Him who cried. But there's the child of God playing within the folds of the robe.

It's a tension, a tension that has to be held on both sides. Our Father who art in heaven. Now here are three petitions and they're actually, they're one and three, they're three and one.

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done. It's the same thing in a sense, multifaceted, different versions of it, emphasizing different things.

But what we need to see is that the prayer is God worth. The prayer is about God. It's not about you.

So many people wonder all the time, why does God not answer my prayers? But you've got to pray as one who seeks first the kingdom and His righteousness. That's where you've got to begin. Prayer has no meaning apart from the person praying with a heart that desires God's kingdom above everything else.

It goes something like this. Let's say that a man has an illness. A brother, a Christian has an illness.

It weakens him, makes him nauseous. His wife says it makes him mean sometimes. And so he prays, God, heal me.

Heal me. If, if through healing me, Your name will be hallowed in a greater way and Your kingdom will come in a greater way and Your will will be done in a greater way through healing me, then heal my body. But if Your kingdom will come and Your name will be hallowed and Your will will be done through breaking my body into a million pieces, then break away.

That's different, isn't it? That's different. Seek ye first the kingdom and His righteousness. That type of praying.

It's all about the kingdom. It's all about the glory of Christ. It's all about the advancement of His kingdom.

Lord, if You want me to get this new job, and through this new job and this new salary and everything else, I can be more productive in the kingdom, I can use resources in a greater way to do Your will, then give it to me. But Lord, if this job will take me away from You and cause me to hoard and live in luxury, snatch it from me! You see the difference? It's a big difference, isn't it? It's a lot different from name it, claim it, blab it, grab it, isn't it? It's just about Him. Whatever will most advance Your glory, Your kingdom, and Your will, because that's all I care about.

Nothing else matters. Give us this day our daily bread. Why does God... I'm not going to go through all of this now, but I just want to touch on this.

Why does God create need in our lives? Why does God create lack? Boy, I'm never going to get a TV show with this kind of preaching, am I? Why does God create lack in our lives? Why does God bring strong winds that shake us like a fall leaf on a tree into our lives? It's so that we will cry out, give us this day our daily bread. It's to create the most blessed thing He can create in us. Dependence.

And destroy the most horrid, damning thing. Independence. Let me teach you something about discipline.

Most Christians are so wrong on discipline. They believe that discipline comes because you sin. That's only half of it.

Sometimes God disciplines His people when they sin. But remember, the discipline is never punitive. It's redemptive.

It's to restore. It's to help. I do not punish my children.

I do not spank my children punitively to put them in some sort of prison. I do it redemptively to save them from greater evil. But discipline comes in two forms.

One is a believer sins and therefore God disciplines them. But there's another type of discipline. It's more like training.

When I was a young boy, I had very weak legs and my father wanted me to be a good athlete so when we would feed the cattle all the hay, we'd be about a mile from our home and with big rubber boots on and ankle weights on, I would run behind the truck all the way home. Now I hadn't done anything bad. I wasn't being punished for sin.

But my father knew if I was ever going to be anything in athletics, I was going to have to suffer the discipline of training. Sometimes the most righteous people, the most godly people, the most pious people will suffer untold discipline. Why? Because they prayed something they should have never prayed.

Lord, make me like Jesus. When you're young, you pray that because you don't know what you're asking for. You don't.

You need to pray it. You need to mean it. But I can assure you, you don't know what you're asking for.

One of the great hymns of John Newton. I believe it's Todd Murray. Todd Murray just came out with a CD on Newton's.

A lot of Newton's songs that no one knows about. I highly recommend it. And he talks about how he had prayed to the Lord that the Lord would conform him to the image of Christ.

And he thought that the Lord would do that by some great deposit of power and grace coming down from heaven that would rest upon him in a time of prayer and change his life. But instead of that, God opened up the pits of hell. And Newton suffered like you could hardly believe.

To be conformed to the image of Christ is so costly to a man. Some of the men who will die totally unknown and some of the men who will die with their names all over the newspapers of Christianity. The difference between those two men many times is that one of them prayed, God make me like Jesus and the other one said, give me a big ministry.

Make me like Jesus. Okay? Then you may have to die with only 12 people in your church and one of them is the one that shoots you. I want to be like Jesus.

Okay? You'll pass your entire life and no one will recognize your value. I want to be like Jesus. Even your brothers and sisters, your family will think you're mad.

I want to be like Jesus. None of the big religious big shots are going to talk to you after a conference. I want to be like Jesus.

Are you sure? Are you sure? Conformity is more important than ministry. And you can only have biblical ministry to the degree of your conformity. That's why when you look at the qualifications for an elder in 1 Timothy chapter 3, it only says apt to teach and then just about all the rest of it has to do with character.

Conformity to Christ. Do not concern yourself so much with praxis. Concern yourself more with ontology.

We're all concerned about what we do, what we do, what we do. That's praxis. Instead of what we are, what we are, what we are.

Being like Christ. So let's take that and close. Again, it's been absolutely marvelous being here.

Like most of my trips, I've gone from the airport, to the hotel, to the church, to the pastor's house, to the hotel, to the church, and I'll go back to the airport tomorrow. Travel all over the world, but I can assure you it is a very boring life. Please pray for us as we head back tomorrow.

Even though Mark's got to travel tomorrow, he has like about 12 hours of work to do. My wife always kids me, you need to pray for me. She says that my favorite hymn is this, We'll work till Jesus comes, and then we'll work some more.

So pray that we'll rest more, pray more, and be more like Christ. If you're here tonight, and you need to know more about Christ, all throughout this week, we've been speaking about the cross, but tonight I felt like I needed to talk about prayer. You just come and we'll talk.

We'll talk. Let's pray. Father,

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