

Prayer

by Peter Brandon

Peter Brandon's sermon emphasizes the critical role of prayer in the life of a believer, illustrating its importance, nature, and practical applications through biblical examples.

Duration: 36:52

Scripture: Luke 18:1

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the necessity and power of prayer, urging believers to continually seek God's presence and restoration. He illustrates the importance of persistent prayer through the parable of the unjust judge and contrasts the humble prayer of the publican with the self-righteousness of the Pharisee. Brandon highlights that true prayer connects us with God, expressing our weaknesses while drawing on His omnipotent strength. He encourages the congregation to cultivate a fervent prayer life, as it reflects spiritual maturity and dependence on God. Ultimately, he calls for a revival of prayer within the church, stressing that prayer is vital for spiritual growth and community strength.

Transcript

How we need to pray, brothers and sisters, Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, Uphold me with thy free spirit, Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, And sinners shall be converted unto thee. Let's pray that God will restore to us The glory and the profundity of that salvation. I want to share a few thoughts with you on the subject of prayer.

Would you please turn to Luke 18, and we'll read from verse 1. Luke 18, reading from verse 1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, That men ought always to pray, and not to faint, Saying, There was in a city a judge, Which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming She weary me.

That word can be translated, Will assault me. Wycliffe went so far as to say, Strangle me. And one modern, saucy translator, And he may be right, Uses the expression, She will black my eye.

Now can you see the force of the word? And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, And shall not God avenge his own elect, Which cry day and night unto him, Though he bear long with them? I tell you

that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, Shall he find faith on the earth. And he spake this parable unto certain, Some which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, And despised others.

Two men went up into the temple to pray, The one a Pharisee, and the Pharisee stood, And prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, Extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off, Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, But smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you this man went down to his house justified, Rather than the other, For every one that exalted himself shall be abased. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. The Queen was actually visiting a certain part of Africa, And she was moving among people that of course had never seen her before.

Some when they saw her, Felt that they were overawed by her majesty. A little way from that place where the Queen had been, An old African lady went into her house, And she didn't have a door, she pulled down the shutter, And she went to a little wooden chair, And she knelt down, She closed her eyes, And she was speaking to the King of Kings, And the Lord of Lords. Prayer brings men and God together.

Think of that. It expresses human weakness, At the same time omnipotent strength. And probably one of the greatest spiritual exercises, Any person who is a Christian can function, Is that of prayer.

Think now just for a moment, When we close our eyes and we no need to do that, And our spirit is lifted up in true prayer, We come right into the holiest of all. Not in the temple of Solomon, Not in the tabernacle of Bethel, But we come right into the immediate presence of God. Yes, in that tabernacle that the Lord pitched.

And not man. When we get to heaven, We shall be no nearer the Lord than what we are now. All that is between us is the thin layer of our flesh.

When we are absent from the body, We are present with the Lord. Therefore the presence of the Lord is in us and with us. And I want to give now some simple thoughts, Concerning this vital subject of prayer.

If you desire to test the spirituality of any Christian, Or if you want to determine the spirituality of any local church, Go to the prayer meeting. And if you find a healthy number of God's people present, And if you find a group of people that can really lay hold on God in believing prayer, Be sure of this, you are in a spiritual local church. If you want to test the spirituality of a man or a woman, Do not always observe the hours he spends studying the word, Though that is important.

But watch carefully that person's prayer life. Any person that spends prolonged periods in the presence of God, Invariably that man's life or woman's life. Now with that in mind, let me give you my headings, In case I forget them as we go on with our little study.

First of all I want to show to you the importance of prayer. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. When we pray we fall on God.

When we faint, we fall on nothing. We collapse. Then, having looked at the importance of prayer, Let's have a look at the nature of prayer.

What does it basically mean to pray? Then let's look at the condition of prayer. Why is it that God does not answer so many of our prayers? So we must look at the conditions of prayer. And then if there's time, we'll look at the aspects of prayer.

But I doubt whether we shall get to that point Before it's almost the importance of prayer. The first reference to prayer is in Genesis chapter 4. When Seth had a son and his name was Enos. And Enos means frail and mortal.

And then we read this lovely little statement. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord. Therefore you can see that prayer comes from extremity.

Prayer comes from weakness and frailty. And when people realise their weakness and frailty, That's when they begin to really pray. And so we thank God for that first reference of people calling upon the name of the Lord.

Then the torch was handed to Abraham. And he was a mighty intercessor. He prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah.

Unfortunately he lost the battle because of a breakdown in his faith. But in spite of that, he was a mighty man of prayer. And then it was handed, not to his son, but to his grandson.

The torch of prayer, it was given to Jacob. And there in the night watches at Jabbok, he learned to wrestle with the man of God. And he said to the man of God who had touched the hollow of his thigh, I will not let thee go except thou dost bless me.

And his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. That means, note, a prince with God. In other words, in the sanctuary, he had a divine influence with God.

Then from Jacob, the torch was actually handed to Moses. And Moses was a man that knew God more intimately than any other man. God never spoke to him through dreams or through visions, But face to face, heart to heart contact.

And therefore I believe it true to say that Moses was probably one of the greatest men of prayer in the Old Testament. Then from Moses, the torch of prayer was handed to Joshua. And whenever you find Joshua, he is prostrated before the Lord of hosts.

He is not a man that kneels, he is not a man that knows the Lord heart to heart. But here is a man that is constantly prostrated before the Lord. And we are going to look at the brilliance of that posture in a few moments.

From Joshua, we go right the way through the book of Judges. And apart from one or two exceptions, we find a very little of prayer. Until the last of the judges come, a man by the name of Samuel.

And Samuel was one of the great warriors of prayer in scripture. He actually said to Israel that he would not sin against them in prayerlessness. And sometimes we can sin because of the omission of prayer.

And Samuel was a mighty intercessor. Now why? When God is going to raise up a prophet, he will always raise up a woman. And God raised up a woman whose name was Hannah.

And that woman was barren. But she was not prepared to sit down under her barrenness and say this is the will of the Lord. She went into the presence of God with a broken spirit.

And perhaps like Rachel she said give me children else I die. And a child was born through her prayer whose name was Samuel. And do you know what that means? May God raise up many Hannahs, spiritual mothers who become great intercessors.

And then we will have a few Samuels among us. Mighty men of prayer. Then from Samuel the torch of prayer was handed on to David.

And I am so glad that we have the prayers of David in the Psalms. And if ever you want to read thrilling, stirring prayers, read the prayers of David. Here was a man that knew God heart to heart.

Here was a man that could come with all kinds of alternating feelings into the presence of God. And he could pour out his soul to the Lord in believing prayer. Sometimes we find that his prayers are the prayers of confession.

Other times we find they are the prayers of intercession. And sometimes we find that they are political prayers. And other times we find they are prayers of praise.

Where he washes and adores the Lord. But he was a man of prayer. Then from David he handed a half torch.

And Solomon gives us the longest prayer in scripture. But a magnificent prayer. A prophetic prayer.

And unfortunately if only that man had kept praying like Paul prayed without ceasing. His life would have finished with a flame. But he died burnt out.

A dry old cinder. Never die like that. Always pray like me when you are over sixty.

That the Lord will save you from becoming a wicked old man. And that is how poor Solomon finished. Then from Solomon it was handed on to the kings like Esau, Hezekiah, Josiah.

But as we go through the prophets. We find during their reign God raises up outstanding men of prayer. And Elijah was one of them.

And we read he prayed earnestly. Do you know what that means? He prayed in his prayers. Well what does that mean? He prayed and prayed until he became conscious of the presence of God.

And he prayed to such an extent that the very feelings of God were placed in his soul. That is the secret of prayer. We find Elijah praying.

Then we go through the prophets we find Jeremiah. We find Ezekiel. Mighty men of prayer.

In fact we find that all the minor prophets were men of prayer. So can you see when we read the Old Testament. It stands up like a mountain.

That prayer is absolutely vital. But we are not finished. When our Lord begins his ministry his praying.

When the heavens were opened. And the dove rested upon him in pure complacency. And the voice from heaven said this is my beloved son in whom I find all my delight.

Luke tells us the man gospel. That he was praying. And then right at the commencement of his ministry he goes into a mountain.

And he continues all night. In prayer. And then rises up early in the morning.

When he is about to appoint the twelve apostles. What does he do? He spends the night in prayer. When he was transfigured on the holy mount.

What was he doing? Praying. When he was in the garden of Gethsemane. What was he doing? Praying.

And probably there he prayed in agony. And probably there he prayed that high priestly prayer. John.

When he was on the cross what was he doing? Praying. When he was raised from the dead and he was about to go into heaven. What was he doing? Praying and blessing his people.

Ah. Now we must ask the question. He has been in heaven for two thousand years.

We know he is there as a great high priest. What is he doing? Listen to what the scripture says. He is able to say fully and completely all that come unto God by him.

Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us. Beloved. Where would we be apart from the prayers of the Lord Jesus? And then when we go through the book of the Acts.

What do we find? Acts chapter one. They are praying with the women. Acts chapter two.

They are continued steadfastly in prayer. Acts chapter three. They go up to the temple at the hour of prayer.

Acts chapter four. When they had prayed the place was shaken. Acts chapter five.

Ananias and Sapphira were probably judged in the presence of prayer. Acts seven. Stephen goes into the presence of God praying.

Acts eight. When the Samaritan believers became Christians. The apostles came and prayed over them.

And they received the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter nine. The moment Saul is converted.

It says behold he prayeth. And he never stopped. And probably entered heaven praying.

Acts chapter ten. Peter is praying. Cornelius is praying.

And they supernaturally meet. It's all prayer. But we are not finished.

If you read the Ephesian epistle carefully. It's the epistle of prayer. Chapter one.

Right through to chapter two. If you read carefully. It's the prayer of the apostle.

Chapter three. Right on to the end of chapter four. What is it? It's the prayer of the apostle.

And he didn't just say God bless the Ephesians. If you read his prayer. You will see the depth of his intercession.

But we are not finished yet. When you come to the revelation. You will find this.

That the golden bowls are opened around the throne. And when those golden vials are opened. And these are not the vials of judgment.

That are going to be poured out upon the earth. What's in these golden bowls? The odour. The incense.

Of the prayers of the saints. And beloved when the Lord Jesus comes. And we are going up.

We are probably be saying. Even so. Come Lord Jesus.

Now can you see. Telescopically. The importance that the bible puts on prayer.

In fact one reason why the apostles appointed deacons was. That they might give themselves to prayer. And to the ministry of the word.

Now unfortunately allow me to say this. As assemblies. We have specialised in the teaching of the word.

And that's correct. But we have become pygmies. In prayer.

Now may the Lord revive. The spirit of fervent prayer. Now what is the nature of prayer.

Now would you turn with me please. To Colossians. Chapter 4. And verse 12.

I think probably. This is the best verse in the bible. That gives us the true understanding.

Of prayer. Epaphras who is one of you. A servant or a slave of Christ.

Saluted you. Always labouring fervently for you in prayer. That she may stand perfect.

And complete. In all the will of God. Now you will notice.

It was not an evangelistic prayer. It was a pastoral prayer. And he was praying for the saints.

And he was praying that they might stand perfect. And complete. In all the will of God.

Now if God raises up. In your local church. Some epaphrases.

And lady epaphrases. If I may put it like that. Who have the same spirit of prayer.

You will find many. In that local church. Standing perfect.

And complete in all the will of God. Now what does the word labour. Fervently mean.

Or as it is put here. Labouring fervently. Well the other day.

And I looked at my Newbery. And I noticed that in the. Side page.

He put very carefully. The word striving. So I looked at my lexicon.

To see if he was right. And of course he was right. The connotation of the word.

Could mean on some occasions. Striving. Therefore what does the word mean.

It comes from the word of a runner. He is going to run the marathon. And he has been running round and round.

For almost two or three hours. He is coming to the four last laps. And he is feeling tired.
And he moves out of the box. And there is just three runners with him. And there is the post before him.
And when he wins. He gets the garland. And he fixes his eye upon the tape.
And he tells his body to do something. It doesn't want to do. It's aching.
His thighs are hurting. And he strains every muscle. He exhausts every nerve.
And he says you must do it. And he runs past them. And hits the tape.
When this man Epaphras prayed. He had an objective in mind. The saints of God.
That they might stand perfect. And complete. In all the will of God.
Mother. Father. Have you got an unconverted son.
That is worrying you. Is there someone in your family. That is constantly.
Tantalizing your spirit. Is there something in the assembly. That is disturbing you.
Get in the presence of God. And fix your mind. On that one thing.
That striving. I put him down. And thank God for the word.
Then I went to a translation. That is very accurate. But very hard to understand.
JND. The new translation. And I picked it up.
And to my surprise. I noticed that Mr Darby. Used the word combating.
So to my lexicon. I went. And I looked up the root word.
Surely on certain occasions. The word could be used. Combating.
And I thought what does he mean. Surely when we pray. We do not combat with heaven.
Then it clicked. We wrestle not against. Flesh and blood.
But against principalities. And powers. And that word principality.
Means. Lord among demons. Now please see this.
If you saw here. A person demon possessed. It would be a terrible sight.
Especially if you saw the manifestation. But they are only ordinary demons. The church of God.
Is not being attacked by ordinary demons. We are being attacked. By the Lord of demons.
That is why we are under fire. And so much trouble. Now what this man was doing.
In the presence of God. Forgive the drama. But this is what the word means.

He was going into the presence of God. And he was pulling down. The strongholds of Satan.
Breaking through into spiritual. Light from all the darkness. Disturbing the hordes of hell.
Beloved we have lost that hour. Do you know in my missions. I always look for two or three.
Intercessors. And I tell them. Don't come in the meeting.
Go in the back room. And start praying. And when you find a group of people.
Who are mighty intercessors. And the reason why. There are so many broken marriages.
So many broken assemblies. Is this. We are being attacked.
Forgive the ungrammatical statement. But I want it like that. Because you see the force.
I thank Mr. Then would you believe it. I picked up Mr. Now every time I use. Anything that belongs to.
I touch him. With electric fingers. You say what do you mean by that.
Well he did not believe. In the deity of Christ. And whenever a man doesn't believe.
In the deity of Christ. Whatever he writes. Whatever he says.
So I said Lord. I am not understanding. But I noticed that he uses the word.
Wrestling. So back to my lexicon. I went.
And to my surprise. I noticed that the word. If made a little elastic.
Could be used wrestling. And I thought well what does it mean. Wrestling.
And then my mind went to dear Jacob. What a night. He was wrestling to get away.
From the man of God. To his side. And said I will not let thee go.
Except thou bless me. It speaks of thee. Now I know we are creatures of time.
And I know we all get tired. At least I do. But that old clock.
Is the worst enemy. To a holy ghost prayer meeting. I have found this over and over again.
Just when we are going. To break through. Into real believing prayer.
Someone will give a hint. Now there is such a thing in scripture. As prayer and fasting.
Now I am going to tell you what I don't mean. There is no such thing. In the New Testament.
As a Levitical fast. But there comes a time. When a group of people.
Will lay aside. All the necessities of life. And all the luxuries of life.
And they'll say this. Lord we are so burdened. We are going to.

That's wrestling. Oh that men and women. Might do that.

May I call upon our sisters. Perhaps in your local church. There might be problems and difficulties.

Don't talk about them. Because you'll get depressed. And I've been like that.

Just two or three of you. Get into a home. And begin wrestling in prayer.

And God can mightily. Use. The prevailing prayer.

I know you young people. I know how you feel. It's as dead as a doughnut.

I've heard them said. Don't grumble about the local church. What do you do? Get alone.

Five or six of you. And start praying in love. For that local church.

And pray through. And God can hear. And answer.

And bless your prayers. So I said. In a very half hearted way.

Thank you for that Lord. And then would you believe it. I picked up Dr. Young.

Now his force were on the word. And I was almost afraid to look at him. In case he spoilt it for me.

And I opened Dr. Young. And I looked. And my eyes nearly popped out of my head.

He uses the word agonizing. Agonizing. Agonizing.

And immediately my mind went to the garden of Gethsemane. And in my mind I saw the Lord Jesus kneeling by that stone. Praying.

As he sees the whole matter of sin. And all it's root causes. As he sees the source of it all.

All the power of Satan. As he saw himself becoming a great universal substitute for the sin of the whole world. Blood like sweat poured from his forehead.

But we shall never be able to pray like that. That's the prayer of death. But he broke through into victory.

He was going to taste death. For every man. It's a very strange thing.

But all the words that Paul uses for pain. Do you know what they're called? Not death pain. But here it comes.

Birth pain. All the groanings that we have in Romans 8. Hallelujah. Are the groanings of birth pains.

When he prayed that Christ might be formed in the Galatians again. He prayed with birth pains. Now what does it mean? Supposing we are walking along the road and we hear someone groaning.

And four days later we come past the house. And out comes four men in black. And a coffin.

And some broken hearted relatives. Ah we say. The pains that we heard.

And if we were in England. We would take our hat off. And bow our heads in respect for the corpse.

But supposing we were going down that road again. And we heard violent pains. And we came back in ten days time.

And out comes a man. And in a little baby. You see they weren't death pains.

They were birth pains that brought life. Hallelujah. We shall never pray.

The prayer of death. But we can pray the prayer of birth pains. That means we can come into the presence of God.

And we can have so much spiritual agony. That there is real prayer of birth pains. Do you know I had to go to Africa to see that.

And I remember being in prayer with godly elders. And for the first time in my life. I saw men pray.

With birth pains. It was holy. It was awesome.

They were in touch with God. But don't throw away your authorized. We don't use the word laboring fervently.

But it's one great word. And it means to be stretched out in prayer. Do you remember Elijah and Elisha.

When they were confronted with their children. Both of them they went into the presence of God. And they did something that seemed quite foolish.

They stretched themselves out upon the child. So that they were thoroughly identified with it. And I often wondered why they did that.

Do you know what the word means? They were laboring fervently. They were stretched out. But because we have come to the end of ourselves.

Our extremity is your opportunity. And in came God with a resuscitation. Beloved there comes a time when we are stretched out.

Have you ever been like that? There's a burden. You're praying for a son. He's away from God.

His life is broken. And you go into the presence of God. You can't kneel.

You're just stretched out. That's prayer. That's prayer.

My time is up. Pray with the disciples. Lord, teach us to pray.

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