

God Answers Prayer

by Pierre Chassion

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Scripture: James 1:5, Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, 1 John 5:14, Luke 18:1, Acts 12:5, Acts 4:31, Romans 10:17, Job 22:27, Psalm 34:17

Topics: "Power of Prayer", "Confidence in God's Faithfulness"

Description

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Transcript

I'm going to read from James chapter 1 verse 5, and this was a passage that we had already talked about, I believe, last time we were together when we looked at the subject of prayer again, when we looked at hindrances to prayer. I want to just mention it again tonight for a few minutes and think about what is said here in terms of having a confidence in prayer. So maybe before we start, we should pray.

Jonathan, do you want to lead us in prayer? Father, I come to you in Jesus' name, and I thank you, Father, that we can come together as brothers and sisters in Christ and learn about you, Father, and dive into your word, Father. Yes, Lord. And I thank you that we can come together as brothers and sisters and pray together, Father.

I pray that you would help us to throw away all those hindrances. If it's sin that's stopping us to coming to you, Father, I pray that you squash that sin, Father, and we would turn away from it. Yes, Lord.

Father, if it's any love in our life that's preventing us from putting you first, Father, I pray that we would put you first in our life and that nothing would compete against you, Father. I pray that we, as Christians, would have a true, holy habit of praying to you, Father, that we wouldn't squeeze you into our schedule, but our schedule be squeezed into praying to you, Father, that we would be truly praying without ceasing. I pray that you would transform our hearts and our lives as we continually fellowship with you and pray to

you.

We pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Yes, James 1 and 5 says, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given. But let him ask in faith with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man suppose he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. When you read that, and you look at the statements, double-minded, unstable in all his ways, says don't have any doubt whatsoever in what you're praying for, is there a lot of things that you pray for where you're really not sure whether that's going to happen or not? So does that make you the double-minded person and completely unstable in all your ways? I wouldn't think so.

Well, why doesn't it? It says it right here, doesn't it? Is that a discouraging verse? If it's that's the case, wouldn't it be kind of like, Okay, so the man who cried out, I think I referred to this last week, the man who cried out, Lord, I believe help my unbelief. Was he lying? No, he wasn't. So why does he say this here? If you have no doubting, if you doubt, you're like a wave of the sea tossed, driven and tossed by the wind.

Don't let that man suppose he'll receive anything from the Lord. Very strong words, wouldn't you say? Like almost cutting words, really, when you stop and think about prayer. You know, I used to read this and it was usually, it often troubled me until I saw the context of it.

So how does the context help in this passage? Any ideas? How would the context help? I'll read it again. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given. But let him ask in faith with no doubt.

Hi, grab yourself a chair and come and join us. Yeah. Okay, so we'll come back just to think about this for a minute.

I'm in James chapter one. And I just wanted to bring out where it speaks about if you don't ask in faith, if you ask with doubting, you're like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind, you're not going to receive anything from the Lord. How can you have no doubt whatsoever in what you're praying for? Tell me what would give you the foundation to be able to pray for something without any doubt at all.

Okay, because God promised it. Because God said something. And what did he say in this passage about faith? This is the context of what's being asked here.

Let him ask in faith, but what was it you're praying for? To ask for wisdom. And what's the promise? We will get it. You're guaranteed to get it if you ask in faith.

Is that what it says? You're not going to get it if you don't ask in faith. Is that what it says? But you're guaranteed to get it and that you'll actually get it, wisdom, liberally. You'll get more than enough wisdom.

Now, if that's the case, why is it that you can have such perfect faith in asking for this? Jonathan gave the answer. Why is it? Because it's in the Word of God. Because God has said that it is so.

Now, there are a lot of things that you could be praying about, but you're not sure what God's perfect will is in that situation. And in that case, you can say, Lord, not my will, but your will be done. Lord, direct me, show me.

I can be seeking God for that. But I want you to know that there's a great foundation for prayer, and it's found in the revelation of the Word of God. How does faith come to us? It's not saying in Jesus.

It's said by hearing. Okay, what's that? It's said by hearing the Word. Faith comes by hearing.

Where's that? That's in Romans chapter 10, verse 17. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God. So, if God has laid something in his Word, and that is a truth, then I can have perfect faith in what God has said.

If I am saying to God, Lord, I don't know if you will answer this prayer, because I'm not sure what you will do. And God has already said clearly, this is what I will do. Then, you see how I double-minded? You see how unstable I am now? Because I am no longer believing the truth that God has already revealed.

There are many things that you don't know about future events, about circumstances, whatever it is. There's a movement called the Word of Faith movement. And the Word of Faith movement says if you name it, you speak it, then you can claim it.

So, the foundation that they are going on is if you declare it, then it will happen. That is false. That is not true.

I can declare whatever I want, but it's not going to happen unless it is in the way, or in the will of God. And that's where a great error can begin to happen, where you start naming and claiming what is not yours to name or claim. But you can definitely name and claim that which God's Word has clearly spoken, where you know that it is in the will of God.

Now, sometimes there are questions of interpretation over what's been said. But by and large, there are a great many promises in God's Word that are already laid down that you can say, yes, Lord, I can come to you. And there's no need or any room for unbelief in what has been promised.

And I should be praying. So, in some sense, I would encourage all of us to begin to grow in certain prayer, where we are praying according to the will of God. And this is a great one.

I think it's incredible. I mean, wisdom is something that you need every day. You need wisdom in your workplace.

You need wisdom in your parenting. You need wisdom in your husbands and wives and how they treat each other. You need wisdom in how to walk in this world.

You need wisdom in knowing, you know, right paths for your life. I mean, what a foundational prayer it is to ask for wisdom. It really is, because wisdom is the application of knowledge.

And without it, wisdom is such a fundamental issue of life. So he speaks about the basis of how do I go ahead? What do I do? You may not know, well, should I move to Timbuktu or should I stay over here? You may not know what to do in that situation. But what you know you can do is ask God for wisdom and that he will liberally give it to you.

So do you see what I'm getting at? In terms of praying in the will of God is not a narrow door. It is a wide door, but it will only become a wide door to us if we read the word of God and we believe the word of God. So that if I ask for wisdom, God will liberally give it to me.

And I don't have to be afraid that he won't, that he will leave me in the dark when it comes to wisdom. He'll liberally give and he doesn't rebuke you for it. He doesn't look away from you for it.

He gives liberally and without reproach and it will be given. Isn't it great? The promises of God. So start thinking about looking through the word of God for the promises of God and praying in the promises of God.

Because you know that you're on ground where you will get what you've asked for. If you ask anything according to his will, we know that he hears us and we know we have the petitions that we've desired of him, 1 John 5. So isn't that exciting? I think it's tremendous. I know I touched on this last week, but I just want to bring it back out because I think it is such a foundational truth for prayer and it can change our prayer life dramatically.

You probably will discover you're more on the hit and less on the miss side of things in prayer, which is a pretty good way to go, I would say. You might even hit a home run once in a while. Because as you begin to know the character and the truth of the word of God, you begin to know your God and that will begin to spill over into these uncertain areas of prayer.

You'll have a greater certainty of what God's will and way will be in many of the circumstances where at present you may have uncertainty. But if you bypass the word, you bypass the truth and the promises of God and the assurances of prayer there, you're not going to get to the place often where you're going to be accurate in prayer and powerful in prayer in many of the other areas that could have some uncertainty to it. The better you get to know your God, the more effective you will discover the rest of your prayer life being.

This is the foundation of effective prayer. It is knowing God's will and praying in the will of God. In James 5, 16, another classic passage where he says, confess your faults to one another, pray for one another, you may be healed.

And then he says this, the effective and fervent prayer of a righteous man counts for much. Then he uses Elijah as an example. And I really want to focus on what he says next in this.

Mind you, effective prayer, that's what we want, right? Effective prayer is according to the will of God. So if that's the case, then start with what the word of God says and put your prayer life there and let, you know, not that you don't stop praying about all these other things and the salvation of loved ones and all kinds of other circumstances that we can be praying to God for, but make sure that we are laying the foundations of our prayer life in the truth, the revealed truth of the will and the way of God. And we will discover effective prayer in a greater way.

And so Elijah prayed and he prayed fervently. We know that because we get the example of him going up on that mountain and praying and continuing to pray. There was a fervency in his prayer, but he was praying in the will of God.

How do we know that he was praying in the will of God when he prayed for rain? God already revealed it to him. God had already revealed it to him and he was praying for it to take place, which is kind of amazing. I think, you know, he was, he was cooperating with God and being the tool that God would use to bring the rain that God had already told him that would come.

Because God wants to involve us in the whole process of whatever he's doing. And he usually does things through prayer. So we want to be in cooperation, in activity with God, being effective and fervent in prayer.

And then the qualification here is of a righteous man, a righteous person. Well, do you qualify? Why would you qualify? You're nodding your head. Why would you? You have the righteousness of Christ.

You can come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain help in time of need. Not in your own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Jesus. We don't have any righteousness of our own.

All our righteousness is found in Christ. Now that righteousness should translate into right living, shouldn't it? I mean, if there's any righteousness of Christ within me, there ought to be righteousness being lived out in our lives. But that's all from Christ too.

That's all from him as we yield to him. But I wanted to just notice and to encourage you. He says, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.

Why did they say that? Why did the spirit of God want us to know that? It's possible for all of you. Yes, it's possible for any one of us. There's this mentality that can come where, oh yeah, but that was George Muller.

That was Spurgeon. That was Elijah. That was et cetera.

But he says, no, no, he's just like you and me. That's what it says. Elijah was just like you and me.

So that is doing something here, not trying to take Elijah down, but in a sense to lift you up and say, this is your privilege too. It's your privilege to walk in the will of God, pray in the will of God, and discover that your effective and fervent prayer will count for much. And I think that's pretty exciting, wouldn't you say? And then he gives the example of Elijah's prayer, that it wouldn't rain and then that it would rain.

But it was all in the way and the will and the revealed will of God to Elijah because he was walking with God. Walk with him and we discover the privilege of prayer. So in one sense, there's almost like two foundations in here.

One is the revealed will of God. And the other is the revealed working of God when we walk in the spirit, when we are in close communion with God. But I want you to know this.

You will not have this, this close communion, this working of the spirit in your life if you ignore what God has already revealed. There are many that are looking for the spirit to say and do and whatever, with a choice to ignore, hey, what does God say already in his word? He takes the revealed, he takes the word and he reveals his will often through that. So that was just a little bit of an introduction in prayer tonight.

And I want to, I'm taking longer than I thought I would, but I want to move from there to look at some examples of answered prayer. But I do want to encourage you that with the context of asking in faith without wavering is in the absolutely clear revealed will of God. So that you don't feel like, okay, I don't know exactly.

So how do I pray with the kind of faith that gets the answer? And if I don't, then there's no point in my praying. This is in the context of the revealed will of God in his word. So Peter lands in prison in the book of Acts and he gets there because Herod wanted him dead and he had actually planned to execute him the next day.

In Acts 12, 5, Peter was kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. So here's a situation where they're crying out to God for Peter. Now, at this point, I couldn't say that they had perfect faith and perfect confidence.

And probably the reason why I can say they probably didn't is why? Rhoda didn't recognize him and nobody believed that it was him at the door, even though they had prayed for his deliverance, right? You know, they weren't, they didn't say, oh, just like we knew you were going to show up at the door knocking here, Peter. No, they didn't. They said it can't be Peter because he's in jail.

What we were just praying for. So even there, there is the example here that they didn't know completely what the will of God was in the matter, but they were still going to pray and ask God. And you can do that.

Don't be discouraged at doing that. And you can ask the Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. But all through that, you can be asking God, reveal your will and your way to me in these matters.

Give me wisdom and understanding and as we do. But anyway, we know that the answer to prayer was dramatic. Herod was about to bring him out that night.

Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. That's pretty well locked up. You I would say, wouldn't you? Now, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the prison.

He struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, arise quickly. His chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, gird yourself, tie on your sandals.

And so he did. And he said to him, put on your garment and follow me. So he went out and followed him and did not know that what was done by the angels was real.

But he thought he was seeing a vision. So as far as Peter was concerned, wow, this is awesome. I'm having this vision of walking out of this prison.

He didn't even think it was real himself, right? And when they were past the first and the second guard post, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. And they went out and went down to one street. And immediately the angel departed from him.

And when Peter had come to himself, he said, now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and has delivered me from the hand of Herod from all the expectation of the Jewish people. So when he considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

And when she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness, she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, you are beside yourself. Yet she kept insisting that it was so.

So they said, well, it's his angel. Whatever they mean by that, his ghost, maybe they thought they had already been killed, whatever. They said it's a vision, basically.

Now, Peter continued knocking all this while. Peter's knocking on the door. I'm here, let me in.

So finally, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Oh, God answered prayer. Imagine that, right? So you could say, well, you know, they might have been praying, Lord, have Peter come and knock on this door, delivered, who knows.

But they were certainly praying for Peter that he would be delivered. And when he was delivered, they didn't believe it. So, but motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord brought him out of prison and go tell these things to James and to the brothers and be part of went to another place.

So as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, but what had become of Peter when he heard it searched for him and not found him. He examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

So this is what happens. God answered prayer in a powerful way. And I just want us to maybe look at a few stories of answered prayer to encourage you to grow in your prayer life, like to take prayer seriously in your experience.

So I want to talk about George Mueller. I don't know if you're going to look into church history. George Mueller lived in the early 1800s and he was a man who he kept a diary of his prayer life.

And he was so meticulous with everything that he did, even his the giving, if anybody gave, even if it was anonymous, he wanted to know the exact amount. And he said, I will never reveal your name, but I want you to be receipted. So you have evidence that I have, that money has come to me.

And he kept an exact record of everything that was done with it. So there could be no question that Mueller was doing anything on his own. In Mueller's lifetime, he received about 1.5 million pounds, which would be worth about a hundred million pounds today, which would be a hundred million pounds is, well, it used to be a pound was around \$4.

I think it's around \$2 now. I'm not sure, but yeah. \$200 gives you 115 pounds.

\$196, I should say, Canadian gives you 115 pounds. 115 pounds. Okay.

So not quite double, but somewhere around that. So if \$200 million, you would say would be, you know, a fair amount of change even today, \$200 million. And he received that much money and he never asked for one penny from anyone.

Not once. He just asked God. That was his principle.

That's his founding principle. What did he do with all this money? Over his time of experience, one figure that I read was 10,024 orphans that he looked after. Another figure said 18,000.

I'm not sure. It sounds like the 10,024 is so accurate, probably accurate, because he kept meticulous records. He provided for these orphans.

And every child who left his orphanage in Bristol was able to read and write, left with a guaranteed job, as well as an allowance for clothing, which was a stark contrast to the harsh workhouse conditions of the era. This was George Mueller. And it was all by prayer.

He prayed in everything that would happen. Why did he build his orphanage in the first place? This is what he says. Why? It was to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large and before the world a proof that he has not in the least changed.

That is God. And this seemed to me best done by the establishment of an orphan house. It needed to be something which could be seen even by the natural eye.

Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith obtained without asking any individual the means for establishing and carrying on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciousness of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the orphan house. I certainly did, from my heart, desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of these poor children, bereaved of both parents.

It was one of the conditions. It wasn't like single moms or single dads. They had to have lost both parents, be completely destitute, and have no other recourse.

Bereaved of both parents and seek, in other respects, with the help of God to do them good for this life. I also particularly long to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God, but still the first and primary object of the work, and still is, that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without anyone being asked by me or my fellow laborers, whereby it may be seen that God is faithful still and hears prayers still. Amazing that he would take this bold step and do it publicly for the purpose of declaring and witnessing to the world.

And he did. He received, when he died, I mean, all of England mourned over him. And thousands of orphans followed that coffin down the street, who were once orphans, once destitute, whose lives had been changed.

And mighty works of God happened amongst those children in coming to Christ and in walking with God. The transformation that the Reformation, not only the Reformation, but the presence of the gospel in England with men like Muller and others, men who came like Spurgeon, caused something to happen in England that is in stark contrast to what happened in France. In France, you had the French Revolution, which was atheistic in its foundations and absolutely bloody and horrific what it did.

In England, you had the gospel. And because of the gospel, the lot of the common man and the orphans and the poor was radically changed. Even in the middle of the Industrial Revolution and all the upset that it brought and the unemployment that it brought, the gospel brought about a transformation without a revolution.

And it brought the comparison, if you look at the French Revolution and you look at the Industrial Revolution in England, and you can see the difference is incredible. But it's because of the gospel. It's because of men like Muller who revealed Christ.

And even much of the nobility became converted during this era, where in France, it just became an absolute debacle, where people were beheaded and violent. Men like Voltaire, who was an avowed atheist, and Robichaud and these men were violent men with no mercy or grace in their hearts whatsoever. I want to look at a couple of other examples of Muller and some of them you've heard before,

I'm sure, but nevertheless, I'm still going to read them.

In November of 1844, he says, I began to pray the conversion of five individuals. I prayed every day without a single intermission, whether sick or in health, on land or on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be. So he began to pray for five people that were friends of his.

18 months elapsed for the first of the five was converted. So a year and a half in, he saw one of the five converted. I thanked God and prayed on for the others.

Five years elapsed, and then the second one was converted. I thanked God for the second and prayed on for the other three. Day by day, I continued to pray for them, and six years passed before the third was converted.

I thanked God for the three and went on and prayed for the other two. These two remained unconverted. Thirty-six years later, he wrote that the other two, sons of one of Mueller's friends, were still not converted.

He wrote, but I hope in God, I pray on and look for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be. In 1897, 52 years after he began to pray daily, without interruption, for these two men, they were finally converted.

But it was after Mueller had died. The reason why we know this is because he kept records of everything that he prayed for. He wrote it down.

Mueller understood what Luke meant when he introduced a parable that Jesus told about prayer. Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18.1 Are you praying for a loved one? Pray.

Pray every day. Don't stop praying. You find these things encouraging? Yeah.

So here's another little story with Mueller. Charles Inglis, the well-known evangelist, relates this following remarkable incident. When I first came to America 31 years ago, I crossed the Atlantic with the captain of a steamer who was one of the most devoted men I ever knew.

And when we were off the banks of Newfoundland, he said to me, Mr. Inglis, the last time I crossed here was five weeks ago. It wasn't very long before. One of the most extraordinary things happened that has completely revolutionized the whole of my Christian life.

Up to that time, I was one of your ordinary Christians. We had a man of God on board, George Mueller of Bristol. I had been on that bridge for 22 hours and never left it.

I was startled by someone tapping me on the shoulder. It was George Mueller. Captain said he, I've come to tell you that I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.

This was Wednesday. Now, Mueller handed off the work of the orphanage in the last part of his life. And for 17 years, he traveled the world to declare the faithfulness of God in prayer.

He felt it was a calling of God on his life to reveal how faithful God was. So he was on his way to Quebec to actually have a meeting for that purpose. And so he had said, I have to be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.

And this was Wednesday. So the captain said to him, it is impossible. Very well, if your ship can't take me, Mueller said, God will find another means of locomotion to take me.

I have never broken an engagement in 57 years. Well, I would willingly help you, said the captain, but how can I? I am helpless. He said, let us go down to the chat room and pray.

I look at this man and I thought to myself, what lunatic asylum could the man have come from? I never heard of such a thing. Mr. Mueller, I said, do you know how dense this fog is? No, he replied. My eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God.

Oh, that God would cause us to see that in the midst of whatever fog you're in, whatever trouble you're in, whatever trial you're in to look beyond the fog and see God. My eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God who controls every circumstance of my life. Does he control every circumstance of yours? Does it feel like it sometimes? No.

He went down on his knees and he prayed one of the most simple prayers. I thought to myself, well, that would suit a children's class where the children were not more than eight or nine years of age. The burden of his prayer was something like this.

Oh Lord, if it is consistent with thy will, please remove this fog in five minutes. You know, the engagement you made for me in Quebec on Saturday, and I believe that it is your will. When he finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray.

First he said, you don't believe that God will do it. And second, I believe he has done it. So what's the point of praying anymore? And there's no need whatever for you to pray about it.

I looked at him and George Mueller said this, Captain, I have known my Lord for 57 years, and there has never been a single day that I failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain, and open the door and you will find that the fog is gone. I get up and the fog was gone.

And on Saturday afternoon, George Miller was in Quebec. Now that's remarkable, isn't it? Yeah. It's great to think this.

Now remember, George Mueller was a man with like passions as us. Yes, he was a giant man in prayer, but he was like us, just like Elijah was like us. May we be encouraged to explore prayer a lot deeper and richer than what we have.

Near the end of his life, Mueller calculated 50,000 distinct answers to prayer, almost two a day after his conversion in 1825. When he didn't pray, he failed. Instead of taking time to pray before one trip, despite knowing that he should, he chatted with believers until it was time to leave.

Consequently, he found himself unable to speak to anyone in the coach about Christ or even to pass out tracts as was his custom. He was constantly witnessing for Jesus. But he said, I neglected prayer and the result was it was barren.

Good lesson for you and I. How often do we neglect prayer? How often do we neglect this time, that time with God and what the results of it are? When Mueller did pray, he frequently testified that God answered in marvelous ways. In December of 1857, a boiler in one of the orphanages began to leak. It had to be repaired.

But during the work, there was no heat. With no heat and the small children would suffer. A day was set for repairs and then a bleak north wind set in.

Mueller asked the Lord to stop the north wind and give the workers a mind to work. The wind veered to the south and unsolicited, the workers volunteered to work all night to finish the job. As Mueller confirmed daily, even the wind obeys God.

So I think that those are great examples for us to think about. I have another one here and this is Hudson Taylor. This gives you a little more background probably than you've read in Hudson Taylor's *Spiritual Secret*.

When Hudson was 15 years old, his father determined it was time for the boy to gain a wider experience in life. His father took up employment at a bank and it was in this environment he first encountered people who openly mocked the Christian faith. He had been brought up in a Christian home and he had, you know, read the Bible, prayed with the rest of them.

He soon joined them in scoffing and in swearing. The job also opened his eyes to wealth and those who live to accumulate it and to enjoy it. He found himself drawn to money and to the pleasures it could afford.

His spiritual life was languished. He lost interest in prayer and in reading the Bible. When weakening eyes eventually forced him to resign, he returned to his father's shop in a state of deep spiritual crisis.

James attempted to help his son but was often too harsh and impatient. The crisis deepened. These were difficult days as Hudson, now 17, found himself despondent, short-tempered, inwardly and at times outwardly rebelling against his father's strict authority.

During a short holiday that took her away from the family home, she felt, this is his mother, and I think her name is Amelia, yeah. She felt compelled to increase the length and the earnestness of her prayers. One day that compulsion grew to such a degree she determined to pray for her son until she came to a sense of assurance that God would save him.

She locked herself in her room and for hours pleaded that God would extend mercy to Hudson and then, all of a sudden, she believed that God had answered her prayer. Her heart turned from pleading to praise and she worshipped God that he had indeed saved Hudson. Meanwhile, Hudson had been at home, bored and discontent.

He began looking for something to do. He wandered into his father's library and though he pulled book after book from the shelf, he found nothing of interest and finally he spotted a tract, a little gospel tract titled *Poor Richard*. He read the story and came to the simple words, the finished work of Christ.

In that very moment, Hudson understood that Christ had done all that was necessary for salvation and the only right response was to accept that work by faith. Right there, he fell to his knees, committed his life to the Lord and promising to serve him forever and he soon learned that he was on his knees praising God for his salvation and his mother was doing the very same thing, though many miles away. A few days later, he and his mother reunited.

He immediately exclaimed, I have some news to tell you. But before he could say anything more, she replied, I know what it is. You have given yourself to God.

She explained that for days she had already been rejoicing in his salvation. And here's a man that changed the work. Here's a man that so respectfully used money when once he abused it, his life was completely transformed.

He became the founder of the China Inland Mission. Hundreds of missionaries spread all over China, trusting God for all of that. But it was his mother's prayer that brought him to that place.

So, yeah, I want to encourage you to pray. God does answer prayer. Let's walk with him.

Let's have an intimacy with him. Let's not let whatever the pressures and extremities of life and the problems and the trials that can be heaped upon us keep us from growing in prayer. If you will not grow in prayer, then you will not grow.

I believe that. And I've discovered that for myself. I'd say in the last few months I have discovered there's a greater need for me to grow in prayer, far greater.

And it has shifted my dependence away from myself more and more on him. More to go. But I am thankful for that much.

And I have seen some of the results of it already in my life. And it is a blessing. It is a great blessing to discover nothing happens except by prayer.

So I can prepare the best message. And it can be clear and it can be easily understood and all of that. And I can depend on the fact that I have the message.

But now what I'm doing is I'm crying out to God, Lord, it's not the message. Yes, you use your word. But I need this to be bathed in prayer.

And I need you to speak. I need you to touch hearts and touch lives and change. And a greater confidence has grown in me because there's confidence in the message.

And there's confidence in myself and my abilities. It's a misplaced confidence. My confidence has to be in the Lord.

So I can attest that I've experienced answered prayer in this. A greater dependence upon God. It's something that I've been asking God for.

And yeah, more prayer about every meeting and every issue that I have to do. I'm seeking God. I'm bathing that in prayer because I know that if God doesn't work, it doesn't matter.

Doesn't matter. Words fall to the ground. But the Holy Spirit takes truth and he does something with it.

Now, I suppose asking if anybody has incidents of answered prayer after reading George Muir's and Hudson Taylor's mother, you might feel a little intimidated and say, well, you know, I don't know if I have anything as dramatic as any of that. But God does answer prayer. And yeah, has there been anything recently in your life where you've seen a vivid answer to prayer, putting you on the spot? I've been praying for my sister, and she's watching The Chosen.

So maybe through watching the movie Chosen, maybe there'll be something in there that fits her. Yeah, that's a start for sure. There's plenty of scripture that's in there.

Definitely. We will pray for her again tonight. Anything else? The night that we laid hands, and that's just a few weeks ago.

And that was a definite never came back. And you were in excruciating pain. That's remarkable, isn't it? Yeah.

So yeah, let's keep praying. When we were in Dingwall just a month ago, we prayed for an individual, more than a month ago, whose life was a complete wreck. And we laid hands and prayed for him.

And I felt God was in that prayer. I knew that God was going to do something in that young man's life. And right now he's clean.

He's being, I'm expecting more. I'm expecting salvation, expecting transformation in his life. So yeah, God is able to miraculously answer prayer.

I already related to you the incident in Africa, but I'll repeat it again just to include it in with this, and that was being at that well. We had prayed the day before, and I prayed to God, Lord, let there be water. And we ended up with a dry well.

And then the next day we built another place and got water. So the next day we were at another village, and they were drilling, and they were coming down to the last pipe, and it was this dry stone dust. And as long as you see that, you know, you're in hard rock, and there's not much hope of water.

And I had prayed, we had prayed before. I prayed with the pastor who was working with that village. And of course, the villagers were all around and excited and waiting to see water.

And one pipe left, and it was looking much like the village the day before. And I just wanted to go over and encourage the pastor. And I went over to him, and I said, I sat down next to him on a bench, and they were drilling away there, and it was dark, and we had the lights of a truck on it, too, so you could see what they were doing.

They had no lights on the actual machine. And I said, well, we just have to trust the Lord. He said, no, yeah, you're right.

And then I got up and I walked away. But God did definitely intervene, and it was as clear as if it was in an audible voice. You need to pray with this man now.

I was walking away from him, and I did an about face, turned around, sat down next to him, and I said, we need to pray right now. And I burst into prayer, and I had confidence in prayer. You know, sometimes you're struggling with having a... I had no doubt in prayer.

And the thought that flooded my mind, God, you answered by fire. You know the story with Elijah, the God who answers by fire, let him be God. Now you answer by water, and let it be a gushing water.

And as soon as I said, let it be a gushing water, the well blew, and the water went up. It was remarkable and encouraging. And he's been going about testifying that God answers by water.

Because it was remarkable, and we both knew it was, and we knew that it was immediate and powerful answer to prayer. And listen, I'm just like you are. Believe me, if anybody's weak, I am weak.

If I struggle with prayer, I do, just the same as you. But God can step into our lives and bring us into a deeper and richer prayer. Just let's be open and willing and listening to him and growing in prayer.

I don't feel the least bit worthy of anything, even an incident like that. It's just, it's pure grace. It's pure mercy.

So come on that basis, not on the basis of whether you're worthy or not. Just come on that basis to God. Begin to really pray for people, lost ones.

Bring them up before God and ask him for a confidence in praying for their salvation. You don't have enough confidence. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.

Ask him for a confidence in becoming a bolder witness for Christ. They prayed in the book of Acts chapter 4, and God granted them boldness to share the gospel. There's so much that we can be praying about and for, but we can see God does hear and God does answer prayer.

I related an incident a while back about a lady, this is a number of years ago, where I woke up at two early in the morning, probably three in the morning. And I had a vision in my dream, actually, I had a vision of this lady in terrible distress. I could see her face in distress.

It was a lady that I knew really well. I knew her. She was a Christian lady, but her face was in agony.

And when I woke up, it was so powerful that I just knew I had to pray for her. And I spent an hour in prayer that early in that morning. And then it was maybe a week and a half later.

I happened to be in the town where she was from, which isn't around here. And I saw her and I went right up to her. I said, can you tell me, did anything happen on this particular night? And I said, God did something.

I said, he woke me up at three in the morning with a vision of you in distress, and I just started praying for you. She started to weep in front of me, and she said, the night before I ended up, my heart was just completely palpitations, everything. They took me into the hospital.

They couldn't get my heart to stop racing and slowing or whatever. It was just completely out of whack. She said, I was terrified.

I was thinking, my children, who's going to look after them? I just was in absolute agony, she said. And I finally fell asleep, exhausted. They sedated me.

They did whatever they could to me. And I was just like, I had no peace. And she said, lo and behold, when I woke up in the morning, I was in perfect peace.

God touched me, and I knew it was God. He had touched me in a powerful way, and I no longer had any distress at all. And the Lord looked after the heart situation.

It was looked after. But that wasn't what gave her the peace. It was the presence of God that gave her that peace.

So can God do these things? Can he cause someone over here to pray for what they don't even know about and make it happen? He can. He can do anything. And let's be open to that.

Let's be aware that God is at work, and let us grow in that understanding and realization. I could relate some other incidents, but I don't want to give some impression that I'm always experiencing these incredible things, because I'm not. But every once in a while, the Lord does something where I have just a complete prayer of confidence.

I'll give you one other one. It was actually in a church service in Marguerite, and we had heard that this woman had an instant swelling of the brain, and it was life-threatening. Like, the pressure ever going to drain her brain, all kinds of stuff.

And it was at the beginning of the church service. And, you know, you can't muster up, you know, if I really work hard at believing it's going to happen. I don't think that's the way of faith.

God grants a prayer of faith, and you know, at times there's a certainty. And I began to pray, and I was as certain when I made that prayer at the beginning of that service, that God was going to answer that prayer. I was sure of it.

So it was no surprise to me, as soon as the service was ending, the phone rang in the church, and it went and answered and said, the pressure's all gone down, everything is normal. I expected that in that circumstance. That is not always the case.

Lots of times I'm just pleading with God to do something, and I don't know whether he is or whether he isn't. I can remember another incident, just one more. I can remember another incident where a woman had come to me and said, I'm diagnosed with cancer.

They're going to go take the tumor out. She said, can you pray for me? And I prayed for her. But I didn't feel any more confidence than if I prayed for something else.

I just prayed for it, that's all. And she went home, and she said, I sat down, and the tumor left me. It was gone.

She said, I knew the tumor was gone. It was gone. So she went back to the hospital and told the doctor, tumor's gone.

The doctor said, no, we took an x-ray, the tumor's there. She said, no, it's gone. God took the tumor away.

So she convinced them to take another x-ray, and they did, and the tumor was gone. It was completely gone, never to be seen again. And they were absolutely certain, and they had done the tests or drawn into it to see if it was cancer or whatever.

It was gone. It never came back. Doctor said, we can't understand it.

She said, I understand it. God took it away. But in that case, it wasn't like, oh, Lord, I believe, yeah.

I wasn't. I wasn't there. But that didn't matter.

God was there. God did whatever he suddenly chose to do. But remember, one of the hindrances to prayer that I shared last week was you have not because you ask not.

And often, I think that is the biggest malady that we have. We have not because we ask not. How much anxiety do we have in our lives? Maybe it's relative to how little we actually do pray with any sense of

connection with God.

Because in everything by prayer, in everything by prayer. Anyone else? We have Gary here with us after I visited him in Maine a few years ago. And Gary, I felt like we were going to say goodbye to you.

Because you were a very sick man, but God had other plans. And we did. A lot of prayer went up for you.

And I probably didn't have, I was probably like the folks who were praying for Peter a little bit because it seemed so overwhelmingly devastating to see how sick you were. Pastor Mark came over almost every other day on his knees praying for me. Yeah, and God answered prayer.

Here we are, out working in a graveyard. Not for you, no. I gave Louise a tour on the way up.

Oh, did you? Okay. We're trying to figure out which plot we might like. We know you got first dibs.

That's right. So, if anything, I hope that tonight has been an encouragement for all of us to pray. Well, I can say on the health issues that getting through that and then the next time things come up.

And one of the things that I just, I don't know, I just hate is the CAT scan. And it's not the CAT scan, it's the process of putting the dye in. Right.

And it burns, and it hurts, and it only lasts for not even a minute. Right. But I have to pray on that every time I go do that.

Just get me through it. And it goes by quick, and most of the time it's not as bad as I think. Yeah.

So. Yeah. Approach everything in prayer, and it'll make a huge difference.

And I've been trying to think about that in just even the small things like, oh, well, how much snow is there in the mountains? How, you know, I've got to put the trap in. Is it, you know, when should I put it in? And I can mull over those things. And I can, you know, say, well, Lord, guide me.

But, you know, more flippant. But this year I've been saying, Lord, I don't want to be trying to manage this. I can trust you with it.

You have the exact time for everything. And I'll do whatever you give me wisdom to do or not to do. And if you decide to wash the trap down the river, well, you have a purpose in that too.

Like last year, we had constructed it. We thought we had it down really good. But there was always a problem on the upper end of my trap to keep it stable, like to keep it really solid.

I had a cable coming down to it. It was braced around a post, and the post would not move because of that. But I had a plank on top of the post, and that was always wanting to move.

And it did. The water was high. We had gotten the cage in and swinging.

And we went to pull it out. Nathan was in the truck, and he started to back up. And the whole thing, and I was standing right out on the end.

And the whole thing started to fall to pieces around me, underneath me. And I was dancing from one pole to the other, trying to get back. The guy who was behind me, Andrew, fell down, and his feet got in the

water.

But I pulled him up, and we got back. The whole thing just dissolved. And the cage went down the river a ways.

And Nathan was in the truck. And the whole truck, he had his foot on the brake, but it was pulling the whole truck forward, because of the power of the water. And then the cage went sideways.

And he was wondering where he was going to end up. But anyway, everything finally did come to a stop. And we looked at this mess.

And we had just spent, you know, like two days making it. And we're looking at it, and it says, whoa. And Nathan looks at me.

And I said, well, Nathan, God has a plan here. The Lord gives. The Lord takes away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Whatever he wants to do with this, we'll be back on Monday. And we'll sort it out.

We managed to hook the tractor on, and we'll pull the cage back in. And remarkably, most of all of the wood was all hanging in the water this way and that way. And so we came back on Monday, and we rebuilt it.

And it was then that I found a solution to fix this, so that could never happen again. And it was something I was always fighting with, is to keep that, where the cage hooked on the edge, to keep it from twisting. Yeah, it was just another cable around a big plank, and then back to the tree with it.

So Andrew was going to Port Hawksbury that Monday, and I said, will you go to Port Hawksbury and pick this up for me? He brings it down. We hook that up. And it just changed the stability, like long term.

It was well worth the whole thing getting blown to pieces. It was perfect. So we can trust God when things go wrong too, right? Yeah, we can.

Let's go to prayer.

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