

The Sin of Prayerlessness

by Raymond Beasley

Raymond Beasley emphasizes the critical nature of prayer in the Christian life, labeling prayerlessness as a serious sin that leads to spiritual decline.

Duration: 1:08:56

Scripture: 1 Samuel 12:23, Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 55:11, Daniel 6:11, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing gratitude for the audience's attention and asks how many couples are present. He emphasizes the need for a strong anchor in the face of life's challenges and suggests that prayer may have been replaced by other forms of worship. The preacher acknowledges that while the congregation is not backslidden, there is room for improvement in their relationship with God. He then references a powerful service where conviction was felt and encourages those who do not know God to repent and be baptized. The sermon concludes with a reminder that prayerlessness is a sin and that the preacher is committed to praying for the congregation.

Transcript

Thank you, Brother Urshan, and praise the Lord, everybody. Well, since we've got nowhere to go, we're going to take time to preach to you. When I received the letter from Brother Bacton inviting me to speak, minister, preach at this conference, I felt so honored, and I felt such a tremendous privilege to be asked to minister at a general conference.

This has been a great conference. The blessing of God has been upon it. I come to you tonight.

I wish that I could preach a different subject than what I'm going to preach. In fact, I brought another line of thought with me. This subject that I'm going to preach on tonight has already been touched, already been preached on by evil men, but I make no apology tonight to preach the same truth to you.

God has been so good to us. I want a revival that's born out of heaven. I want a move that comes from the throne of the eternal, and I believe this book has the answer.

And I want to assure you tonight that I'm going to preach from this book, and I'm going to stay in this book. And when I step behind a pulpit, I only know one book. I want you to understand that I only know one book.

When I step behind a podium or a pulpit to preach the word of God, we believe in preaching what's in the book. I like that charge tonight that was given to the outgoing missionaries. Preach the word.

Preach what's in the book. And we are here tonight to preach to you a subject that's in the book. Do you have your Bible? I'm turning to two verses of Scripture, one for Scripture reading and one for my text tonight.

Looking at this sixth chapter of Daniel, reading a very familiar verse of Scripture, the eleventh verse, and when these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God, then I would like to turn tonight to 1 Samuel, the twelfth chapter, and the twenty-third verse. Samuel, the great judge of Israel, is addressing the congregation of Israel, and he makes this profound statement, Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. Our God and our Father, we thank thee tonight for the Spirit of God that we have sensed and felt throughout this whole conference.

I ask even now as your word goes forth that it might go forth under the anointing and power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. Let this conference be ended on a great note tonight. Let this conference come to a climax tonight with each of us leaving this great convention hall with that desire of fulfilling and walking closer to thee.

Bless tonight, Lord, and we'll be careful to praise thee, for we ask these mercies in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. And you may be seated.

As I come to this pulpit tonight, I come with a burden on my heart. I come with a great concern on my spirit. But before I get into the message, I realize that in this great congregation tonight, and perhaps there's those here, that you have never had an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You've never bowed your knee at an hour of prayer. You have never made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. As of now, you have not obeyed the gospel.

I feel a necessity tonight to pause and tell you there's room at the cross for you. If you are not saved tonight, if you have not been born again, if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, let me appeal to you tonight that God loves you, that God cares for you. God wants to woo you and bring you unto Himself that you might know Him, that you might come out of the kingdom of darkness and be placed in the kingdom of God's dear Son, that you might have the hope of eternal life burning within your soul and within your breast.

Friend, we have a great gospel, and that gospel will bring peace and joy and happiness to your soul. I challenge you tonight, if you're here and know not God, if you'll repent of your sins and be baptized in that wonderful name of Jesus, and your faith will be sealed by the great infilling of the Holy Ghost in power. But tonight, it's how my lot, after waiting on God to preach to those, that if you were to ask them if they were a Christian, they would certainly answer in the affirmative.

If you were to ask them if they've ever been born twice, they'd say, Yes, I've been born and born again. If you were to ask them what label they wear on their lapel or dress, they would say, I wear the label of being a Christian. It's to you tonight I want to preach, and I want to preach on the sin of prayerlessness.

The sin of prayerlessness. I did not say to neglect the prayer. I did not say that we'd become ineffective if we did not pray.

I did not say that we'd just be weak if we did not pray. I want to preach to you on one of the greatest, darkest, and it might shock you when I say it, but I'm going to stay in the book, and I want to prove it before I leave this pulpit tonight. One of the darkest, bleakest transgressions that can be committed by a child of God is the sin of prayerlessness, because this sin leads us to all other transgressions and sins.

When we pray, we come from darkness to light. We come from bleakness to hope. We come from despair to peace.

We come from sin to righteousness. We come from transgression to holiness. And tonight, as I look at the words of Samuel, where he said, Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord and cease to pray for you.

I read something concerning Daniel, and the Bible declares that he was a great man. He was a tremendous man. In fact, he became the chief captain, the chief president.

He was president over the three presidents, 120 princes, a man that served King Darius well, a man that was loved by the king. But envy and jealousy and strife rose up in the prayer of the presidents and in the princes, and they sought to kill him. They could find no fault with him save the way he worshiped God.

I would that that was a testimony of the world concerning us tonight. I would that our employer, our boss, those we bump shoulders with, would not have anything against us save the way that we worship and serve our God. I believe that being a Christian is more than just coming to church.

I believe it's more than raising your hands and clapping your hands. I believe it's more than jumping up and down and running the aisles. Being a Christian is a seven-day, 24-hour-a-week job and occupation.

We want this world out there to speak well of us. We hear people say, I don't care what the world says about me. Friend, you ought to care.

The Bible tells us that we are to have a good report with those that are without. And under a false pretense, they got the king to sign the decree of law. And you know the story.

Daniel knew that the handwriting was on the wall. But Daniel knew what it was to pray. He didn't pray in an emergency.

He didn't pray because there was sickness in his house. He didn't pray because he was in some kind of a jam. He didn't pray because he wanted some success in his preaching.

He didn't pray just for some special need. He prayed because he believed in prayer. He prayed because he knew that he was going to know that one true God.

Then he must, of necessity, pray. Yes, sir. So, when he knew the handwriting was written, he knew that the law could not be altered.

The Bible declares that he did what he did a fourth time. He just did what he did any other time. Three times a day, he had opened his windows towards Jerusalem.

Yes, sir. Because he believed that God of Israel, the Lord of Jerusalem, someday was going to bring him deliverance and bring the children of God back to the land and back to the city of Jerusalem. So he went.

And as he went, he got down on his knees, stretched his hands, and prayed like he always prayed. Say, friend, how long would they be at our window before they heard us pray? Then I come to my text. The words of Samuel.

Where is it from? What prompted Samuel to say these words? Samuel, you have just been rejected. Samuel, this people that you ministered to, whom you gave godly counsel to, whom you judged righteously with them, they are the ones that said, we want a king. We don't want you any longer, Samuel.

We want a king to reign over us. And Samuel, you called upon God and God spoke to you and said, Samuel, it's not me they have rejected. It's not you, Samuel, that they have rejected, but it's me they have rejected.

Samuel, in this chapter, check it when you go home. He stood before the children of Israel after Saul was anointed king. He looked at them and said, when his hair was gray and rejected, he said, what have I stolen? Where have I defrauded you? How have I oppressed you? Have I ever received a bribe? And they rose up as one voice and said, Samuel, you haven't stolen any oxen.

You haven't defrauded anybody. You have not brought oppression upon the people of Israel. You have never received a bribe.

Then Samuel went on and warned them about the judgment of God that would come upon them if they were to depart from the living God. And then he went on to talk about the mercies of that God. And right in the midst of that, he lifted up his voice and said, as for me, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

I want you to realize tonight that prayerlessness is a sin. We often say it's unfortunate we do not pray more. We often say, well, I guess that's the reason we're weak, or that's the reason we're ineffective.

But I have yet to hear a testimony. I have yet to hear somebody rise to their feet and say I have sinned against God this day because I have not prayed this day unto my God. I know I'm not going to get much shouting.

I know I'm not going to get much clapping. I know I'm not going to get no outrunning. But I'm not here for that tonight.

I've got a burden I want to bring to you tonight. I've got a concern in my spirit tonight because we can be carried away with physical manifestations and not get to the root of our problem. And the root of our problem is prayerlessness.

Ask yourself. Only you can answer it. I can't answer it.

Your wife can't answer it. Your husband, our good superintendent, can't answer it. Ask yourself, how much or how little do I pray? Why is it a sin not to pray? Preacher, tell me why it is a sin not to pray.

Because, first of all, the Bible expressly calls it a sin. And if this Bible calls it a sin, I am at liberty to call it a sin because we have many people that call things sin and they have no Bible for it. But when it comes to this tonight, see, I have Bible for the fact when I say that if you do not pray, you sin.

It expressly states it. And I'm going to pick it up and prove it in the New Testament. Samuel said that I should ask, and sin is always wrapped around I, and then that I should sin.

If Samuel felt it was a sin, do you believe we can get by without feeling it is also a sin? It is a sin not to pray because it's right to pray. I said it's right to pray. I said it's right to pray.

It may not always be to pray. Jesus said in Luke 18, 1, 1 Thessalonians 5, 17, Pray without ceasing. Ephesians 6, 18, Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and marching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Luke 11, 1 Lord, teach us to pray even as John also taught his disciples. My Lord, there's something we want You to teach us. There's something we want to learn of Thee.

And Lord, teach us to pray. There was something imputed to those disciples as they watched the ministry of the Lord Jesus that they come to Him with that question. Lord, teach us to pray.

Then listen to this. You'll find it recorded in James 4, 17. Therefore, to Him, to you and I, to we that's got a button on our lapel, we want the world to know we're Christians.

Therefore, to Him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to Him it is sin. Therefore, to Him that knoweth He should pray and He doesn't pray, to Him it is sin. If I know something is right and I don't do it, it's a sin.

And if there's anything that's right in the Bible, prayer is right. If there's anything in Holy Scripture is right, prayer is right. There are two kinds of sins.

There's a sin of commission. There's a sin of omission. And we are experts.

Just stay with me. We are experts on talking about the sin of commission. We can bring people to their feet by talking about TV.

We can bring people to their feet talking about rock and roll. We can bring people to their feet talking about dope and alcohol and lust. Yes, sir.

But when we come to the sins of omission, all of a sudden that same congregation freezes. Why should we freeze over one kind of sin and rejoice over another? We look at the sins of omission. If I know to do good and I don't do it, it's a sin.

If I know to witness to my neighbor and I don't do it, it's a sin. If I know to read the Holy Scripture and I don't do it, to me, it is a sin. Friend, look at me tonight as I tell you I'm preaching to folks tonight.

You have not read a chapter of the Word of God this whole week. But tonight, you can take off on a fast course. Tonight, you can take off on something that's got a beat in it.

Friend, why is it you can't take off over the fact that you read the Scripture this week? I would have sooner preached. I know enough about Pentecost and I've been in Pentecost long enough to know what to preach, to bring people to their feet and have a time of rejoicing and just be a cheerleader in my preaching. But that lot didn't follow me tonight.

The sin of association. We don't believe that women ought to paint their faces because we associate it with Jezebel. We don't believe that a Christian smokes because we associate it with defiling the body, which is a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Will you still love me when I get through here? We preach some things that are sin that you can't find anything in Scripture to associate it with sin. And I could preach on that tonight. But I still want to go out of here in your good favor.

Here comes a man. He comes through the church just before he comes into church. He's a great tithe payer, a man that appears to love God.

But he's just put out a stinking cigar that's worse than a cigarette. I look at that fall and say, Listen, man, you can't have pardon in any activity of the church. You're out completely until you pray through, until you really repent, until you really repent.

Because we believe that by the sin of association that a Christian can find deliverance at the old rugged cross for that. But here comes Sister Jehu. She's got her long hair, sensible sleeves, dress of good length.

But by her spirit, you know, she hasn't prayed in six months. Now, Sister Jehu, you can sing in the choir because you meet an outward standard. I think my God gets disgusted with some of us.

Not much wonder He told us that we judge from the upward appearance, but He judges from the heart. It might be a big awakening on that eternal day when we find out who did make it and who didn't make it. And don't take it for one minute that I'm trying to justify any sins of commission tonight.

I am trying to show to you that we will stand condemned before God by the things we do not do. There's a sins of involvement. This is what Peter preached to those Jews.

He said, have crucified and slain. And yet a Jew never did drive a nail in his hand. They never did whip him.

They never did crucify him. It was the Roman soldiers. But on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, by your wicked hand, you crucified and slain the Lord of glory.

So there are sins of involvement. There are sins of the flesh, sins of the spirit. And I declare unto you, God being my judge tonight, I cannot.

I think I got a great church. I got a church that's bright for me. They're all in bed at home.

It's two o'clock in the morning home. But they have prayed. I know that.

But I cannot honestly, consciously before God get up and tell you that I have got a spiritual church. How can I? When before the Sunday night service, we encourage them to find a place of prayer in the lower auditorium. When you come up from downstairs, two-thirds of the church is sitting there waiting for the service to start.

And one-third is the only one that made their way down. How can I conscientiously brag about the spirituality? And friend, we do have a time. We do shout and we do sing and we do clap our hands and we do have a glory hallelujah time.

But my friend, the bottom line is the church is not spiritual. How can I get up here and brag? And I think we closed one of the greatest camp meetings we ever had in August. As far as attendance-wise and spiritual-wise and every other way.

But how could I get up and tell you that we had a great spiritual camp when that 8 o'clock prayer meeting was only attended by a few. I know there's some mothers that have kids, children they've got to look after. But I know also that preachers can leave the campground at 11 o'clock and go to Fredericton and buy hot dogs and wieners and Chinese food, get back 3 o'clock in the morning and they're too tired to go to prayer meeting at 8. Friend, we need to set our priorities right.

We're crying for revival. My soul is crying for evangelism. My heart is beating with the heartbeat of God tonight.

Crying, oh God! How can I? Friend, if I can't do it, I don't think you can do it. See, not only does the Bible teach us that prayerlessness is a sin, but as you look at the Bible, there's so much in the Bible that encourages us, that begs us to be given to prayer. The Bible urges us to pray.

If two agree, it's touching one thing. If two agree, it's touching one thing. These sexual servant prayers of a righteous man avail us much? Oh yes.

A young preacher looked at me and said, Brother Beasley, when you go down to conference, he said, will you bring back any new plans or any new methods? Any new ways of God? Friend, we don't need new methods. We don't need new ways. We don't need new programs.

And I'm not condemning anyone that we have, and I work with all of them. But that's not the answer to our heartbeat of God tonight. It might be the answer to reap the loss, but it's not the answer for the church.

We are raising, God help me now, we are raising young men and young women, and you look at them and say something like this. Have you prayed through about it? They look at you to stare. They don't know, really know what you're talking about.

You get six calls from six different preachers, and every one of them told you they're calling the same church. You look at them and say, well, have you prayed through? They don't know what you're talking about. My friend, what's going on? Have we failed as elders to show the example to the juniors that we believe in praying through? Where do we lay the blame tonight? On our young people, or do we lay it on our seniors tonight? Prayed through, they don't know what in the world you're talking about.

Well, did you ever have a burden of prayer? Burden of prayer. Burden of prayer, no. Don't know, really know what that's all about.

How many of you got here tonight that knows what a burden of prayer is? Thank God. But as many didn't raise their hands, that raised their hand. Don't know what a burden of prayer is.

They know what you're talking about. When you talk about praying through. Friend, let me tell you something.

You're not going to go too far with God until you get some Bethels established in your life. You better get some Bethel experiences, because there's going to be some place out there in this journey between here and glory that you're going to be buffeted by the wicked one. You're going to be buffeted by the world.

You're going to be buffeted by the cares of life. And friend, you need some anchor. You need some place to go back to and say, God, here it is where I laid myself on the altar, and I gave myself to Thee.

You need some Bethels. Have we replaced prayer with our young people by the way we worship? I thank God for the sea of people I saw around this altar today. I thank God for those I saw from night to night.

I'm not saying we're backslidden, but I'm also saying we are not where we ought to be in God. In other words, there's room for improvement. We worship.

I sat in a service. It was an after-service. The preacher preached.

Conviction came on that meeting in almost a tangible way. You could just feel the convicting power of God as that man brought that service to a climax. They all gathered around and flocked to the front.

And it wasn't five minutes until somebody was playing. The Holy Ghost will set your feet a-dancing and bless your heart for an hour and a half. All I heard was drums and a bass guitar.

And all they did was hoot and holler. Friend, they would have been better without the drums and the guitars and stayed on their face before God. I'm talking tonight on the scene of prayerlessness.

We hear much about the charismatic. As far as I'm concerned, we don't got a copy any other ways. I don't believe tonight when you guys receive the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in an unknown tongue.

I don't believe you just got to get up and say, Adore me, Ado-de-da. And then you got it. I believe, my friend, there's something that comes from heaven that takes a hold of your tongue and you cannot give expression outside of the Holy Ghost.

I don't buy or part of this that you say after me. And on the basis and on that foundation, I'm about to tell you tonight that I don't believe we have to accept their way of worship. I don't know what they are out West here.

I don't know what they are in the United States. But back in our country, they have what they cast, what they call orchestra worship. They have a leader.

And if he jumps, they jump. If he swings his arms, they swing their arms. If he jives, they jive.

Let me tell you something. As somebody that was born in the fire, somebody that came out of an old-fashioned Pentecostal church, somebody that knows something and has seen the manifestation of the glory and the power of God in physical manifestation, you don't got to learn to dance. You don't got to learn to shout.

You don't got to learn to hoop. You don't got to learn to shout. My friend, you get the Holy Ghost down in your side of you, and the expression of the Holy Ghost will bring it about.

Give me something that's genuine. Give me something I can see the power of God in. Give me a manifestation that you got to believe it's in the Spirit of God.

And my friend, something will happen. Oh, yes. Perhaps the fault lies in my shoulders.

Perhaps it lays on the shoulders of those in my age bracket that somehow we haven't conveyed to that young preacher, that young saint, what it's all about, to pray through. See, this Bible tells me that I have a partner in prayer. Romans declares the eighth chapter, Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself make an intercession for us with groanings that cannot be altered. I said we have a partner in prayer. Oh, if I could only live that close to God.

Let me confess to you tonight. I mean, let me be honest with you. I do know, and I have known what it is for my partner to speak to me and say, Son, we ought to pray together.

I appreciate the men that are behind me. I've been in the general board with 101 things on their mind to do. But I've seen our great superintendent move into the spirit of travailing prayer.

I've seen that general board move into prayer. I might not express myself much there, but something way down deep inside says, Oh God, let it always be this way. May we never, never take prayer of the general board meeting.

May we never take intercession out of that meeting. May we never take intercession out of our fellowship. Because, my friend, we were born in a prayer meeting.

Brother Gilgore expressed himself. He said, I just feel like putting a resolution in. I don't know if it's in or not.

He said, I would like to see the month of January declared. I'd like to see it declared three hours of prayer and fasting in the month of January. I know our good superintendent looked at him and said, put it in, brother, my friend.

But there ought to be something move us beside a resolution. There ought to be something that's calling us stronger than a resolution. There ought to be something that's coming from the throne that calls us to a time of prayer.

What time did I start preaching? Let me skip over some stuff. Did I read the Bible? The examples of men and women who prayed and received answers to prayers is my encouragement to pray. Elijah prayed and a fire fell.

Moses prayed and the children of Israel were spared. Paul and Silas prayed and angels came down. The early church prayed and Peter walked out.

The upper room where we come from and we take our roots from, my friend, was the result of men that gathered there to tarry in prayer. And if we're going to keep our roots where they ought to be, we have got to go back to that upper room. Let me go another step with you.

See, it is a sin not to pray because prayerlessness leaves a door open for all other sins. I said I was going to preach in the darkest, the bleakest transgression because prayerlessness opens a door to all and every other type of sin. Now let me establish this.

It was the Lord Jesus at the request of the disciples that sent teachers to pray. He said, When ye pray, say, Lead us not into the temptation, but deliver us from evil. I pray every day that God would not put temptation in my way, but deliver me from evil.

A thousand and one times I've gone out of the house with a prayer in my lips. My God set a watch on my lips today. And don't put my feet in a slippery place this day because if you don't keep me, I haven't got the ability to keep myself.

Jesus said, Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus said again in Luke 22, 40, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

John Bunyan, the writer of *Jupiter Pilgrims Progress*, put it this way, Prayer will make a man cease from sin as sin will make a man cease from prayer. Someone has said, Prayerlessness is identical to backsliding. Friend, you will never stumble as long as you are on your knees.

What are the things that's overcoming us? Could I suggest that there are things overcoming you? It is because of the lack of prayer. I know a situation. Heard of a situation.

A man, six, eight years, had carried on a life of unfaithfulness to his wife. Finally, he was dealt with. Finally, it surfaced.

But that man all the time carried a key position in the church. He would pray in the church. He would give his tithes in the church.

He would Jericho in the church. He would do everything that Pentecostalism calls for in the church. But when he was asked, Whatever happened to you? How did this come about? His answer was, I give up.

And I haven't prayed for six years. Millions of people are praying. They say their prayers now lay me down to sleep.

I had a man in my office just prior to coming. Trouble. Outside of the church, outside of God.

He just cut to the place he couldn't stand his wife any longer. As far as I know, he has been faithful to her to that point. In fact, he just put her out.

Told her to hit the road. I counseled with him. Said, I don't care, he said.

I'll give her 50% of what I have just to get rid of her. Well, that's the law we have in the province. If a wife leaves or a husband leaves, you get 50% of the estate.

I don't know what it is in California. But he said, I'll do that. I don't want her.

I looked at him and said, listen. I said, your problem is not with your wife. I said, your problem is that you need to go to Calvary.

To the power of prayer, you and your wife could get together. She had a Pentecostal background. I said, you could get together and you can make amends.

You're only going to mess things up more. You're going to get a separation and divorce and God knows where it will go. What you need, what you need is to come back to an altar of prayer and let the power of the Holy Ghost praying together and friend of prayer, the family that prays together will stay together.

You show me a family that's having trouble and I'll show you a family that's not praying together. If I say that to the ungodly, if I say that to the sinner, how much more does it need to be said to those that call themselves preachers and saints? Let me tell you something tonight. Let me preach to you something.

There are some things that God has joined together. He's joined together faith and works. He's joined together truth and righteousness.

He's joined together the Spirit and the blood and the Word. He's joined together prayer and fasting. And He has joined together husband and wife.

Divorce was a word we did not use. Let me say that again. Divorce was a word we didn't use in the church.

We just believed that if we could raise our family the right way and give them the structure of the Christian home, the faith of the Christian church, that somehow, someday, they would make it together. That's what we believed. That's what we believed.

And you're looking at a preacher that still believes it tonight. But the sad part of it is that which is out there in the world has invaded our home. It has invaded our church.

It's invaded our ministry. Something's wrong in the prayer life. Our trouble is not with TV.

Our trouble is not with professional sports. Our trouble is, my friend, of committing the sin of prayerlessness because when you pray, these things will find their rightful place in your life. And if you don't pray, a preacher can preach himself blue in the face and you wouldn't do anything about it.

Let's worship the Lord, shall we? The root cause of our deficiency and the lack of our spirituality comes from the sin of prayerlessness. Why is the church, and I want to say this right, why is the church so powerless when we believe there's so much power for the church? Why does preaching accomplish so little? We expect a canyon to go off and we get the report of a 22. We expect a bomb to explode and we hear a firecracker.

We expect an earthquake and we feel a tremor. Why, my friend, why do we work so hard and get so little results? Could it be neglecting the responsibility of prayer? Jonathan Edwards, preacher of the turn of the 17th century, preached a message. It's in print today.

Entitled that message, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Perhaps many of you have read it. But if you haven't read it, the story is something like this.

That that great congregation of thousands that he was preaching to, and he did not preach it. He read it under candlelight. He was not what you'd call a good reader.

He read that sermon. But that sermon, as he read it, was so anointed by the Spirit of God that holy ghost conviction settled. And history tells us in that meeting people literally wailed.

They actually saw themselves dropping into a crisis. Eternal hell without God and the mourning and the cry and the repentance of that service. We can still read about it.

You say, what did it come from? Did it come from a man that could kick his heels, that could run across a platform with a mic and get something going? No, it came from a man that spent eight hours on his knees before God in prayer. Friends, you don't got to be a great orator. You don't got to be a great preacher if you can get the touch of God upon your soul in prayer.

Against whom do we sin when we do not pray? No sin falls into three brackets. We sin against God. We sin against man.

Or we sin against ourselves. The law that says thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain, that's a sin against God. Thou shalt not bear false witness is against the neighbor of man, is against your neighbor, and consequently against the very character of the holiness of God.

Thou shalt not covet is the sin of one's own spirit towards somebody that has something better than him. And I'm going to slow down if I'm going to preach this right tonight. I said sin is three things.

You sin against God, or you sin against your neighbor, or you sin against yourself. When I come to this sin of prayerlessness, it's a sin against God, it's a sin against your neighbor, and it's a sin against yourself. The whole three of them are wrapped up in this sin.

I said it's a sin against God. Listen to how Samuel put it. God forbid that I should sin against the Lord.

That I should sin against the Lord. Like David cried out and said, Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight. Prayerlessness is a sin against God because it hinders His purpose and prevents Him from accomplishing the things that He wants to do and His mighty works.

See, things can only happen by prayer. Moses is the example of that. God said, Strike them out! Cut them down! And Moses said, No sir, Lord.

No sir. He said, If you're going to block them out, block me out also. See, Moses gave God the reason to change His mind.

The Bible makes it clear in Psalm 116. Therefore He said that He would destroy them had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach to me, to stern away His wrath, lest He should destroy them. See, Moses gave God the reason to change His mind concerning the children of Israel.

The early church gave God the reason to send down angels to deliver Peter. Paul and Silas prayed and gave God the reason to send down angels for their deliverance. Elijah prayed and God shut the heavens and gave God the reason to shut the heavens.

We sin against God when we do not pray. I remember a few years back in my own life in the city of St. John in the brunch of Canada. I'd gone there to open a new work.

I always liked to visit old houses and construction sites. And this morning I walked into this house that was being torn down. The city had ordered it to be demolished.

I knew the contractor that was demolishing it in. And it was a cold winter morning. Maybe you folks don't know anything about 20 below zero in a driving wind.

But that's the kind of a morning it was. I had my heavy overcoat on and decided I'd pull in and see what was going on. As I walked through the kitchen of that old house they had an old tin stove there and it was just blood red with wood in it and burning it.

And I said to the fellow calling my name I said, you're going to burn this shack down. He said, I don't care if it does burn down. It would be a blessing if it does.

I wouldn't have to rip it down. And I walked out of the kitchen into what was I suppose a dining room area. That floor was all ripped up and all there was was the joists.

And off on the left hand side was a narrow stairway that took me to an attic. I pondered up that narrow stairway to the attic. And I get up there and there were some old hymn books and some old writings.

And I began to turn them over and look at them. And all of a sudden I smelled some smoke. So I did the foolish things like sometimes I do.

I went over and I raised the window. And as soon as I did I saw the smoke coming up that stairway and I said, this thing's afire. This thing's afire.

I put the window back down. It was too high for me to jump. The man that was looking after downstairs didn't know where I went.

As far as he was concerned I could have gone out the front door. I come to that stairway and it was full of smoke. Believe me, preachers and saints I don't know how I got to the bottom of that.

All I remember, I slid down. And I come to this dining room floor. There was nothing but choices.

The floor was there. As I looked, I saw the flames leaping through the kitchen into that room. And I said, my God, I can never make it.

I'm no good at heights. I'm no good at walking deals. Don't put me on a two-by-four.

That's all there was was these heavy choices in that old building. Somehow I said, if I'm going to make it I've got to try it. And I stepped out and I don't know how I never slipped.

Went through the other room and went out. I guess I said I better go home. Scared to death.

As I walked in the house that morning my wife looked at me and said, where have you been? I said, I haven't been anywhere. Just driving around and saw this man that had this building. Never told her a thing.

She said to me, I want to know where you've been. I said, well, I guess I've told you. She said, you were in danger because I was doing the dishes.

And God spoke to me and told me that you were in prayer that called me to pray. Then I told her unknowing to me the back of my hair was all singed. My coat was singed.

But what was it? God saw one of His servants in danger. There was another servant He could lay prayer on that gave God the reason to bring deliverance. I say to you tonight humbly that we sin against God.

A saint in the church had a husband, basically a good husband, a good provider, just a fine man, but had no room for God in his life. He'd come to church one Sunday night. She prayed for him, I would say, twenty years.

He'd come just because I guess he took a liking to me. He said, I'll go once. And he came and he said, I'm not going back again.

But two Saturday nights later he went to bed and his wife went to bed. And all of a sudden he said to his wife, do you see what I see? I see a cross. I see hands extended.

Do you see it? She says, no, I can't see it. He said, will you pray with me tonight? My friend, her prayer gave God the reason to give this man the vision that brought him to repentance. Believe me when I tell you tonight that we are sinning against God when we do not pray.

Give God the reason to do something. Say, friend, how long has it been since you gave God a reason to do something for you? Not only is this sin against God, but it's a sin against others. Listen to how Samuel puts it.

In ceasing to pray for you, we live in a world filled with men and women, spiritually and morally broken. We sin against them when we do not pray. A young man came into a home of his praying mother, a mother that he heard pray a hundred times.

He looked at her and said, Mom, I don't want you to pray any longer for me. In fact, he cursed at her and slammed the door and went out. His mom went to her bedroom, bowed her knee, and kept on praying for him.

About two years later, that boy found himself. And he said to his mother, I can remember it, and come back and ask you to forgive him. I can remember that night.

Mom, I can remember that night. But I cursed at you when I told you to quit praying. There was something down inside of me that said, Mom, keep praying.

Don't stop praying. Keep praying. If you seem to have an impossible situation, just keep praying.

Then we sin against ourselves. That I should sin. That I... Underline the word I. Prayer changes things.

Oh, prayer changes things. But prayer will change the prayer. The man that prays will be changed.

The blessing will come upon that man that prays. And you're sinning against yourself if you do not pray. Now hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

Listen to how Samuel concludes this matter of prayerlessness, the sin of prayerlessness. Listen to his solemn words. It was a personal decision.

Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin. That was the conclusion. Samuel said, There's one thing that I am going to do.

I am going to pray. That's the conclusion of the matter. And with every head bowed, every head bowed, in the galleries, in this great auditorium, I thank you for your kind attention tonight.

But stay with me just another five minutes. With every head bowed. And while the Spirit of God is talking, I wonder how many moms and dads we have sitting together tonight.

Friend, would one of you just raise your hand if you're sitting with your life partner? Put them down. Perhaps there's somebody in this building. You could be pastoring the First United Pentecostal Church, the Apostolic Church, the Church of the Great Light, whatever you want to call it.

But you've got some problems, friend. I'm not here by accident or mistake tonight. Friend, maybe you're a saint in one of these churches.

And you've got some problems. You've got some problems. Let me plead with you as I give you the answer to your problem.

With your head bowed and you softly praying, would you listen to the call of the Spirit tonight as He bids you to go home and take your wife by the hand and kneel beside the old cot or the old bed and there we pray together. I know that sometimes we just pray enough to break conviction off. I wonder how many there is tonight in this building.

Listen to me carefully, that you will stand with your wife. Maybe it won't be convenient tonight. Maybe the circumstances will not be convenient.

You might be driving all night somewhere tonight. I don't know anything about that. But at the first convenience, you and your wife alone, you're going to pray together alone.

Because if I can get you praying together alone, then you'll be praying together with your children. A wife and husband that don't pray together, they don't pray together with their children either. Oh God, help us now.

God, help us now. I want you to say, Preacher, at the first convenience, and I'm not talking about next month, the wife and I, we're going to have prayer together at home. Would you stand? Oh, you might go around the altar and pray, but at home, we're going to have prayer together.

The wife and I are going to have prayer together.

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