

Why Pray?

by Richard Siple

Richard Siple emphasizes the critical importance of prayer in the life of a believer and its role in experiencing God's glory and revival.

Duration: 55:36

Scripture: Matthew 26:36

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a powerful experience he had as a 15-year-old boy at a conference grounds in New York. During a meeting, a heavy rainstorm suddenly began, but a man named Mr. Nicholson stepped forward and commanded the rain to stop in the name of Jesus Christ. Miraculously, the rain moved across the campground and the tabernacle until it was completely quiet. This dramatic display of God's power led to a powerful outpouring of prayer and brokenness among the attendees. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and the need for a great awakening in our hearts.

Transcript

I don't know about you, but my heart is just so full after that last session with Bill that I can hardly speak. It seems to me as if the glory of God is right here somewhere. It would be a terrible thing to miss it.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue was singing. And then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.

That's what we need. Amen? We need the glory of God. How God has impressed on my heart that passage of scripture that Bill quoted a small portion of.

Connection with revival. And the Lord came and he goes on to say that great prophet and the earth was filled with his glory. Do you want that? Oh my, so hungry for it.

I've been there when the glory came in the church. I want to be there when the glory comes on the world. I just pray that God will let me live and be part of it when God's glory comes on this world around us.

And there is an awakening. We have seen revival. We need to see a thousand times more of it in the church.

But we haven't in our day seen a great awakening. And we've all read about it, we've studied it, we know all about what's happened in past history. But in our day we have not seen that great awakening when the glory of God spills out of the church and spills all over the world and people come to Christ by the thousands and by the thousands.

And I pray with all my heart that God will let me live and be healthy and be well and be able to be part of it when it happens. I'd just like to die and go up in smoke right in the middle of it. I don't know about you.

I really want to be part of it. Well, it seems like the Kleenex is important today, not only to the singer. Well, it seems to me as if God is just all over the place here.

Do you sense that? Please turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians 4, verses 6 and 7. I've become more and more convinced that the number one answer to this whole matter is prayer. And for the last two years, God has been pressing on my heart that statement of the apostles in the book of Acts when they elected the first deacons. And they said, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

And God has really been facing my own life with the question, are you giving yourself? Are you willing to give yourself? Are you willing to pay the price? Are you willing to have that other dimension of Calvary that is prayer? And are you willing to really give yourself? Not just pray, but to give yourself continually. Not just once in a while, not at particular seasons, but are you willing to give yourself continually to prayer? And then to the ministry of the word. I believe it's the answer.

Philippians 4, 6 and 7, let us bow in prayer. Oh Father, you know I talked to you about this message last night and this morning. And it seemed to me that you want me to speak on this subject.

Why pray? So I pray that the Holy Spirit will take the word of God and burn it deep into our hearts now in these few minutes together. Deeper and stronger than we have ever realized possible. Until it becomes part of our lives.

And we see that great awakening that our hearts long for. That we must have at any cost. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Philippians 4, 6 and 7. And be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The first time that I can ever remember having a taste of revival was when I was 15 years old. My father was pastoring a church in West Hempstead, Long Island.

Armand Guestwine had just come back from the revival in Norway. And he and his family had settled in the immediate area where my father was pastoring. I do not know how any of the connections were made or how my father became acquainted with him.

But one Wednesday night I went to prayer meeting with my family and I expected the normal size prayer meeting group. And I was astounded to walk into our church as a 15 year old teenager on Wednesday night and see the church basically full. The word had gotten out that Armand Guestwine was in town and he was going to be speaking at our prayer meeting.

And I guess we probably sang a few songs. And someone led in prayer and my father introduced Armand Guestwine. And he did not go into the pulpit.

He did something that I was astonished at as a boy because I had never seen anyone do it. He just walked down to the front of the church. I'll never forget him putting one foot up into a chair and leaning on his knee and starting to talk.

And while he talked, the glory came down. I was brought up in a pastor's home. We had family devotions morning and night.

We heard the word of God all our lives. We heard gospel preaching. We heard the word of God taught.

We heard the deeper things of the word of God taught. The deeper Christian life. But I had never been anywhere that I could remember where the glory of God came.

And that church was totally broken that evening. People were weeping everywhere that you could turn, sobbing before God. And suddenly the front of the church was filled up with praying people.

I'll never forget seeing two men who were in opposition to one another. There they were suddenly standing before the whole church with their arms around one another, sobbing and praying, asking forgiveness and getting right with each other and with God. In those few minutes, we saw God move and saw the glory of God come into that church.

What was behind it? A man of prayer. A man of prayer, a man who had just come from a place where God was working in mighty power and where the glory of God was manifest. And behind that life was a tremendous impact of prayer.

Armand Guestwine has a saying. It goes like this. Prayer is not everything, but everything is by prayer.

And that's what our text says this morning. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer. In everything by prayer.

You say, but Pastor, prayer is not everything. No. Oh no, there is much else to do in the Church of Christ, and there is much else to do in evangelizing the world and in foreign missions.

And I come from a denomination whose middle name is missionary. I believe in it with all my heart. No, prayer is not everything, but everything is by prayer.

Everything, everything, absolutely everything in the work of God is by prayer. And anything attempted in the work of God that is not attempted by prayer is a failure. I do not care how successful it seems to be.

I do not care if the church is full. I do not care if the money comes in. It doesn't matter if everything seems to go forward.

And in the eyes of the world, all is success. If it is not bathed in prayer and born in prayer and empowered by prayer, and it doesn't proceed in prayer, it is a failure in the sight of God. Because it can be done by man and not by God.

And I wonder how many things could go right on in our churches if God should leave the scene completely. There are churches that would never miss a lick, that could go straight on with all their

organization, all their programs, all their teaching, all their preaching, and be packed to the doors and take in the money and do everything that they're doing, if God did not exist. God's word says everything is by prayer.

Now, why is prayer so important? Why should I pray? Why should you, as a Christian, pray? The first thing is because God commands it. Oh, my brother and sister this morning, the reason we ought to pray and that we ought to pray about everything is because God commands it. God says, But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

That is the command of God. God has ordered us to pray. I'm going to give you a list of Scriptures, and I'm going to read them.

You won't have time to look them up, but just put down the references. 1 Thessalonians 5, 17 and 25. The 17th verse says, Pray without ceasing.

See, in everything by prayer. Well, if you pray without ceasing, everything would be by prayer, wouldn't it? Well, if everything is by prayer, you must pray without ceasing. And so God has commanded us to live a continual life of prayer.

In verse 25, Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, Brethren, pray for us. Ephesians 6, verses 18 and 19. Ephesians 6, verses 18 and 19.

Praying, says Paul, by the inspiration of God, praying always with all kinds of prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto, that is, continuing in it, sticking to it, persevering in it, hanging in there, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Now, if you can come across the verse in the Bible that is stronger on prayer, I don't know what it would be. I mean, Paul says we're to pray always in all kinds of prayer and supplication and we're to watch in it, in the Spirit, and we're to persevere in it and we're to supplicate for all saints.

And then he goes on and says, And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. That is what God commands us to do. You say, well, I have my little time of devotions every day and I spend what is called five minutes with the Lord.

Well, bless your heart if that. I'm glad you do that, at least. But I want you to know that that isn't what God is talking about.

And when God says that everything is by prayer and we're to pray without ceasing and we're to pray always and we're to persevere and supplicate and watch and hang in there and pray for all saints, he's not talking about five minutes a day with God. That's better than nothing. But it's not what God is talking about.

2 Thessalonians 3, verses 1 and 2. Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith. 1 Timothy 2, verses 1 and 8. I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men. Verse 8. I will therefore, this is God speaking through Paul.

This isn't just Paul. Do you believe the Bible is the word of God? Do you believe it's inspired by the Holy Ghost and that it's God speaking and not man? There is no prophecy of the Scripture that is any private interpretation, for holy men of God speak as they were moved, as they were carried along by the Holy

Ghost. So when Paul says, I will, that's not Paul saying it, that's Almighty God saying, I will.

That's strong. And he says, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands. Lord, my hands are clean.

Lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. You see, God says, first of all, we're to pray. He says, finally we're to pray.

He says, everywhere we're to pray. And finally, He says in Luke 18 and 1, and He spake a parable unto them, this is Jesus, to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. I can put it down that God has commanded us to pray first, last, always, and everywhere.

Let me ask you a pointed, penetrating question. Is that a description of the people in your church? People that pray first and last and always and everywhere and for all saints and that they do all kinds of prayer and that they persevere in it and they supplicate God and they watch before Him? Is that a picture of the Christians you know? Maybe what I should say, is that a picture of the person you see in the mirror every morning? Oh, you say, I think that's exaggerated. Well, you'll have to argue with God about that.

I didn't write the Bible. Aren't you glad? See, that's what God says. That's the kind of a life God wants us to live.

That kind of a life of prayer. 1 Samuel 12.23. The Israelites had cried out for a king and it was contrary to the will of God. But they insisted and God gave them what they wanted.

And Samuel wrote down the manner of the kingdom. And then he was speaking to the people and he rebuked them for their disobedience and their rebellion against God. And they were quite concerned.

And finally he says in 1 Samuel 12.23, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. God has commanded us to pray.

He's commanded us to do it first and last and always and about everything and to do it without ceasing and to live a life of prayer and to pray about everything. My dear brother and sister, not to do it is to sin against God. There are lots of people who wonder what the problem is in their life that's keeping back the anointing and filling with the Holy Ghost.

They wonder why there's no power in their life. They wonder where the joy is. They wonder where the glory is gone.

They wonder why God isn't using them. And they have said, I have searched my heart and I can't find any sin in my life. But not to live a life of prayer is sin against the Lord.

It is flat disobedience to God. It is rebellion against the Most High. And rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

It means that I do not believe what God says or I am not willing to pay the price to do what God says. And I am determined to carry on the work of God in my own strength. And I am determined to live the life for Christ the way I want to live it and not to accept the command of God to live a life of prayer.

And it's sin. It's sin. Psalm 32 for this show.

Everyone that is godly, pray unto thee. In a time when thou mayest be found, surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. All the Psalmist is saying, the person that is godly prays to God when he may be found.

He prays to God on a regular basis. And then when the floods come, he has the victory. See, so many of us wait until the floods come and then we pray.

But God says, No, I want a life of prayer. Matthew 9, 37 and 38, Jesus speaking, Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, for the labors are few. Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will thrust forth labors into his harvest.

We say we don't have enough missionaries and we don't have enough money. I serve on the ordaining council of our district in the Christian and Missionary Alliance and it's a privilege to me to work with the young men and to examine them for ordination to the gospel ministry. We were going through an ordination time when we had three days of examining young men and we came to the end of one day when we had examined five young men for the ministry.

And they go through each one in that oral examination. They go through a two-hour examination with our men who are on the ordaining council, besides many other things. And we came to the end of that day and we were about to go out for dinner and I said to the men, Have you noticed something very peculiar that has become almost monotonous in this examination today? And they said, No, what's that? And I said, Four out of the five men that we have examined said that they met God and yielded their life to Him in the 71 Revival.

Four out of five. And they said, Why, that's right. Didn't notice that.

You see, when God comes and when His glory comes and when we obey Him and He is moving in power, these things take care of themselves. We shouldn't have to plead with young people to go preach the gospel. We shouldn't have to try every possible means to twist their arm and to try to get them to yield and to say, I'll go to the mission field and I'll go and give my life for Christ.

And Jesus said, Pray and the Lord will thrust them out. We don't have to do it. Luke 21, 36, Watch ye therefore, said Jesus, and pray always that ye may be account worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man.

Matthew 5, verse 44, Jesus said, But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. James in James 5 said, Is any afflicted among you? Let him pray. Oh, not go to the phone and call the five people that we know that we can cry on their shoulder.

No. Are you afflicted? Pray. Are you merry? Sing psalms.

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray. God has commanded us to pray. There's a motto which reads, You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

Years ago during the Civil War in the United States, an officer once complained to General Stonewall Jackson that some soldiers were making a noise in their tent at night. And General Jackson said, What are they doing? And the answer was, They're praying now, but they have been singing. And is that a

crime, the general replied? Well, said the officer, the article of war orders punishment for any unusual noise in the camp.

And General Jackson said, God forbid that praying should be an unusual noise in this camp. But it's an unusual noise in many places. Oh, my brother and sister, is prayer an unusual noise in your house, in your home, in your bedroom, with you and your wife, with your children? Have your children ever heard you pray? A couple come in recently to ask if I would, well, the girl who had been saved asked if I would dedicate their baby.

The man who hadn't come to the Lord yet, they were Roman Catholic background, asked if I was willing to baptize their baby. We had a long talk. And I said, Do you realize that if I were to dedicate your baby, you would stand up before a large congregation of people, and you would stand before Almighty God, and you would take solemn vows publicly that you would do this and this and this and this? And I said, One of the vows you would take is that you would pray with your child.

I said, I wonder if you as a father are ready to pray for your child by name out loud in front of your child. Are you ready to do that? Are you ready to read the Bible to your child? Are you ready to teach your child the doctrines of the Christian faith? Are you ready to take that kind of a stand? I said, All my life I heard my father pray for me by name. In our house, prayer was not an unusual noise, thank God.

It was the usual noise. In fact, it was so usual that we couldn't get out of the house in the morning without it. All of us kids, there were four of us, and we had to go to school like all other kids.

But believe me, before we got out of the house to go to school, there was always that circle in the living room, and there was the word of God read, and there was prayer. And we prayed all around the circle, and I heard my father and mother pray for me by name as long as I can ever remember. And the day that I was eight years old, it was my birthday, and we were praying around the family circle before I went to school.

We were all going, the four of us, and suddenly my mother started to pray, and she said, Oh God, I hate to tell you this, my middle name is Malcolm. My mother was born in Scotland. That's a nice name.

But they used to call me that. And she said, Oh God, protect Malcolm today and don't let him get killed on the way to school. That encouraged you before you went out the door.

Well, the fact is, at eight years old, I hardly noticed it. But I'm glad that God noticed it, or I wouldn't be standing here. Because I got on the way to school, and some of the kids found out it was my birthday, and they started to chase me, to spank me for my birthday, and I ran out into a major highway and was run over with an automobile.

I never saw a car until suddenly I found myself lying on the pavement under the car. And I crawled out and tried to stand up and fell down. Somebody scooped me up and jumped in the car and they raced to the hospital.

And really all that was wrong, well, you can say he got hit in the head, but I don't believe it. But all that was wrong was that one tire apparently had caught my foot and tore the sneaker off my foot and had taken a patch of flesh about that big off the side of my ankle. And that was easily patched.

Prayer was not an unusual noise in our home. I remember one time when my father was pastoring when we all had freewill offerings. Don't you know? Older pastors remember freewill offerings? They were sure

free, but not much will sometimes.

My mother averaged one year during the Depression. And my mother averaged our weekly income for one year was \$2.45 a week with four children. And I remember one night for dinner there just wasn't any food and my mother set the table and Dad said, We need to pray.

And we all went in and got down on our knees in the living room. And we had prayer. My father said, Dear Lord, Sometime in the prayer he asked God to provide food for supper.

And while he was praying, there was a sound on the porch. He just kept on praying. And after he was finished, he went and opened the door and there was a box of groceries.

My father and mother in heaven, if they can hear me, I want them to know how grateful I am that I grew up in a house where the people prayed about everything! They prayed about their food and their clothes and when we got sick they prayed and they prayed about everything! God has commanded us to pray. And brother and sister, if you are not living a life of prayer, you are living a life of disobedience to God and it is one of the greatest sins in your life and it will block the blessing and the power of God and the joy of the Spirit and it will defeat you and there isn't any way you can pray around it or get around it. Because God has commanded us to pray.

The second reason we ought to pray is because Jesus has set the example. Jesus set the example. What a life of prayer he lived.

And I want you to know he was living in a human nature and he had all the physical weaknesses that we have and all the physical tiredness and busyness and pressures that you and I have. But I want to give you some scriptures very quickly. I'm going to read them quickly.

Jot them down. Matthew 14, 23. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he, Jesus, went up into a mountain apart to pray.

And when the evening was come, he was there alone. Mark 1.35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed. Mark 6.46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Luke 3, 21 and 22. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, also being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him. And a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son.

In thee I am well pleased. I want you to know that Jesus himself was filled with the Holy Spirit of God as a result of prayer. He prayed and the Spirit of God came upon him.

Luke 5.16. And he, Jesus, withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 6.12. And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. You say the reason that Jesus had such power in his life is because he was the Son of God.

That is not so. The Scriptures say how that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. What Jesus did, he did in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

And if you want to see the power that was in the life of Christ, just read about his prayer life. Luke 9. Many of these are in Luke. They're not the same thing repeated.

These are all different incidents. Luke 9:18. And it came to pass as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him, and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? Verse 28. And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray.

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. Bill was talking about the glory. Wouldn't you like to have been there? You that know me, don't you know it isn't polite to sit and stare when someone asks you a question? When Jesus was on that mountain, he took those disciples up there to pray with him.

And they got into a prayer meeting. I don't know what they were praying about, but Jesus and those three disciples got into a prayer meeting. And there they were, praying.

And suddenly, the glory came down. And Jesus was transfigured before them, and his clothes became glistening as white as snow, and his face shining as the sun, and they saw the glory of God. That was in prayer.

Jesus in prayer. Luke 11:1. Luke 11:1. Jesus still teaching on this subject of prayer. And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

John 11:41-43. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Don't feel sorry for me. I don't have a cold. I'm just all broken up.

Is that all right? Have you ever noticed this incident when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, that he didn't go up to that tomb and stand there and say, Now, Father, I need to pray. And what I want to know is, what do you want to do? No, he said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Go check the tenses in the Greek.

They're correct. This is a good translation. Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that you always hear me, but now what I'm going to say is because of the people that are standing around me.

See, Jesus said, Father, I've already prayed this through. I know what I'm going to do. But these people here, they don't know that I've already done this, so what I'm saying is, just so they'll understand that I have already prayed to you, and you've already told me what to do, and what I'm going to do is exactly what I know you want me to do.

I think that's marvelous. See, one of the reasons that we get into such trouble when we get into emergencies is because we aren't like Jesus. We haven't lived the life of prayer, and we haven't been with God, and we don't have the answers.

We don't know the will of God, and we aren't prayed up, and we aren't ready. Is that right? And then we're suddenly in an emergency. We say, Oh Lord, I don't know what to do.

And then we want to pray, and sometimes there isn't time to pray. It's time to act. We aren't ready to act.

But Jesus had prayed, and He knew exactly what He was going to do. John 14, 16, And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. I am so glad that this wonderful person of prayer, the second person of the Divine Trinity, God of very God, God incarnate, the eternal Word that He prayed for God to send to me, the Divine Comforter.

Hallelujah. John 17. No, Matthew 26.

We don't have time. Matthew 26. I want to give you verses 36 and 39.

Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go, and pray yonder. In another place it says that He said to them, Watch with Me. He wanted them to pray with Him.

He just removed Himself a slight distance, but they were to kneel there and pray, and He was to kneel there and pray. And they were within hearing distance because that's how they knew what He said, and why it's recorded here by the Spirit. And He went a little further and fell on His face and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

It says in Hebrews that He prayed with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and He was hurt and that He feared. I tell you, when I think of the prayer life of Jesus, who was God, I am so ashamed. If He needed to live the life of prayer that He lived, what do I need if the One who created all the worlds and who at that moment was sustaining them by His own personal power, if that One who knew all things and who was slain before the casting down of the world, if that One needed to live the life of prayer that He lived in the flesh, what do I need to do? Oh, my friends, we ought to pray because Jesus set the example.

The third and final thing I want to say to you is we should pray because prayer changes things. Prayer changes things and prayer changes people. It changes the world.

There has never been any worthwhile change ever wrought on this earth since the fall of Adam and Eve that hasn't been wrought by prayer. Oh, you say great preaching changed the world. No! Great praying changed men so they became great preachers.

Do you believe it? I've studied it. It's true. Well, the Bible is full of it, isn't it? Where should we turn? What could we say? Prayer.

The example of prayer. Men of prayer. I think of Abraham.

Three men appeared at the door of his tent one day. He ran out and said, Come in, gentlemen. And he prepared food for them.

And two of them were angels headed for Sodom and Gomorrah to rescue Lot. And one of them was the Lord. And the two angels, after the Lord had said that Sarah was to give birth to a son, the two angels started for Sodom to rescue Lot.

And Abraham stood before the Lord. And the Lord said, Shall I do anything without sharing it with my friend Abraham? I don't know what that does to you, but that does something to me. I would certainly like to be on those kind of intimate terms with God.

Wouldn't you? God said, I'm going to do something quite tragic. And I wouldn't think of doing it without sharing it with my friend Abraham. Abraham lived such a life of prayer that he was called the friend of God and that God would not do any major thing that would touch Abraham without talking with him about it first.

And so he told him what he was going to do. And Abraham stood before the Lord and he interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah. I've often wondered.

I'm not critical of Abraham. I don't think I've ever had the courage to do what he did. He said, you know, here I am but dust and ashes.

Now I who am dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak unto the Lord. And he interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah. And he started with 50 people.

He said, if there are 50 righteous, will you spare the city for the 50 righteous? And the Lord said, I'll spare it. And he said, Lord, what if it were 45? And the Lord said, I'd spare it for 45. And he said, now, Lord, please don't get upset with me, but what if it were 30? And he kept working it down and working it down.

And you know, by the time he got to 10, I think he was getting nervous. I've often wondered what would have happened had he worked it right on down to Lot and his family. He wasn't far off.

Because when Lot and his wife finally came out, there were four of them and he was only six away. What a man of prayer. Moses, that great man of prayer.

God said to Moses, get out of the way. I have had it with these people. I am going to destroy this whole nation.

Three million of them. I am going to wipe them out. Just stand aside.

I am going to wipe them out. And then I am going to take you, Moses, and I am going to make a great nation of you. And instead of Abraham's name, it will be your name.

Oh, what a man of prayer. And Moses went before the Lord and he said, Oh, Lord God. He said, don't do that.

He said, if you destroy these people, then all the heathen around will say that you weren't strong enough. That you brought them out of Egypt and you weren't strong enough to take them into the Promised Land. And they'll blaspheme your holy name.

Oh, God, honor your name. And do not destroy these people. And he got to the end of his prayer and he said, Oh, Lord, blot out their sin, but if not, blot thee, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

He wasn't only willing to die for those people, he was willing to go to hell for them. What a man of prayer. And God said, I have heard your prayer.

And I will pardon your sin. Oh, I would to God that he could get a hold of some of us to pray for this nation, for North America, that God would come in power. Think about Hannah.

She wanted a child. She went up with her husband to the temple year by year. And she was praying.

What a woman of prayer. She was so earnestly in prayer that the priest came to her and said, How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine! And she said, I'm not drunk. I may look drunk, but I'm not drunk.

I'm praying! I'm praying for a child! And he said, God has answered your prayer. And God gave her Samuel, the great prophet, as her son. A woman of prayer.

What about Elijah? Oh, Elijah always amazes me. You know, to go and stand before the king of a land and to look him in the eye and to say, Now listen to me. Sort of like the captain on a ship saying, Now hear this.

He says, Now listen to me. It isn't going to rain in this country except by my word. You have to be prayed up when you do that.

You don't fool around with things like that. See, it says in James, that Elijah was a man of like passions. You say, That was Elijah.

Listen, Elijah, says the Scriptures, was a man of like passions as we are. And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it rained down on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again. And the heaven gave its rain and the earth brought forth its increase. You see, we ought to pray because God answers prayer.

He does for the person who lives a life of prayer. And Elijah lived a life of prayer. So he could go and put his finger under the nose of the king and say, Listen, I have been with God and I'm telling you, it isn't going to rain in this country until I say so.

Wow. And it didn't. And the king believed that Elijah was at the root of the problem and he went looking for him all over the country to kill him.

Then you know about Mount Carmel. A preacher was preaching on Mount Carmel and he entitled his sermon, he was from Texas, and he entitled his sermon, Showdown at Mount Carmel Pass. I like that.

And he said, Get the prophets of Baal and get them out there. And he got the prophets of Baal. And he said, Now you go first.

You fix your altars and I'm going to give you all day. And you pray to Baal and if Baal is the God, he will answer for fire and the fire will come down from heaven and burn up your sacrifice. And we're going to see who is the God.

I tell you, when you put yourself out on the limb like that, you have to be prayed up. Man, I've thought about that and I've thought by the end of the day when it came my turn, I'd have been a nervous wreck. I wonder if the fire will come down.

Elijah wasn't nervous about it at all. In fact, in the middle of the day, he came out and he said, Listen, surely your God is a God. Why don't you cry louder? Probably he's asleep taking an afternoon nap, you know, siesta.

Or maybe he's gone on a walk or something. Cry louder. Surely he'll hear you.

And he mocked him. Oh, I get excited over this man. He was just a normal man.

Just like you and I. You say, how do you know? The Bible says so. And after the great victory, Jezebel said, By tomorrow I'm going to kill you. And he ran.

And I mean he ran for 40 days. The long run. Just an ordinary person.

But there was one thing different about him. He was a man of prayer. He lived a life of prayer.

And when they had finished all their nonsense, they had cut themselves with knives and they had done everything they could do. Then Elijah came and he built the altar of the Lord that was thrown down. And he lifted his hands and he began to pray.

And the fire fell. A man of prayer. Let me mention one more.

Hezekiah. Sennacherib had come against Hezekiah and the city of God with a great army. The city was shut up.

It was under siege. There was no way anyone could go out or come in. And he sent a letter to Hezekiah telling him, mocking the God of Israel, and saying, Don't depend on Jehovah.

Don't depend upon your God. What has happened to all the gods of all the other nations where we have gone? Our armies have destroyed those people and those gods and they were nothing. And your God will be the same.

And I love the picture of Hezekiah. It says he went into the house of the Lord and he spread out the letter before the Lord. Watch out, Sennacherib.

God can read. And he laid it out before God. And that night, in answer to his prayer, a death angel swept through the camp of Sennacherib.

And in the morning, there were 185,000 soldiers lying dead in their tents. That's the power of prayer. The power of God.

When I was 15 also, I had the privilege of seeing God answer prayer. I had all my life, but God did something very dramatic. I was at a place called Delta Lake Conference Grounds.

It's a large conference grounds in New York State where the Christian Missionary Alliance holds conferences. There was a man there by the name of Nicholson. He was an Irish evangelist.

And he was preaching at the conference. We had a large tabernacle that had a metal roof. And one afternoon, we were in the midst of a meeting.

There had been great singing and special music and all the things that go to a great afternoon rally. And Mr. Nicholson was introduced. And suddenly there came a rain.

And you could hear the rain coming across the grounds. You know what I'm talking about when it's really raining. You know, it's just pounding the ground, just thundering on the ground.

And you could hear this terrible rain coming and just thundering on the ground and just moved right across the camp and right over the tabernacle. And it just roared. No way you could preach or do anything.

I was sitting there in that audience as a 15-year-old boy. And I thought, well, I wonder what will happen now. And all at once, Mr. Nicholson walked out to the front of the platform.

And he lifted his hands and he shouted in the name of Jesus Christ, I command this rain to stop. And it had come this way. And all at once you could hear it coming the other way.

And it just came and it moved right across the campground and right across the tabernacle. And right on, you could hear it roaring. And it moved right on until the sound was gone and it was perfectly quiet.

And, brother and sister, the glory came down. Oh, there was no need for a sermon. A few words and the whole front of that place was filled with praying, sobbing, broken people as they had seen the power of God.

Why? Because this man was a man who lived a life of prayer and walked with God and knew the voice of God and dared to come out and stand and do a thing like that in the name of Jesus because he was prayed up and he knew the mind of God. I am absolutely convinced that if God could get us to obey Him in this area of prayer, that all of us could live to see the awakening that God likes to bring to the world about every 100 years. Just study history.

It's just there. We're overdue. Do you realize it? We're overdue.

And God is speaking to our hearts in this conference and saying, are you going to do business with me in this area and are you going to begin to live a life of prayer or are you going to go right on in rebellion and disobedience and sin and defeat in your Christian life? Which is it going to be?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23134.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-siple/why-pray/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net