

# Shocking Message on Prayer (Prayerfest)

by Shane Idleman

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*The church must become a praying church to regain its power and authority, and to experience spiritual growth and revival.*

**Duration:** 21:32

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 145:18, Jeremiah 29:12, Matthew 6:6, Mark 11:24, Luke 18:1, Acts 3:19, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Revival Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the power of prayer, highlighting the essential role of prayer in the life of a believer and the church. It calls for a return to a deep, humble, and surrendered prayer life, pointing out the impact of prayer on marriages, families, ministries, and the nation. The speaker stresses the need for repentance, humility, and seeking God's face through prayer, emphasizing that prayer moves the hand of God and leads to revival and transformation.

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## Transcript

Chris likes to make me nervous, so he came up and said, you know the wind's going to pick back up, right? Because Henry can pray better than you. He didn't say that, but I threw that in there, and it's just such an honor to be here. But I do come tonight with a heavy heart.

I've been asked to speak on the power of prayer. And as I was preparing this, a quote I read many years ago came to mind by Ian Bounds. He's a great devotional writer.

I would encourage you to read anything on prayer by him that you can. Ian Bounds. He made a statement.

He said, when your faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live. Prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. Folks, you will not know the power of God in your life until you become men and women of prayer.

The lukewarm condition of the church in America today is because they have lost the power of prayer. There's no consecration. There's no holiness.

There's no fear of the Lord. The church is supposed to be a powerful church. We're supposed to be confrontational.

We're supposed to change lives. We've lost the note of authority. We've lost our power.

The Holy Spirit's been quenched and grieved because we do not pray. Do you know that prayer moves the hand of God? Prayer moves the hand of God. This sermon is birthed in the prayer closet, not from pop psychology.

I have to go to the prayer closet and say, Lord, what do you want to say? Not what does man want to hear? You have to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer. You need to become men and women surrendered, fully surrendered, get up early, go to bed early, do what it takes. But the power of prayer, that's why marriages are not being restored, families are not being restored.

That's why the nation is a condition we're in today, because we have lost the power of prayer. Period. And I want to talk to two groups and I'll be out of your way.

I promise. The first group I want to address is to leaders in the church or involved in ministry in any capacity. Do you realize that we set the tone for the church? Yep.

A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. A prayerless church is a powerless church. The reason many churches are moving mightily, the reason the pulpits are dying, churches are closing, is because we've lost the power of prayer.

That is the most important thing we possess, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Folks, our battle is not physical, it's spiritual. We go into battle unprepared, unarmed and untrained.

It is the prayer closet that breaks you. It's a prayer closet that molds you. It's a prayer closet that shapes you.

It's a prayer closet that leads you. It's a prayer closet that you commune with God. I want to quote, not only in honor of Reverend Hearn, but just for my own, I really admire this man, Martin Luther King Jr. And he said that the church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state.

It is the conscience of the state. We are the conscience of the people. He goes on to say if the church loses it, loses her prophetic zeal, she'll become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.

That's what we've become. We've become a social club. There's no power in the name of Christ anymore when people come into church.

There's no distinction. There's no separation. The church is a mile wide, but an inch deep.

And I've come to sound the alarm. We have got to become a praying church. Listen, the church is mocked.

The church is ridiculed. The church used to pray. The church used to petition God.

The church used to know what all my prayer meetings meant. What brokenness and humility and full surrender. Now we want to talk about blessings and boasting and jockeying for position.

God says, I don't want any of that. Humble yourself. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, will I not hear their prayers, heal their land and forgive their sins? If, conditional, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, humility.

Church, we're too arrogant. Our nation's too arrogant. The church as a whole is arrogant, jockeying for positions, building men of ministry.

I don't want a thousand people. I just want a hundred people, men and women, surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who want to pray and contend for the valley. That's how the prodigal son comes home.

He comes home in the prayer closet. And I also want to talk briefly to just the group of you who might not be in leadership yet. Or just in ministry, in any ministry whatsoever, you've got to remember something.

That prayer moves the hand of God. We're going into battle, as I said earlier, unarmed and untrained. We're saying, devil, take the best shot.

But we wrestle not against flesh and blood. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds and casting down arguments. This, sir, needs to take precedence in our lives again.

I've come here as a witness that the truth transforms you. I say often in my church that this is a hill on which we must die. Prayer is a hill on which we must die.

The church must contend for it. You say we're going to have a concert and free food. We would pack this place.

But when you say there's a prayer closet, every excuse in the book comes up. Why? Because there's power in the name of Jesus Christ. There's so much power that the Bible says that God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.

Therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. When you pray in the power of Jesus Christ, God moves. That's how you win the prodigal son home, in the prayer closet.

That's how the wayward daughter returns, in the prayer closet. That's how you build your ministry in the prayer closet, waiting on God. Humility and brokenness.

People, when men and women pray, God moves. And I'm not talking about a five-minute devotional or something quick before a meal. I'm talking about brokenness and humility and surrender.

Where are they today? When Moses prayed, he said, Let my people go. When he stood before the Red Sea, it had to part. When Joshua prayed, the walls of Jericho came down.

When Hannah prayed, Lord, I need a child. She brought forth Samuel, the most anointed prophet that Israel has ever known. When Samuel prayed, Israel repented.

When Esther prayed, she said, I might perish, but I've been called for such a time as this. Call a fast, call a prayer. I've been called for such a time as this.

When Elisha prayed, the heavens were shut up for three and a half years. When he prayed later, fire fell and consumed the altar. There's power in the prayer.

Genesis to Revelation. Most mighty moves of God are because of prayer. Not expositional teaching.

I love sound doctrine. But it's not about eschatology, newitology, theology, hermeneutics and homiletics. It's about petitioning God and praying and being broken and surrender.

Where are they today? Where are the men and women praying and petitioning God? When David prayed, he could stand before Goliath and say, You uncircumcised Philistines. You have defied the armies of the living God. And David, in the power of the Holy Spirit, put him down.

When Samson prayed, when Samson repented, his eyes had been gorged out. Everything taken from him, he was grinding in the mill like oxen. And a little boy led him.

And he said, Oh Lord, remember me. Lord, remember me. Avenge me for my two eyes.

And he put his hands on the pillar and the whole Colosseum came down because of his prayer of repentance. And the Bible says that the dead which he slew in his death were more than they which he slew in his life. He pleased God again.

He conquered more people at his death than he did his life because of prayer of repentance. If my people are called by my name, they will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways. See, the church wants to be politically correct now.

We don't want to talk about sin. We don't want to talk about judgment. We don't want to talk about hell.

We don't want to talk about the cross. We sure don't want to talk about the blood of Christ. We don't want to talk about holiness.

The problem is that's the foundation of the gospel. Those are foundational doctrines given to us to preach with authority and boldness to convict the heart so the heart is broken and surrendered and prayed and petitions God. When men and women pray, God moves.

I can take you to the New Testament church when Jesus Christ said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. His prayer secured salvation. He could have called down ten legions of armies and wiped out humanity and said, Let's start again.

I'm not going on that cross. But he's hung there beaten beyond recognition. The creator beaten by his creation.

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Do you know that the New Testament church was birthed in a prayer closet? It wasn't planted by a mega ministry. Jesus didn't say, Go out and pass out tracts.

Go knock on doors. Go start a church. He said, Go and wait until you've been endued with power on high because it's in that prayer closet that the men and women were petitioning and broken.

What happens in the prayer closet is it should humble you and break you. You go up in there arrogant and haughty and you come out broken. Now you're filled with the spirit because you're emptied of yourself.

When men pray and women pray, God moves. I can take you through church history and show you St. Augustine's journals. I can go to Martin Luther who brought the church to her knees.

They said, Mr. Luther, we can't or we will possibly execute you. He said, Here I stand. I can do no other.

Because he spent the night praying and petitioning, Uring Zwingli turned Switzerland upside down. John Knox cried, Give me Scotland for the cause of Christ or I shall die. Hussein, give me the Aloe Valley for the cause of Christ or I shall die.

We're too busy, church. The church is too busy. We've lost the note of authority.

We've lost our passion. We've lost our power. Quite frankly, we've lost the presence of the Holy Spirit because we are quenching and grieving Him.

Now I did not come here to be popular. I came here to be confrontational. I didn't come here to tickle the ears.

I came here to challenge the heart and we need that sometimes. We can look throughout church history. All these great men and women of God were men and women of prayer.

I have never met a strong saint of God who was not a man or woman of prayer. That petitioning, that brokenness. Look at even the founding of our nation.

I can take you back to the first great awakening with Jonathan Edwards and Wesley and Whitefield. These men were men and women of prayer and brokenness. Where are they today? Where are they? And you can hear, I'm just reminded of, I believe it's Isaiah 59 where the Lord says, Is not my ear heavy that I cannot hear? Is not my hand short that I cannot save? But your iniquities have separated you from me and your sins have hidden my face from you so I cannot hear.

Folks, this is the most important verse we can grab onto when it comes to prayer. If my people are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face. Not my hand, not what I can give them, but seek my face.

I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins. Think about that. You want to know why marriages are not being restored? Why families are falling apart? Men, let me talk to you for a minute.

You are called to be the spiritual leader of your home, period. We're not jockeying for position. We're not supposed to earn two different degrees and buy a big house and tons of toys.

You're supposed to be a man of character and raise your family in the fear and admonition of the Lord. That is your number one responsibility. As men, the weight of responsibility rests squarely upon our shoulders.

We are missing in action and we are burying our children. Not necessarily physically, but spiritually because we are not leading them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Men, the most important thing you can do is be men of prayer and men of brokenness.

But it starts with repentance. Did you know that repentance is preached throughout the entire Bible? John the Baptist came on the scene saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus said, Go and preach repentance.

Peter opened up the church and said, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and let your sins be blotted out. The times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

This message should stir and it should upset, but at the same time it should bring conviction. Saying, Lord, I want that. I need that.

Lord, that's what he wants us to do. To come in the spirit of brokenness and humility and relying on him. That's the New Testament church.

The New Testament church was a praying church. The problem is we're dying in the pulpits. We're dying.

Churches are closing across America. The church is not operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the key to the Christian faith.

The power and the presence of the Holy Spirit operating in the life of a believer. And that only happens in the prayer closet. As I said before, sermons aren't prepared.

They're prepared in the prayer closet. Not based on pop psychology. They're prepared in the prayer closet.

Not based on the latest fad. You've got to start spending time praying and petitioning God. Crying out to him.

The only hope for this nation, the only hope for this community, is prayer, humility, and repentance. Prayer, humility, and repentance. And I want to end with that verse when I quoted earlier with Peter, when he said in Acts chapter 3, he said, repent.

Repent and let your sins be blotted out so times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord. And you theologians out there might say, Shane, contextually he's probably dealing with people who aren't yet Christians. And that's true.

But the principle still applies. If you repent, I will return to you, the Lord says, repent and I will return. I will fill you with the Spirit of God.

And I can imagine Peter on that day, if there might be some out here, I don't know. If you don't know, truly know God. If you have not made Jesus Christ Lord of your life, my concern is that there's a lot of people in America playing Christian.

You want to know what that is? They know about God. They've heard about God. They have religion, but they don't have a relationship.

They've never repented and turned their life over to Him. I want to give you that opportunity as well. Peter was saying, repent.

That's all you have to do. Repent and be converted. And your sins will be blotted out and times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord.

That word there in the literal language is revival. Peter is saying, repent and be converted that your sins will be blotted out so that times of refreshing, times of revival will come from the presence of the Lord. That's when you have a personal time of revival is when we repent of our sin.

Repent Lord, get me back on track. Lord, I need you. Lord, I'm sorry.

And I can just imagine the crowd out there saying, but Peter, but Peter, I was the one who pierced Christ with the sword. I was the one who pierced Him with the sword. And he would say, repent.

It's okay, repent. But Peter, but Peter, I'm the Roman soldier that took the crown of thorns, made it and pushed it on his skull as the blood came down. Peter would say, repent, repent.

Another guy come up, Peter, but I'm the guard who took the five pound sledgehammer, drove the nails into the hands and into the feet. And Peter would say, repent. God says, if my people are called by my name, will humble themselves.

I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land. Stop buying your seven secrets to success.

Stop worrying about 15 principles of financial prosperity. Obey this verse. And when I talk about obedience to God's word, sometimes people say, oh, that's legalistic.

That's judgmental. You can call it whatever you want. James 1.22 says, be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Deceiving yourself. When you hear the word of God and you don't do it, you don't apply it, you are living a life of deception. I counsel people who are living together, thinking, oh, it's no big deal.

God doesn't care. They're doing all these things. They're lying here and lying there.

It's no big deal. They know it intellectually. But James says, be doers of the word and not hearers only, or you are deceiving yourself.

So on that note, as Josh comes back up and the prayer team comes back up, I just want to give people the opportunity. If you need prayer, if you say, Jane, I don't know who God is. Or I need that relationship back again.

I've lost my first love. I'm going to encourage you to come forward. And, oh, don't worry about what the person next to me is going to think.

Because when you stand in front of the judgment seat of Christ, nobody is going to be next to you. Nobody. You're going to be weeping like a child.

And I want to challenge you, if you don't truly know him, if you've never accepted him as Lord and Savior, you can play in games. God knows that. Come up and let us pray for you.

But I also want to pray for the person who's left their first love. Jesus talks about it in Revelation. He says, yeah, yeah, you've got sound doctrine.

Yeah, you hate those that are evil. Yeah, I've got all that. But you've left your first love.

What does he say to do? Repent and return to me. Return to me. That's what God's calling us to do, to return to him.

So Josh concludes and the worship team concludes. The prayer team is going to be up here. I'm going to be up here.

We're going to give plenty of time, 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes. Whatever it takes. Just think of that.

When men and women pray, God moves. If you want that prodigal son to come home, I would be up here on my knees. That way we're daughter on my knees.

If your marriage is falling apart, the family is disintegrating, come forward and pray for that, contend for that. You have not because you asked not. God is wanting and willing to open the floodgates of heaven to pour out a blessing we don't have room enough to receive.

But there's obedience, there's responsibility on our part. We have to take that step and say, Lord, I need you. Will you come and visit me? And I just want to give you that opportunity.

You guys can all stand up as we conclude tonight. I know it's comfortable, but we just want to get a position of worship. I don't care if you stand where you're at.

Come forward. I just want to make sure your heart is right with God. He's calling us back to him.

He's calling us back to a place of full surrender and humility. You won't hear those words much because it upsets people. But God wants full surrender.

He wants humility. The time playing games is over. And I'm just going to give you the opportunity to just begin coming forward if you need prayer for anything.

And that's what we're going to be up here for. I'll be up here, Pastor Chris, Reverend Hurd, and the prayer team. But don't be scared, don't be worried.

Just come forward. That's what we're here for. We're here to pray.

Heavenly Father, Lord, I just conclude right now. Lord, I do pray that you would bring that prodigal son home. Lord, I pray for the wayward daughter.

Lord, I pray for the marriages that are hinging on the fracture zone, Lord, and they're just heading for the divorce court. Lord, I pray that you'd disrupt that whole system. I pray that you'd begin revival, bring revival to this community, Lord.

Revive the people, Lord. Give us a sense of holiness and purity in the fear of the Lord. Lord, we just want to honor you.

I pray tonight that you'd pierce hearts, dear Heavenly Father, that you would radically change the lives of those people here today that surrender to you. And we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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