

Revival

by Stephen Olford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prevailing prayer, which is for ordinary, obedient, and observant men and women who pray with all supplication and prayer in the city, and watch thereunto with all perseverance.

Duration: 1:11:10

Scripture: Psalm 24:3-5, Matthew 9:36, James 5:16-18

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by mentioning Vietnam and encourages the audience to invite their friends to the upcoming ministry sessions. The speaker then shares a story about four men on a ship who witnessed sin and wickedness among the crew. These men prayed fervently and experienced a breakthrough, leading to a revival on the ship. The sermon emphasizes the importance of prevailing prayer and the need for believers to come clean with God.

Transcript

Well now, will you turn with me to the epistle of James, the epistle of James, chapter 5, and we'll break in at verse 16. James, chapter 5, and at verse 16, though I do commend the reading of the entire chapter to you. James 5 and verse 16.

Contest your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed. The effectual servant prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias, or Elijah, was a man subject to like passions, as we are, and he prayed earnestly, or prayed in his prayer, that it might not rain.

And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any one of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Now our text is part of verse 16. The effectual servant prayer of a righteous man, of a righteous man, availeth much. Tradition has it that James the Apostle, the brother of our Lord, was nicknamed Camel Knee, Camel Knee.

And we're told that when he died, friends who prepared his body for burial discovered great calluses on his knees. These deformities had been produced because of the long hours he spent on his knees in prayer

before God. Now whether that tradition can be substantiated or not, it's very suggestive and makes me interested in what James has to say about prayer.

And any of you who know this epistle will know that there's practically a message on prayer in every chapter of this epistle. James was indeed a man of prayer, and from a practical standpoint. And in this passage, he gives us a divine proposition on prayer, and then follows it immediately with a human illustration on prayer.

And I want to take this proposition and break it up, expound it, and then illustrate it with the illustration that the Holy Spirit provides here through James. No doctrine of Scripture is found anywhere from Genesis to Revelation that isn't supported and illustrated by some great example. This is one of the unique things about the Scripture, and helps us to understand these two mighty laws of the seven of biblical interpretation.

The law of full mention, here it is in proposition. The law of illustrative mention, Elijah, the illustration of this principle. So I want us to look at this text together.

My heart is very burdened to say something which has become increasingly heavy as I've ministered throughout the two weeks here in Sydney. I've been talking to some of your religious leaders, men of God, men of prayer, men of vision, men of great evangelistic passion. And I have been surprised to learn that this country, Australia, and particularly this city, Sydney, has never known a spiritual revival, has never known the kind of revival that swept New York in 1857, Ireland and Scotland and part of England in 1859, that swept Wales in 1904, that swept the Hebrides in north of Scotland in 1951.

Australia has never known a heaven-sent revival. You have known mighty times of evangelism, and under the ministry of Dr. Billy Graham, especially in his first visit, something happened in this country that was very akin to revival. But you have never known that sovereign, mighty moving of the Spirit in response to anointed prayer, which has shaken this nation and this country for good and for the glory of God.

I don't know if that concerns you, but it deeply concerns me. Because as I think of the United States of America, where I now minister, and which has become my adopted home, I am interested in evangelism, and there will never be a moment in my life so long as I have breath and strength that I will not devote to aggressive evangelism. But the situation has gotten to a point where nothing left than heaven-sent revival can cure our ills and bring the nation back to God.

Revival, revival. And closely aligned to this matter of revival is the ministry of prayer in the Holy Ghost, as we heard read just a few moments ago, praying with all prayer and supplication in the city and watching thereunto with perseverance for all things. I'm wondering whether you, young person, and I'm speaking to young people as well as older ones, this is no archaic subject that I'm bringing to bear upon you now.

It's fresh, alive, and relevant, and the only answer to the day in which we live. I'm just wondering what your prayer life is like. Whether you know what I mean when I talk about revival prayer, or prevailing in prayer.

Let us then look at this text and see what the Spirit of God would teach us here tonight. First of all, I want to speak on what I'm calling the ministry of prevailing prayer. The ministry of prevailing prayer, the effectual servant prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The effectual servant prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We're brought right to the very heart of this ministry in this opening verse. The ministry of prevailing prayer is for righteous men and women.

You only qualify for prevailing prayer when it can be said of you, you're a righteous person. James tells us, first and foremost, surprisingly enough, that a righteous person is an ordinary person, just an ordinary person. For having stated the effectual servant prayer of a righteous man availeth much, he goes right on to say, without a break, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

But he prayed. Now we can never think of Elijah without thinking of Mount Carmel. And we shall be going to Mount Carmel a little later.

There he is, alone, strong, formidable, courageous, spirit anointed, challenging an entire apostate nation, and calling down far from heaven upon that prepared altar. He's a character that always thrills me, always thrills me. It's very interesting, if I may say, by way of an aside, that when our Lord asked his disciples what they thought of his ministry and what the general public thought of his ministry, they replied, some say you are Elijah.

Others say you are Jeremiah. Very significant. The man of judgment, the man of fire, the man of fear.

Jeremiah, the man of sorrow and weeping and sympathy. Two glorious characteristics blended in one mighty personality, our Lord Jesus Christ and his humanity. Elijah, Elijah, a mighty man.

And yet, for all that, he was an ordinary man. He was an ordinary man. For you can't read his story in the book of Kings without discovering that there came a moment in his life when he fled in fear from a woman, a man who stood against all those false prophets, a man who gambled his life alone on a mountaintop, fled in fear from a woman, tranced in frustration from a prophet's yoke, and at the last, sat under a juniper tree longing to end his life.

An ordinary man. Just an ordinary man. My point of emphasis here is simply this, there is no one who can go out of this place tonight and say, I don't qualify for a ministry of prayer.

If you do, you go out because the message hasn't reached you. Or perhaps because you're unregenerate and you're out of this dimension altogether. Or it may be because you're rebellious to the sacrifice that God's going to make upon you for this kind of prayer.

But there isn't a young person here, and it's wonderful to see a crowd of young people here, and there isn't an older person here who doesn't come into the embracing suite of this prayer ministry. An ordinary man. But supremely, he was an obedient man.

The effectual servant prayer of a righteous man. An ordinary man, but an obedient man. And poring over his story again this afternoon, I was impressed, deeply impressed, with a little recurring reframe in that story, which goes something like this, he went and did according to the word of the Lord, he went and did according to the word of the Lord, he went and did according to the word of the Lord.

A righteous man is a man rightly related to God, rightly related to the word of God, rightly related to the will of God, rightly related to the world of his day. He was an obedient man. He went and did according to the word of the Lord.

He stood before the Lord. Now, men and women, if there's one thing I want, and which I wish to measure tonight, is just on this. Is your life characterized by obedience to the word of God, to the will of God? David says in one of his psalms, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

More literally, that could be rendered, if I look with approval on anything in my life which is out of adjustment to the will of God. Out of adjustment to the will of God, the Lord will not hear me. The Lord will not hear me.

Are you obedient to all the will of God? Jesus said, you remember, if you abide in me, and my words abide in you, he shall ask what he will, and it shall be done unto you. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, he shall ask what he will, and it shall be done unto you. Christian friends, let's forget for a moment that we're in a crowd here.

Let's face up to the solemn challenge of these words, and bow before our Lord and answer this question. Lord Jesus, can I honestly say that there is no point of disobedience in my life? So far as the revealed will of God through thy word to me, I've gone all the way. I've gone all the way.

Dr. William Fitch, pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Canada, delivered an address a few months ago where he searched every one of our hearts. He made the statement from which I haven't been able to escape. He said, men and women understand this, that defective disobedience constitutes total disobedience.

Defective obedience constitutes total disobedience. And it's no good saying I've gone all the way with my Lord on everything he's revealed to me. Say this one matter, this one matter, and so far as I'm concerned, it's an insignificant matter.

It doesn't really, it doesn't really matter whether or not I include this in my obedience. Defective obedience constitutes total disobedience. And I just wonder whether or not tonight some of us will have to come clean on this issue of obedience in our lives.

Let me ask you this, are you meeting your Lord every day in the place of daily devotion, quiet time, morning watch, whatever you like to call it? Did you have your quiet time this morning before you went to school, to university, to the bank, to the office, to the shop? Is it your custom to open the word of God in his holy presence every day, and find out what he has to say to you, and then say, Lord, I'm going to do according to thy word? Did you spend moments of prayer with him? A famous and popular Christian psychiatrist in the United States of America has made some kind of Gallup poll or survey to discover that the average time that Christian people spend in the reading of the word of God and prayer, every day or any day, is five minutes. Five minutes where creatures of eternity, what is of supreme importance is that holy life of yours, that call to obedience, that living out of the revealed will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit undergirded by prayer. Five minutes.

How long is it in your life, an obedient man, we sing, but also glibly, trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. But I wonder how far you've gone on the issue of obedience. The ministry of prevailing prayer is exclusively related to a righteous man.

A righteous man. An ordinary man, Elijah was, but an obedient man. And although he had his weaknesses and his failures, he rose to obedience every time the Lord laid his hand upon him.

Rose to obedience. And I notice in the third place that he was a man of vision. He was a man of vision, an observant man.

We read in the story that he went up to a king and he faced that king with these words, thou in thy father's house hath forsaken the commandment of the Lord, and hast followed after Balaam. He was a man who

was so wide awake, so alert, because of the word of God in his own soul, that he could evaluate and assess the trends of the day. He saw what was happening.

He was concerned because of the apostasy and degeneration of his nation. You know, one of the things that worries me more than anything else, is the lack of intelligent observation on the part of Christian men and women, and indeed amongst our leaders and even our pastors. They're completely complacent with the status quo, indifferent about the things around us, whether it's within our churches or the squalor and poverty and need outside.

We're completely unconcerned about the need for pressing the advance of evangelism. We're unconcerned about revival. We're not observant.

Now it goes without saying that it's only the man who sees, who prays, it's observation that leads to intercession. And only the man who sees will pray. That was true of our Lord.

That was true of the great apostle Paul. That's been true of men and women down through the centuries. Jeremiah says in the book of Lamentations, mine eye affecteth mine heart.

Mine eye affecteth mine heart. It's because of what I see that drives me to intercession and to prayer. I wonder if you've ever understood the meaning of that word we so often quote, where there is no vision, the people perish.

That word of the Spirit through Solomon has a tremendous New Testament connotation. Where there is no vision, where there is no vision, the people perish. Vision, vision is indissolubly linked with a Spirit-filled life.

It's when the Spirit of God is poured forth on young men that they see vision. They see vision. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Or more literally, where there is no vision, the people throw off all moral restraint. Where there is no vision, the people go naked. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

A lady came to me not so very long ago and said, Pastor Alfred, I'm concerned about this city. Have you ever known in the history of this city since you've been here these ten years, such goings-on as are happening right now? And I said, it's a fearful situation. We're having nights of prayer about it.

I don't know what's happening in your church, but I want to tell you, my dear friend, that city of ours is a reflection, a reflection of the weakness of the Church. Where to be as salt in the earth, where to be as light in the world, where the salt has lost its flavor, where the light no longer exposes evil, you can expect men to go naked. You expect men to throw off moral restraint.

The power of the Spirit in his restraining ministry is hindered because he's grieved and quenched in the body of Christ. We don't see what's happening in its right light. Vision leads to prayer.

What I see makes me pray. Observation leads to intercept. Yes, Elijah was a man of observation.

He saw what was happening. One of the only men who did see what was happening. Yes, there were prophets shot up, fearful, cowering and cringing for fear of all that was going on, who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

But it appears that only one man knew the secret and the solution. It was Elijah. Elijah.

Well, now, do you qualify for the ministry of prayer? It's for ordinary men and women, for obedient men and women, for observant men and women. Christian people, let us not be ignorant of what's happening today. When we read our papers or watch the television or read the magazines that tell us of the trends, let's not read them objectively or merely in terms of academic knowledge.

Oh, to be moved as our Savior was, as he looked out upon sheep without a shepherd and had compassion on them. So much, then, for the ministry of prevailing prayer. But our text takes us even deeper.

There is not only here the ministry of prevailing prayer, there is the manner of prevailing prayer. The effectual, fervent prayer, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And this, I must confess, is where my heart is searched.

This, I confess, is where I've slandered even today. And God knows my heart. And all I'm doing tonight is sharing with you a testimony.

What is this manner of praying? I want you to notice, first of all, that it's fervent prayer. Fervent prayer. We read that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, or prayed in his prayer.

Alas, alas, so many of us merely say prayers, or, to quote the children's hymn, I often say my prayers, but do I really pray? We've known the cliché since we were youngsters. We've followed our forms of prayer. We've ate the pastor or minister, and we know how to use the evangelical jargon.

But do we really pray? Beloved, what God is talking about here through his apostles is something tremendously searching and deep. This is inward prayer. This is praying in the Holy Ghost.

Praying with all supplication and prayer in the city, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. This is prayer in the Holy Ghost. This is the kind of prayer which only comes to a man or a woman, a fellow or a girl, who, understanding the word, has said, Oh God, I want this body of mine to be the temple of the Holy Ghost.

I want my mind, I want my heart, I want my will, so to be yielded to the indwelling Spirit that he prays in me all the will of God. Paul tells us something about that in his Roman epistle in chapter 8 where he says, The Spirit helpeth our infirmity, not infirmities as the plural has it there, but as the original has it, the infirmity, my infirmity, what infirmity? Without a question, the infirmity there is our prayerlessness. Prayer starts in heaven, and whether you pray or not, I'll tell you someone who's always praying, and that's Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Prayer originates in heaven. But in the wisdom of God, that prayer closes the circuit by coming down into the life, the temple life, of a man or a woman who's given himself entirely over to the indwelling paraclete, who in turn uses our minds, our hearts, our wills, to echo the prayer in heaven.

Then it returns back to heaven, and when that circuit of prayer is closed, things happen in the universe. Question is, have you ever yielded that body to the Holy Spirit for that purpose? Do you know what it is to pray with groanings that cannot be uttered? I'm not being pious, I'm not being mystical, I'm not being

intangible, I'm not talking about something nebulous. I'm talking about prayer for all things.

I'm talking about the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man. I'm talking about fervent prayer, fervent prayer. And I'm challenging a congregation in Sydney tonight about that praying, and before this meeting is over, you're going to answer to God as to whether or not some of you women whose children now have grown up, and for the most part you have several hours a day where you could give to prayer, to hit the great mission fields of the world, to pray for your pastor, your church, the outreach of the gospel, and mainly and supremely for revival.

Some of you young people here who ought to be giving more time to prayer in your quiet times, you men too, despite all the busyness, getting a hold of God and laying hold of God, and all of us, all of us, bringing a new spirit of prayer and intensity into our public prayer meetings in our churches. The greatest meeting of the church should be the prayer meeting every week. This is where the information is shared, this is where the inspiration is gathered, and this is where intercession is made for all men, for all saints, for all situations.

Think of it, prayer is a means by which in spirit realm I project myself across continents and oceans and situations, governmental and otherwise, to touch situations for God. This is the greatest weapon God has ever given to the church. And to me, one of the greatest evidences of satanic delusion is that we give it such a small place in our lives and in our churches, fervent prayer, fervent prayer.

But if my text teaches me anything, it's not only a matter of fervent praying, but of regular, continual, frequent praying. Yes, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months, and he prayed again. And the sense must be understood in the context of the story of one king, sixteen and onwards, where he prayed again and again and again.

His prayer ministry was not intelligent, it was not cosmic, it was regular. And I'm reminded of the words of our Savior who said, men ought always to pray and not to think. Men ought always to pray and not to think.

And when you're not praying, you're thinking. That's the alternative. When you're not praying, you're thinking.

And I'm not only talking about the attitude of prayer, since life is a prayer, that attitude of prayer that carries me to the office, into the bank, into the university, into the pulpit, the total attitude of praying. I'm talking about the activity of praying. Likewise, men ought always to pray and not to think.

I think it's awfully suggestive, though we could never build a doctrine on it, that this man, Elijah, when he sensed the great need for prayer, you remember, cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees. That's the only cure for fainting. I want to ask you, do you know unceasing prayer in your life? Pray without ceasing.

Pray with all prayer and supplication. And again, men ought always to pray and not to think. Beloved, we can go out of this place tonight, stirred by the word of God and stirred by the impact of preaching, and become very zealous about prayer.

But I'm thinking about two weeks hence, a month hence, six months hence. Men ought always to pray and not to think. And it's only the life that's yielded to the seed of prayer that will be brought to remembrance

and brought to the place of prayer again and again.

The manner of praying then was fervent and frequent, but more than that, it was focused praying. It was intelligent praying. Yes, he prayed that it might not rain and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months, and he prayed again, and heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruits.

Why, this is tremendous. Here is a man who believes in praying specifically. You see, praying isn't really praying until it affects the object for which you pray.

He said, God shut heaven, and God shut heaven. He said, O God, open heaven, and God opened heaven. God sent the rain and bring forth fruit, and God did precisely that.

Only a man who's prayed his way through the word of God and knows the will of God and prays according to the will of God, as we've already learned from Romans chapter eight, can say things like that to God. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. It affects the very object for which you set out to pray.

And I'm asking you, my friend, are you receiving answers to your prayer? Tell me, have you a prayer list of men and women that you want to see converted? Have you a prayer list for special needs in your church? Have you a prayer list of missionaries who are under the fire and depression of the enemy? Have you ever asked yourself how many missionaries have to come home? I cannot. What reason is given? Medical, spiritual, moral? How many missionaries have come home because you have failed to pray? Have you a burden for revival? Are you praying specifically for revival? I mean, are you praying specifically for revival in Sydney, in your church? That, my friends, is the manner of prayer. But the burden I have to bring to you tonight is in my closing thoughts.

That which has made me stand to my feet to pray and to preach and to apply truth here tonight is my closing thoughts. We thought of the ministry of prayer as for ordinary obedience and observance, men and women. The manner of praying, fervent, earnest, continual, focused.

But I want you to see here in the third place the miracle of prevailing in prayer. Or the miracle of prevailing prayer. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

And this is not rhetoric. This is not the pile-up of meaningless words. This is the statement, the utterance of the Holy Spirit.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And I want to pick that up and interpret it in terms of the life of Elijah. Have you ever studied what was effected through the prevailing prayer of Elijah the prophet? We could be here all night on that one theme alone, several studies.

But I'm going to lift up three illustrations only, three illustrations only, to show what this man Elijah effected through prevailing prayer. Through prevailing prayer, Elijah first of all triumphed over the powers of darkness. Bishop Dane in his opening prayer touched upon that very phrase, the powers of darkness.

Elijah prevailed over the powers of darkness. This Christian friend was when he built that altar on Mount Carmel, and stood before that altar, and looked up to heaven, and said, O God, let it be known this day that Thou art God. And with that prayer, he overcame spiritual darkness, principalities, and powers, and triumphed over them.

And our first concern in prayer, men and women, is the glory of God in any situation, in my personal life, the glory of God in my church, the glory of God on my mission station, the glory of God in my crusade, the glory of God in my country. God indicated in the midst of the people, let it be known this day that Thou art God, amidst all our theologians who tell us that God is dead, that all His absolutes are now relatives, that now no longer can we say Thou shalt not kill, but rather Thou shalt not kill ordinarily. Thou shalt not commit adultery ordinarily.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against Thy neighbor ordinarily. In an hour like that, O that there might rise from the church of Jesus Christ, men and women who can pray and say, let it be known this day in our age that Thou art God. And we can never pray that way until we carry our battle in prayer, not to Mount Carmel, but to Mount Calvary.

And there at that foot of the cross, on the basis of that precious blood that was once shed, claim the victory that Jesus Christ has already won for us. For let me remind you, men and women, ours is not to fight for victory, but to fight from victory. Ours is the glorious privilege of standing in the place of triumph which our Savior assured for us by reason of His death and burial and resurrection, and on the ground of the many promises, in the mighty name of Jesus, with the undergirding power of the Holy Spirit.

Claim Christ in life, in church, in situation. Paul tells us what he means in that glorious passage we had just now. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places.

We've got to remember that it's a spiritual warfare. We're all concerned with the flesh and blood down here, and our confrontation is with men and women and things, whereas the real battle is yonder, up there, and all to know and to prove. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, overcoming by prayer.

There isn't any situation in which the devil has free course that cannot be overthrown, for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might disintegrate the works of the devil. The miracle of prevailing in prayer. He triumphed over the powers of darkness, and from north to south and east to west.

That day it was known by everyone in Israel that God was God, and he stood alone. But the second illustration that moves me deeply, and perhaps is at the center of all I have to say to you tonight, is the occasion, and in fact the same instance in which, through prayer, he not only overcame the powers of darkness, but he overcame the powers of drought. The powers of drought.

After that mighty victory on Mount Carmel, you remember how he told the king to hasten back to his palace, because the rain was on its way? He went to the edge of that mountain, and he cast himself down before God and prayed those seven times, until his servant told him that that prayer had made its impression upon the very heavens. There was a cloud the size of a man's hand. Presently, the cloud gathered from every direction, and the torrents began to pour down their refreshing showers upon a very dry and thirsty land.

And, men and women, if the first illustration helps us to understand how the glory of God might be vindicated, the second illustration helps us to understand how revival, how revival showers may be poured forth upon our very dry and thirsty land. This is revival. This is revival.

All through the scriptures, all through the scriptures, the pouring of rain, the pouring of rain is likened to revival. I believe with all my heart, despite what some of our scholars tell us today, that our Savior is holding back that moment of his return until he, as the great husbandman of the fruit, waits for the harvest. And when is that going to come? After the latter rain.

The former rain was Pentecost. I'm waiting for the latter rain. And God, God has sent that rain century by century by century.

Let me go back for a moment to that 1857 revival in New York City. I don't know when I've read so much and researched so much into this matter because I'm so burdened about it, but you know that revival didn't start with the clergy. You know that there was a prayer meeting at noon every day in Philadelphia, numbering 3,000 people.

And in Chicago, 2,000 people at the same time at noon. And in New York, 5,000 people. See, Charles Finney tells the occasion when he came into the blessing of this.

He didn't start it when he stood up in Boston at a meeting and asked for testimony. And a man jumped to his feet from Omaha in Nebraska. Omaha, Nebraska, is 2,000 miles from Boston.

And this man stood to his feet and said that he had come from Omaha in Nebraska to Boston in Massachusetts, 2,000 miles, and he'd come by road, and in every single city at noon he found a prayer meeting. And at the height of that revival, ladies and gentlemen, listen to me, at the height of that revival, 50,000 souls were born again, swept into the kingdom of God every week. 50,000 souls every week.

50,000 souls every week. No radio, no television, no publicizing, no great evangelists. As a matter of fact, outside of Charles Finney, who came in towards the end of that revival, there is no name associated with the 1857 revival.

50,000 souls a week. A beautiful story is told of something that happened down on the harbor, the dock of New York. The North Carolina, one of New York's great battleships, was anchored there in the harbor.

A thousand men aboard that ship. Amongst that thousand men were four keen Christians, an Anglican, a Presbyterian, and two Baptists. And they began to see something of the sin and wickedness aboard that ship.

The horrible sexual perversion, the sin and wickedness of these men, the utter drunkenness of these men night after night. And so burdened were they that they asked for a room somewhere in the ship to pray. And in scorn they were given a little tiny room down below the waterline.

And night after night they began to pray. And one night as they were praying, those four men down there in the bowels of the ship, God broke through to their lives, and the release of joy and faith was such that they burst into song. And they sang so loudly that they were heard on board deck, on top of the deck.

And these men heard the singing, and in scorn and derision they ran down and began to mock them. But their words were frozen in their mouths. Instead of derision, they began to weep and break down in big giants of men, giants in sin, crying to God for mercy.

And hundreds of them were converted. They had to send to the mainland to get ministers and chaplains to come and help counsel the thousand men. And that ship became a sending station of young cadets and

sailors to other ships.

And revival went beyond New York unto the seas, unto the boat. And hundreds of thousands of naval men were converted. I can't read things like that.

Remember it was only a hundred years ago. And not be burdened for New York at this very hour. And I don't know what you think about Sydney.

I don't know what you think about Sydney. Nineteen fifty-nine. Eighteen fifty-nine.

Eighteen fifty-nine. That revival swept Ireland. The news of what was happening in New York reached Ireland.

And four schoolmasters, just boys really, just boys, in a classroom in County Antrim, got down on their knees and began to pray. And they prayed, and they prayed, and God broke through to that little classroom, and a mighty thing happened such as Ireland has never known. Revival broke through County Antrim right throughout that entire land of Ireland, left over to Scotland, and even penetrated into England.

Nineteen hundred and four. Revival swept Wales. The greatest privilege of my life, I think, ever in this context of revival was to meet for one brief moment the great Evan Roberts.

A miner, a miner, whom God rescued from sin and then gave a burden to become a minister. But he hadn't even really finished his training when the spirit of prayer came upon him in an unusual way. He went around the country asking people to pray for revival, to pray for revival.

Three hundred prayer meetings were started, and then those prayer meetings began to grow until almost the entire Principality of Wales was one colossal prayer meeting. And I'm telling you, you only have to pick up a book on the Welsh revival to be stirred to your very foundation. God so swept that land that meetings started early in the morning, they went right through the night.

Very often people didn't even go to work. Great mountainsides became like choirs as they stood there before they went down into the mines singing hallelujahs to God. Indeed, we're told that all the flumes and bars and liquor houses were completely closed.

The theatres were abandoned. Swearing completely went out of the country. Even the mules in the mines stopped working because they were unused to kindness.

Revival. Revival. And I don't know but what Duncan Campbell has been to this very country to share with you the burden he shared with me.

He told me the whole story of the revival in a little room that my friend Bishop Gay knows about, 53 Old Deer Park Gardens in Richmond, when he had returned from the Hebrides to recover his voice and to have medical help because he preached himself absolutely hoarse in that revival. And in a whisper he told me what God did in those days and I had all night to tell you. I'm telling you I'd move your heart if your hearts can be moved at all by that story of revival.

I'm telling you God started again, a dear pastor and his deacons, yes, in a barn of a place when one deacon one night after months of praying got up and read the 24 Psalms and said, who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands. He that hath pure hearts. He that hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.

He shall receive the blessing of the Lord. Reverend, we've got to come clean with God. And that's when the fire fell.

That's when God broke it. Next day everybody felt the impact of it. Churches were filled, people away out to sea, fishing, dropped their nets and came back and stood crying to God for mercy.

Nobody had told them about any service. Nobody had preached a gospel sermon. They were there waiting to be saved.

And if that's too much history, I want to ask you men and women here in this church tonight whether or not you're ahead of the trends and ahead of the news of what's been happening in Indonesia. One of the greatest mystery statesmen I know has just returned from Indonesia and shared hour after hour with me the movings of the Spirit of God. In his judgment, nothing has happened quite like what took place in Indonesia just a few months ago since Pentecost itself.

God moving through village after village, island after island, revival leaping from one place to another, sweeping the land in the most amazing fashion. And every one of those revivals married indissolubly to prayer. He overcame the power of darkness by prayer.

He overcame the power of drought by prayer. He overcame the power of death by prayer. And that's the instance when that great prophet Elijah stretched himself out upon the body of that dead boy, the widow's son, the widow's son, a picture of a man dead in trespasses and in sin, dead, dead in trespasses and in sin.

And his prayer was, Oh Lord my God, let this son's soul, let this lad's soul, let this boy's soul come into him again and the boy live. And I want to say to pastors here tonight, I want to say to evangelists here tonight, I want to say to missionaries here tonight, I want to say to church members here tonight, you'll never see conversions in your church, you'll never see conversions on your mission field, you'll never see conversions in your school or in your university, you'll never see conversions without prayer. Nothing ever good comes into a city without its counterfeits.

And one of the great delusions the devil has brought across the church of Jesus Christ is that souls can be saved quite easily when you get a man like Dr. Billy Graham to come and preach in the great oboe here or the stadium. I've heard people actually say, My, isn't it wonderful, he's got such a gift, all he says is get up out of your feet and come forward and they come by the south. That most unintelligent, unobservant thinking.

Has it ever occurred to you, my friend, that never in the history of the world, this has been said hundreds of times, but I say it again, never in the history of the world has any evangelist been so undergirded by prayer as Dr. Billy Graham. A member of our own church came back from Russia just a little while ago during one of Graham's crusades, and talking to a Christian man in a Russian home where suspicion reigned all around, they got to talking about men of God and they talked about Dr. Billy Graham. This Russian said, You know, we never cease to pray for Dr. Billy Graham, so you know about him? Oh, we know about him.

And then looking all around the room, lest anybody should see him, he went over to the wall and turned a picture over, and on the back of that picture was the photograph of Dr. Billy Graham taken from a magazine. No child is ever born into this world physically without travail. There are the tears, there is the

pain, there is the blood, there is the corpses.

There is no child ever born into the kingdom of God without soul travail. And if you've seen conversions without it costing you anything, that's because you've been bypassed, and some little Christian in Nepal will get the glory and the reward. When thy entrave is, she brought forth.

And you're never going to see evangelism break through the frontiers and barriers that are holding back advance in Sydney, in Australia, or anywhere else, until you know what it is to stretch yourself out for men and women who are dead in trespasses and sin, and to say, Oh God, my Lord, let this child's soul, this boy's soul, come into him again. The need of the church, the need of the church is for revival praying. A ministry restricted only to righteous men and women.

Ordinary people made righteous by the imputation of our Lord's righteousness through his cross and resurrection. Made righteous by imparted righteousness through his own indwelling nature. Maintained righteous by a life of obedience to all his will, through his word, by his spirit.

People who are on the outlook and lookout. People who are observant and intelligent about trends, about situations today. People who are honestly concerned about the spiritual decadence in which we find ourselves.

The manner of praying, fervent, frequent, focused. The miracle of praying, availing much. I mean availing much.

Triumphing over piles of darkness, piles of drought, piles of death. Proving that God still answers prayer, but only when men are ready in the day of his power and are prepared to bow to the terms, yes the terms, the costly terms of prevailing in prayer. Now you'll have to admit that I haven't preached a popular sermon, and tried to amuse you, and spent the time telling you anecdotes, but I wouldn't preach anything else because I'm concerned about the day in which I live.

I know too much about the trends. I know too much about the sins of the great city to which I'm committed in the ministry. I know too much about my own church.

I know too much about my heart. I know too much about the subject on which I'm going to speak on Thursday night, the judgment seat of Christ, when I have to give an account of my life before my Lord, to preach anything else than the need for revival. For the last nine years in our church, on the first Sunday of every month, and the first Friday of every month, we give ourselves entirely and completely to praying for revival.

On top of all other prayer meetings throughout the week, and throughout our boards and organizations, but that first Friday of every month, that Friday in that upper room where sometimes we've had as many as ten, and other times we've had as many as five hundred and had to go into the main sanctuary, we've tasted now and again, and I believe one of these days it's going to come, it's going to come in a flood tide, but we've tasted now and again heaven touching earth. A completely new experience to most of my people. Many came out of curiosity to start with, wondering what kind of a prayer meeting, a night of prayer was, or a half night of prayer was, what kind of meeting it was.

And they're quick enough to get up and pray once, yes, and twice, yes, and three times, but they dare not get up a fourth time and pray the same words. And they discovered they were only saying prayers, they weren't really praying. And then God began to take us through a school of prayer, and in those moments

of unhurried prayer and opening of scriptures and searching of hearts, oh God has brought around that ministry now.

A group will be meeting this Friday as I fly to Saigon. They'll be starting at seven o'clock, and they'll be praying through to one o'clock in the morning. And I believe things are going to happen not only because of prayer there, but your prayers as well.

But I'm telling you, we've become very serious about praying for revival. And as I close tonight, I put it to you. Will you be a recruit? You're an ordinary person, but are you prepared to meet the terms of obedience? Are you prepared to open your eyes wide and see what's around you today? Are you prepared to say, oh God, I want this body of mine to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and I want my mind and my heart and my will totally given over to the Holy Spirit to pray in me and through me the will of God.

And whether it's in my own quiet time, or in prayer cells started in my office at the lunchtime in my school, in my college, or whether prayer cells in the homes of many of you women here, and most important of all, at your own church prayer meeting. Oh God, make me, make me an intercessor. Make me a prayer warrior.

Make me a righteous man and woman whose prayers avail much. If you're prepared to say yes to that challenge tonight, you tell God. You tell God as we pray together.

Let us pray. We're going to have a few moments of absolute silence in which I want us to be alone with God. We're in a great crowd here tonight, but let's for a moment isolate ourselves from our wives, our husbands, our friends, the audience, and still ourselves in the presence of our Lord.

And hear him saying with all the freshness of his anointed word, men ought always to pray and not to think. I can hear him saying now in the agony of Gethsemane, watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. And again, could ye not watch with me one hour? Can we honestly, can we honestly claim to be indwelt by the Savior himself in his Spirit and by his Spirit and not have a burden for prayer? For just as he never ceases to intercede in heaven, so the Holy Spirit never ceases to intercede in us, providing he finds the willingness and cooperation of our minds and hearts and wills.

A Christian who isn't engaged in this kind of praying is obviously grieving the Holy Spirit, quenching the Holy Spirit, disobeying the Holy Spirit. But I sense in this service tonight a true concern, a response to the message that's gone forth. And in this closing moment of silence, I want you to tell the Lord that you're willing to be a prayer warrior.

You're willing to give yourself to a ministry of prayer as and when the opportunity affords itself and as and when you make those opportunities. Just before I conclude in prayer, I'm going to ask those who are saying yes to this challenge tonight. With all its implications, I needn't recount them.

I needn't recapitulate the terms of reference. You've heard the message, but you're saying, yes, Lord, I'm believing for revival and I'm going to pray for it in my own life, first of all, and then in the circle in which I move. I'm ready to be an instrument of prayer, a temple of prayer, a life and ministry of prayer.

I'm going to ask you to quietly stand to your feet right now. Let's just be still in God's presence. This wasn't intended as an outward act of witness.

This is to clinch by some expression of ourselves the decision of our hearts. This is a holy moment, a sacred moment. Indeed, I'm prepared to say that with the remnant of godly people who've been able to come to this service tonight and who are here responding to this challenge, God could rock Sydney to its foundations for his good and glory.

The Right Honorable Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Britain, for many years, reflecting on the John Wesley, George Whitefield revival, declared that the revival under those two men changed the entire history of the British Isles. His expression changed the entire history of the British Isles. The entire history of Australia could be changed by you men and women if you really meant business with God.

Our Father and our God, we bring to thee every precious life, young and old, standing in thy presence at this moment. In response to the message delivered tonight, this simple exposition of thy truth concerning praying for revival. And we dare to believe, Lord, that this is a response deeply meant.

We dare to believe that this is going to be implemented by obedience, through the undergirding of the spirit, through the teaching of thy word. We dare to believe, Lord, that the impact that's going to follow such praying in Sydney and beyond is going to be felt throughout this country. We believe that thou dost not mock thy people, and every response to a call to prayer and obedience and holiness is sealed in heaven.

And so we dedicate these precious lives to thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And trust thee to work out the ramification of what has taken place in hearts and lives here tonight. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord and all God's people said, Amen.

Shall we be seated, please? For Mr. O'Hara leads us in our closing hymn, and I hand back to our good chairman. I just want to say one simple word concerning procedure at this point. I know some of you may have to hurry home because of commitments or travel arrangements, but if it's possible, I would like as many as those who stood to their feet tonight to remain just for a few moments after the service is dismissed.

We shall have a prayer and benediction. Then I'm going to suggest each night that we have a few moments of absolute silence and prayer. Then the organ will quietly dismiss us, and those who would like to leave and have to leave, would you do so just quietly and prayerfully and rejoicingly? The rest of you just remain behind.

I would like to say a word to you about some of the implications of this, some help I trust that is going to help you on this matter of planning your prayer life, and I would like to just say a word or two about Vietnam. It won't keep you long. And then I just would like to say what our chairman has said.

Simply because I only have these next two nights left, it would be wonderful if you could share this ministry with your friends and bring them along tomorrow night and Thursday night, where we lead off from this point, having become prayer warriors. Now how is this going to work out in terms of witness? And then how is it going to work out in terms of that final day when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Thank you for your cooperation and thank you for your presence and love and affection and response here tonight.

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