

Levels of Prevailing Prayer

by Wesley Duewel

The Holy Spirit wants to lead us on deeper and higher in prayer to help us prevail and get God's answers.

Duration: 1:11:12

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:29, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 5:23-24

Topics: "Prevailing Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of seeking God with all our heart and soul. He shares a story about missionaries who prepared flip charts and special instructions to train people in churches. The speaker also mentions the faith of George Mueller, who prayed for the salvation of his five friends for many years. He emphasizes the power of persistent prayer and the expectation of seeing the fifth friend in heaven. The sermon encourages believers to wholeheartedly seek God and trust in His faithfulness.

Transcript

Many years ago, it is not exactly related to my message, and yet it is related to my message. Entitled, Wanted You. Wanted, an out and out Christian.

Wanted, a new volunteer. Wanted, a soul with a passion. Strong, dauntless, brave, without fear.

Wanted, a man with a message. Eager to tell it to all. Wanted, a man consecrated.

Willing to answer the call. Wanted, a fire-baptized Christian. Burning with holy ghost zeal.

Filled with a yearning compassion. Sharing the woe others feel. Longing, loving, with heart filled with longing.

Hungry to see others won. Thirsting to see God's own power. Till a revival's begun.

Wanted, a triumphant Christian. Beaming with radiant joy. Face all aglow with God's glory.

Victory that naught can destroy. Prayer that can seize hold the promise. Faith that can make it come true.

Power for service triumphant. Seeing the lost born anew. Wanted, an out and out Christian.

Wanted, a soul all afire. Wanted, consuming soul passion. Wanted, overwhelming desire.

Willing if need be to suffer. Willing to sacrifice all. Who will his life freely offer? Who now will answer the call? God is wanting us to be available for that kind of a Christian life.

We can't produce it in ourselves. It must be produced by God the Holy Spirit. But he is waiting and longing.

I continue to speak on the subject of prayer and I would that somehow I could help you realize how the Holy Spirit longs to lead you on and deepen you in prayer. To deepen me in prayer. And I believe God the Son, seated on the right hand of God the Father, on his intercessory throne of sovereign power, sovereignly working through prayer, I believe he is also longing for us to advance in his school of prayer.

Dear brother E.M. Bounds, who lived nearly a century ago, made a statement which I have quoted and I love and I agree and I don't agree. He says no one is qualified to be in the ministry until he is a graduate in the school of prayer. I believe I know what he means.

Personally, I doubt if anybody ever graduates. I think there is always more ahead in Christ's school of prayer. But may God teach us how to pray.

Nearly two years ago, I had a series of five prayer conferences across India. And at the close of the first service, of the first conference, I had not intended to do this. But as the Spirit led me on the spur of the moment, I asked the people to join me in the prayer that Jesus was asked by his disciples after they saw Jesus prevailing in prayer.

Do you remember their request to Jesus? Lord, teach us to pray. I would like for us in unison to express that as the prayer of our heart this evening. Will you join me? Lord, teach us to pray.

Then I said to the group there in Madras, India, about 2,900 and 1,000 pastors, I said let's emphasize the word teach because we need to be taught. And Jesus is the one that must teach us. I'm not the teacher.

Jesus is the teacher. Shall we repeat emphasizing teach? Lord, teach us to pray. Then I said, who do we want to be taught? It's us.

Let's emphasize that. Lord, teach us to pray. Now one more time.

We've begun to pray. We've learned some. But we want to learn to really pray.

Let us emphasize the last. Lord, teach us to pray. Amen.

May God do that. Now you see, we need to be taught. And we have a helper.

Do you remember? The Bible tells us that he is our helper. In the same way, says Paul in Romans 8 beginning with verse 26, in the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for.

But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Do you notice that? We need help in prayer.

And God knows we need help. And he has given the Holy Spirit to be our paracletos. Pastors, that beautiful Greek word cannot be translated fully with any one English word.

That is why the King James Version says comforter. Other versions say helper. Other versions say counselor.

He is all of that. All of that is hidden in that word paracletos. If we take the meaning helper, which is used in some translations, because the paracletos is the one who comes alongside you to help you.

That's what Jesus said, I will send you another helper. Here is one of the great ministries of helps, which the Holy Spirit has for you and me. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray for. I remind people frequently of this fact. Do you know that James and John didn't know what to pray for? They said, Lord, these Samaritans won't let you stay overnight.

Shall we call fire down from heaven like Elijah? Burn them up? And Jesus said, you don't know what spirit you are. They didn't know the prayer. They were going to glorify God by blasting him out.

No, that wasn't the way to glorify God. And Paul didn't know what to pray. Paul said, I asked three times that this thorn be removed from my flesh.

And God said to me, my grace is sufficient for you. So you see, the best of us don't know how to pray and for what to pray on some occasions. And we have to pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, your will be done.

We do not know what we ought to pray. But the spirit himself intercedes for us. I talked about this last night.

With groans that words cannot express. Contrary to what some people think, this does not say we will groan. We may.

When we are heavily burdened in prayer, we may cry out to God. We may sigh before God. We may groan before God.

But the emphasis is not on our groaning. The emphasis is upon our helper in prayer. And he, as he helps us, prays for us, intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Some of you, several of you, a number of you said tonight, you want to go on in the life of prayer. Or similar words. Praise God.

But that's exactly what the spirit wants to help you. In fact, he is so desirous. I believe he prays for you by name.

The shepherd knows his sheep by name. He calls his sheep by name. I believe that the Holy Spirit prays for you by name.

Oh, God. Oh, Father. Help Jim to go forward in prayer.

Oh, God. Help Terry enter into the depths of the life of prayer. Oh, Father.

Help Walter. Help Tim. Help.

He's praying, groaning for us to be all that we could be. And he is interceding for us. And he is here to help us in our weakness in prayer.

Praise God. Now, in my book, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, full of weaknesses, yet God seems pleased to use it, and I praise his name. But I have felt led to try to show people how the Holy Spirit can lead us on deeper and deeper, or if you want to say higher and higher, in prayer.

So I refer to it as levels of prayer. The emphasis is not upon classifying levels of prayer. You say, now I'm in level number two.

Let's move to level number two. No, that's not the way. I just use this term to try to help you realize that the Holy Spirit wants to lead us on deeper, higher, more intensively in prayer until we prevail and get God's answers.

Now, there are some things that we ask of God that aren't worth spending too much time prevailing for. But I am talking about those things that we are convinced are in the will of God. And we have prayed, and we have prayed, and we don't have the answer yet.

How can we get answers? I don't claim to be the person to give you all the answers, but I want to help you. I want the Holy Spirit to use this to help us. But let us begin by realizing that prayer is so simple that many wonderful things happen in answer to prayer without even the thought of that I'm prevailing in prayer.

Let's begin by reading Matthew 7, verses 7 and 8. Ask, and it will be given you, said Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives. He who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

In order to help us prevail in prayer, in order to help us get God-glorifying victories, in order to help us advance the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit is prepared to lead us on in the life of prayer till we reach the victory that He wants to give us. He's the guide. He's the helper.

Praise God for a divine helper in prayer. He can help us in our preaching. Praise the Lord, that's true.

You've known it. I've known it. But what the Bible especially emphasizes, He's our helper in prayer.

Did you notice that? Prayer is tremendously important to the Trinity. We don't realize that God has built prayer into His plan of redemption. The kingdom is to be advanced through prayer.

When I give a message that brings us in, I have so much to cover in such a short time that I don't get it all told or as clearly told to me as I wish. But I want you to realize that this is a decree of God. In the Messianic Psalm number 2, the first Messianic Psalm in the Bible, God speaks and Messiah speaks.

Here are the words of Messiah. I will declare the decree of the Lord. He said to me, He, God the Father, said to me, God the Son, the Messiah, ask of me and I will give you the nations.

The only way God's kingdom will advance is through an asking church, an asking believer. This is the decree for God. He is not advancing His kingdom today by the rod of iron.

He will rule one day with a rod of iron. But today He is ruling by the throne of intercession. This is the dispensation of intercession.

I mustn't let myself get carried along there too far. But this is the will of God that we advance by intercession. This is the decree of God for God the Son in this dispensation.

And missions will not properly advance apart from prayer. And revival will not properly advance because of prayer. And evangelism will not properly advance without prayer.

Prayer is basic. This is God's decree for our day. This is a day of militant prayer.

We are the church militant. One day we will be the church triumphant. But we are the church militant to advance by prayer.

Thank God that many prayers are answered in a moment. Praise God that prayer is so simple that a person is born of God praying. We are born to pray.

We are created to pray. We are converted to pray. And the initial level that is foundational to all praying is that simple word that Jesus taught us in Matthew 7, 7. Ask and it will be given to you.

All other prayer levels include the asking. This is where you begin. Sometimes that's all you need to do.

Praise God. Sometimes it's a bit of a mystery why some prayers are answered so easily and some others are more difficult. Sometimes it's amazing that some things we would have thought to be difficult are answered so easily.

I have seen God on various occasions heal. And almost always it was after simple asking, not long-term prevailing. Now that may happen on some occasion.

I'm not saying it won't. I use this illustration sometimes in a different message. And I hesitate sometimes to bring, use illustrations from my own experience.

But it was so precious to me. And to me it illustrates. I had the students of our seminary out in the villages of North India for our field term between the first and second semester.

And we take all the students out in the villages. We're going in villages, most of which had practically never, if ever, heard the gospel before. And we were some miles outside the city where our seminary was located, living in a mud house.

I was living with the students. And in the typical village in North India does not have a store of any kind. There are central villages where there is a market day once or twice a week.

Then there are market towns where there are stores available always. There are not post offices in all the villages by any means. There are villages, market towns will have a post office.

Some of the smaller villages will have a nearby post office. I was in, we were at a village like this in a house. And I came down with malaria.

I didn't have one aspirin with me. There was no aspirin available in the village. I could have sent for some, but I didn't think of that.

I very rarely use any medication of any kind. Maybe the day will come when I'll have to take it all the time. Who knows? But I'm not saying that with pride.

I'm just saying with thanks that God has been good. But the malaria fever was such that I was unable to go with the students on my bicycle in the mornings or on foot in the afternoons. We alternated mornings and afternoons.

The group that went on bicycle in the morning went on foot in the afternoon and vice versa. And this day as I was there unable to go with the students, I realized that the fever was getting higher than it had been before. And there was nothing nearby, and the students would now not be back till night.

And I just longed that some brother in the lawn could pray for me like James Five states. But I was alone. And as I lay just with the burning fever, I thought, oh, if there were only someone here with me to pray for me.

And I thought, if I had some olive oil or something. Of course, God doesn't need olive oil to heal. I know that.

But anyway, I raised up on my elbow. And mud houses have walls, you know, about 10, 12, 14 inches thick. And in one of these thick windows, I saw a bottle of coconut oil.

Now the Indian people often put coconut oil on their head. And if you're in a filled room with lots of people and hot weather, you can smell the coconut oil quite distinctly on the many heads throughout the room. But anyway, I spied that.

And I didn't really think that much of what I was doing. I was a little bit desperate. And I went over and got that bottle of coconut oil.

And I went back to my bed. And I said, Jesus, there's nobody here but you and me. And I'm going to anoint myself in your name.

You join me in my prayer. And I put the oil on my head. And do you know that malaria left? And for years after that in India, I never had one touch of malaria again.

Now prevailing didn't take one minute. I just asked. And God was so good and so merciful that he just did it like that.

I didn't beg him. I just told him and he was there to help. That's the simple level of asking.

Do you know new converts in India or any country, you don't have to spend time teaching them to pray. It's an amazing thing. They're born to pray.

Villagers, I could tell you various stories of people just simply asking and just expecting God to answer. They seem like they're born again expecting God to answer. Maybe we in America are so sophisticated and so filled with skeptical doubts that we don't expect God to do things for us.

But our Indian brethren, they expect God to answer and to meet. And so people ask and get answers that sometimes surprise us missionaries. That's right.

And it's so simple to ask. And you see, Hinduism doesn't ask. They don't learn it from Hinduism.

Hinduism doesn't ask. They don't learn it from Islam. The Muslims don't ask.

Now there is one group of Sufis that ask. They say they fellowship more. I don't know.

They probably ask too. But the Muslim has a memorized prayer which he prays so many times a day. It has to be spoken in Arabic.

You have to have the right motions of the body to coincide with the right Arabic words. No matter what your language is, you have to say the namaz in Arabic. It doesn't work in other languages.

That's the Muslim teaching. And the Hindus don't ask God of anything. To them, you might call it blasphemy to ask God.

Because they don't believe God is a person. So what they do is to meditate upon the names of God. And they say those over and over and over and over.

I've heard them say the same words over and over the names, maybe four or five names of God, for an hour nonstop before daylight in the morning. Often heard that in the village people. And there are some that do it two, three.

And when the man who succeeded Prime Minister Nehru as Prime Minister of India, when he became Prime Minister, his wife switched from three hours to five hours a day in prayer, doing nothing but saying the names of the gods over, over, over, over, over, over, over. Because she was taught that if her husband died, it would be because of her sins. And he already had had one heart attack, and now he was Prime Minister.

And what if her sins would cause her husband to die? And so she switched from three to five hours a day. And began at three o'clock each morning to repeat the names. So they don't learn that from their religions.

They learn that in being born again. They learn to ask a God who answers prayer. And the word gets around in India, where the Christians have been for a while, that is, evangelical Christians, that the Christian's God answers prayer.

And they may not do it like you and I. One of our pastors in the town of Simla in North India, in the state of Himachal Pradesh now. It used to be the British summer capital when they got away from the heat of the plains. And from Simla to the Tibet border is 200 miles.

And at Rampur, about 100 miles between, about midway between, there is a Mela, M-E-L-A, held each year. And one of our pastors would go every year and take bags full of gospel tracts, scripture portions, the gospel of Matthew or the gospel of John, and go up to Rampur and witness to as many people as possible. Because the people would come from over the mountain roads, from villages miles around, that he wouldn't have time to go out and, you know, circumnavigate and go through all these villages.

He would go through many on a tour, but he couldn't reach them all. And they would come in there, and so he would reach the people. One year when he came, a little Indian man, about this high, thin, came up to him.

Sir, I'm giving you the English translation. I came last year, and I brought a New Testament from you. Sir, my village is the last village in India before Tibet.

I want you to come to my village. I have 25 new Christians in my village. And every night, we'd meet together and read the New Testament and pray.

And Brother Chamund Lal went up there, and he found 25 heads of families, 25 men, one to Christ, by a man who had never been inside a Christian church one time in his life. He'd never heard a Christian song. He didn't know how Christians worshipped, so they didn't sing.

All they did was to read the New Testament and pray. Where did they learn to pray? The Holy Spirit. He had purchased a New Testament from the man, but no one taught him to pray.

He'd never heard anybody pray till after he'd won 25 people to Christ and taught them to pray. You see, prayer is natural to the Christian. And it's unnatural for people to say, well, I don't know how to pray in public.

That's unnatural. And so one time when I was up there for an area preacher's meeting, they sent word up, a postcard up to the border to his man's village and told him I was going to be there for meetings. So he came down just for the meetings.

And I'd heard about this man, and I met him, but I didn't know how he was going to pray. I'll give you the best translation I know how to give. We were around in a circle.

He heard other people praying, but he was praying his way. He was accustomed to praying. How do you do, Jesus? Oh, I am so glad you came down from heaven.

How do you do, Jesus? You don't know how happy you made me when you saved me. How do you do, Jesus? You know those Hindus, they say it this way. And he quoted Hindu verses from their scriptures, their Vedas.

He said, Jesus, that's not the way it is. He said, how do you do, Jesus? This is the way it is. And then he quoted from the gospel that he had memorized.

How do you do, Jesus? How do you do, Jesus? Who taught him that? Nobody. But he was praying. You see, the simplest level of prayer is asking.

Fellowship. And you know God hears those prayers? Yes, he hears those prayers. I wonder if you'd been in the village all by yourself and in one year's time would have won 25 men to Jesus Christ and you'd never really talked with another Christian except to buy a New Testament.

Just to have to be taught by God. Yes, the simplest level of intercession is asking. Ask and it will be given.

Do you remember how much is said about asking? If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Matthew 1.22 God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Luke 11.13 I will do whatever you ask in my name.

You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. So you see, asking is the first level of prayer.

And that just prays the Lord automatically begins. And thank God he can do many things. Now, when you advance to other levels of prayer, you keep asking but you do more than ask.

Abraham asked God for an heir, a son. God gave him a son. Miriam was smitten with leprosy by God.

Moses prayed. He was horrified. Aaron was horrified.

Miriam was horrified. She criticized Moses' wife. You remember? And Jesus, yes Jesus, Jehovah.

And Jehovah, the manifest of Jehovah in the Old Testament was Jesus. So Jehovah smote her with leprosy just like that. And the Shekinah cloud had been over them and it instantly lifted.

And as it lifted, Moses looked and Aaron looked because God rebuked Miriam. He looked at Miriam and there she was covered with leprosy. And Aaron said, Oh Lord, to his brother Moses, don't let her die like that with a person's flesh half eaten away.

Moses just prayed a two-sentence prayer and God healed him. He said, I've heard your prayer. But if her father had spit in her face, she would be put outside the tent for seven days.

Put her outside the encampment for ten days, for seven days. In other words, I've spit in her face. That's what I think of anyone who is critical of someone else.

But that prayer for healing of leprosy was a two-sentence prayer. It wasn't an all-nighter prayer. It wasn't a gathering of 50 people to pray.

It was just a simple asking in the second sentence and God said, I've healed you. Amy Carmichael was a missionary in India. She said God frequently led her to ask for things.

She couldn't understand why he wanted her to ask for them. So she asked, she obeyed, and a short time later on each occasion she saw the reason. She needed exactly what God gave her when she asked.

Now why didn't God just give her without her asking? But this is a dispensation of asking. And God wants us to ask. Even a little child can ask.

When I was about seven years of age, we had a disease called scarlet fever. A lot of people don't know much about it nowadays. It was a serious disease at that time.

Children died of scarlet fever. The government law in Illinois was that you put, the doctor put a quarantine sign, a placard about this size, red, on the outside of the house, quarantine. And no one was allowed from the outside to enter the house, nor was anyone in the house allowed to leave the house until that sign was removed.

I came down with scarlet fever. So did a little girl in my Sunday school class, and she died. On Saturday night the doctor came to check me out.

And he said to my parents, Wesley has scarlet fever. He said, Reverend Dool, to my father, anything you want for the next two or three weeks, take out of the house immediately. I will come back tomorrow morning and put the quarantine sign on the house, and you will not be able to enter the house or take anything out after that time.

So my father that night, he immediately took out books from his library and his Bible and various things from his office. He took out his suit and ordinary day clothes and his Sunday suit and all, took them all out to the garage and hung them up and took a cot out there and put it down and got all fixed up. Mother said, well, I'll put the food in a dish and put it on the back porch and you can come and lift it off the back porch and so on.

They put a cot for me in the dining room downstairs. And as mother tucked me into bed, she said, Wesley, don't worry. We'll just ask Jesus.

She meant it would be all right. I shouldn't worry. So she prayed and tucked me to bed.

And she didn't really think about me being healed of scarlet fever. What she meant was, you know, Jesus will take care of you. But little Wesley didn't know any better than that he was asking Jesus to heal him.

So the next morning, the next morning the doctor came. And he knocked and came in the house and he walked over to my cot. Well, how's my little patient, he said.

He opened up my pajamas and all the pox were all gone. All the spots were gone. He said, open your mouth.

All the spots inside the throat that you have and so on, they were gone. He put his hand on my head. The fever was not there.

He looked at my mother. He said, what's happened here? Mother just stepped up. She was always a bit timid.

She said, Wesley, you see, it pays to trust Jesus. Why, he said, must be wonderful to have a faith like that. Oh no, mother said, it's wonderful to have a God like that.

He said, well, I'm an agnostic. I didn't believe you could know there was a God. Oh yes, mother said, you can know there is a God.

And he sat down for one hour to ask questions and listen to my mother witnessing to him. No virtue to the little seven-year-old boy. He didn't know any better than to ask Jesus and expect that Jesus would do it.

I remember a day when I was in high school, a night on Nebraska Road. Cold winter night. Some icy spots on the road my father didn't think about.

We were going to special evangelistic meetings, revival meetings, people call them, in another town in Nebraska. And so my father said to me, you can drive the car tonight, Wesley. So that was a big night for me because, you know, I didn't get to drive that often.

So my mother was in the back seat and with her was a lady from our congregation. And my father was with me in the front seat. And as I was driving down, we came to a long hill with winding bends.

And we got on one of those curves and this car began to slide. And I scrapped the wheel, you know, just like a death match. I'd never had this in my life.

I didn't know what to do. I couldn't control the car. I just scrapped it.

I didn't think about praying. But that lady in the back seat, not my mother, who was a great prayer, I said, Jesus, help. Just like that.

The tire grabbed the road. Just went on straightened out down the road. I was shocked.

She just said, Jesus, help. You hardly heard the help. It was Jesus was the main thing.

She asked, is that prevailing? I guess you could call that prevailing. It was just asking. Praise God, we can ask.

And believers around the world can ask. It can be that simple. What does the poem say? If our faith were but more simple, we would take him at his word, and in our lives would be all sunshine.

In the sweetness of. . . Maybe you remember better than I do. Anyway, that's true.

Now, let's hurry on. The next level, Jesus indicated, is seeking. Ask, and it will be given.

Seek, and you will find. What is the difference between asking and seeking? Seeking goes clear beyond asking. Seeking implies a greater intensity, a greater earnestness, a greater desire, perhaps a longer time.

Seeking means you are prevailing. You are trying. You are going beyond just asking.

The answer doesn't come immediately. So you seek on. You pray on.

And if the answer doesn't come, you say to yourself, why isn't the answer coming? Is this not God's will? You seek in your mind, is this God's will? Could this be something not God's will? You say, is there something in me that may be hindering? Is there something in my life that may be hindering? Maybe disunity with another person? Maybe something that I haven't obeyed the Lord in? Have I grieved the Lord? So you're seeking. You're not just asking. You're doing anything you can to try to get the answer.

And do you know that seeking again and again brings answers that don't come from simple asking? And our people need to be taught to seek. Just because you ask God for something and it isn't granted to you doesn't prove it is not God's will. Seek if there is anything more that you can do.

Do you remember what Jesus said? If you bring your gift to the altar and there remember what? That you've done something against your brother? No, that's not what it says. There you remember that your brother has something against you. You remember that.

It doesn't say who's guilty. It doesn't say who's to blame. You just remember that there's a problem.

There's a brother that has something. There is a strain someplace. There is a negativeness.

There is something being held against me. What are you to do? Promise the Lord that you will take care of it when you get a chance and give your gift. Is that what the Bible says? It says leave your gift.

Stop. Don't offer your gift. First go and be reconciled to your brother.

And then come and offer your gift. Do you know that happens again and again? And I tell in my book the story of two missionaries in the central part of India in the same missionary society. They loved each other.

They were fellow missionaries. But there had been some strain. Have you ever known churches where there was some strain? And the one brother, he was praying for revival in his church.

And as he prayed and prayed on for several weeks, his fellow missionary's face would come before him. He'd remember. He'd had a problem.

He would pray, Oh, Lord, send revival. You know how we need revival. He'd pray on.

There was that face. This continued for some days. He said, Lord, I'll go.

He got on the train because in India in those days, there are not many cars. He got on the train and went several stations down the train line, got off the train at that town, and walked to the house of the other missionary. And the other missionary happened to see out the window, well, here's brother so-and-so

coming.

He felt a little bit awkward. Do you know how that is? He felt just a little bit awkward. But he went to the door, opened it.

Come in, brother, so-and-so, he said. And the missionary that had just arrived didn't come in. He fell on his knees on the porch.

He said, I'm not worthy to come in. I've come to ask your forgiveness. And the man inside says, brother, I'm more to blame than you are.

Come on in. And inside the door, they threw their arms around each other and wept on each other's shoulders and asked each other's forgiveness and got down on the floor and prayed together. And at the appropriate time, when there was a train going the other way, the first missionary went back to his station on the train.

Do you know, they tell me, within that year's time, both places had revivals. Do you remember what Moses told Israel? You will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 4.29. It takes all the heart and all the soul in searching.

Jeremiah said, he was speaking on behalf of God, You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. There are times that nothing less than the allness of our heart, all of our being, we must be totally agreeing in our innermost being, we are seeking God for his answer. And God will give answers when we seek that come in no other way.

David said, When you said to me, Seek my face, my heart said to you, Thy face, Lord, I will seek. And there is such a thing as seeking God. Seek and ye shall find, said Jesus.

Praise God for the blessed reality. I gave you the illustration, I believe, earlier today of R.A. Torrey. He came to the conviction that probably nobody was ever saved without someone seeking through prayer their salvation.

I wonder if there are any names on the list for whom you are seeking salvation. General George Gordon, Charles Gordon, was known as a godly British general in the late 1800s in the Africa campaigns. He was famous for his prayer life.

Every morning he would take a white handkerchief and put it out in front of his tent. And the other officers, all the people knew that when that handkerchief was out on the ground in front of the tent, that the general was praying and was not to be interrupted. And he prepared a list of fellow officers for whose salvation he prayed every day until they came to Christ.

He sought their salvation. And when they came to Christ, then he began to disciple them and lead them on into deeper things of God. I referred to this.

Now let me give you the statistics. I've got it before me here. George Mullen, the great man of faith, sometimes called the apostle of faith, who supported up to, near his death, 10,000 orphans without telling anyone his needs or asking anyone for anything, who supported missionaries, who had a literature ministry, printing tracts, giving Bible portions and things.

George Muller, in his diary, says that he had records in his diary of more than 50,000 answers to prayer that came the day he asked them. Do you know why he did this? He did this to prove to the world that God was real in a prayer answering God. He felt that Christians in general were not demonstrating God before the world.

So that's why he decided to start an orphanage, to prove to the world that God was real. And he began with asking little things and bigger things and bigger things. And you've probably heard several stories about his life, one of which is this, that one morning at breakfast time, the children were all at their long tables in their lines, and the empty plates were on the table.

And he led them in the thanks for food. He had nothing to set before them. And while he was thanking God for their morning food, a knock came on the door.

And there was a dairy cart in Britain. They had horse-drawn dairy carts in those days. And the dairyman said, Mr. Muller, my cart broke down in front of your orphanage here.

Is there some way you could make use of the milk? I don't want it to just be wasted. Well, he said, yes, bring it on in. And before they could get the milk distributed at the table, there was another knock.

And it was a bakery man. He said, Mr. Muller, I was awakened in the night last night, impressed that I should bake bread and bring to you this morning for breakfast. That is one example of the faith of that man.

Now, George Muller, when he was converted from a life of willful sins, sinfulness, he had five young friends that he began to pray for their salvation, his pals in sin. This is Muller's testimony. After five years, the first one was saved.

After two years, after 15 years, two more were saved. He kept praying every day. He was seeking their salvation.

After 35 years, the fourth one was saved. And shortly before his death, he said, I'm still praying for the fifth, and I expect to see him in heaven. Two weeks after Muller died, the fifth was saved.

If he had not prayed, would they have come to God? The man who prayed 50,000 prayers which were answered within 24 hours for the salvation of souls, sought and prayed on and on and on and on. When human wills are involved in a situation, the stubbornness of man can delay. But if you will hold on seeking, Jesus said, seek and you will find.

Now, the last illustration I want to give of this, my father was a pastor in Springfield, Illinois. Our home and the church next door were just a block from the state's capital. Some of my baby pictures in the baby buggy are on the lawn of the state capital there.

There was a layman in Springfield who started a prayer group. And after he had been going for some time, one night he felt impressed, and he said to the people, take a piece of paper. I want every one of you to take a piece of paper tonight.

So each one was handed a piece of paper. He said, write on this the names of the unsaved people here in Springfield that you would like to see saved. They did.

He said, now I want you to promise me that you will pray three times a day for the salvation of those people until they are won to Christ. In Springfield, there was an invalid that had not been able to come to church for 17 years. She was bedridden and had been bedridden for 17 years.

Someone came to her home and mentioned to her what this group was doing. Why, she said, that's something I can do. I can't get out to people, but I can do that.

So she made a list of the people, 57 names on her list. Now, she couldn't do anything in the home. She just lay there in bed.

So I don't doubt that she prayed more than three times a day or when she prayed. I imagine she prayed more than just to mention their names in prayer. She was seeking.

And when someone would come and see her occasionally, she'd say, do you happen to know so-and-so? Do you know so-and-so? All right, yes. Now look, would you join me in prayer? I'm praying for this person's salvation. Would you join me three times a day praying for this person's salvation? All right.

Now, one more thing. If you get a chance to witness to this person, would you please witness? I'll be praying, and you witness, and we'll pray for Jesus to save him. Before that invalid died, all 57 people on her list had been won to Jesus Christ.

I said that was my last illustration. It isn't. It's not in my notes, but it's in my memory.

Our largest work is in Korea. The OMS of which I used to be the president. A few years ago, the leaders of our Korean churches were impressed that they should have a special prayer for salvation time.

So before the end of the year, they got word to all of the churches. They sent out letters, and they asked every pastor to ask his people that they, on New Year's Day, make a list of five people that were not Christians that they wanted to see saved. Those would be Buddhists or Daoists or something.

Five names. And to pray every day for those people till Good Friday. And the pastors told them, don't go and witness to them yet.

First, you must saturate them with prayer. You pray every day from the first of the year till Good Friday. And on Good Friday, we'll prepare you, and you go to those people then and witness.

So they prepared flip charts, and they prepared special instructions and a special track with five points to salvation. Instead of the four spiritual laws, they felt there was something missing. They should have the word repentance in there.

So they made five points. Now, the pastors had the flip charts, and I couldn't tell you how many people in the congregations, you know, followed through. But anyway, in every church, they were supposed to be training the people.

And they gave them tracks to use, and those tracks corresponded with those five points. They were to give the Korean person one track, and then they, on the basis of the flip charts, were to lead them step by step to Christ using those five points. Then they were told, if you win them to Christ, bring them to church on Easter Sunday morning and introduce them to the congregation.

Now, it takes a while to get reports in, you know, from Korean pastors. Not all pastors are good at writing letters or sending in reports and things like that. But when the reports got in, over 12,000 people were introduced on Easter Sunday in the churches across the country, having been won on one day.

They call it their quiet day of witness. No crusades, no evangelistic campaigns, nothing special. Just by three months, approximately, of saturation prayer and then a direct witness.

Well, they were so excited, they decided to do it again. And I don't have the statistics with me here. I can find them.

But I believe the second year, it was something over 14,000. Got up to over 16,000. And the last I heard, it was over 24,000 people won to Christ by this simple method, seeking their salvation for three months.

Not everyone was converted. I'm not saying that. But think if they hadn't done that, the people who would still be in Buddhism and heathen religions.

Now, I must hurry and close. I haven't looked and I'm afraid to dare to look to see what time it is. There's one more level in this verse I want you to see.

And you know what that is? Knocking. What is the difference between seeking and knocking? I believe knocking expresses a determination, a hunger, maybe a holy desperation. Going clear beyond seeking.

It's beyond asking. It's beyond seeking. The Holy Spirit, our guide in prayer, leads us to go beyond asking to seeking.

Leads us in our seeking. May lead us beyond seeking to knocking. Jesus gave the illustration of a man who came at midnight and the host had nothing to set before him.

And he went to his friend. You remember what he said? And the friend said, leave me alone, don't bother me. It's the wrong time of night.

I'm in bed with my children. I can't get up and give you anything. And what did Jesus say? Though he would not give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his what? Importunity.

Or whatever version you have, boldness. Refusing to be silent. Keep on knocking.

He will rise and give to him. What do you think Jesus was doing in Gethsemane? I believe he was knocking on heaven's door. But you know, the book of Hebrews says that during the days of his flesh, he prayed with strong crying and tears.

Did you notice that? It's a plural. Days of his flesh. The writer of the Hebrews must have known of more than one occasion, and they're not in the Bible, when Jesus was knocking on heaven's door.

I think when Jacob wrestled that night, he was knocking on heaven's door, refusing to take no for an answer. And I must hurry on. You remember when God was going to take Elijah to heaven? Elijah said to Elisha, you stay here at Bethel.

The Lord has sent me to, was it Gilgal? And what did Elijah say? As Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I'll not leave you. So the two went together. They got to the next place, and the sons of the prophets, that's a Bible school student, the sons of the prophets came and said, Elijah, do you know the Lord is going to

take your master to heaven? He said, keep quiet.

Elijah said, Elisha, the Lord has sent me to Jericho. You stay here. Elisha says, as Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I'll not leave you.

So they went on together. They got to Jericho, and the sons of the prophets came and said, Elisha, did you know your master is going to take, keep quiet. So they started on, and Elijah said, Elisha, stay here.

The Lord has sent me to Jordan. He says, as Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I'll not leave you. If Elijah's going to heaven, if he's leaving, I'm going to stay with him until the very end.

That's the implication. Elijah turned to Elisha and said, what do you want, Elisha? What did Elisha say? I want a double portion of the spirit that is in you. Elijah said, you have asked a very difficult thing, but if you see me when I am taken, you will have it.

So they go down to the Jordan, and Elijah takes off that old mantle of his. The Jordan had opened for Joshua and the whole nation, but just two lone fellows here now by themselves. But Elijah takes off that mantle, and he gives a stroke in the water parts.

And up on the hill are the sons of the prophets walking, watching. And they get across, and suddenly here come the chariots, and down they come. And Elijah just says, my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.

And Elijah steps on board, and up they go. Can you see Elisha watching? And suddenly, what's this? Oh, that's Elijah's mantle falling down. But he's all alone with Elijah's mantle.

He turns around, and he goes back to the Jordan. And he takes that mantle. Now just one man.

And Elijah isn't here. He takes that mantle, and he strikes the water. And what happens? No, it didn't work.

The Hebrew suggests, because it says, when he struck it again, that implies that he struck it once, and nothing happened. And then he struck it again, and he said, where is the Lord, the God of Elijah? And the water parted. And up on the hill, those sons of the prophet, they said, the spirit of Elijah is on Elisha.

They saw the proof. I believe Elisha was knocking. He struck it, nothing happened.

Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah? And if it didn't part the second time, my guess is he would have struck it the third time. Knocking on heaven's door. There is such a thing when you feel the spirit of God on you, and you know you're in the will of God, that you refuse to take no for an answer.

My closing illustration. I'd like to talk... If I had time, I'd talk about John Knox knocking. You know John Knox? You know John Knox? He had a burden for Scotland.

He is known for his call that was repeated over and over, give me Scotland or I die. John Knox, Queen Mary, sometimes called John Knox. The bloody Queen Mary said, I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the armies of Scotland.

She was determined to make Scotland Roman Catholic, and John Knox, in hiding, was determined that it would not become Roman Catholic. She tried to find him. She could not locate him.

Her ambassadors inquired in France and other places, they could not find John Knox. And all the time, he was in the third floor, on a building right on the street, on what is called the Royal Mile. One mile from the castle to the palace.

And every day, the Queen came within not many feet of where John Knox was hiding and praying. And on that wooden floor, he could not knock with a loud voice. He could not call out, oh God, give me Scotland, or he would be found.

He had to, in the intensity of his soul, but in total silence, plead and wrestle with God. And he prayed week after week and month after month. Where is the answer? Oh God, give me Scotland or I die.

Oh God, give me Scotland or I die. And the story is told. I cannot verify this part, but I have been told, I read it someplace and I can't find where I read it, I am told that once while he was on his knees pleading, he suddenly leaped to his feet and shouted, Deliverance has come! Deliverance has come! Deliverance has come! Deliverance has come! And when the word got back, at that moment, Queen Mary had died.

He was not praying for her death. He was just praying, give me Scotland or I die. He was knocking on heaven's door.

Martin Luther, read all about it, chapter 26 in *Mighty Preventing Prayer*. Okay, get copies for your friends, let's get people praying all over as much as we can. Okay, Martin Luther's helper in the Reformation was Melancthon, Philip Melancthon.

He was the theologian. Martin Luther was not as uneducated as Dwight L. Moody, but just as Torrey was Moody's helper, so Melancthon was Luther's helper. But it was a very different day.

As you know, their lives were in danger. And one day word came to Martin Luther that Philip was at death's door. And immediately he started out.

I'm assuming he went by horseback. They did not live near each other. He arrived at the place and stepped inside the door and he saw Melancthon on the couch.

His eyes were set. He had the sweat of death, so it seemed, upon him. He did not show signs of responding to sight or sound.

Luther stepped there and saw his friend Philip. And he turned and went to the window and knelt down at the window and prayed for one hour. Now let me quote Luther's own words.

You've never heard a prayer like this. Semi-coma, fixed eyes, cold, clammy sweat, unable to eat or drink, unable seemingly to be roused. Luther says, This time I besought the Almighty with great vigor.

He's describing his own prayer. I attacked him with his own weapons. Did you ever dare describe your prayer like that? I attacked him with his own weapons, quoting from Scripture all the promises I could remember and said that he must grant me my prayer if I was henceforth to put my faith in his promises.

That is a boldness. I couldn't pray that way unless the Holy Spirit was really on me, I'll tell you. I have never knocked like that, really.

This time I besought the Almighty with great vigor. I attacked him with his own weapons, quoting from Scripture all the promises I could remember and said that he must grant my prayer if I was henceforth to

put faith in his promises. I said, Be of good courage, Philip, you will not die.

Then Luther arose from his knees and went quietly to the bed. He took Melanchthon by the hand. The sick man may have recognized Luther's touch.

He opened his eyes slightly. Oh, dear Luther, why don't you let me depart in peace? No, no, said Luther. Philip, we cannot possibly spare you from the field of labor yet.

He said, Nurse, give me a little nourishment. He brings it and tries to give it to Philip. And Philip again weakly said, Dear Luther, let me go and be at rest.

No, no, Philip. Nurse, give me that nourishment again. And in holy boldness, he put that nourishment to Melanchthon's lips.

And it took just a bit. And the crisis turned. And Melanchthon got well.

And out lived Martin Luther. Listen. Reformation came to Europe because of men who knew how to fast and pray.

Men who knew how to knock on heaven's doors. I'm not saying that this is the way you should pray every time you pray. But I am saying that there is a level beyond searching.

There is a level beyond asking and seeking. There is a level beyond seeking when in holy boldness and with importunate prayer, you insist on God's will being done. And Christian history has the record of those unusual times when people have been led to knock on heaven's doors.

Tomorrow morning, God willing, I will talk about level number four and number five. And then I will close. It's late.

Harold, let's commit this time to the Lord in any way you see fit as we close with prayer.

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