

Prayer Is Knocking

by Wesley Duewel

Wesley Duewel's sermon emphasizes the importance of knocking in prayer as a desperate plea for God's intervention and guidance.

Duration: 37:27

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Matthew 26:36

Topics: "Persistent Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of persistent and fervent prayer, drawing parallels between Jesus' teaching on asking, seeking, and knocking and the deep prayers of individuals like Jesus in Gethsemane and Moses on Mount Sinai. It highlights the concept of 'knocking on heaven's door' as a form of intense, soulful prayer in times of urgent need or spiritual warfare, showcasing examples like Martin Luther's prayer for God's intervention during World War II and a personal testimony of prayer answered for a ship escaping the Graf Spee. The sermon encourages believers to pray with holy desperation and faith, trusting in God's response.

Transcript

All right, level one, asking. Level two, seeking. Then what did Jesus say? Ask, and it will be given to you.

Seek, and you will find. Then what? Knock, and the door will be opened to you. What is the difference between knocking and seeking? Jesus said, ask, seek, knock.

Sometimes there are needs so urgent, and it seems like the devil resists so strongly, or people are so unyielding, or whatever it may be. The situation is so that you go clear beyond ordinary seeking, and you knock on God's door. Sometimes it takes strenuous praying.

I think when Jesus was praying in Gethsemane, he was knocking. He went clear beyond asking and seeking. If things were over, he was praying alone for three hours.

Do you remember? He prevailed in prayer, and then he went up. The Bible says he was praying. He went up and found the disciples asleep.

He woke them up, and he said, pray. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Sometimes we need to kind of wake up.

But I believe Jesus was really knocking. In Gethsemane, he prayed for three hours as well as he could understand. They began at about nine o'clock, and it seemed as though it was midnight or afternoon before the detachment of troops came to arrest the Lord.

He was knocking at heaven's door. He looked up in his face and saw the perspiration on his forehead. He saw the bloodstains on his garment.

Peter, James, and John looked at Jesus, and they started praying again. But by the time the hour was over, they had dropped off to sleep again. But Jesus prevailed on them, agonizing.

But he was really knocking. On him was the burden of the whole world, of your salvation and mine. He was calling on God from the depths of his heart.

Yes, Jesus went beyond just seeking. I think Moses went beyond seeking. You know, Israel would have never made it to Canaan but for the prayers of Moses.

Moses and Aaron. But Aaron was the follower. Moses was the strong leader in the prayer.

You remember, God told Moses to get the people ready. It took three days to wash their clothes and wash up and get ready to meet God. And on the morning of the third day, Moses led the people out before God at the foot of Mount Sinai.

I've never been there. I'm told this is a sheer rock about 2,000 feet up. And Moses led Israel.

Apparently, there was a couple million people there at that time. Behind him sort of, but Moses was there about faith to God. And God revealed himself.

He was fire on top of the mountain. The holy Shekinah of God that the Old Testament knew about. The Shekinah of God that stayed in the holy of holies right over the Ark of the Covenant for years.

This invisible glow of glory. The light, the glory. No human source to speak of it.

Only the high priest was permitted to look at it once a year. But suddenly, God spoke. From above Mount Sinai.

And gave the Ten Commandments. And then he called Moses up the mountain. And Moses and Joshua sort of, Aaron was left in charge of the congregation down below.

They stood there before the mountain. And went and guards them. I don't know how much volume the voice of God had.

Because all 2 or 3 million people understood and heard it. And they're standing there before God. And then God tells Moses to come on up.

And Moses starts up with Joshua. He's the Ten Commandment. And Moses went to Meribah when he left Joshua there to wait.

And Moses went on. And for 40 days and nights, Moses was interceding before God. Supernaturally upheld.

Without food and drink. You can't live that long without liquor. Some people do without food, but not without liquor.

But supernaturally sustained, Moses was up there on the mountain. And after 40 days. And God gave to Moses the Ten Commandments in stone.

What he had proclaimed mortally to the people, he now handed to Moses on the table of stone. And after 40 days, God said, Moses, go on down. Your people have corrupted themselves.

They're worshipping an idol. Idol, don't I imagine? Moses, oh no. They're not doing that.

Lord, you know, they just heard your voice down there. They were trembling before you. And you told them, you shall have no other gods before me.

How could they not be worshipping a god? Go down, God said. They're worshipping me. And when Moses took the tabernacle stone in his hand.

Probably put it on his shoulder. Stored it down the mountainside. He got to where Joshua was waiting.

And Joshua said, there's a sound of war in the camp. No, Moses, that's not war. It's not singing.

Joshua turned and came following Moses down. And Moses came down. And I know, I can't visualize it, but I have been on mountains.

During our India days. And you don't go down a mountain just like this. You do those things that I do.

Down the mountain. And I can see Moses going down with the ten commands on his shoulder. And Joshua was following behind him.

And they turned the last corner. And suddenly, he saw them before him. They were worshipping a golden image.

And Moses was so aghast. He took those tablets of stone. And he smashed them to pieces.

I suppose he thought the judgment of God would fall upon those people. God just given these commandments. And here they are.

And Moses went up to them. What made you do that? Oh, they said the people gave me their jewelry. And I filled them with fire.

And this is what came out. And Moses, like a schoolmaster, Hey, what are you doing? He went to God. He said, oh, God.

He went. He said, you've committed a great sin. But I'll ask Him to forgive you.

He went back up the mountain. He had just come down shortly before. Went back up the mountain without those tablets.

He smashed them to pieces. He went up the mountain. Did he make excuses? He said, oh, God.

You know how weak and wobbly I am. This will be in my hand. No, no.

He made no excuses. He said, oh, God. My people have sinned a great sin.

But forgive them. And if you can, forgive them. Blot my name out of your book.

What's he doing? Oh, Lord, Lord, Lord. Forgive them. Forgive them.

And if you can, blot my name out. Let me go to hell with them. And the Lord said, I'll not blot your name out of my book.

The one who sinned is the one who will not blot out of my book. And for 14 more days, Moses stayed up there. When he came down the mountain, I forgot to mention that he prepared new stone tablets and took them up the mountain because he had broken the ones in God's name.

And God put on the tablets. Moses came down. What had Moses done? He had not.

Lord, forgive them. Forgive them. And if you can, blot my name out.

Oh, passionate prayer, Moses prayed. You don't knock on heaven's door every day. But there may come a time in your life when you feel like you're at that level of prayer and you want to knock on it.

Chapter 26 in My Committed Prayer. Yes, it's possible to knock. Martin Luther knocked on heaven's door.

Have you ever thought what it was like when Martin Luther stood almost alone? The Roman Catholic Church in power. There was no Bible. And Martin Luther gave himself a gift of the Bible to share the language of the people.

That was the beginning of the war with Luther. What prayer band was he a member of? No prayer band. Which denomination? There was no denomination except the Roman Catholic.

He saw a lot of corruption in the Roman Catholic Church. And he was broken hearted over it and deeply burdened. But who's going to stand with him? They had to hide him for his life that time, for a time.

The Pope's emissaries would have killed him if they had the chance. So some of the princes of Germany captured him and no one knew where he was. For a time they kept him in hiding.

Who was his partner? What prayer group? Where could he go to get prayer help? He had one special prayer partner. His name was Philip van Leeuwenhoff. I don't know how far apart from each other they lived.

But one day someone came to Martin Luther and he said, Did you know that Philip van Leeuwenhoff is dying? Dying? Dying? Philip? Martin Luther could hardly believe it. Philip dying? I don't know how he had a problem, jumped on a horse. I don't know how far it was.

But in my mind, I can see Martin Luther. That's his prayer partner. That's his stay in hell.

How's he going to fight this battle for God without Philip van Leeuwenhoff? What would you have done? Luther went there and tied his horse outside. He went up to the door. They opened the door.

And they're just inside the door on a couch. Later, Philip van Leeuwenhoff, his eyes partly glazed over. He was almost going to death.

Martin Luther stood there looking. He's barely breathing. He doesn't respond to sight or sound.

Martin Luther tells us that he went over to the window and kneeled down beside the window. And my words, Lord, he knocked on heaven's door. For one hour, he agonized in prayer.

I have a part of his words. This is what Luther tells us. This time, I besought the Almighty with great vigor.

This time, with the lambs on the verge of death, I besought the Lord with great vigor. I don't ask you to use these words in prayer. This is what Martin Luther said.

I attacked him. Would you talk about your prayer attacking God? I attacked him with his own weapons, calling from Scripture all the promises I could remember. And said that he must grant my prayer, if I'm henceforth to put faith in his promises.

I don't suggest you ever tell God that way. But this is what this desperate Martin Luther did. Hidden of hours, we now know, was the promise of church.

Martin Luther is so alone. This time, I attacked the Almighty with great vigor. I attacked him using his own weapons against him.

One of the weapons of God, the promises of God. Calling from Scripture every promise I could remember. He didn't have his Bible with him.

He just dashed over when he heard that my father was dying. He's down by the window all by himself praying to God for one hour. We don't know all he prayed.

But in his own words, I attacked the Almighty with great vigor. I was knocking on heaven's door. And I told him, he must answer these promises, or henceforth I cannot put faith in them.

He was desperate. He rose from his knees by the window after one hour of prevailing before God. Knocking on heaven's door.

He opened it. You're not going to die. Nourishment.

He said, give me a little nourishment. I don't know what she gave him. Whether it was soup or juice or water.

I don't know. But he called it nourishment. Give me a little nourishment.

He took it from the nurse. And he tried to get it in Melanchthon's mouth. And Melanchthon softly said, dear Philip, dear Luther, why don't you let me depart in peace? No, no, Philip.

Luther, please. I was talking. No, no.

No. Melanchthon, just let me depart in peace. No, no.

We cannot possibly spare you from the theme of labor. Nurse, give me that nourishment again. He takes the second type and tries to force it into Luther's mouth.

Dear Luther, says Philip, rousing his strength, one more time. We can't spare you yet, he said. Luther said.

And the third time he turned, he said, nurse, give me that one more time. He's desperate. I don't know how he tried to get it into Melanchthon's mouth.

Twice he's been unable to. And the third time he got some nourishment in Melanchthon's mouth. And Philip Melanchthon began to get better.

And you know, he lived 14 years longer than Martin Luther. Because Luther was knocking on heaven's door. Desperate to get God's answer.

We're in a battle for Germany. We're in a battle for Europe. Actually, he was in a battle for the world, for the Protestants around the world.

He needed the help of them. He needed a prayer partner. You don't knock on heaven's door.

Ordinarily. But there is such a thing, said Jesus, as at the beginning. Seek and you'll find.

Or if you come to a place, knock and you'll be opened. That's the way I understand the words of Jesus. Knocking is not physical violence.

Knocking is not necessarily knocking on something with your hand. Knocking is not praying with the loudest voice you have. It might be.

Knocking is the desperation of your soul before God. That was Moses on the mountain. Forgive him.

And if you can, blow it out by name from the book. Martin Luther knocking. You may not even wave your hand, but you may.

Maybe, maybe one time in my life, I knocked on heaven's door. During World War II, I watched the news reports day by day. We didn't have TV in those days.

We had radio. I watched how Hitler was marching over one little country in Europe after another. And I prayed, oh God, stop him, stop him, stop him.

But God didn't stop him. I was praying for an army to attack an army. Some people say that's hell.

Well, it's bad. But that's war. For a battleship to attack a battleship, that's war.

But for an army to march through an unresisting town and just slaughter people, that is so evil. And for a battleship to attack unresisting passenger ships and sink them with all lives lost and steam away and let them die, that's so evil. And that's what was happening in World War II.

Hitler had a pocket battleship called the Graf Spee, S-P-E-E, the Graf Spee. I have, in a number of places when I have told this story, had people say, well, I remember the Graf Spee. I don't know if anybody here remembers the name of one.

You do? I prayed every day and every night, especially. Oh, God, stop the Graf Spee. Stop it.

Stop it. I prayed and held out in prayer. I don't know what all I prayed, but I prayed day after day after day after day for a little while each night.

Oh, God, stop that. But it was disguised like a passenger ship. It was being in the passenger line.

There were lines in the ocean where the ship lines, the general track that the ships take. And that's, there'd be passenger ships and freight ships of Europe and America and different places in that. But it was not side by side.

This was a general line. And the Graf Spee, in a couple of moments, was like a passenger ship. And suddenly, take off the façade, and there's the torpedo turrets.

It would sink one or two ships, put the façade back completely, steam off. No one would go, or the Graf Spee go. To me, that was so evil.

And I prayed day after day after day. I was a Bible school student. And then I was a pastor for nearly a year.

We'd go to the local church. One night, we had gone to bed. I had prayed as usual.

But after I'd gone to bed, suddenly, a bird struck me, just like somebody got hit. Like a plank or something came on me. Oh, wait, that's in my heart.

I just felt such awful need. And I felt Graf Spee. And I thought, oh, God, stop the Graf Spee.

Stop that unnecessary loss of life. Stop that marauding. Stop that torpedoing.

Stop the Graf Spee. I was praying. My wife was in bed with me, asleep.

So I couldn't call out. But in my heart, I was calling out. I didn't wave my arm around, oh, God, oh, God.

That would have disturbed my wife. I lay there in horror, praying, oh, God, stop the Graf Spee. Stop the Graf Spee.

And then the word lifted from my heart, just like a cloud lifted from the moon. And I felt normal again. And I fell asleep.

The next morning, we turned on the radio. The Graf Spee dashed into the harbor of Montevideo, the last scientist. You see, Montevideo, ordered by a third guy, was neutral during the war, just as Switzerland beat Europe, so Uruguay and South America, the home country of Uruguay, was neutral.

And Montevideo was the capital city of Uruguay. And the Graf Spee dashed into the harbor. We don't know what for.

And then he changed his mind, the captain. And as he stormed out of the harbor, he commanded all the sailors on board the ship to put on life jackets. And they had had explosives stowed all over the ship.

He then commanded all the sailors to get into the lifeboats. And he alone was left on the ship. And he blew up the ship and committed suicide as he went down in the Graf Spee, just outside the harbor of Montevideo.

Thank God he stopped the Graf Spee. Several years went by. A few years ago, I was coming back from Brazil, where we had work.

And there were two coordinating groups, sort of like licensing groups for evangelical missions. One is called the EFMA, Evangelical Fellowship of Missionary Agencies. The other is the IFMA, Independent.

Well, OMS is a part of the EFMA. And IFMA is a separate group, quite a young group. And what the Lord's people, good people, evangelical people.

Every three years, they meet together. When I came back from India and was made president of OMS, I would represent OMS at these gatherings once every three years. There were annual meetings.

I went to the annual meetings, too. But this year, as I was coming back from Brazil, it was the third year we were meeting together, a joint meeting. And this year was in Orlando, Florida.

So I got there one day ahead of time from Brazil and stayed with a couple near Orlando. And then they took me in the morning to the hotel where the conference was going to be held. Now, when I go to the International Conference, often before I go in, I just bow my head and say, Someone, you want me to contact today that has the permission to help me, or someone, you want me to contact so that they can help me or I can be a person to them.

You work it all out. Now, I was doing what I customarily did. I got there a little bit early, and I stood in the aisle, 10, 15 feet up the aisle by myself with my head down.

Just praying, Lord God, if there's someone, you want me to contact. And someone grabbed me around my chest and hugged me to the heart. I started to look.

He was a sharp Latin American man. He hugged me so tight, I couldn't see what his name was on his name, based on his suit. He said, Brother, I'm here because of you.

I said, Who are you, brother? His name was Dr. Louis Bush. He's held various important positions. He was a coordinator for what they called AD2000 and beyond.

Various missions cooperated and tried to reach every unreached person in the world by 2000. We didn't get it all, but we did a lot. Many different missions were cooperating in that.

He was the coordinator of the whole thing. Dr. Louis Bush. He said, I read and touched the world through prayer.

My uncle there would take my first book. How do you pray with me? And God stopped and brought faith. Oh, I said, Brother, there may have been a thousand other people praying with you.

Yes, I prayed. Yes, God put the burden on my heart. Yes, I prevailed, and God answered prayer.

But there may have been a thousand others. Who knows? He says, I don't know about the thousand, but I know about you. He said, My father-in-law was a priest surgeon in Brazil.

And when the war came, he decided to take his family to a place of safety. So he took them back to Britain. If you remember the war days during World War II, you know that Britain was not a safe place.

Hitler's planes were bombing and bombing and bombing in Britain. But that's what he did. But he said after some months, his daughter, who was in love with a Brazilian young man, said, Father, I want to go back to Brazil and marry my fiancée.

He said, The night that you prayed, my mother was on a British passenger ship just outside the harbor of Montevideo. And at dusk, the captain came out, and a small group of passengers would have to be on the

deck. And my mother was one of them.

He said, Does everyone know that we are being pursued by the Grouse Bait? I said, You know, wartime rumors, you can't believe those, so don't worry. He said, The Grouse Bait is right there in Montevideo Harbor. And my mother's ship was just outside the entrance of the harbor.

And they scuttled the Grouse Bait. And the ship reached Brazil. And my mother rejoined her fiancée.

And in time, they were married. And in time, I was born. Brother, I'm at Goldsburg today because of Leon.

He was all excited. The next day, he was to get the address. And before he came through, he took five minutes off.

And he said to all the people there, I'm here today because of the prayers of Wesley Newell. I didn't know he was going to do that. They wouldn't have wanted him to do that.

But that's what he said. I'm told he's told that story in different parts of the world, in Singapore, I don't know where else. He believes that because of my hurt.

Now, as I still say, I don't know if God knows how many other people were praying. But I know that I have been faithfully praying every day for months. And I know that God put that burden on my heart.

And I know that I was knocking on it. Not with a loud voice. Not with weight in my hands.

I didn't dare, but I was sleeping. But I know that in my heart, I was knocking on heaven's door. And that night, God answered.

Yes, I've been seeking. I've been praying day after day after day. But God put a special burden on my heart that night.

And that night, God answered the prayer. There is such a thing as knocking on heaven's door. You don't do it every day.

But if you're faithful to the Lord, God may put the prayer burden on your heart. I'm going to talk before the day is over about the prayer burden. Oh, and I can tell you how important your prayer life is.

Who knows? You may be one of a thousand people. And you may be the only one that God gives a special prayer burden to. Knock when there's a holy desperation.

When you feel the pressure of your soul. When you feel the burden. Knock.

Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.

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