

A Manual for Prayer - Part 1

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the need for a revolutionary movement in the church, modeled after the early Christians in the Book of Acts, who lived a radical and counter-cultural lifestyle.

Duration: 1:33:11

Scripture: Acts 6:1

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living in a state of continuous revival and walking in the spirit. He believes that the principal work in service for Christ is done through prayer. The speaker highlights the example of the early Christians in the Book of Acts, who moved forward and affected the world for Jesus Christ through prayer. He also discusses the revolutionary teachings of Jesus and the need for Christians to live with a sense of reality and purpose. The sermon encourages listeners to have a strong foundation in their faith and to focus on evangelism.

Transcript

In our morning sessions together, I would like to take a fresh look at the Book of Acts with you. Somehow or other, it seems easy to feel that that's just exactly the life that we're living today, the life that the Christians lived in the first century of the church. I think it'd be profitable if we could just spend a few hours going through the Book of Acts, picking out some of the main subjects and looking at them together, and perhaps in the evening meetings we could concentrate more on evangelism.

Tonight, first of all, I thought I'd like to talk about the foundation that these people operated on, and I'd like to remind our hearts tonight that there's another side to the subject that our brother Walden was speaking on, rebellion, that's the sin of witchcraft. And yet, we as Christians, in a sense, should be rebels, not rebels against God, rebels against many of the things that bind us now. I'd like to remind our hearts tonight that Christianity is really a revolutionary movement and a good thing, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I say this reverently, was the greatest revolutionary of them all.

And when the disciples, when the apostles went forth, and the early Christians, they were really disturbers of the peace. They were really fanatics for Jesus, and it got to the point that their enemies had to cry with tears of rage in their eyes, these men have turned the world upside down. Are we turning the world upside down tonight? Hardly.

Why not? Well, I believe that we've lost the impact of New Testament Christianity, we've lulled ourselves into thinking that we're really following the pattern, and if so, it's certainly a pattern without power, isn't it? I long to know more of the power of God by the Spirit of God poured out in our midst. I believe God's looking for revolutionaries today. I don't want to use the word rebel because Mr. Walden has used it in the bad sense, correctly, but I certainly agree with what he said.

I just wish he had added one name to the name of Dr. Spock. That's the name of John Dewey, and his undermining philosophy that he taught at Columbia University. I thought there was kind of an even-handed justice recently in the rebellion that took place at Columbia, but to me as if some chickens were coming home to roost, and God was having the last word.

It's absolutely true. This permissive spirit that's been taught has been one of the greatest causes of the difficulty that we're having in the United States today, and yet we want to be rebels too, and I believe God's raising up a generation of rebels among us today. Young people and people who want to rebel against living self-centered lives.

That's an awful bondage, you know, and praise God as I read the book of Acts, I find that people who were not self-centered, they were Christ-centered, and you know, you don't read about all the nervous and emotional troubles in the book of Acts. They just didn't seem to have them. Do you ever think about that? Why? Well, they were so engrossed in Christ, and in the service of Christ, they didn't have time to be introspective.

I really believe that. They were weary of living self-centered lives, and they wanted to be Christ all the way from now on. I think we want to see a generation arising who realize that we're here for a bigger business than to make money.

That's one of the worst bondages that is holding us down today, and it's reflected all through our lives, in the way we talk, in our conversation, and the ideals we hold out for our young people, and in the way we measure their success. How much money they're making is a test. But I say again, God has put us down here for bigger business than to make money.

We're stooping too low if that's the end of our existence, and I think God wants some revolutionaries in the day in which we live to rebel against the terrible snare of materialism, against the terrible delusion that happiness is the possession of things. What a lie! There never was a more affluent society than the one we're living in tonight, and there was never one more torn apart by frustration and unhappiness than all the rest. Over and over again in these days the words of Hudson Taylor danced in my mind.

He said that he enjoyed the luxury of having few things to care for, and it really is a luxury. A woman said to me recently, I spent the first 25 years of my married life accumulating things and spending the second 25 getting rid of them, and she was much happier. Materialism is a snare.

Materialism is a bondage. God's looking for men and women, and young men and women who will see through it, rebel against it, and set out for him. God's looking for people tonight who will look in the book of Acts, the Gospels and in the book of Acts, and see that there's a great gulf between that kind of Christianity and the kind of Christianity we see about us in the world today.

He wants people who will turn away from the tyranny of the fashion parade. It's really kind of empty, isn't it, when you stop to think. Imagine encroached in the things of fashion.

People will turn away from the amusement parade, turn away from the parade of beauty culture, if you will, and even from the food parade. I believe God's looking tonight for revolutionaries who are determined to find reality in life. Someone to live for, and if necessary, someone to die for, too.

Now, the Lord Jesus laid the foundation doctrinally for what we find in the book of Acts, and I really believe with all my heart that his teaching is the most revolutionary teaching in the world. I really believe that the teaching of the Lord Jesus, for instance, makes the revolutionary teaching of communism look sick. But the heartache today is that oftentimes you find more reality in the average communist than you do in the average Christian.

That's the heartache. Well, now, the Lord Jesus laid the platform by the teachings he gave his disciples, and I'd like to go over with you tonight, just very quietly and briefly, some of his teachings, and all I would ask is that we try to capture the fact tonight that there's enough dynamite in any one of these teachings to blow the church out of its complacency to reach out with the gospel that hasn't gone out for centuries. First of all, I'd like to suggest to you that the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary standard of living.

He taught it in the Gospels, and we're going to be seeing that as we go along, but he also teaches it in the epistles through the Apostle Paul, and I'd like you to turn with me to a verse in 1 Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6, 7, and 8. It says, But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be there with contentment.

Now, that's the last verse. The last verse I have particularly in mind. Having food and raiment, let us be there with contentment.

Now, I'd like to tell you, that's really different, isn't it? Have you read any messages on that verse lately? Have you read any all your life on it? How many Christians do you know who believe it? It says, Having food and raiment, let us be content. Incidentally, that word raiment, the word literally translated means covering, and it's the same word that would be used to describe the roof over your head or the clothes that you wear. Interesting, isn't it? The Lord Jesus says, Look, you came into the world empty-handed.

You're going out empty-handed. Be content with food and clothing and the roof over your head. Now, I think as we go to the book of Acts, we're going to see a people who didn't bother to think up 60 theological explanations why these verses don't mean what they say.

They just were naive enough to believe that the Lord and the Holy Spirit knew what they were talking about, and they said, Well, this must be it. And so they went forth and they lived on that faith. Of course, the idea is that everything above that went into the work of the Lord.

That's the way they lived. Well, that's very uncomfortable, isn't it? And immediately when we read a verse like that, the word prudent comes to our mind. And we say, Well, that isn't prudent.

Is that right? Maybe you have to think of your future. You have to live, don't you? All I'm trying to say to you tonight is that the Lord really was a revolutionist, and he was a disturber of the peace. And I believe the Holy Spirit still is a disturber of the peace, and he wants to disturb my peace, and he wants to disturb yours as well.

A revolutionary standard of living. But then the Lord Jesus also taught a revolutionary social life. Luke chapter 14, verses 12 and 13.

Luke chapter 14, verses 12 and 13. Then said he also to him that bad him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again in a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, that thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Now it's wonderful, you know, how these verses can be in our Bibles, and we can put the Bible on the table beside our bed and sleep comfortably beside it. But really, really, if you read those verses, think of what they say, and realize this is what the Lord is calling us to. It's really upsetting, isn't it? What it really means is that going back from the conference, we would break up these little social cliques that we have, even in the local assembly, and instead of inviting those people who have sweet dispositions like ourselves and are generally the same intellectual and social level and good conversationalists with all the rest, and we'd make a determined effort to go out and reach people who have no way of repaying us and speak to witness to them for the Lord Jesus.

Can you picture the average Christian home next Thanksgiving or Christmas, if we actually took the Lord Jesus at His word? And it really involved going down to perhaps the Kidwell, bringing out some folks with just the single purpose of telling them about the Lord Jesus, maybe going and getting some foreign students, maybe some students from the Muslim world, and bringing them into the homes that they might know, just what a Christian home is like, giving thanks for the food and reading the word of God after the meal. That's what Jesus said. Don't call those who can repay you.

Have a revolutionary home. Call in the social outcast. That's what he said.

I heard a touching story about Jack Wurtzen. I've always admired Jack Wurtzen's Word of Life. I've always loved him more since I've heard this story.

He has this camp, Word of Life camp, up in Spoon Lake, New York. The folks were there and they told me that there was a dear brother there, a brother in Christ, and he was very horribly deformed. Oftentimes he would go into the dining room, and it was not unusual for him to be the only person sitting at his table.

Because, I mean, everybody had their own friends and their own social circle and all the rest. And more often than not, he was sitting alone. And it often happened that Jack Wurtzen would come into the dining room late, and whenever he came to the door, the folks there would see him coming, and they'd all wave to him to come over to their table and sit with them.

And every time, Jack would go over and sit with that brother who was alone. Certainly the spirit of what the Lord was teaching here, wasn't it? I praise God for the experience I had in Turkey with those dear young people. Some of you know Steve Richards and Diane, other young people there.

I see them going out to the universities, out in the streets and contacting young people, bringing them back to their apartments, sitting down with them, serving them a supper, and then speaking to them about the Lord Jesus. And I thought, well, here it is. It works.

A revolutionary social life set forth in the word of God for the day in which we live. And then the Lord Jesus also taught a revolutionary view of earthly relationships in verses 25 and 26 of this same chapter, Luke chapter 14, verses 25 and 26. And I went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea,

in his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And that's revolutionary, isn't it? What it says is that Jesus Christ must be first, that peers, family relationships, nothing of the sort must be allowed to come between Christ and the individual. Everything else must be subordinated to him. And really, this was the spirit of those early Christians as they went forth.

Their attitude was, well, it isn't true, it doesn't matter, but it is true, nothing else matters. But that's why they turned the world upside down. A revolutionary view of earthly relationships, and incidentally, of one's relationship to himself, too.

I often think of that at the end of the verse, yea, in his own life also. And then, of course, the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view concerning our occupation in life. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33, a familiar verse which we need to recall to our hearts over and over again.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, with all these things for the advent of you. I have underlined two words in that verse. The word first, as in the word God.

First, God. And once again here, we're reminded that our vocation in life, the purpose of our being here, is to serve the interests of the Lord Christ, and that the job is not the important thing. The job is secondary.

The purpose of the job is simply to make expenses and have the wherewithal to help in the work of the Lord. Yet, no matter how much you say this, or no matter how much you might realize it intellectually, the fact remains today that secular occupation, for many of us, is the principal thing in life, and the work of the Lord takes the fag end. Is that true? I'm afraid it's true.

And business today is making increasing demands, increasing pressures. Standards of living are rising, and it's so hard to miss the balance that the Lord Jesus taught. Isn't it amazing that he would come into the world and give this revolutionary view of occupation, and yet if you really sit down and think it over, you have to realize it's true.

You think of the most glorious secular occupation that there might be in the world today, and then think of it a hundred years from today, and the glory fades, doesn't it? The glory fades. What will count a hundred years from today? Only the life that's lived for God, that's all. My heart aches when I see our Christian young people being encouraged down the road to making a name for themselves in the world.

When you see the sands of time running out, you think of their potential for God. If they could only keep a vision, I think of the strong social pressures, the strong parental pressures that are on our young people today. I long to see more Christian parents who will encourage their young people to give their best to the Lord, be satisfied with a more modest standard of living in order that men and women might not perish so want the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view of security, in Anthony 6.25. Security. That's a great word today. He says here, Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on.

Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature, and why take ye thought for

raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not a ray like one of these.

Perhaps you'll be walking around Yosemite here to see some wild flowers. Just remember as you look down on them, they're saying something to you. They're saying, Don't worry.

You don't have to worry about the future. Put Christ first and foremost. Still take care of the details.

That's where the light face comes in. Wonderful to think of flowers preaching a message to us day by day. Yet that's what the Lord said, Wherefore if God sowed clove, the grass of the field which today is, tomorrow is cast into the oven.

Shall he not much more clove you, O ye of little faith? I see that the Lord Jesus knew that if I had to worry about my future, then I'd never have time to get to him. But that's true too, because if I have to worry about the unknown future, I'll never know how much is enough. And so the Lord says, Look, I want to make an agreement with you.

You seek first the kingdom of God in his righteousness and leave the future to me, and I'll take care of it. You know what it says? All these things shall be added unto you. Revolutionary view of security.

My, how brainwashed we become. It's in our vocabulary. So clever.

You get a few stocks and bonds, they're known as securities. Are they secure? There's an awful lot of Christians biting their fingernails lately. We talk about land and building, we call it real estate.

Isn't that clever? It's real. You can touch it, you can walk on it, you can handle it, and therefore it's secure. Do you really think it's secure? Dear friends, there's no security in this world apart from God.

He's the only security we have. And I want to tell you, the more we try to find security in material things, the more worries, the more distresses, the more difficulties, the more problems we're going to get. In my own life, I can see the Lord day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year, just trying to knock out the props.

Really. Trying to get me to get rid of the cushions and the crutches, so I'll have nothing but himself who is sufficient. Revolutionary view of security.

Just think of those early Christians, if their future was their concern, they never could have accomplished what they did. Never could have. The Lord says, look, you can't by thinking add a cubit to your stature.

I really don't know what that means. A cubit is supposed to be 18 inches, and the word stature there can also mean age, and so frankly it leaves me with a problem. But take it either way.

You can't by thinking add an inch to your height or a day to your age, and then the Lord says, well, I really think this is beautiful. He says, you can't do that which is least. Oh, but that's nothing at all.

You can't do that which is least. How do you think you can control your future? That's the truth. The future belongs to the Lord, and he's promised to take care of it.

And then the Lord taught a revolutionary attitude towards other people. Matthew chapter 19 and verse 19. Just the latter part of the verse.

Honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And I want to tell you that I think that's one of the most revolutionary statements that was ever spoken. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Imagine, just put yourself in your own neighborhood. Think of all the quarrels and bickering and strife such as is in the average American neighborhood today. Think of the Lord planting a Christian family in that neighborhood who isn't going to react the way the rest of the people do.

So when they're abused, show kindness, and who are out for the souls of men and women who will do anything to get them. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And he that is chief, as he that doth serve, for whither is greater he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth, is not he that sitteth at meat, but I am among you, as he that serveth.

Now that's revolutionary. I think there's a trace of humor there in verse 25. He pictures the rulers of this world, sometimes they're pretty tyrannical, sometimes they take advantage of the people, and in spite of all their imperfections, yet they're called benefactors.

Now he said, human ideas of greatness are fallacious. In my kingdom it's not going to be so. I am among you as he that serveth.

Let him that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. Marvelous, isn't it, to think of the Lord of life and glory coming down into this world and living this out before us, taking the apron of a slave and girding himself with it and getting down and washing the disciple's feet. It breaks my heart.

That's what he did. And he says, you have this life and you'll find a revolution in your home. You'll find a revolution in your local assembly.

You'll find a revolution in your neighborhood as well. And then finally, I like to think that the Lord Jesus taught a revolutionary view of social reform. You know, we live in a world that's sick.

We live in a country that's plagued with problems, and everybody has his own idea as to the solution of this problem. But as far as I know, the Lord Jesus is the only one that had the right solutions. We Christians today are being criticized that we have lost any sense of social consciousness.

We should be activists. We should be participating in all of these movements that are going on today. This is what we hear on every hand.

Especially evangelical Christians are taking a terrible beating today in this connection. Why aren't we out there in the vanguard fighting for social reform and all the rest, alleviating human needs and raising the level of the people? So the Lord Jesus really taught a most revolutionary view of social reform, and you get it, of course, in John chapter three, where he said to Nicodemus in verse three, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verse five, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The Lord Jesus began with the individual. He struck at the very root of the problem, which is sin. And he gives the only remedy for sin, cleansing through his own most precious blood.

Education is put forth as a problem today. It doesn't solve the problem. It hasn't solved the politics.

Politics is no better than the men who control it. Philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, varying forms of government, and all the rest. They all leave a man still in his sin and on the way to hell.

The Lord Jesus has the only answer. The only answer for this old world tonight is the revolutionary gospel of the grace of God that reaches down to where a man is. In his sin, provides cleansing for those sinned, gives him new life in Christ, starts him on the road to heaven, and teaches him these revolutionary principles of the word of God.

The difficulty is with us tonight, as I see it. I speak for myself today, which is bound by tradition. As we look at Christians about us, we say, well, I don't see them living that life.

I don't see people around me tonight living that life. And as far as the totem pole is concerned, I seem to be higher than many of the others. And so in a very real sense, we succumb to the chill of our environment, and it's pretty chilly.

And I believe what God wants us to do is go back to the words and realize afresh that Christianity is really a world-shaking doctrine, a revolutionary movement. And he wants us to really think his thoughts after him, and just say, well, this is what the Lord Jesus did, and what he taught. And whether people around me are doing it or not, by the grace of God, I want to do it.

By the grace of God, our family is going to start living this kind of a life. Thank you. Now, Bibles to Acts chapter 1, please.

First chapter of Acts. I mentioned that we were going to take up some studies in the book of Acts during these morning sessions. Acts chapter 1, verse 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Chapter 2. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Then in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 17.

Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, and be not drunk with wine wherein it except, but be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Now I think that the central fact in the book of Acts is the coming and filling of the Holy Spirit of God. That really explains everything that happened after that. Before Pentecost, the people were sort of a bland, insipid type of people.

But then the Holy Spirit came, and these people were supercharged with power and with boldness for the Lord. Somebody said that they became radioactive with the Holy Spirit, and everywhere they went, people felt the sparks. And that's thrillingly true.

And as I read the book of Acts, and as I see these men and women going forth, little nobody, as far as the world is concerned, but taken over by the Holy Spirit of God, as I see the souls that were being saved all the time, as I see the New Testament churches that were being planted, as I see the impact that was made on the community, as I see a church so powerful that people were afraid to join themselves lightly to it. They realized that God was working, and working in a mighty power. As I read this in the book of Acts, I feel this is what it must be.

We must have the filling of the Holy Spirit. This is the grand imperative. How can we have it? To get the answer, we turn over to Ephesians chapter 5, and verses 17, 18, 19.

Shall we turn back to that passage once again? Be filled with the Spirit, the scripture says, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. Now, the first thing I notice in this passage of scripture is that there are certain similarities to being filled with the Spirit and being drunk with wine. That's rather a shocking thing when you first come to it, and yet not so shocking when you begin to realize it.

Similarities to being drunk with wine. A. In both cases, the person is under an outside control. In both cases, a person is under a control outside of himself.

The case of a man who's drunk with wine, he's under the control of alcoholic beverages, sometimes called spirits. Kind of interesting, isn't it? It's an interesting thing that the word spirits would ever be used of intoxicating liquor, and yet that's what it's called. In the case of a man who's filled with the Spirit of God, he's under the control of the Spirit.

And when you stop to think of that, you'll realize that this is the ideal, to be under the control of the Spirit, to turn our lives over to Him so that He can work through us, ungrieved, unquenched, and unhindered. A second similarity is that in both cases, the person is fervent. There's that word again, Mr. Wallace.

The people, the persons are fervent in both cases. When I think of fervent, I have to think of the word boiling. I have to think of the idea of fire.

And when a person is drunk, well, he's fervent. He's boiling, as it were. He's effervescent.

He might have a personality like a Mr. Milk Toast normally, but he gets a few drinks in him, and his whole personality has been changed. As you know, it's true of a man who's filled with the Spirit of God, too. Something happens in the life of that man, and you can tell it.

And I think one of the greatest curses of the day in which we live is that we have a Christianity without the Holy Spirit. And oftentimes, you'd like to ask the question that Paul asked in the 19th chapter of Acts when he came to some of John's disciples, and he met these people. And these people had a thin veneer of religion about them, and yet he thought, well, there's something missing in these people's lives.

What is it? And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? As you know, that's a very piercing and a very discerning question. And sometimes we'd like to ask that today, even in the circles in which we meet. Did you receive the Holy Spirit? People who say they're saints, people who have all the right answers, people who, as far as their orthodoxy is concerned, you can't question it.

And yet, there's no fervency. There are no rivers of living water. And Jesus said, he that believeth in me out of his inward part shall flow rivers of living water.

Jesus said, when Christ comes in, the waters are going to flow. Where are the rivers of living water? In both cases, the person is fervent. And that's why it's rather interesting there in the day of Pentecost, that when the great miracle had taken place, and when the Holy Spirit had been given, and when the people were all filled with the Holy Spirit, natural men standing by said, these men are drunk with new wine.

Wasn't that an interesting thing? That Spirit-filled people, there was something about them that gave other people the impression that they were drunk with new wine. You know, if Spirit-filled men come into your assembly sometimes, they're apt to make you feel uncomfortable. It's such a strange thing to say, but it's absolutely true.

They're apt to make you feel uncomfortable. They'll be so fervent that you'll wish, perhaps, they'd quieten down. Well, that's the way it was in the day of Pentecost, certainly.

Then a third similarity is that in both cases, both speech and song are effective. Both speech and song are effective. Almost every time that you ever have the filling of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, a person's speech is immediately affected by it.

And usually when he opens his mouth, he starts talking about the Lord Jesus. Do you have the Spirit of God? Are you filled with the Spirit of God? When you open your mouth, what comes out? It's an amazing thing that the filling of the Spirit of God is invariably connected with witness for the Christ of God. And it also affects a person's song.

It's interesting that the man, when he gets drunk, well, you go by those houses and you hear, I don't know whether you'd call it song, but you hear something coming out of the taverns and the bars and all the rest. It's an interesting thing. The man gets loosened up, shall we say.

He loses his inhibitions and he bursts forth into song. Well, it's true of the man who's filled with the Spirit of God, too. Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, it says.

And then finally, number D or letter D, the man's walk is affected. The man who's under the influence of intoxicating liquors, he staggers along the street. The sidewalk has been in the same place for 50 years, but all of a sudden it's rolling like waves of a sea and he's trying to navigate along the sidewalk.

You can tell it by the way he walks. It's true of the child of God, too, who's filled with the Spirit of God. It affects his walk.

It affects where he goes. It affects the kind of a life he lives. It's absolutely vain to be talking about the filling of the Spirit of God if there's been no change in our lives, if we're undesirable from the unsaved people about us.

But there are two contrasts between drunkenness and the filling of the Spirit, and we want to see these very clearly. And first is this, that with the filling of the Spirit there is no riot or excess. It says, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.

And you never get that with the Spirit of God's fillings. He, there, things are done decently and in order. And closely related to that, with the filling of the Holy Spirit, there is no loss of self-control.

So when a man is drunk, he does lose self-control. He does things that are, in a sense, he's not even responsible for. But that isn't true when the Spirit of God comes in.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control. And that's a marvelous thing, isn't it, that a man can be filled with the Spirit of God, and yet in a real, though mysterious sense, he doesn't lose the power to control himself. It says in 1 Corinthians 14, The Spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet.

Here was a man in the early days of the church, and the Spirit of God had come upon him. He was filled with the Spirit of God, and he began to speak, and what he spoke was actually the Word of God. He was a mouthpiece for God, and yet he never lost self-control in the process.

He could never say, for instance, Well, I just couldn't help preaching three hours and a half. I was just boring along, and I couldn't stop. Well, that isn't true.

When a man is filled with the Spirit of God, he still has self-control, and at the same time, he's under the control of the Spirit. Now, the filling of the Spirit is the ideal state for the Christian, and if you'll just stop to think about it for a minute, you'll realize that this has to be true. Here's a person, and he's filled with the Spirit.

What does that mean? Well, it means that today, at the beginning of the day, he opens his ear to get his instructions from the Lord. It means that his life is turned over to Christ day by day, and what it really means is that he's at that intersection when the Lord wants him to be there, to speak to that man there. It means that his life is efficient.

There isn't a lot of wasted energy. The Spirit of God doesn't waste a person's energy. It means his life is effective.

It means that every blow really counts. It's the life of power, and it's the life of release, too. The life in which we're released from the inhibitions and the traditions and all the petty sins that bind us day by day.

Now, sometimes in the Bible, the filling of the Spirit seems to be a sovereign gift of God. At least in one particular case, it's so. In Luke chapter 115, you read about John the Baptist, Luke chapter 115, and it says that he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

It says, verse 15, Luke chapter 1, for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. Well, that's a mysterious thing, isn't it? I think that refers particularly to John's mission as the forerunner of Christ. I don't think it means that he didn't have to be born again.

He was born in sin, shame, and iniquity. He had to be saved, and yet as far as his mission was concerned, as the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, he wasn't to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But here in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18, it's a command to be obeyed.

It says, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. And this puts the responsibility right back on me. Do I want to be filled with the Spirit? Do I want a life that's effervescent with God? Do I want a life so that everywhere I go I'm going to be seeing things happening for God, God working in a marvelous, mysterious, supernatural way? God, does He want that kind of a life? Well, it's your responsibility.

Now, I think we want to mention, too, that the filling of the Spirit is not the same as the baptism of the Spirit, not the same as the indwelling of the Spirit, it's not the same as the anointing, it's not the same as the earnest, and it's not the same as the seal. Good to distinguish these things. There is some confusion today on it, although I'd like to say this.

I've met a lot of people, and they might not use the right phraseology, and yet when you come in contact with them, you really believe that they are filled with the Spirit. And I'd rather have the filling, even if I called it by a wrong name, wouldn't you? I'd rather be filled with the Spirit, even if my phraseology wasn't right, than to be absolutely perfect as far as the phraseology is concerned, and not be under the control of the Spirit of God. But it's not the same as the baptism of the Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, we read that the baptism of the Spirit is that ministry of the Holy Spirit which incorporates us into the body of Christ by one Spirit, where we all baptize into one body. And the baptism of the Spirit, of course, took place in the day of Pentecost. We come into the good of it the moment that we trust Christ as Savior.

That's sovereign. That takes place at the time of conversion. It's not the same as the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

We read about that in John 14, in verse 16, and once again, this is the portion of every person who is genuinely born again through faith in Christ that very moment. The Spirit of God comes and indwells his life, and there should be a manifestation of it after that. You don't feel the Holy Spirit come into your life, but you know he comes in because the Bible says it, and other people should know he comes in because of what they see in your life.

The filling is not the same as the anointing. The anointing is the use of the Holy Spirit in connection with his teaching ministry, the mysterious, marvelous thing that when a person is saved, the Spirit of God comes in, and a teaching ministry begins there, and he enables this child of God, however young in the faith, to discern between truth and error, to hear the voice of the true shepherd and to discern the voice of strangers. And then it's not the same as the earnest.

The earnest of the Spirit simply means that those of us who have the Spirit of God have the down payment that the full inheritance will follow. And it's not the same as the seal, either. The seal is a mark of ownership and a guarantee of the eternal security of the believer.

Read about that in Ephesians 1, verses 13 and 14. The filling, is it a crisis or is it a process? Well, I like to answer the question by saying that the filling of the Spirit can certainly be a crisis followed by a process. It certainly must be a process.

It must be a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment experience. But I don't rule out the thought of crisis. Are you afraid of a crisis experience of the Holy Spirit? I'm not.

Christians do have crisis experiences of this. There comes a time in the lives of some Christians when the truth of God is borne home to their soul. Perhaps they've been saved and now they see that they've been living for self and trying to save their life.

And the dam breaks, as it were, and they get down before the Lord and they turn control over to the Lord, the Spirit, and a crisis takes place. I'm not afraid of that. I have no doubt Moody had a crisis experience of the Holy Spirit to prepare him for the service that God was calling him.

I have no doubt Billy Gray and other of these men have had crisis experiences. But whether we have a crisis experience or not, the important thing, I think, to realize is that the filling of the Spirit of God is a continual process in the Christian life. Literally, as has many times been pointed out, the wording is, be ye being filled with the Spirit.

Wouldn't it be nice if at the end of this meeting we could have an altar call and you could come down and just by some simple act could receive the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit of God, so that for the rest of your life you'd be filled with the Spirit? Well, it wouldn't really be nice. If it would be nice, God would have arranged it that way. But if that had been His method, then we would cease to be dependent creatures on Him.

The greatest glory of the creature is dependence. That's the way the Lord wants us, moving ahead on our knees. And by arranging the filling of the Spirit of God in this way, He keeps us on our knees, as we'll see as we go on.

And so this is a life that we live. No pep pill that you can take. No capsule form.

No single experience that will project you onto a plateau of Christian experience high above everybody else. It's a life to be lived, a process day by day. Now, there are certain conditions to be met, and these are very obvious on the face of them.

Certain conditions to be met if a person is going to be filled with the Spirit of God. The first is he must confess and put away all known sins. 1 John chapter 1, verses 5 through 9. So we turn to that.

1 John chapter 1, verses 5 through 9. This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, John here is describing a way of life in which we walk with everything dragged out into the open as far as God is concerned.

I wonder, do I know that life today? Is this the way I'm living? As I'm walking along the street and an evil thought enters my mind, do I know what it is, right then and there, to rush into the presence of God and say, Lord, that was sin, and I confess it, and I forsake it this moment before you? There's nothing hidden with God. There's nothing under the counter with God. God isn't that kind of a God, and if I'm going to walk in fellowship with Him, I have to drag it out in the open and keep it dragged out in the open, and that's what keeps me clean, and the Spirit of God can only fill clean vessels.

Sin breaks fellowship with God. Sin grieves the Spirit of God, and he cannot walk along happily with the life where sin is unconfessed. Second condition to be met yields Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. If I am to know the fillings of the Spirit of God, my life must be turned over to Him without reservation. So easy to talk about, but another thing to do.

We don't realize oftentimes the things that are holding us back from a complete dedication, a complete devotion to the Christ of God, yet it's the only reasonable thing to do. If I want my life to be effective, if I want to be in the place of God's choosing, I have to do it. I just have to come and say, Lord Jesus, here I am.

Take over, take control, anywhere you want me to go, anything you want me to do, anything you want me to say. You be the leader, I'll do the following. Yield your life to God.

Then see, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16.

It says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord. Now, it's impossible to think of a life filled with the Spirit of God if that life at the same time is not filled with the word of God. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

It's impossible to be living day by day without cracking the Bible, without spending time in the word, without hearing God's voice speak to me in the Bible. It's impossible to think of being filled with the Spirit. Isn't it crowding out the scripture for my life? Isn't schooling crowding it out? Well, we can do that.

We can have the filling of the Spirit. It has often been pointed out that in the Ephesians passage it says, Be filled with the Spirit and these things will follow. In Colossians it says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and the same things will follow.

Conclusion, to be filled with the Spirit is to have the word of Christ dwelling in you richly. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. And then of course, condition to be met, number four, to be empty of stealth.

And I think you have that suggested at least in Galatians chapter 2 pointing, I have been crucified with Christ. Great thing for us to know and to remember, all that we were as sons of Adam, all that we were as men in the flesh, crucified with Christ. In us dwells no good thing.

Our job is to be an empty vessel, to be that glove into which the hand of Christ can come and move us as he will. And so those are some conditions to be met in connection with the filling of the Spirit. Now what are the results of being filled with the Spirit? Well, here again we go back to the book of Acts, first of all, Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. It says, But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, that ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Result number one of being filled with the Spirit, power. Power for what? Power for witness. Not necessarily power to do the spectacular, not necessarily power to do the sensational, although that was included here in the book of Acts.

The power to open your mouth and testify for the Lord Jesus Christ. Result number two of being filled with the Spirit, boldness. Acts chapter 4 and verse 31.

You have your Bibles open, turn to that. Acts chapter 4 and verse 31. It says, And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Notice when they spake, it's the tongue every time, the mouth every time. They spake the word of God with boldness. Kind of thrilling, isn't it, to think of that same mouth that not very long before was saying, I don't even know the man.

And now that same man gets up on the day of Pentecost, filled with the Spirit of God, and he preaches, and three thousand people are saved. I tell you, it took boldness, too, to stand up. It took boldness for Peter to stand up that day on the day of Pentecost and point to the Jewish nation and say, you took them and you killed them, but God raised them from the dead in the day of reckoning coming again.

That's what the filling of the Spirit of God did with Peter. It gave him boldness. And not only that, a third result of being filled with the Spirit is generosity.

In the very next verse, verse 32, it says, A multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed with his own, and they had all things come. Now here we go with our sixty theological reasons why this verse doesn't mean what it says, or why we should shunt it into a dispensational pigeonhole and relegate it to the first days of the church.

But I want to tell you this morning that wherever the Spirit of God is filling lives, these results follow. Generosity. Too many Christians today, I fear, are suffering from paralysis of the nerve that leads from the brain to the wallet.

And when the Spirit of God comes in, that paralysis is gone. And people say, material things, so what? If I can use them for the spread of the gospel, if I can use them for the salvation of souls, that's the thing that really counts. What a wonderful deliverance it is when the Spirit of God comes in and fills a life, and people say, my greatest desire is to use the material things I have for the honor of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another result of the filling of the witness, verse 33. Verse 33, we've already suggested it, but here it is again. You can't get away from it.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Isn't that tremendous? This great power, there was a great witness there, a great subject to be witnessed about, and great grace was upon them all. That is, great enablement was given to them all.

And then over in Ephesians, chapter 5, we find that there are some other results of the filling of the Spirit of God, and one of them is joy. Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 19. It says in the King James Version, speaking to yourselves, but it really should be speaking to one another.

It isn't that you go around talking to yourself, although that isn't so bad either. But here the thought is, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. What does that mean? Well, look, it means when you're filled with the Spirit of God, your vocabulary is filled with the Bible, really.

That's really what it means. And when you're talking to people, you're ministering to them and you're feeding them. It's almost on the subconscious level.

It's so much a part of you. The Spirit has such control over you that you go around and you're talking to people and you're helping them on in the things of God. And then it says, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

That's the inward part of it. You yourself have the joy of the Lord as your strength day by day. All right, then another, F, thanksgiving.

You say, oh, that's not very sensational. That's not very spectacular. I thought the filling of the Spirit would do something else.

Well, this is one of the results of the filling of the Spirit, giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus. And then final result, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Can a wife be filled with the Spirit? Yes.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands. Can a husband be filled with the Spirit of God? Yes. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church.

Can children be filled with the Spirit of God, Christian children? Yes. Honor your father and your mother. Submit yourselves unto your parents in the Lord.

This is a result of being filled with the Spirit. Can employees be filled with the Spirit of God? Yes. They should respect their masters and serve them, not with that as unto the Lord.

Can masters be filled with the Spirit of God? Employers, yes. They should treat their employees kindly, too. Final question, does a Spirit-filled Christian know it? Well, the answer is, if you mean does he know it in the sense that he's proud, that he thinks himself above other Christians, the answer is no.

If he's that way, he's filled with vitamin I. He's filled with a perpendicular pronoun and not with the Spirit of God. But does he know it? If you mean does he know it in the sense that he realizes that God is at work and that where he goes, things are happening for God, the answer is yes, he knows it. These people in the book of Acts knew.

They saw the marvelous converging of circumstance. They saw that their lives were chained to the chariot wheels of God, and they realized that things were happening, that the Spirit of God was working, that he was using weak clay vessels to work. That was the thrill of life in the book of Acts, and it can be yours, and it can be mine, too.

If we meet the conditions, the result will follow. See, so Acts chapter 1, and we'll begin reading in verse 9. Acts chapter 1 verse 9 says, And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Now, yesterday we were speaking about the centrality of the filling of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is really a wonderful book. You can hold it up like a diamond and see its colors glisten in different lights.

Today we'd like to think of the Book of Acts as a manual on prayer. And we'd like to just look at some of the references to prayer in this wonderful book. And as a subtitle for our Bible study this morning, we might call it, Does It Pay to Pray? And we're going to think of every incident, at least I think we are, dealing with prayer in the Book of Acts, and look at the prayer and then see, did anything happen? Do you just pray and nothing happens? Well, we'll see.

The first prayer mentioned in the Book of Acts is the prayer for Pentecost in the verses we just read, chapter 1, verses 12 through 14. The Lord Jesus has ascended into heaven. The disciples go back to the upper room in Jerusalem, and they're gathered there, and interestingly enough, Mary the mother of Jesus is there.

This is the last reference to Mary the mother of Jesus in the New Testament. And it's an interesting thing that in this last reference she's found in prayer with the disciples. You don't find the disciples praying to Mary, but you find her praying with the disciples.

There they are. They're all with one accord. They're all bowed in prayer before God.

What were they praying about? You guess? Well, they were praying for the coming of the Spirit, weren't they? Exactly what they were praying for. They were praying for the coming of the Spirit. Just a humble band of simple believers gathered there on their knees in an upper room.

Will anything happen? Does it pay to pray? The answer to that prayer is found in chapter 2 of the Book of Acts. The Spirit of God came, and power was poured out upon the disciples, and all the believers were baptized into the body of Christ. It was a wonderful time of prayer, and wonderful answer came.

Let me ask you this morning, you who are believers, do you ever pray for the Spirit? You say, Mr. MacDonald, what new heresy is this? You said yesterday that when we're saved we're indwelt by the Spirit. Well, that's absolutely true, and yet there is a sense in which we do and should pray for the Spirit of God today. We should pray for the Spirit of God to come upon us in power for our service for Christ.

Do you ever pray for that? I think we ought to start. Jesus said, if you being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give Holy Spirit to them that ask him? And we're told by some Bible students that when the article the is left out, when it just says give Holy Spirit, that it means not the person of the Holy Spirit, but the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And I'd just like to suggest to you this morning that it might be a good thing for all of us to be more exercised about this, that as we start the day that we might ask that the Spirit of God might be upon us in power as we go forth in this day, arranging the contacts of the day, arranging the telephone calls of the day, supervising in the

letters that are written and the conversations that are held, that we might see God in all the circumstances of life day by day.

Well, it was a wonderful time of prayer, this first prayer meeting in the book of Acts, and think of a wonderful answer. The answer was Pentecost, the beginning of the Spirit. The second prayer that you have is in verses 24 through 26, and that's the prayer for a successor to Judas.

It says in verse 24, And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of the ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Now, I know there's a lot of controversy among Christians as to whether Matthias was really the choice or whether it should have been the apostle Paul.

For my own part, I'm convinced that these disciples were acting in the fear of God. They took it to the Lord in prayer. They asked the Lord to show his will in the matter, and I'm persuaded he did.

I don't think it was ever God's intention that Paul should have been numbered with the twelve. The important thing here is with their simplicity, they face a crisis in life. They go back to the Old Testament scriptures, and they see that somebody should be appointed to take the place of Judas.

What are you going to do about it? How can you know the mind of God in a case like this? They had only one resource, and that resource was prayer. They prayed, and the lot fell to Matthias. Now, this was, of course, before the Holy Spirit was given.

We don't believe that you should use the lot today, the casting of lots, so that you don't have to. We have the Spirit of God, and he has promised to guide us in all the affairs of life. Is there someone here this morning at the crossroads, perhaps facing a crisis in life, having to make a decision that you don't know which way to go? The answer is prayer.

Get down before the Lord. Bring it before the Lord. Wait patiently upon the Lord.

God has promised to show. And the third instance of prayer is in chapter two of the book of Acts, verse 42, and this is general prayer following Pentecost. Verse 41 says, this is chapter two, verse 41 says, Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Now, here prayer was the atmosphere of their life. It wasn't just some specific crisis that came up that drove them to prayer.

It was the air that they breathed. Did God answer that prayer? Was it just going through the motions, spinning the prayer wheel? No, just read the following verses, and I can't help feeling that the following verses are all part of the context, and this is the answer. Fear came upon every soul.

Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. All that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people that the

Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved, or those that were being saved.

They pray in verse 22. What is the answer to the prayer in verse 22? The answer, as far as I can see in the verses that follow, is continuous revival. They were living in a state of continuous revival, and I believe this is God's will for us today.

I don't think God wants us to be on the spiritual roller coaster, up one minute and down the other. I believe God wants us to be walking in the Spirit, abiding in the Spirit, living in the Spirit. What is the lesson we learn from chapter 2, verse 42? We learn the work is done in prayer.

And I really believe this. I really believe with all my heart that the principal work in service for Christ is done on our knees. That's the thrilling thing to me about the book of Acts, to see an army, a five-ranked army of fools, as far as the world is concerned, moving forward on their knees and affecting the world for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, then it's rather thrilling to turn over to chapter 4 and find their prayer for boldness there. Chapter 4, verses 24 and 29. Now, Peter and John have just been released.

They've been in trouble with the law, and of course it was for Christian propaganda activity. And it says in verse 23, being let go, they went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, and this is a wonderful prayer.

I'm going to read it. It says, Lord, thou art God which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is, who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said, Why did the heathen rage? And the people imagined vain things. The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

For of a truth against thy holy should be servant Jesus. For thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatening, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word by stretching forth thy hand to heal, that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

There's something thrilling about this, something that makes you proud to be a Christian. When you see these Christians, Peter and John have just been released from jail, and they come together and they say, my, this reminds us of the second Psalm somewhat. And here the Gentiles and the peoples are gathered together in opposition to the Lord and to his Christ.

Why do they do that? And they go and list the enemies of the gospel here. But I think the thrilling thing you want to notice is the calm and the poise of these Christian people in prayer. There's no frenzy here.

They're not frantic here. They're not falling apart at the seams. They lift them off carefully before God.

For of a truth against thy servant Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod, Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. But then notice the reverse twist in verse 28. You would think they would have said they're gathered together to do what they jolly well pleased to do against thee and against the gospel, but that isn't what it says.

It says these wicked world rulers and people gather together to do whatever thy hands and thy counsel determined before to be done. And I just believe that pleased the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ when he saw those feeble disciples down there in the world and they realized that he held the scepter of universal dominion and that not all the kings of the earth could do a single thing apart from him. Wonderful, isn't it? They gather together to do what you had determined beforehand was going to be done.

I've often told the story of a prayer meeting back in Chicago when a couple of young Christians went to it and these young people had prayed all night, laying hold of God for countries of the world. And I spoke to one of those young men the next day and I said to him, what was it like? He said, I can't tell you. He said, you'd have had to be there to know what it was like.

He said, all I can tell you is this. He said, one of those fellows started praying for Russia and for the Iron Curtain, and he said when he got through, Khrushchev looked like a midget. But that's what happened in this prayer meeting, too.

They were praying, and before they got through Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Jews and the Gentiles, they looked like midgets. Now, what did they pray for specifically? Well, this is another beautiful thing. They didn't pray for safety.

They didn't pray for protection. They didn't pray for long life. They didn't think that was the important thing.

They prayed for boldness. Verse 29. Now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy words.

Thrilling, isn't it? Did God answer the prayer? Doesn't it pay to pray? Verse 31. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, but they spake the word of God with boldness. Some people say, you know, I have trouble speaking for the Lord.

When I start to speak for Jesus, my lips turn to blubber, and I just find it difficult to get the words out. What do you do in a case like that? Tell the Lord about it. Tell the Lord about it.

Ask the Lord for holy boldness in proclaiming His word, in witnessing for Him. God answers prayer. It must have been thrilling to be in a place like that.

Have you ever been in a place, in a prayer meeting, where the place was shaken? Well, I haven't. It's a thrilling, thrilling experience, not only where the place was shaken, but where human hearts are shaken as well. I tell you, when we get down before the Lord in desperate, believing prayer, lives are transformed in a prayer meeting like that.

Well, then we turn over to chapter 6, and we find prayer for the choice of deacons. Chapter 6, and this is beautiful too, some lovely touches here. Let's begin back in verse 1. In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

These were all believers, some of the Grecian or Hellenistic backgrounds, and others of Hebrew background, all Jewish converts. Then the twelve called a multitude of the disciples unto them and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over

the business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochurus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus the proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostle.

And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Here was one of the first instances of difficulties in the early church. The Hellenistic Jews were, the Hellenistic converts were complaining against the Hebrew converts. They thought their widows were being neglected in the daily ministrations.

What do you do in a case like this? This is a big problem today. The problem is always the personal problem. Interpersonal relationship.

Prayer is sufficient. They get down on their knees. They pray.

They selected men to carry on. They selected what we would call deacons.

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