

Effective Prayer - Part 2

by William MacDonald

Effective prayer requires a believer, confession of sin, faith, perseverance, and a willingness to accept God's will.

Duration: 32:57

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:13-14, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:1-19, Romans 5:20, Philippians 1:21

Topics: "Effectual Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares various stories and examples to emphasize the power and importance of prayer. He highlights the transformative impact prayer can have on individuals and communities. The speaker encourages listeners, particularly women and elders, to turn to God in prayer and seek His intervention in their lives and surroundings. He also mentions a specific instance where people across the country engaged in a day of humiliation, fasting, confession, and prayer, which coincided with the Watergate scandal.

Transcript

Somebody once asked a servant of the Lord, what's your philosophy of prayer? He said, I don't know. He said, all I know is when I pray, things happen, and when I don't, they don't. Well, that's true, and that's the way it should be in your life and in mine.

It should be that when we pray, things happen, and when we don't pray, they don't. I mentioned yesterday that I consider that the greatest work for God is done in prayer, and yet, most of us would rather take a beating than spend consistent time in prayer. We mentioned yesterday that one of the first keys to effective prayer is that the person must be a believer, but we left the door open.

We said that God does reserve the right to answer the prayers of unbelievers, and I was reminded last night of a young fellow named Dale Tweedy. Some of you might know him. Dale Tweedy was on the drug trip.

He was just about wiped out, to tell you the truth. Just about at the end of the line, he was living in a cave down near Palm Springs. One day, he came to the end of it.

Sitting there in the cave, he said, Oh God, if there is a God, reveal yourself to me, or I'm going to take my life. Within 10 minutes, a young fellow stuck his head in the mouth of the cave, saw Dale there, and said,

Hi, mind if I speak to you about Jesus? He did. Dale was converted.

Today, he's the assistant to the chaplain up at Cook County Jail, reaching others for Christ. Some of you read about him in the last issue of Letters of Interest. There may be someone here tonight who's not a believer in the Lord Jesus.

Maybe someone here tonight who's not a decided Christian, not sure about it all. That's a good prayer to pray. Pray that prayer.

Pray, Lord, reveal yourself to me. He'll never fail to answer that prayer. God, if there is a God, reveal yourself to me.

If any man will do his will, he shall know Jesus said. The second key to effective prayer we mentioned last night was confession. There must be no unconfessed sin in the life.

I'd like to speak a little more about that tonight because confession is the road to revival. And I'm sure we're all familiar with the facts theoretically, but we don't know too much about it practically. Would you turn back to 2 Chronicles 7 and verses 13 and 14.

2 Chronicles 7 and verses 13 and 14. A very appropriate section in a time when our country is suffering a terrible drought, both physical and spiritual. God says here in the 13th verse of 2 Chronicles 7, If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.

Now here is a most unmistakable promise in the word of God that if we meet certain conditions, God will send revival. Maybe your assembly, maybe your local fellowship has been going through a period of drought. You're not seeing anything happening.

You're wondering what it is that's clogging the flow in the pipes. A possible solution is confession of sin. I'd like to ask you tonight, not to raise your hand or show in any way, but in all your life, in the fellowships where you have been, have you ever known a meeting called for the purpose of confession and prayer? Most of us can live and die without ever being in such a meeting, and yet it's the invariable road to revival and to answered prayer.

You have a beautiful illustration of it in the ninth chapter of Daniel. Daniel is before the Lord and he bows his knee and he takes all the sin of Israel and he confesses it as if it were his own. Now Daniel was not guilty of many of the sins that he speaks of in that ninth chapter, but he ate a sin offering.

He took those sins and confessed them as his own and the people came back from captivity. And I want to tell you, people always come back from captivity when God's people get together in a time of confession and prayer. We have been having a terrible drought on the West Coast.

You've been reading about it in the newspapers and it'll be reflected in food prices within the next year. The assembly in San Francisco, the Parkside Assembly, came together one night and had a time of confession. Confessing the sins of this nation.

Watergate, the Lockheed scandal, corruption in government, immorality being legalized and all the rest. Confess the sin of the assembly, the deadness, the lack of passion for souls, the lack of unity, the personality conflict and all the rest. Confess personal failures and shortcomings.

Confess failures in business life and then call on God, God send the rain. Send the rain to this land and send showers of blessings. Do you know the next day, for the first day in months, it rained and something that never happens, it snowed and it sleeted all in the same day.

Never happens in family. And God has been working in that assembly and they've had another baptism of young people recently down in the Pacific Ocean. What? Because they took God at his word.

Second Chronicle, chapter 7, verses 13 and 14, they humbled themselves before God, they called upon God in prayer and God wonderfully answered. Some years ago on the island of Lewis on the northwest coast of Scotland there were two elderly godly women and they were appalled by the conditions in the island in which they lived. How people were living for pleasure rather than for God.

How men were indulging in drink and becoming drunkards. And they cried to God and they laid hold of God and they wouldn't let him go. Oh God, send the revival.

They confessed the sins of the people as their own. Two old women. What can two old women do? Dear friends, the greatest work is done in prayer.

Never underestimate the power of women in prayer. God came to them in some way I don't know and he said the answer is on the way. And those women sat down and they wrote a letter to a man on the mainland named Duncan Campbell.

He was the head of the faith mission at that time. And they said God's going to visit this island and we believe you're God's man to bring the message of revival. They said you better come.

And Duncan Campbell wrote back and he said I'm right in the midst of a great campaign here in Edinburgh and I couldn't possibly leave it. Well these dear ladies they dipped their pen in acid and they wrote back another letter to him. They said if you don't come God will work anyway and you'll miss the blessing.

Just like the book of Esther that we were hearing about today. When he got their second letter his campaign in Edinburgh had dried up. He got on the next boat and he crossed the niche there to the Isle of Lewis and when he got there it was already taking place.

The people were in the church buildings there till four o'clock in the morning crying out to God. People were going to the meetings they didn't want to go. Unsaved people were going to the meetings and getting saved right and left.

A drunkard going back to his home at night and he's sitting down at the side of the road and he's saved before he ever got home. A cousin of mine Norman Morrison he was in the second world war lost one eye and has shrapnel in the other eye and has a metal plate in his head to protect his brains as a result of war injuries. He was there an unsaved fellow.

He came back from the war and he couldn't work because if he leaned over like that he lost consciousness and he began to drink and he became a drunkard. And this revival hit the Isle of Lewis because two women confessed the sin of the people as their own and started to pray and Norrie started

going to the meetings. He didn't want to go to the meetings but he went to the meetings.

And he got saved. And his life was transformed and revolutionized and when he used to walk down the street after that the ladies would look out out the window and they'd say where sin abounded grace did much more abound. I'll tell you it was a wonderful work of the spirit of God because two women prayed.

Some of you sisters might be here at the conference and you might be discouraged. You might be discouraged by the spiritual lethargy and deadness around you there's an answer. You go to God in prayer.

You take all of this and confess it before God and see God come in and work. I really believe it's one of the greatest answers to our needs today. Some of you are elders here from assemblies.

Go back with a message. Let's meet together for confession. Call upon God.

Humble ourselves before God as he says in 2 Chronicles and see him work in a mighty way. During the terrible Watergate scandal in this country Senator Mark Hatfield tried to get a resolution passed in the Senate to set aside a day for humiliation fasting confession and prayer. It never passed the Senate as far as I know but anyway the word spread and on April 4th 1974 Christian people all over this country got down on their knees.

We did. Out there in San Leandro. We got down on our knees and we ate the sin offerings.

We confessed the sins of our nation and of evangelical Christendom and of our assembly and of our individual lives as well. Do you know it was shortly after that it was shortly after that that those terrible tapes came to surface? When the abscess was punctured and the pus began to flow. You mean to say that Jesus Christ leading together for confession and prayer can affect the whole destiny of the nation? I say yes it can.

But I believe that's what God is waiting for. He's waiting for us to do this very thing. Well then the third key we said yesterday was we must pray in faith.

We must take a promise of the word of God and say Lord you said this in your word. That's the kind of faith that honors God. That's the kind praying in desperate believing prayer.

We said that our prayers must be according to the will of God and the will of God is generally revealed in the word of God. And when we pray in his will we know that we have the things that we ask for him. Our prayers must be sincere was the next key.

We mustn't ask God to do things for us that we can do for I figure it would be the height of hypocrisy for me to get up before a group of Christians and make known a need for a thousand dollars for some work of God if I had the money in the bank. If all I had to do was sign a check to meet that need I figure it's the height of hypocrisy for me to ask people to pray about it. God isn't honored by that sort of thing.

We must be sincere when we come to him. We must persevere in prayer. God lays the burden and leaves the burden on us.

Persevere. Some of you are praying tonight for unsaved loved ones. Don't give up.

Don't give up. But let me say something about that. What about that? Some of us pray for unsaved loved ones and nothing happens.

They don't get saved. How do you resolve that in your mind? Well, let me suggest something to you and see what you think of it. I don't believe God saves anyone against his will.

I don't believe God is going to populate heaven with people who don't want to be there. But I do believe this. I believe every time I pray for an unsaved person, God speaks to that person in some way.

I believe that with all my heart. Think of it. I'm praying for that fellow, let's say, down in Miami that I mentioned to you.

I believe every time I pray for Doug Danforth that gospel is brought before him in some way. Whether the Holy Spirit comes and speaks to him, whether he sees a sign on the bus, whether he turns on the radio and hears the Billy Graham quote, I don't know how he does it. I really believe that the simple believer in the Lord Jesus, every time I pray for him, God speaks to him.

That should be a tremendous encouragement to us that's praying according to the will of God. You know it's the will of God and you know that God is going to do something in answer to your prayer. We must be willing to accept something better than we ask for.

God will never give us anything that will be harmful, but he sometimes gives us something better than we ask for. And then we mentioned that the best prayer comes from a strong inward necessity that we pray best when we're in the wilderness, when we're really cast upon the Lord, when if God fails us, we're sunk. Now what I want to do tonight is give some practical illustrations.

Does it work? Does it pay to pray? Or do you just pray and nothing happens? People say to me, what do you think? Does prayer change the hand of God or does it just change your mind with regard to what's going to happen? Well I'm not interested in those theological questions at all. Really not interested. All I know is you pray, God answers prayer.

And these are just some little illustrations taken from one of the trips that I took within the last few years. A few years ago we were in Rome, Italy, and we visited a young fellow there named Woods, a young missionary. And we were on our way behind the Iron Curtain at that time.

So he said, Steve, Steve Woods, he said, before you leave, let's get down and pray. He said, do you have any special prayer requests? And we said, as a matter of fact we do. We're going into Czechoslovakia tomorrow and we have only one contact and we'd really like some more contacts in Czechoslovakia.

We got down on our knees and poured out our hearts to God, prayed for that among other things, and left. The next day I was driving through the streets of Rome in a car with a young Italian Christian driving. It's a faith-producing experience.

There's nothing that will deepen, there's nothing that will deepen your prayer life like driving in Italian traffic. And this fellow, this fellow was driving through and all of a sudden he started waving to the car next to us and I thought, what did the poor man do? You know, this terrible demonstration. And so the poor man pulled off to the side and as we were pulling in front of him he said, this is a missionary and I want you to meet him.

There was nothing more than that. But he was really making a federal case about it. So we got out and this man had some visitors with him.

We met the missionary and he introduced us to these visitors who spoke only German, they didn't speak English, German, and Czech. And so the conversation was rather halting for a while but they said to us, yeah, you're going into Czechoslovakia and we said, yes. They said, do you have any contacts in Czechoslovakia? And we said, only one, Dr. Jan Zamen in Bruno.

And they said, Dr. Zamen is dead. Well, I nearly fell over because we had been corresponding with the man. What had happened he had taken a heart attack and died.

And so to make a long story short they gave us their card and they said, here, you come and visit us when you're in Czechoslovakia. You know, we had prayed the day before here in the busy Italian traffic we need a couple from Czechoslovakia the next day. Can? It would never happen by chance.

It was God moving the checkers on the checkerboard. So we went into Czechoslovakia and we went by the Zamen home and we visited Mrs. Zamen. And as we sat there and talked to her she told us this lovely story.

She said, you know, the night Dr. Zamen died I was all alone here and my daughter was off at a camp in the mountains counseling some young people. She said, they have no telephone there at the camp and I had no way of getting touch with them by phone, she said. And I got down on my knees and asked, Lord, you know my prediction my husband is dead here in the house and I have no way of getting word to my daughter.

It's really a toughie. She had no car no way of going up there. Do you know that in the morning her front doorbell rang? She went to the door and there was an American lady there.

And the American lady said, I represent the Child Evangelism Fellowship. She said, I'm making a study of a Bible camp in Europe. She said, and I hear that you folks have a camp up in the mountains.

She said, could you tell me how to go there? And Mrs. Zamen said yes she could and she explained the story. Her husband had died during the night her daughter was up at that camp. When you do go to the camp would you please tell my daughter who is counseling there to come home.

So Mrs. Zamen Child Evangelism Fellowship worker drove along for quite a while and she asked the Lord to guide her to guide her to the camp. She wasn't too certain about it. You know conditions in those countries aren't the way they are here with all the clear road signs and route signs and all the rest.

So she's driving along and pretty soon her instructions kind of run out and she said oh here I am Lord and I don't know where I am. And she cried to the Lord. And then she saw some people and she went to them and she showed them the address of the camp and she said you know how would I get there? And they said look, the shortest way leave your car here and follow us.

And they led her across some fields into some forest. And when they got into the forest they found a young woman with some young people on a nature hike. Who do you say I don't think it was.

It was the Damon girl. She had decided that morning to take her young people out from the camp on a nature hike. They didn't leave her at the camp.

They met her out in the forest. Does God answer prayer? Does it really pay to pray? Or are you wasting your time? I'll tell you it really pays to pray. We go on from there and I think my God can work in all countries can't he? We go on to Kathmandu, Nepal and then we hear a story there of what had just happened to George Verwer the head of Operation Mobilization.

George was there in Kathmandu, Nepal and he had to fly to Britain. So they piled his things in the back of a cab you know and rush off to the airport. Everything is done in a rush.

And they rush off to the airport and George grabs his suitcase and runs into the airport and checks on board and gets on the plane and the plane takes off for Britain and he's forgotten his shoulder bag it's still in the trunk of the car with important papers. What do you do? There's a predicament. You know how would the Lord ever get you out of a fix like that? Sure pray on the plane to Britain but you know very well it's hopeless don't you? Well George prayed on the plane to Britain.

The next day one of his colleagues there in Kathmandu Ron Penny had to take off in a bus for India. There's only three main roads in Nepal incidentally. Three main paved roads and one of them goes down into India.

So he takes off in this bus they go a few a few kilometers and the bus breaks down. Business as usual. They get out and they try to repair it with a few coat hangers and a rubber elastic I'm exaggerating but this is what it seems like.

They try to repair it they get back in and go a few more kilometers it breaks down again. They try to fix it with some hairpins and all the rest and on they go it breaks down again and Ron said I'm never going to get to India this way and he wasn't far wrong either. So he got his bag out of the bus crossed the road found a bus going back to Kathmandu Nepal.

He got to the edge of Kathmandu in the second bus and he hailed a cab and the man opened the trunk for him to put his suitcase in and what do you think was in the trunk? George's shoulder bag it shouldn't have been there. I'll tell you with the character of the cab drivers they're not sanctified and with the number of taxis in Kathmandu they never should have got that same taxi but they did. George is praying on the plane to England God is working back in Kathmandu.

You see this type of thing happening in your life? You should. God is the God of the miracle and I think this is the miracle of the day in which we live. Seeing God working in these marvelous ways in answer to prayer.

We're driving down on that same trip into Italy. We left I think Geneva, Switzerland early in the morning we're driving and driving and driving and we're going to a place called Reggio Emilia in Italy and we have the address but we don't know and it's dark when we get there and we're tired and on edge and how do you find they don't have street lights the same as we do how do you find an address just cry to the Lord Lord lead us to this place. So Ray Lynch said look stop the car let me run over into this tavern and ask them.

He speaks a little did it tell. So we stop the car and he rushes over to the tavern and he said where's this address and they said where's your car and he said right over there and he said they said you're right in front of it. Right in front of it.

And I find out on this trip God is answering his prayer all over the world. We went we went on that same trip to to Bangkok Thailand and there we met a young fellow named Billy Bray not the Billy Bray that's already been referred to in this conference was it you brother Sheridan somebody referred to Billy Bray well this was a descendant of his he was a student at Moody when I first met him and he was over there in Bangkok Thailand I don't know whether Dr.

Smith here met him did you know Billy Bray okay well you'll appreciate this story Billy at that time was kind of serving as a newspaper reporter for one of the big magazines Time Newsweek something used to send stories in and get a check back in return and his purpose there was to serve the Lord of course but this was to put bread and butter on the table well Billy Bray has an interesting habit when he signed his name on a check on a news release to Newsweek or Time Magazine every time he signs his name he signs Billy Bray Bill 121 Philippians 121 for me to live is Christ and to die is gain and when he signed his checks at the bank Billy Bray Bill 121 he went down there he always went to the same teller in the bank and he went there one day and the teller said what's Bill 121 he said I

understand Billy Bray but I don't understand Bill 121 and so it gave him a wonderful opportunity to give the gospel to this teller at the bank well one night Billy was in the I think it was the Oriental Hotel you can correct me in some of the details but Occidental Oriental something like that and he had his supper there and he had his attache case there and when he left he forgot his attache case his check book was in it he had just received a big remittance from the magazine that he'd been writing for and he forgot his case he went away and the case was gone the waiter didn't forget it the waiter took that attache case and took the check book out of it and he saw quite a nice balance it was the biggest balance Billy had ever had and so the waiter made out a check and signed Billy's name

and he took it down to the bank and you know that tells me I'm supposed to be too sneaky he took it down to the bank and you know it's a strange thing Billy had always gone to the same teller at the bank which teller do you think this teller went to the same one Billy was praying that the Lord would bring the attache case back to him he went to that very teller and the teller looked at the check and he saw the amount and he saw the name Billy Bray and it looked good but something was missing Phil 121 and the teller called Billy Bray and Billy Bray came down to the bank and when he stepped in the door the waiter stepped out and Phil 121 saved him over a thousand dollars in answer to prayer it really pays to pray why am I telling you these accounts I asked the Lord years ago that I should

never speak on prayer without making people want to pray without making them in a hurry to go back and get down on their knees and learn God in a new way in answer to prayer on that same trip we were coming from Yugoslavia and we had to come through Paris to Brussels in Paris we had to change stations we were late getting in and we knew we were going to miss our connection Romans 8 28 you never miss connections things don't happen they're planned so we went to the north station I'm not going to try to pronounce it in French I think it says north station we went to north station and the fellows that were with me they plunked all our baggage down in a pile and got out their guitar and we started singing and when you start singing over in a railroad station there you gather young people like

honey gathers bees the young people started coming around pretty soon we had a gospel meeting going there in the railroad station well the time was going on it was getting time for us to get our train to Brussels and a young fellow came along and he said to Bill McCarter could I leave my baggage here while I go and buy my ticket and Bill said sure where are you from he said from Chicago Chicago he said that man over there is from Chicago so he introduced him to me he said this is Terry Foley I said my name is Bill

McDonnell I said where do you live Terry he said tell me where you live I said oh I said you know a church building there in the corner of Foster and Nagle Norwood gospel chapel he said sure two blocks from my house I said that's where I fellowship that's where I attend service

so I witnessed to him about the Lord Jesus and he said I said to him Billy nothing happens by chance in life I said it was no accident that we met here in the railroad station in Paris he said you think you're going to save me in a Paris railroad station I said Terry I couldn't save a mosquito let alone you but I think God is speaking to you and I think you better listen he left us and went and bought his ticket came back and got his luggage and off he went and off we went and we were praying to Terry Foley you'll never meet him again will you?

You'll never meet him again Terry Foley went on his way several years later I had been serving the Lord over in Ireland I had to come back to the United States on business and I was only one weekend in Chicago I went to the Norwood Gospel Chapel for the breaking of bread at the end of the meeting I started walking toward the back of the hall a young Danny Erickson came to me and he said Bill here I have a friend I'd like you to meet and he said this is Terry Foley I just remember a few years had gone by Terry Foley it rang bells so to waste time and let me think I said where are you from Terry?

Well he told me but the family had moved and that threw me off they had moved to a different location and then I kept stalling for time and finally I said to him Terry did I ever speak to you about Jesus in a Paris Railroad Station and he went like that it was a physical reaction he said yes you did what happened? He left us in that Paris Railroad Station he went down into Germany he was hitchhiking a ride to Vienna Austria a car came along with a girl and two fellows in it and they were Christians she was connected with Young Life they took Terry all the way to Vienna she didn't force the gospel down his throat she told him about Young Life and about the camp they had out in Colorado and they showed kindness to him in the name of the Lord Terry came back to the United States and she didn't live far away and one night he thought he would call her she was in La Grange so he called her and they went out on a date together I'm not recommending this but what I mean is she's unsaved and he's unsaved that's what I mean I don't recommend that but anyway it happened that's what I'm trying to say and she didn't force the gospel down his throat but she told him again about the camp that summer in Colorado well you know a strange thing happened I mean he had some free time that summer and on his own with no connection with her now he went out to the camp in Colorado he was there a whole week and nobody forced the gospel down his throat but you know the last day he was going to be there he was standing in the swimming pool and a fellow came in and spoke to him about the Lord and Terry who fully trusted Christ there in the swimming pool in Colorado we met him in a Paris railroad station God tracked him down to Vienna back to the state since then he's graduated from Wheaton College has worked for Bill Gossard in his seminar and as far as I know he's still going on for the Lord does it really pay to pray I'll say it pays and I hope we'll go away from here with these keys to effective prayer and with the desire to really get to know God in a life of prayer and if something is hindering if something is clogging the pipe let's get before the Lord in confession in humiliation in fasting and in prayer and see diplomatic relations established and be on God's side in the wonderful work that's going on throughout the world today may the Lord bless his word to our hearts

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