

The Local Church 3 - Part 4

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in moving God to act in ways that would otherwise not happen, and its role in changing the destiny of nations and the spiritual history of a church.

Duration: 9:05

Scripture: Matthew 18:19

Topics: "Prayer Power", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the power and importance of prayer in the life of a believer, highlighting how prayer can awaken and transform dead spiritual atmospheres, impact nations, and change the course of history. It underscores the concept that prayer is the key to accessing God's omnipotence and that God often acts in response to the prayers of His people. The sermon also stresses the necessity of fervent, heartfelt prayers that stem from a strong inward necessity, as they are the most effective. Additionally, it explores the idea that God's work is primarily accomplished through prayer, making it a vital aspect of the Christian walk.

Transcript

And she went into the prayer meeting, she was stranger, she had never been there before. And nobody said a word. For the longest time they sat there, not a word was spoken.

And finally she couldn't stand it any longer. She lifted up her voice and prayed, Lord, this place is dead. You know this place is dead.

It's the deadest place either of us has been in for a long time. And after that there were no silent moments in the meeting. Question, was she an angel? I think she was.

I think God had sent her along that night as an angel to wake up that assembly. That's why I say you can go through the routine, you can announce a prayer meeting for Wednesday night, it's not it. It's not enough.

You've got to be there and be doing business for God in great waters. I like to remind our hearts that we human beings never come closer to omnipotence than when we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. You and I will never be omnipotent.

We will never have all power, but we never come closer to it than when we pray in his name because when we pray in his name it's the same as if he was presenting that prayer to the Father. That's really what it means. We're praying according to his will, we're praying by his authority, and he presents those prayers to the Father.

And when they get to the Father they're absolutely perfect. This is a motivation for me to pray. An old bishop in England said, when I pray things happen, when I don't pray they don't happen.

Good to remember. He had learned to move men through God by prayer. Christians hold the balance of power in the world through prayer.

Say what do you mean by that? I mean that we can change the destiny of nations through prayer. You know one day you sit and you read the newspaper and what is that? Well the Berlin Wall has fallen. Why did the Berlin fall? Through the prayers of God's people, that's why.

Through the prayers of God. We don't relate those things together, but it's there just the same. For many, many years Christians have been praying for the overthrow of that cruel regime and God in his own time answered those prayers.

I've told maybe some of you of a prayer meeting we had some years ago, or 20 years ago actually, at Fairhaven. And at this time it was an all-night prayer meeting, young people, it was a missionary prayer meeting, at that time probably connected with Operation Mobilization. And at two o'clock in the morning, Saturday morning, we started to pray for the Chad Republic.

The Chad Republic in Africa had a very wicked ruler at that time. His name was Tombulbai and he was killing the Christians. He ordered one Christian to be buried in sand up to his neck and the ants killed him.

He ordered another Christian to be placed in a drum and they beat on the drum until he starved to death. And Dick Sanders, who was a missionary in the Chad at that time, wrote to us and we read this letter at two o'clock Saturday morning, don't feel sorry for the Christians who've gone home, but pray for the Christians right now. And so our young, dear young people, they got down on their knees and they cried to God for the Christian people in the Chad Republic.

That was Saturday morning between two and three. On Sunday morning I was driving to Bethany that day and I turned the radio on to get the news. Special report, military coup in the Chad Republic, Tombulbai killed, a new ruler rises to power and this ruler happened to be favorable to the evangelistic enterprise.

And I tell you, the young people who were there that night, if you say, do you believe that your prayers there that night affected the Chad Republic? They say, absolutely, they do. And some of them are still living. And this last year, on the anniversary of that, I got a call from Dick Sanders reminding me it was 20 years ago to that day when we prayed in San Leandro and God answered out in the Chad Republic.

We control the balance of power through prayer in the world. We really do. And we can change the destiny of nations through prayer.

The best prayer that we can send up comes from a strong inward necessity. You know that, don't you? You know that when things are going smoothly, your prayer life can be dull. But when there's a crisis in your life, it's easy to pray with importunity, isn't it? It's easy to pray fervently.

The best arrows come from a taut bow, Spurgeon said. And that's true with the arrows of prayer. The best prayers come from a strong inward necessity.

I'd like to suggest to you tonight that God seldom, if ever, does anything except an answer to prayer. I know that'll shock you, but I believe it's true. I believe the word of God bears it out.

Somebody wrote this, prayer is the forerunner of mercy. Turn to sacred history and you'll find that seldom ever did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by supplication. Prayer is always the preface of blessing, that somebody was Spurgeon, he said that.

And I think it's true. God seldom, if ever, does anything except an answer to prayer. It's a wonder we don't pray more.

God has limited certain of his activities to responding to the prayers of his people. Unless they pray, he won't act. That's what accounts for the great boxes and crates in the warehouses of heaven, filled with all kinds of blessing.

The reason they're there unopened is nobody ever asked for them. Nobody ever asked for them. Prayer moves God to do things that he wouldn't otherwise have done.

It's common to hear in even angelical circles today that prayer conditions you to God's will. What God has willed is going to happen anyway. And when you pray, that brings you into line with God's predetermined will.

I don't believe that. Prayer moves the hand of God to do things he otherwise wouldn't have done. So how do you know? It says in James, you have not because you ask not.

That's what it says. You have not because you ask not. That's good enough for me.

God always answers prayer in exactly the same way you would answer it if you had his wisdom, love, and power. Some of you have had great disappointments in your life. You've prayed, you've cried to the Lord, and the thing you prayed for didn't happen.

Listen, if you had his wisdom, love, and power, you would have acted in exactly the same way. Because whatever he does is absolutely perfect. His wisdom guarantees it.

His love guarantees it. His power guarantees it. Actually, the work of God is done more in prayer than in any other way.

Prayer is the cutting edge of the work of God, somebody said. It should be the central thrust. The spiritual history of a church is written in its prayer life.

That's good. We're talking about the New Testament assembly. The spiritual history of a church is written in its prayer life.

God helped churches and assemblies that don't have a prayer meeting. That's all I can say. Whatever happened to the prayer meeting? It's missing today, I would guess, in most churches in the United States.

There are mysteries in connection with prayer. You can come to me afterwards. You can ask me questions about prayer.

Listen, I'd rather pray than solve all the mysteries of prayer. Just get down on my knees and cry to God in simple faith. I'd rather do that.

I like this paragraph. Somebody said, prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshaled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the rapid sun in its great race, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils.

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