

# Luther Rice Seminary

by Al Whittinghill

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of secret prayer and the ingredients of closet prayer, highlighting the need for secrecy and solitude in our relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 47:23

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:13

**Topics:** "Convention"

---

## Description

The video is a sermon where the speaker repeatedly mentions that they will show the audience what they are going to talk about today. However, the speaker does not actually provide any specific information about the content of their sermon. Instead, they continue to repeat the same phrase over and over again. The video does not provide any meaningful or substantive information about the topic or message of the sermon.

---

## Transcript

I think we had quite turned so, uh, uh, blonde, silver, uh, not gray, but silver. But, uh, I'm excited to be with you. I, I love, um, just practical things and we, we homeschooled all our kids.

And, um, there, here's a little, um, the prayers of children. Listen to this, uh, age six, Wendy, God, who do you belong to? Kids or grownups? You have to pick one, no havesies, with flowers, Wendy, age six. And here's one from Violet who says, God, I always spell your name in my alphabet soup.

Uh, that's nice. Here's one from Kim. For God, why not try the gardens of Eden again? Ever thought about it? This time you could try it without the apples and the snakes.

Very best wishes to you, Kim. Here's one from a 10 year old, dear God and your disciples. Please forgive me for not being a better listener at church, but it's hard to learn about you all at once.

Keith writes, dear God, how long did it really take you to make the first people? Do you feel that you rushed too much? A nine-year-old writes, dear God, why do so many people who persons who begin with I fight in wars, Iranians, Iraqs, Israel, Indians, you name it. Is it just an accident? Maybe you should check on it. It gives all the I people a bad name.

Best wishes, Ingrid. And, uh, that's so, um, here Neil says, dear God, I'm sorry. I like to do religious things, but fasting is where I draw the line.

A man has to take a stand in life. Neil, age 10. And then I like this one, perhaps my favorite, Jesus.

You must've got a big smile on your face when you found out you was resurrected. I was glad when I heard about it too. Love, love Frank, age eight.

Well, we hear those little prayers and they really delight us. And there's something about them that's so simple and uncomplicated and precious. And, uh, I wonder if, uh, when we read those, we understand the ingredients that make them precious or their genuineness and what they really are before the heavenly father.

I wonder what your prayers and my prayers sound like to him. Uh, you ever think about how that our prayers are just like that to him, if their heart filled and from our inner person, well, I want to talk this morning about something very special to my own heart, and I know that you'll relate to it, uh, the Lord really began to teach me this in a, in a way that, uh, arrested me just when I was graduating from Southwestern years ago, many years now, and, uh, taught me some of these things I'm going to share this morning, but let's pray together father. As we turn to your word, we pray that you will speak to us and made the joy of the Lord indeed be our strength.

May we discover again daily that, uh, knowing you is the highest privilege in our whole life. And may we with that knowledge come to the place of true obedience of faith, where we gladly and, and permanently, uh, day by day surrender to your highest and best will through us. So bless these dear ones here today and may their studies and their families and their, uh, ministries honor and glorify you.

We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. I wonder if you'd turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter six, and, uh, this is the familiar three chapters that are the sermon on the Mount, Matthew five, six, and seven, and, uh, these are interesting chapters, you know, in that first chapter, the Lord Jesus says, let your light so shine before men.

So they may see your good works. He's talking about a demonstrated testimony in chapter five, and you will see, uh, that people will know, know you by, by the life that comes forth. And so in chapter five, he talks about a public testimony, good conduct, lived out character, uh, as the Lord reveals himself, that's chapter five.

In chapter seven, uh, he also speaks about our relationship with others and talks about people seeing us and knowing us by our fruits, visible Lordship. Chapter six is different. Chapter six starts off and says not to be seen of men, uh, in Matthew chapter six.

Look what it says in that first verse, take heed that you don't do your alms before men to be seen of them. It's talking about in this chapter, a life that is in secret. In fact, it makes sense that it would be right between the other two chapters, the public testimonies of our life, uh, before men and the good works that there's a spinal cord for both those chapters and in chapter six, the key words you'll find over and over are in secret, in secret, in secret, not to be seen of men, and so you see that chapter start off with three cardinal disciplines.

Uh, when you give, when you pray and when you fast those three things, and we don't have time this morning, but I believe you would find that, uh, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, those three things that are the pressure cooker of the world to put pressure on us to have, to do, and to be, you will find them directly answered inwardly as we learn to by the spirit of God's leadership to fast, we

find that we have an answer for the flesh that says, do this, do this. We learn by inner yes to God. Uh, so we faced that clutch situation.

We can say not my will, but thine be done. And when we desire to have things, the lust of the eyes, we find that as we learn to give by the spirit of the Lord, uh, we releasing inwardly that the world loses its luster and glimmer. And then the one we're going to talk about this morning, when you pray, you will find that when you pray inwardly by the discipline of the Holy spirit and spend time alone with God, that, uh, the pride of the world will not have a resting place because you will know who you are and, uh, you won't have any desire to be beyond where the Lord has shown you that you really are with him.

Uh, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, given an answer right here in these three disciplines. But I want to look at the middle discipline beginning in verse five, because it's right in the middle of the other two. And I believe that says something to Jesus says, and when you pray, don't, you shall not be like the hypocrites are.

They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, so they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But you, and it changes to a singular there, when you pray, enter into your closet and when you shut your door, pray to your father, which is in secret.

And praise God, your father, which sees in secret shall reward you openly. But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions like the heathen do. They think they shall be heard because they have much speaking.

Be ye not therefore like to them for your father knows what things you have need of before you ask him. And then he shares with them the specifics of after this manner. Therefore pray ye the familiar, uh, disciples prayer.

Uh, we call it the Lord's prayer sometimes, but I believe that's over in John 17. This is the disciples prayer. This is the way he says to pray.

Well, real prayer is personal. It's a family time and it's like this little children, uh, with the father and the most important credential, of course, in prayer is a family relationship, a blood washed relationship with the father. And he delights for his children at any time, in any situation, at any place to come in, we have an open invitation.

There's not a time in my life or yours. That's more important than the time that we spend alone with our heavenly father. And it's his highest delight, an open door to come to the throne room.

I hope this encourages you like it does me this morning, that your heavenly father yearns to spend quality time alone with you. He yearns for that. And, uh, he, he wants intimacy and it ought to birth hope in us.

You know, there's, uh, I think the angels in heaven must be amazed that we have this open door invitation to always come and spend time with our heavenly father. The only thing that must amaze them more than when a someone like me can come with an open face washed in the blood, right into the presence of God. The only thing that must amaze them more that I can come is that I don't come.

They must look and say, why doesn't he go and spend time with his father? Why doesn't he take this to the Lord in prayer? He has an open door. The Lord longs for us to take advantage of this privilege. Now, way back in the old Testament in Isaiah and other places, Jeremiah, the Lord says to his people, he says, I remember you in the, in Jeremiah, in the honeymoon love that we had when you went after me in the

wilderness.

But now in the latter part of that chapter, my people have forgotten me days without number in the book of Isaiah, a day much like ours with problems and many things that were religious contradictions, a great day of religious prosperity, but much contradiction on every side. The Lord looked and he wondered, and it was astonishing that there was no intercessor. He, he, he was the actually astonished is the word that there was no one to stand in the gap in Ezekiel's day.

He looked for a man who would stand in the gap and who would sign, cry out for the abominations that were done in, uh, in Israel, but he found none. If he was astonished in the old Testament, think what he must be like now after the historic appearance of the Lord Jesus and the cross and the giving of the new Testament and church history. When he sees the church in our day, he longs to spend time and he longs to have those who will stand in the gap, but, uh, but he finds none.

Well, I remember when I was graduating from Southwestern seminary in about 1978 of December, about, uh, May before that, uh, I was deeply concerned. I was a single man who had given myself to just study and belong to the Lord. And, uh, but I, I wasn't allowed by the spirit for me personally to fill out any resumes.

Uh, I couldn't do that. The Lord just said, Nope. I want to do this a different way for you.

And so as graduation came closer, uh, I felt like I was compelled by the spirit of God to go away to a Baptist campground called Glen Rose. It was off season. No one was there.

And so I took a jug of water and a loaf of bread, which I ended up not using the bread. I just, Lord just said, you listen to me and just drink water. I took my guitar, but the Lord says, uh, uh, no, no music, no sounds.

You fast from food and fast from sounds. I want you to hear my voice. I said, Lord, I've got to hear what's going to happen to me after graduation.

What do you want for me? Uh, and I went away before him. I, I felt like I needed a word about my, where I'd live, my move and my mate and my ministry, those three things. I was single and I said, Lord, you want me to be single? I, it was a major milestone turn in my life.

And I went away to seek the face of the Lord after about a day and a half of pure silence. I felt like I was just like this. I wanted to hear a car honk, honk, or some noise.

It was like just, just deadening silence. But then it was like the sound barrier as I was alone with the Lord, he almost, as I had my notebook, I felt like I was just to my own heart hearing his voice. And I wrote down, uh, the specifics that I still have this book of, of so many things that he was saying that I should look for and expect after graduation.

And you know, uh, every one of them concerning my move, concerning my mate to be, concerning my ministry was exactly fulfilled. So it's little wonder that after I was married and moved to Atlanta years later, after some time, and, uh, I was turning 40. Now, once again, I felt as if, I mean, I was having this, when you turn 40, things change, 40 is no big deal.

Trust me. But, uh, but it felt big to me then, uh, 60 is a big deal. I want you to know that of course that's probably no big deal to some others who cares, you know, uh, timeless.

That's what it all is. But, but I felt like the Lord said, I want you to take another weekend like that, and I want to speak to you. I wrote down a whole book that time before it was so exact.

So I came out here to, uh, Conyers and rented a room at this monastery out here. You know, they have real quiet thing out there. So, so, uh, and it was really quiet.

And I took all these books and this notebook and the Bible expecting to the Lord, once again, to dictate to me during this intense special time where I needed guidance. I said, I wanted to know what would affect me for the next 20 years of my life, just like the last. I said, Lord, I want to know what's going to affect me more than anything else.

And how to really, uh, walk these next 20 years. Cause I want them to count. I don't want to just sit around and pick lint out of my spiritual belly button.

Sorry, but that's just what I said to him. I don't want to just sit around and do nothing. I want to really hear from you.

So I went away and I got quiet. And after about four hours, all my books spread out. I was just expecting, I felt like the Lord said, get ready.

I'm going to speak to you. And I said, yes, Lord, I'm ready. I've been down praying and I've been really quiet.

And, uh, I felt like the spirit of God said this, you want to know what's going to affect you more than anything else over the next 20 years, uh, get ready. I'm going to tell you, I just like this expectancy. Yes, Lord.

Yes. And, uh, here it is. And I just, I wrote down these words, five words, get back to the closet.

And I said, yes, Lord. That's it. Go with it.

That's it. But Lord, I remember the last time we were together, all this long stuff. You wrote five words, get back to the closet.

You see, because in the ministry and in the press of it, that time had gotten crowded out, not non-existent, but just crowded out to where other things, you see, the first thing to go when your ministry begins to flourish or you become busy or attentive to the ministry things of God is that you often allow that time alone with God to take a second priority. And I remember that as he took me to the, those very verses that we just read and he showed me the ingredients of closet prayer. I don't have very long, but I want to give them to you.

What he showed me in those texts that we just read the ingredients of closet prayer, the most important part of my day is to be the time I spend alone with the Lord. The first ingredient, if you look in verse six, is that word secrecy, secrecy. He says, enter into your closet.

It's like, it's like if you make, if you bake a cake and you have the wrong ingredients, the cake won't rise. There are ingredients to closet prayer. And the first one that is the, is what God puts together in these verses is secrecy.

See secret is a key word in this chapter. It's the word crypto. We get our word cryptology from it, or study of secret codes, deciphering.

So there's, it's not easily found five times in this chapter. It says not to be seen of men. Three times open, a reward is promised to a life in secret.

So secrecy, just for the eye of God alone, this kind of prayer dies when it's exposed to man's gaze. It's not the kind that's in public as the Lord shows in the verse before. It's the kind that's in secret.

So enter into your closet. That word is very interesting. Tameon.

It's only used a few times in the new Testament. And it means this, the word for closet. It's a secret chamber that's used to consummate a marriage.

Isn't that interesting that he would say the closet were to go is where that relationship with God is consummated. It's also used for a storage room or valuables vault where you'd keep your gold or supplies. That's where you find the real riches, isn't it? In the secret place alone with God.

It's also that family only closet where, uh, you would find the things that are like, well, like your laundry room that you don't want anybody to see. It's just family information and family stuff, the stuff of daily living. And this is what you take to the closet.

The, in everything in Philippians, it says by prayer in everything you have laundry, you have other things, the nitty gritty of life, that's where you take it. Isaiah calls it the treasuries of the secret place. I will give to you the treasures of the secret place.

What I'm talking about then is a definite place to meet with God. Do you have one? Do you have a place that's special to you that you just meet with God? I had a pastor friend that didn't have anywhere to go, except he felt like his car, he'd drive it out to overlook and he would meet with God and his car. It was his secret place.

I think you could find something better than that, but yet that's the one he used. Uh, your father who is in secret, it suggests to the Hebrew mind, the secret place of the most high, that holy of holies where none was to go except the high priest and that once a year, and it was total solitude with the Lord God himself. Get back to the closet.

See secret prayer is the first kind of prayer to go when things really get busy. I just said that, but the, but the public life flows out of a private life with God. We've got to get alone with him.

I've had people say, AI being in the closet seems like such a waste of time with everything else going on. And we avoid it. That's why we're in the condition we're in.

That's why we're in the condition as our churches across this land, you see, we have a serious problem. It's a holy watch. You ought to study being a watchman in the old Testament.

The word watch is used more than the word pray. It's an amazing thing. It says, watch and pray in the new Testament.

What does it mean to watch? It's not saying pray. It's a sober vigilance where you're looking and listening and your heart's attuned to the things that come from the throne of God. So you can intelligently agree and

in harmony, uh, agree with him in prayer.

But what's happened to us, I believe is that a pragmatism and a lust for results have caused us to come to the place where we've been robbed of our time alone with God. Is that true? It's true. It is true.

I've seen it. I've been in hundreds and hundreds of churches over the last 20 years. And I can tell you, I believe this is a serious problem.

If I really want to put feet to my faith, then get on your knees. If you really want to find a, that what God is saying, get alone with God, we have a great debt to those who are secret place lovers in the church somewhere. Some, there's a little widow praying.

Uh, there's a little person alone. Every success that you see is based upon prayer somewhere. Somebody has prayed Dwight Moody once said that behind every work of God, there is hidden a kneeling form.

I like that. I think it's true. You see, do you have a secret life that is just for the eye of God alone? Is that part of your Christian experience? It ought to be the backbone of it.

Secrecy. Second word, second ingredient of a closet prayer is solitude, solitude. Notice it says, when you go into your closet, shut your door, shut your door.

And this suggests seclusion, being alone with God. And it's not like the Lord says, if you pray, he says, when you pray, he expects this kind of prayer. It is a, uh, something that he expects from me.

I'm to forget everything else and shut out the world and shut myself in with God. Now, this is not easy. You know, if I want to make a list of what I have to do, I can get alone with God and the devil will tell me everything I've got to do tomorrow, trying to get me to think only on that instead of worshiping the Lord.

So everything vital to godliness is nurtured on closet air in the book of Mark, it says that when the crowds were pressing upon the Lord Jesus, he went out into a solitary place and he prayed time under bushes, time on mountains, time, a great while before day alone with his father, and he had no sins to confess and he had no shortcomings to deal with in the sense that you and I do. What did he do? That's the great secret of time alone with God. It's closet time.

It's alone time. I had one pastor say to me one time, Al, God has blessed us so much. We've seen such an increase.

All my praying has to be done on the run. And I looked at him in love and I said, well, brother, you're busier than Jesus because he took time in the days of his flesh to get alone with his father. And with strong crying and tears, he was heard in that he revered his heavenly father.

It's the time exposure of the soul. I asked brother Ofert if he really did this. I'd heard he had, but when he was a younger man, he went to Vance Havner and he said he did, this is true.

Vance Havner was a friend of mine also in Greensboro, North Carolina and old Vance, he talked like this through his nose. And, uh, brother Ofert who was young at that time, Havner was still old. Uh, he was old after, I mean, he's with the Lord now, but he went to Vance and he says, uh, brother Havner, what's the secret for a young man of being, becoming a godly man and Vance looked at him and said, solitude, young man, solitude, solitude, time alone with God, where the finger of God can write on your heart and mind, his holy word.

You see John the Baptist, David, Elijah, Moses, Paul, wherever you find these people, you will find that they had to be still and know that I am God. It's a great test of solitude. We send men out alone at men's conferences and say, get alone with God, no sounds, just listen.

And after about a half an hour, they come back and go, some of them. And they'll say, that makes me nervous to be alone with God. You know why we get nervous when we get alone with God, because suddenly the noise of our life doesn't drown out eternity.

You see, even Christians today, when they get in the car, the first thing they do, they put it in the radio, you know, in their, in their car and you hear them down the road. I mean, and there's nothing wrong with that. Music is great, but is there ever a time when you are totally quiet and this quietness of eternity can soak in and you can really hear his voice? You see, I believe this noise drowns out reality.

And when you get really, really quiet, you're forced to face the things of God. Silence makes us face reality. That's why the Bible says in Psalm 24, who can stand in his holy place? Who can abide in that holy place? You see, nobody can go in there if they're not willing to be reduced to grace.

Because you see, can pride, you can't go in to the presence of God and remain the same. You see, either prayer will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from prayer. One of those two things.

And when I'm alone with God, I'm no longer all those things that I've convinced myself I am or that my wife has told me that I am or that my friends think I am or that I've made the world think I am. I'm just a man there by the grace of God. And like Paul said, what I am, I am by the grace of God.

So when you go in and you're alone with God, he shows you, you see, he reveals himself and he unveils ourselves. I see self's deformity. I see sin's enormity.

And I'll tell you, it's a harrowing experience unless I'm willing to be reduced to one thing. The amazing grace of the Lord Jesus. That's what I see.

How few can bear that sacred ray of the shining of his face. So in solitude, we learn the art of thinking of God alone. We set the Lord continually before us like David said that he did.

It's an act of will. It's silent surrender. It's love without words.

We become a riverbed of light and love and truth. And it's called waiting upon God in many places in the scripture where we come and we we don't keep God waiting. See, there's only two kinds of people, those who keep God waiting and those who wait upon the Lord, who expectantly are in his presence.

So when I'm alone with God, you see, it's good for the soul. My personality is disciplined. I become disciplined.

My pretense is stripped away. Things are brought to mind. Motives, my motives are challenged.

My disguises are exposed. My pride is revealed. My actions are weighed in his divine balance.

And there's a new sense of divine reality. And I catch a fragrance of the heavenly realm. And I see him who is invisible.

Alone with God, alone with God, how to get messages, he says, he awakens my ear morning by morning, he he says to me the things in Isaiah 50, he says he digs my ear. God takes the wax of this world out and he speaks as I take time to let him really have time with me. You see, this kind of prayer will gloriously change any life.

It's what's second Corinthians 318 says, but we all with an unveiled face, take the mask off coming in to before the Lord. And we look in the mirror of his word and we behold by the spirit of God, the glory of the Lord. And we're changed by the spirit of God, even into that same image.

But you've got to have an open heart and open Bible and come to an open heaven. And as you're there alone with him, God graciously will change your life. And you may not even know how deep he's changing it.

But when you leave, they'll say, what's that I smell on you? You you seem like I have the fragrance coming from you of the holy life. And and I can tell by the way you speak that these men have been with Jesus. Your speech betrays you.

Secrecy, solitude. You say, Al, that's just so hard with my schedule and you just don't understand how difficult it is. I've taken all these classes.

That's the third word. Sacrifice brings us to that one. Verse six sacrifices says when you pray, doesn't say if four times in three verses he says when you pray, I've got to make time.

I'll never find time to pray. I mean, there's so much else competing and and even my own enjoyments. I've got to make time, you see, and we give time to what we call priorities.

It means they come first spiritual sacrifices. The fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name is what Peter called them spiritual sacrifices. You see, if something like this is going to come and find a resting place in my life, something's got to go to make room for it.

So I have to evaluate my life and see what is it that's keeping me from this kind of prayer. One day you'll see and I'll see that whatever keeps me from prayer is really my enemy. It may be disguised, it may seem like pleasure, but whatever keeps me from it is done as an enemy and whatever is done without my heart as a Christian is done in the dark.

The heart's got to be involved. God takes time. He speaks to those who take time and make time to really listen without faith.

It is impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who casually inquire after him. That's right.

Diligently seek him. I know you caught that one. I'm sure you did.

But you see, do you make prayer a priority? Do you? You take time to nourish your body three times a day. Why? It's important. We like it.

Do you take time to pray? Did you know that one hour a day for three hundred and sixty five days is the equivalent of forty five full eight hour working days. Forty five full eight hour working days alone with God. Wow.

What an amazing thing. If you gave him two hours a day for the next 40 years, it's 10 pure years of productivity and prayer before the Lord added to your life. A listening heart is the greatest of riches.

Solomon, tell me what you want. Anything you want, I'll give you, Lord. I want a listening heart.

That's what he says in the Hebrew, a listening heart. It delighted the father. He said, oh, because you didn't ask for all these things, I'm going to give you what you asked for, a listening heart.

And I'm going to give you those things as well, because I can trust your heart with them. Solomon should have kept listening. I'm afraid he stopped listening.

And you see, don't let anybody say that they don't have time for this kind of prayer who still has time for what is a love for many of us. Golf, sports, all these things. We've got to make time and let that get crowded out.

There's other things for prayer. I love that verse in Matthew 26 when it says about the Lord Jesus, he went a little further and he fell on his face and he prayed. And the Lord would ask us, would you go a little further? Would you be willing to fall on your face alone and pray to your father? Secrecy, solitude, sacrifice.

You say, oh, that sounds so heavy. It sounds so deep. I'm not sure that I can really handle that.

That brings us to the fourth word, and that's in verse seven. Simplicity, simplicity. When you pray, don't use vain repetitions like the heathen do.

You see, this is gloriously simple. It's uncomplicated like that child with the father. In verse seven and eight, he says, use not vain repetitions.

What are vain repetitions? It's prayers that have been taught by man. You know, I go in a lot of denominations, not just the Southern Baptists, Presbyterian, Methodist. I can almost tell you the stock prayers of each one of them.

Now, I'm not saying this in an unkind way, but I hear this all the time. Lord, it's so good to be here in your house today. We want you to lead, guide and direct us and forgive us of our many, many sins.

And for all these things, we'll be careful to give you all the praise and the glory and bless all the missionaries and forgive us of our many, many sins. And I can almost see the Heavenly Father up there. I mean, not that he won't hear the heartbeat of prayer, but he wants prayers.

Pour out your heart before me and not to be man taught, but to use. He listens to the language of the heart. And I'll tell you, I've been in situations, especially in the last five years, when you come in before God.

My heart has no words. All I can do is lay there on the floor because of anguish before him. You see, but it's better that your heart have no words than your words have no heart.

When you just say all these things so quickly to the Lord and it's almost like they're just vain repetitions, they're man taught prayers. Pour out your heart before him. In the Scriptures, one of the best prayers is a sob or a sigh or a tear.

God keeps our tears in his bottle. He writes them in his book. It says in Psalm 56 or is it 58? I don't know.

It's one of those two. But he writes our tears in a book, keeps them in a bottle. And when his children cry, your cries have come up before me.

I've heard your groaning, he says to them in Egypt. It's a picture of incense in the Bible. It's very simple.

What's simpler than incense? Your father knows what things you have need of before you ask him. He already knows. So why do we have to ask? That's the key.

He wants to spend time with you. But my kids used to come and say, Dad, can I have five dollars? I'd always say, why? Because I want to talk to them. And if I just held out five dollars, they're gone.

Where'd they go? Where'd the five dollars go? You see, they just wanted to get that. But instead, we just talk because your father easily has everything you need. He wants to ask you why? He wants to fellowship with you in the things of his heart.

He listens to the language of the heart. If my son and I are out walking and suddenly he's a four year old at that time and a rattlesnake, he's on the gully and on the other side of the gully, he's walking and a snake rears up, a rattlesnake like this. He says, Dad, Dad, a snake.

Can you imagine me now? Now, son, we've homeschooled. I told you to use the word reptile. And I'm quibbling over terminology or I say something.

Do you really believe in your dad that he'll come to help you when you call? Can you imagine anything more ridiculous than that? If my son called upon me, he's my son. I'd be over there and I'd jump up and down with my boots if I could on that snake till he looked like mud, wet mud. He'd look so crushed because that's my son he's messing with.

And your heavenly father knows your heart language. When we were young, Catherine, John, you know, Catherine used to pray. And John Miller's family has been friends with us.

I've known him since he was drooling. How are you still drooling? Boy, it's great. It's great to watch the Lord change lives over time and make him into a true man of God like John.

It's an awesome thing. So my daughter, Catherine, we would get down and pray for missionaries. We'd pray.

I kept noticing she'd try real hard to enter in. She was just about three and a half or four. And she'd scrunch her eyebrows up like this and she'd go.

Thinking real hard, kids, like we just read real simple. And she'd say something. We're praying for Molly and she says, Lord, send red dress to Molly.

And she's thinking like that, you know, and she's just thinking between each one so much, it's just all you can do to keep her from just squeezing her eyes pop out because it's just so precious. You don't want to laugh at your daughter in prayer, but it was hilarious. You know, she'd always say.

But, you know, after about two months, I started seeing God answer those prayers specifically. I mean, a red dress came to Molly and I said, wow, this is amazing. What is going on? And I went alone and I got

with the father and I said, Heavenly Father, I don't know, but maybe, Lord, I want to pray today.

I started doing my lips like that. And I felt like I just suddenly realized it wasn't just moving my lips that made prayer work. It's not just what you say.

God is listening to the language of your heart. And if you have a broken heart, that's one of the best criteria and credentials for coming in before a Heavenly Father who knows our sorrows, that he's a sympathetic high priest and he ever liveth to mix our little incense with his much incense. And they ascend before the Father in heaven.

Secrecy, solitude, sacrifice, simplicity. This is not hard. Simplicity.

I remember I just got to take just one more second, brother. And just one more. I mean, I'm so sorry.

I've gone over. I'm famous for that. After I spoke on this one night in a church years ago, there was a family conference.

I talked about family prayer and praying together. And the next night, this dad came to me and he was shaking like this. He said, I've got to tell you, last night we had the most meaningful time of prayer our family's ever had.

He said, our six year old last night was in the session and this was so simple, the stuff we're sharing. You know, he said, we went home. We were going to have family prayer for the first time in forever.

And so we went into my son's room to pray with him, the six year old, and got down beside his bed and we knelt together as a family. And the six year old, my son said to me, wait, stop. The preacher says, get into the closet.

So we got up and went into his closet and moved his toys aside and made a place in his closet. And we got down on our knees and started to hold hands. He said, wait, he said, shut the door.

And so we got up and shut the door. And then he said, he says, alone, cut the light off, dad. And he cut the light off and he says, he says, I want you to know that when we knelt together as a family in my son's closet, holding hands in the dark and prayed and he led us, it was the most awesome time I've ever had with God.

Simplicity, simplicity. The last word is specifically, pray this way, pray this way. And the whole next verses where we call the Lord's Prayer talks about his will, his word, his way, his warfare.

It's all based upon the holy character of God. Our father who is in heaven, holy, holy is your name. And it's all based upon who he is.

You see, up till now, it's been how to pray. But now it's what to pray for. Be specific.

You see, be specific. Don't be afraid to be specific with your heavenly father when you're really, really before him. What are you believing God for today? That only God can do, not just generalities, not just wholesale praying, but retail praying that's specific, you see.

Do you know what happens when you pray something specific that only God can do and he answers it? What happens in your heart? These things have I spoken to you that your joy may be full. When we see

answered prayer, we see God involved. Joy erupts unspeakable and full of glory in the heart.

This is why you see there's so little joy in the church and we settle for happiness or worked up emotion in our singing, even trying to, OK, now you all smile. Don't worry about making people smile. Just bring them to a place of real joy.

When you pray, you have to say, get that silly grin off your face. We're trying to be sober here because you just have joy, unspeakable and so much fuller glory. So when was the last time you knew prayer was specifically answered? Well, when this happens, we'll carry away from us a fragrance from the holy place.

So we're finished. But do you sense as we just talk about these things and kind of an inner excitement, I do when I talk about this, I just feel like a breeze on my cheek. And I just feel like, Lord God, this is what you're saying to us.

I feel an excitement about it. Well, let me ask you, do you dare to receive these words? I mean, you're in seminary, you're here and, you know, I mean, people, you're leading others, but do you dare to receive these words? You see, that inner excitement, that stirring is not of man. It's the Holy Spirit saying this is for you, this is for you.

And maybe he would say to you this morning, like he says to me, he doesn't just stop then, he said it since then, too, in a lot of ways. We speak in a lot of ways. Get back to the closet, get back to the closet.

Do you have a private life with God? Each of us are right where we've chosen to be with God. And we're just as spiritual as we want to be. Nobody ever had a bigger Bible or more openness.

God says, get back to the closet. And this is what he's wanting and loving for us to do. Maybe you could say, Lord, just make me simple again, uncomplicate my life.

Teach me that ways, show me that truth. Lord, better is one day in your house than a thousand elsewhere. You see, that's three and a half years outside.

One day alone with God is better than three and a half years of busyness for him because you learn what your life really is and who he is and where your life comes from. Well, you've been great to listen for so long, but I just got to leave you with this question. Are you willing to get back to the closet? Oh, it'll be your highest blessing in your life if you tell him yes.

Your father, who is in secret, will see into your secret places and he will reward you openly. Heavenly Father, we bow before you and we thank you for the privilege of having your word. We thank you for the privilege of serving you.

We thank you for the privilege of knowing you and having joy when we learn something new. But we pray that we will see the absolute necessity of spending time alone with you, that you would tune our hearts moment by moment to walk in your Holy Presence. May the secret of the Most High, that place where you dwell, be our best place, that we spend our best time and the best part of our being.

Bless these dear ones here and now as we just sing this last song together with our brother, would you just call our hearts before you? And don't make us, don't allow us to feel condemned by this word, but rather compelled and constrained to say, here, my Lord, I want to know you and spend time with you. Just dare to ask him to break you, to simplify you, to uncomplicate you and to get you back to that quality time

alone with him. That's his greatest desire for you.

Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Would you just sing quietly together with our brother? And on.  
Knowing you.

You're my joy, my righteousness. Jesus. Knowing you.

There is no greater thing. You're my all. You're the best.

You're my joy, my righteousness. And I love you, Lord. All I've built my life up.

All this world reveres and wars to end. All I once had lost is spent and worthless now. Come to me.

Knowing you, Jesus. Knowing you. There is no greater thing.

You're my all. You're my joy, my righteousness. You're my all.

You're the best. You're my joy, my righteousness. You're my best.

You're my joy, my righteousness.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16895.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/al-whittinghill/luther-rice-seminary/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**