

Prayer 06 the Prayer of Faith

by Alden Gannett

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in prayer, illustrated through the story of blind Bartimaeus and the necessity of specific requests to God.

Duration: 36:53

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-33, Mark 10:51, Luke 10:38-42, John 7:37-38, John 9:1-7, John 11:1-44

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for believers to desire and seek more from God. He highlights the vast number of people in the world who have not heard the gospel and challenges the congregation to be content with what God is doing through their church. The preacher encourages the audience to trust God more and to be encouraged by His word. He reminds them of the power and miracles performed by Jesus, emphasizing that God is their refuge and strength. The sermon concludes with a story of a faculty member who received exactly what she prayed for, which serves as an encouragement for the congregation to have faith in God's provision.

Transcript

Our text tonight is Mark, chapter 10. We shall read beginning with verse 46. Mark 10, verse 46.

And they came to Jericho, and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried them all a great deal.

Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth for thee.

And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee well.

And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the way. Let us pray. Our Father, we rejoice tonight that the just shall live by faith.

We would learn anew tonight from thy word something of what it means to trust thee. We pray with the disciples of the world, Lord, increase our faith. Lord, teach us to pray in faith.

May thy word encourage us tonight. May it instruct us more carefully, and make us men and women of faith, trusting thee more. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Just a casual reading of the Scriptures teaches us that the great principle of the Word of God, for day by day experience, is the life of faith. By faith the world is refrained by the Word of God, Hebrews 11.3 tells us.

For the very beginning of this earth, and the creation of man upon the earth, and man's relationship with God has been a relationship of dependence. Man gets into trouble when he fails to depend, doesn't he? Man is blessed of God in the measure that he trusts his God and learns to walk by faith. This morning, from 1 John chapter 5, we studied that great promise about praying in the will of God, and that when we ask according to his will, he hears, and when we know he hears, he answers.

Now, when this has been determined, it is our responsibility to come to God in faith, and to trust him for that particular matter. This is gloriously illustrated for me in this text in Mark chapter 10 we just read together. The occasion for faith is given to us in verse 46, "...they came to Jericho, and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus the son of Timaeus, sat by the wayside, begging." Here was that occasion, here was that need, a man who was blind.

This need was very real to him. I know what it is to be blind in one eye. I had sight in that eye, and the eye went blind because of an accident, and received sight again, and today is blind again because of a cataract.

You see, I'm getting old. No, that's not the real reason, but I know something of this, to look out and not be able to see. Here was a man, blind.

He had a need, and the need was real. Your Jesus was coming that way. Here is the object of his faith.

"...when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." He's coming to him, you see. "...and many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried them more and said, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called.

And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, for he calleth for thee, and he casting away his garment, robes, and chains to Jesus." The object of his faith, the son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. This one recognized that Jesus Christ is who he really is, the promised King of Israel, 2 Samuel chapter 7. Isaiah, you remember, spoke of the promised one, that a child would be born, and a son would be given, and that government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This blind man, Bartimaeus, had some appreciation of the greatness of the person of Christ, and that encourages and increases our faith.

It was this Jesus, who is the creator and sustainer of the universe, according to Colossians, chapter 1. It is this Jesus who turned water into wine, who healed a nobleman's son at a distance, just spoke the word, that's all. The man was healed. It's this Jesus who came to the pool of Bethesda, and out of that mass of people, singled his eyes upon one, and asked him if he'd been made holy.

He said, I've been here thirty-eight years, and I don't have anybody to put me in the water. You remember the story well. Jesus said, Rise, take up thy bed and walk.

Here the man, impotent for thirty-eight years, rose up and walked. Then there was a great multitude hungry out there where there were no hamburger stops, no McDonald's, or whatever you use where you live. And the Lord, testing his disciples, you remember, will you give them to eat? Well, wait a minute, what a bunch of poor preachers! They got two hundred penny worth, but what an ease among so many! The Lord, of course, knew what he was going to do.

Well, what do you have? There was a lad there. What's he got? Five loaves, two fishes. Had them sit down, and they sat down.

Someone suggested whether the miracle there was the five loaves and two fishes feeding the hungry multitudes, or getting five thousand men plus women and children to sit down in order. We know the answer. The Lord took the five loaves, blessed them, braced them, and fed five thousand men plus women and children.

What a God! Later on, you remember, John records that the disciples went across the sea, got out in the middle of the lake, and a storm arose. And the Lord, who'd been praying, came down from the mountain, and walked out on the water, and met them there, and just spoke the word, and the winds and the waves obeyed him. Then there was a blind man from birth.

Who did sin, this blind man or his parents? The Lord said, neither one as far as his blindness is concerned. This is for the glory of God. Remember, the Lord made spittle, and tucked his eyes, and sent him to the pool of Siloam.

Meaning, sent, and he came back seeing. Then there were two sisters. Mary and Martha had a brother named Lazarus.

And they sent word to the Savior that his brother was sick. Their brother was sick, and the Lord just stayed there, remember, for two more days. According to the reckoning, he'd died already by the time word had come to the Savior.

Then he shared with the disciples that he'd already died. But this is for the glory of God, and this is that you might believe. And after the episode of meeting Mary, and then meeting Martha, Martha first, and then Mary, Jesus wept there at the grave of Lazarus, and then asked him to roll away the stone, and cried out, Lazarus, come forth! And a dead man came to life.

That's not the end of the story. He said, I'm going to be betrayed and be crucified, and on the third day be raised again. You read the accounts in the four Gospels, and he was betrayed, and he was crucified.

Ah, but the Romans were going to see to it that this time this so-called imposter will have had it, as we say today. And they set the guard to watch. But on resurrection morn, they came to the tomb, and the stone had been rolled away, and an angel sat there and said to Jesus, who is dead, he is alive, come see the place where the Lord lay.

This is the one to whom blind Bartimaeus came, and he's our God tonight, beloved. This is why the psalmist in Psalm 46 said, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore need not we fear. And then verse 10 said, be still.

Be still. Finish it. And know that I am God.

Beloved, this is fundamental to the life of faith. This is fundamental to the growth of our faith, a genuine appreciation as to who our God is. You have a burden at your house, and we have a burden at our house.

But I look at my burden in terms of a God like this that can go on and rejoice and thank God for the answer. The object of his faith was the Lord himself. We now look at verse 51, and Jesus answered and said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Here now is the challenge to his faith.

What is it, blind Bartimaeus, that's really on your heart now? You see, back in verse 47, he'd cried, have mercy on me. In verse 48, he'd cried again, have mercy on me. It sounds like us in our modern day praying, Lord, bless us.

Lord, bless our family. Lord, bless my children today. Lord, bless our pastor today.

Lord, bless the park of the palms today. Lord, bless our ministry today. Now, what do you want, the Lord says? You want bigger palm trees? You want ten more feet in the lake? Now, what is it you want when you say, Lord, bless the park of the palms today? You want your preacher to not preach so long? Lord, bless us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Now, just exactly what did you mean? You'd take an omniscient Lord to know, wouldn't it? Ah, but we've all prayed this way. I have many, many, many times.

Do you see what our Lord is doing here? The man who'd been crying, Lord, have mercy on me, the Lord challenges his faith and said, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Be specific. Quit your generalizing, he's saying. Be precise in your requests.

Now, just what is on your heart? What is the specific thing you want me to do for you, Bartimaeus? This is very, very important, beloved. Why is it important? It's important for us in this life of faith, for us to know exactly that for which we are asking. It makes our prayer intelligent.

It helps us to think this issue through and when we say, Lord, bless the park of the palms today, we are asking God now, just precisely what do you want God to do for park of the palms today? What is on your heart? And it forces you to think the issue through and be intelligent and specific and definite with God about this. It also helps us determine whether we really mean it or not, this prayer which we have just uttered to God. How many times I have caught myself having prayed for something and gotten off my knees and go about the day and have acted as if I had never prayed about it? Did you? And I caught myself in a conversation that expressed an evil heart of unbelief about the very thing I talked about with God in the morning.

Being specific with God helps me test it by the word, as we saw this morning, to see whether my quick request lines up with the word of God or not. I can't do it if I just say, Lord, bless park of the palms today. But if I ask God for something precise, something specific, I can test that request by the word of God to see whether my motives are pure, to see whether it's for the glory of God, to see whether it's in line with the great commission and the purposes of God.

You see, I can test it when it's specific. Then, too, when it's specific, I have something very specific to challenge my faith. I have something definite to trust God for.

If I just pray, Lord, bless us today, well, that doesn't take a lot of faith. I don't know what I prayed about to start with, you see. But when I say, Lord, bless park of the palms in this specific area, Lord, you know that next year the facilities are already full.

Lord, you know that next year we're going to have more people. In the word of God, we've got to have more beds and more places to put the beds. Oh, God, give us more places for more people for the gospel's sake.

Now I'm getting specific, and I'll get more specific if I ask God for 10 beds or 15 beds or 20 beds or 50 beds. When I'm specific with God, then I know what to look for when the answer comes. I know what to thank God for when the answer comes.

Lord, we thank thee for 10 beds. Lord, we thank thee for 20 beds. Lord, we thank thee for 50 beds.

Whatever you've asked for, when the answer comes, you recognize it because God has provided in answer to believing prayer. So tonight when we speak about believing prayer, we're speaking about believing prayer regarding specific things. First I pray specifically, and then I pray believingly.

You say, will you now notice next the exercise of his faith? Lord, that I might receive my sight. That's what I want, Lord. Lord, that I might receive my sight.

He's been crying, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Now, what is it that's really on your heart, Bartimaeus? Lord, that I might receive my sight. What's your request tonight? Did you notice the song Mrs. Carey sang tonight? That's their theme song these days. They're going to Canada like Abraham, not knowing where they went.

They have a house up there, but they don't have a job. They don't have an income. They're trusting God to lead them.

I trust in God. They have a specific request. What's yours tonight? Is there a family here tonight from Daytona who need a pastor? They have a specific request tonight.

Lord, send our church a pastor, the man of thy choice. There's a brother here tonight who needs employment. Lord God, provide a job for this brother.

You see, we're getting specific now. Lord, there's my unsaved son, my son John. Lord God, save John, I pray.

You see, not just bless my family, but Lord, save John. It was interesting to me in reading Praying Hyde just this last week, and hearing, reading that he got to the point in his prayer life when he asked God for X number of souls, and God would give him that number. Not just that God would save souls, but that God this meeting would give so many, or God this year would give so many.

My friend C. Sumner Wendt, who is the practical Christian work director up there at Moody Bible Institute, said the other day he'd been challenging the people where he'd gone about trusting God, just as we have faith promise for missionaries, and just as we have faith promise at our college for our building program. He said, let's have a faith promise for souls. And he said, it's been working.

God has been giving them a certain number. Lord, that I might receive my sight. What's your burden tonight? What's your request tonight? Be that specific with God.

Now look at the reward of faith. Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee well. But what was his basis? The word of the Lord Jesus.

Go thy way, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee well. And immediately he received a sight, and followed Jesus on the way. What's the basis for our faith? This book.

Faith promise by what? Tell me. Hearing. Hearing by what? Word of God.

Now that text is in the context of salvation, but it's an abiding principle of Christian experience as well. That faith cometh by hearing. Hearing by the word of God.

There's not a person in this audience tonight who would not say, Lord, increase my faith. There is not one of us here tonight who may have been saying 30, 40, 50, 60 years, thank God, but there isn't one of you who would not pray, Lord, increase my faith. Oh, for grace to trust me more.

Where do I get this greater faith? Where do I get this ability to trust God for greater things? The word. We do what we've already done tonight, as we've traced through the gospel of John and seen the handiwork of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read through the word of God, and we see the greatness of our God.

We see the faithfulness of our God. We see the miracles of our God. And we say, a God like that is able for my problems.

He's able for my burden. He's able for my need. And I'm encouraged when I see the greatness of my God revealed in the book.

The Lord did it for somebody else. He can do it for me. I remember not too long ago hearing that a man had walked upon the campus of Bryan College just once.

And then some years later, the president, the business manager, awakened in the morning and read in the morning newspaper, so-and-so leaves Bryan College, a half a million dollars. I sit back and say, if God can do it for Bryan College, he can do it for Southeastern Bible College. You think? Sure.

I read in the word of God, if God can take care of the children of Israel 40 years in the wilderness, he can take care of me. Think? If God can take care of the children of Israel at the Red Sea, he can take care of me with an impossible situation on my hands. And God's faithfulness yesterday is a basis for encouragement for my faith to trust him today.

And so as I read the word, I lift up mine eyes into the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth. My faith is enlarged as I see the greatness of my God and the faithfulness of my God revealed in his wonderful word.

Do we want, then, our faith to grow? Stay in the book. You'll find men of God who are men of faith who are men of the book. As I read a praying hymn last week, I read that again and again, while he was in prayer before the Lord, he would open the pages of his book, and that his prayer time was reading the word and praying, and reading the word and praying, and reading the word and praying, all the time going back to the promises of his God, to the greatness of his God, to the faithfulness of his God, the basis of our faith.

As was the basis of the faith for blind Bartimaeus, the word of the Lord Jesus himself. Then you see the abundant reward go thy way by faith that made thee well. And immediately he received his sight and followed him in the way.

The accompaniment of his faith, he followed. This went on in the way. Will you turn in your Bible with me to Matthew chapter 9? Here are two blind men.

Matthew 9, verse 27. When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed him, saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? Good question.

They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. According to your faith, be it unto you.

Turn to Mark chapter 11, the familiar story of the fig tree having been withered and dried up from the roots. In verse 22, Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God, for daily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, Whatever things ye desire, when ye pray, what's the next word? Believe that ye receive them.

And what's the promise? Ye shall have them. When you turn to one more text, John chapter 7, the Lord has been observing the Jews of that day as they were going to the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles. As he saw them pouring that water from the Zion, symbolic of the blessing and the future of the rivers flowing from that place, our Lord now turns to them in verse 37 and says, In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers, rivers of living water. Are you and I content tonight with what God is doing? Is there a holy discontent in your soul about the measure of blessing, about the measure of God's working, about your prayer life and the answers to prayer that you see God accomplishing according to your faith? Be it unto you, says Jesus. Here are mountains.

If ye have faith to remove mountains, we don't need a laternal. Hmm? Is that faith, he said? Was he talking about literal mountains? Yes, sir! Yes, sir! There are lots of mountains in your experience and in mine, and here is the God who made the mountains. Jesus stood before the thirsty multitude and said, I have reality for you.

He that believeth, he that believeth, he that believeth on me, out of his heart shall flow trickles? No. Drops? No. Buckets full? No.

Barrels full? No. What does he say? Rivers of living water. What he says, this they give us.

What do you want God to do? What do you want God to do? Are we content at Park of the Palms with what God is doing through Park of the Palms when there are three and seven-tenths billion people on the face of God's earth, most of whom have not heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or do we want God to do more? I know your heart tonight. Call for grace to trust thee more. That's mine tonight.

Let our hearts be encouraged from God's word. Let us see God do greater things these days. Let us stay in the book until our hearts are encouraged, until our faith is strengthened, until we dare, led by the Spirit of God, to trust him for greater things according to your faith, be it untrue.

One of the members of our faculty shared with us some years ago the fact that she wanted a certain car, certain make of car, certain color of car, so many doors on the car. God gave her exactly what she prayed for. I said, recently, I see you have a new car.

She said, yes. I said, the Lord gave it to you? She said, I asked God for last and he gave it to me. She said, this one I just went out and bought.

I don't know what she meant by that. I understand you had a need here at Park of the Palms when you built the building. I understand you were told by Brother Willie you needed \$600 a month, and you asked God for \$600 a month.

Brother Willie told us this last week that not a month has gone by that God has given you at least \$600. According to your faith, be it unto you, do you dare ask him for \$700, for \$800, for \$900, for \$10,000? Your buildings are full next year. How many do you dare to ask God for? How many people do you want here under the Word next year? You see, the same preacher can preach to twice as many.

Same voice, same energy. Same prayer ministry, same study. I don't know the answer to that.

But I challenge you, dear folk here tonight, to pray with our Brother Harvey and our Brother Willie and ask God for an answer, and whatever it is, trust him for it. According to your faith, be it unto you. I understand our Brother Willie came to you not long ago at the end of the Bible conference season and said, We need a certain amount, but he didn't tell you what it was.

He asked you to pray with him about that amount, and he told you when it was in that he needed \$650. My story correct? \$550. And you put in the box \$550.25. According to your faith, be it unto you.

Some years ago when I was in a church in Dallas, Texas, some of my deacons had problems, problems with their pastor. The church came to me. We weren't paying our dues.

And he said, Pastor, I'd like a meeting with the deacons and the elders together in the church right away. We need money bad. Okay, we had a meet.

We sat around the circle, and I said, Brethren, what's your problem? And my treasurer spoke up and said, Pastor, our problem is that you haven't been preaching enough on tithing. He expressed himself, You'd emphasize it more if you preached it more. God's people give more.

One of the members of my board was Dr. John Wolvard, the president of Dallas Theological Seminary. He had a big job keeping the seminary straight with the presidents in my audience. Dr. Wolvard spoke up and said, Brethren, the problem is not that our pastor has not been preaching on tithing enough.

Here's the need. Let's share this burden with our people and ask them to pray about it. And let's ask God for the need.

Our need was \$600 to pay our bills through July. And this was the lean summer months when people went on vacation and spent their money on boats and cars and gasoline and motels, you know. And so I got a letter to our people and said, We are behind in our bills.

This is not for the glory of God. We need specifically this Lord's Day \$600. Let's ask God for \$600.

On prayer meeting on Wednesday night, we gathered together and we said to the Lord's people, Let's pray God for \$600. We prayed for \$600. I don't remember what the usual offering was.

I think it was about \$150 or \$200 for a Sunday back in those days. The Lord's Day came. Our people gave when the figure tallied.

It was not \$600. It was \$650 the Lord sent us in that day. According to your faith, Peter, what do you want God to do? What do I want God to do these days? He says from our text tonight, Pray specifically.

And then pray believingly. Expect the God of faith to answer prayer. Shall we pray? Our blessed Father, what a joy it is to share together Thy blessed words.

We are thankful for this encouragement to faith, and we do pray with the disciples of old, Lord, increase our faith. Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief. We confess to Thee tonight that oh, so many times we have talked to Thee and mentioned our needs, but we have not trusted Thee for the answer.

Lord, tonight show us Thyself. Show us Thy greatness. Show us Thy power.

Show us Thy faithfulness. Show us infinity tonight, our Father. Lord, increase our faith.

We ask Thee for the rivers of living water to flow from this place as never before in the history of the park or the ponds. Lord, enlarge its ministry. Enlarge the overflow of blessing, the work of the Holy Spirit through Thy servants, through Thy Word in this place.

Let us seek greater things for the glory of God in the gospel. We pray in Jesus' name.

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