

Prayer 08 Certainty - Answered Prayer

by Alden Gannett

The sermon emphasizes the certainty of answered prayer and the importance of a dedicated quiet time with God.

Duration: 50:17

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Deuteronomy 8:3, Psalm 23:1, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 7:7-10, Luke 11:9-10, Revelation 22:21

Topics: "Answered Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving attention to the Word of God and applying it to our lives. He suggests four A's to help us in this process: attention, application, prayer, and action. The speaker also discusses the significance of prayer and how it should include worship, adoration, and confession. He shares a story from the book of John to illustrate the power of God's quick answer to prayer. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the faithfulness of God's word and the need to believe in its promises.

Transcript

It's been our joy to be with you these days, to be back again at Park of the Palms. We wonderfully enjoyed your fellowship. We closed the school year weary in body, but rejoicing in the Lord, and you helped greatly the weariness of the body.

Preaching for me is like eating your meals at Park of the Palms. It's not work. Administration is.

So I've been able to relax and be refreshed and thank you for this, most of all for your fellowship in the gospel and for the joy of these days and being with you and the privilege of sharing the word of God with you. I told Brother Harvey that I heard maybe my cook is leaving in a year up there at Southeastern. I'll just keep him on my list for a year from this fall.

Now, Brother Willie told me that there was no hurry tonight, that I could preach like Paul till midnight. No, he didn't say quite that. But in view of this liberty, I'd like to take just a few moments and talk about how to have a quiet time.

Would you like me to take about five minutes on this? At least some suggestions that I have found, and then we will turn shortly to the scriptures. Let us bow together in prayer. Our Father, we do rejoice in these days, and thank thee for thy blessing upon thy word.

Thou hast said, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And we pray tonight for grace to do what we have heard. May the Holy Spirit burden our hearts in greater measure for a ministry of intercessory prayer.

Speak, we pray, to each waiting heart. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. Dr. Ironside was a great blessing to me a number of years ago when I was just a lad and heard him on a Bible conference platform up in New York State.

I recall his telling how he had his own devotional life. The point that I remember most about his discussion was the fact that he considered it very important to read through the Bible at least once a year. I remember his telling us at Dallas Seminary some years later that he had read through the Bible 40 times in addition to any of his studies.

That meant he had read the Bible through for the last 40 years, at least once each time. His principle was, which I think is exceedingly valid, we should know all the counsel of God. And we get lopsided, like our kids eating hamburgers and French fries.

You go out to supper somewhere and that's all they want, or you ask them what they want for supper. They don't get a balanced diet that way. Now, Dr. Ironside's method was to have a balanced diet in your Bible reading.

He said, read six chapters a day. Two chapters begin in Genesis, two chapters begin in the Psalms, two chapters begin in the New Testament. And then he said, this way you have your appetizer, you have your meat and potatoes, and you have your dessert.

Now, many people don't feel they can read six chapters a day. But if this is at all possible, here is one method. Another method is to read through the entire Bible by simply starting with Genesis and reading through Revelation.

This does become discouraging to some people because they get bogged down in the genealogies and get bogged down in some of the historical portions of the Old Testament. But this certainly is a good way. If you're a new convert, I encourage you reading through the Gospel of John several times, and then on through the New Testament, and then pick up a method going through.

Now, my own particular method is reading through the Bible once a year, which suggestion I got from Dr. Ironside, but I use a bit of a different approach. I do start with Genesis and read through the Scriptures. I've taught through the Bible a number of times, and so the genealogies don't bother me as they might a new convert.

But in addition to reading from beginning with Genesis, I like to read one of the Psalms each day. So starting January 1st, I read Psalm 1, and January 2nd Psalm 2, and then when I finish Psalms, I read one proverb a day. Today is June 2nd.

I read the second chapter in Proverbs, and by the time I get through Proverbs, I'll go back and start with Psalms again and read through the Psalms and Proverbs, and twice in the course of a year. 50 Psalms, 30 Proverbs, that's 180 times 2, makes 360. So you can go through the Bible through these very nicely twice a year.

I like these for the devotional, the worship aspect of a quiet time. Now, if you actually divide the chapters of the Bible, and divide them by 365, you get three chapters a day for six days a week, and four chapters a

day for the seventh day of the week. If my mathematics are correct, that's the way it works out.

And so you can literally read only three chapters a day, and a fourth chapter on the Lord's Day or some other day, and on the average of this, you can read through the entire Bible. Let me encourage you not to get discouraged in your Bible reading if you get a difficult portion, a portion you don't understand. Don't worry about this, just keep on reading, and the more you read, the more it will dovetail together.

There's a whole lot of the Bible I don't know tonight, and I've studied it formally for nearly 25 years, and there is much in the Bible I do not know. But every time I read through, I get more, and more of it fits together, together, together through Bible reading. Now, I have a philosophy about Bible reading that some people disagree with, and I respect every writer there to disagree, but I don't do my Bible study when I'm reading.

For me, I read devotionally, and by that I mean I'm reading. Of course, I have my formal Bible study with courses I teach at the Bible College, and study for such a series as we've had this weekend and so on, and so I have ample opportunity for formal study. But I like to read simply for God to speak to my heart.

I'm not ignoring facts. I want to glean every fact I can. I want to glean the historical, the biographical, the theological, but at the same time, I want God to speak to me.

Somebody asked the question one time, well, how much of the Bible should I read a day? And the reply came, read till God speaks through your heart. And that's the best answer I've ever heard. Read till God speaks through your heart.

He may speak to you in one verse, one chapter. It may take several. But read till you get some food.

You'd hate to go all day hungry, wouldn't you? I certainly would. And so, read till God speaks through your heart. Griffith Thomas suggested four A's that have been a great blessing to me, and I think I've shared them with some of you in years past right here, but let me repeat them fairly for you without going into great detail.

One A he suggests is attention. Any time you come to the Word, give attention to it. Get your mind off other things.

And it takes time, you know, to give attention to the Word. You must set aside something else. Give attention to that book.

The second A he suggests is application. Look now for something to be applied to me. If my wife needs this, and my friends need it, and somebody else needs it, but I need it.

And so I ask the Lord for something for me that day. Application. Attention, application.

The third A he suggests is aspiration. And by this, Dr. Thomas means pray over it. Pray about what you've read.

And this has been a great help to me in my own devotional life to enlarge it, to enrich it, to pray about what I've seen in the Scriptures. If I've seen the Lord, then I worship Him as I've seen Him revealed in the Word. He's put His finger upon sin in my life.

I confess that sin of the Lord. He gives me a new challenge to faith. Then I reach out in faith to claim that wonderful truth that God's given me in His Word.

And then the fourth A he suggests is action, action, action. It's so easy to give attention, to say, that's exactly what I need, to get out on our knees and pray about it, but then not act upon it. Now if you'll take these four A's and apply them to any time you are confronted with a word in a worship service such as this, in a Bible study, in your quiet time in your family worship, it matters not.

Give attention to the word, application of that word to your own heart. Then pray over it, and then act upon it. Perhaps your Bible reading will become more meaningful to you.

Now, after you've read the Word, then pray. Pray. Let the Word prepare you to pray.

Now, what do you pray about? Well, the scriptural prayers begin with worship and adoration, and so are we to do this. Scriptural prayers include confession where this is needed, and we name our sins to God. And scriptural prayers include the matter of praying for the needs that are before us, our loved ones certainly, our own personal walk with God, our neighbors and loved ones here for whom we are concerned.

We pray for others. We pray for our missionaries. We pray for Christian workers.

We pray for our government. We pray for the fields of the world. We become specific and definite, as we've heard this week.

We pray about these things. Now, what time of day is best for your quiet time? I've discovered that this is best for the individual. The scriptural pattern, again and again, in Psalm 5, for example, in Psalm 55, speak of David having met the Lord in the morning.

I like the morning best, but I like that old adage, early to bed is not wise, but keep trying. But I do like that schedule. For other people, it's horrible.

You don't have any better sense than to go to bed at 12 or 1 o'clock at night. Well, you know, I've discovered at my young age that you can't get up in the morning unless you go to bed at night. That's profound.

You'll ponder that one a while. Now, for some people who don't wake up until the middle of the morning, the best time for you is at night. Have your quiet time when you're awake, but at least when you open your eyes in the morning, connect the day to God.

It is the day which the Lord has made and dedicated to him and his will and his glory. Now, how long should you have a quiet time? If I'm speaking to somebody who's never really gotten started, start with five minutes. Start with ten minutes.

You heard about people who pray for an hour and pray for all day and pray for all night. You start with five minutes or start with ten minutes and let it be meaningful. And don't be legislated by somebody else's time.

You'll find it'll grow. The first time I talked to my dear Redhead, I just tapped her on the shoulder at a prayer meeting at Holton College and asked her for a date. And we talked there just a few moments walking down the stairs.

But on the way down from Birmingham last Wednesday, we noted our clocks and we spent six and a half hours talking. The Careys were there too, I hasten to add. But this grows on you.

Don't worry if the other fellow spends an hour. You spend the time that's meaningful. Don't make it legalistic.

Make it important to you. A definite time, a definite place. Well, you say, Preacher, I'm just so busy.

I've got so many things to do. You have just as much time as every other human being. The question is discipline, not time.

The question is priorities. You have to make a value judgment on that which is good and that which is better and that which is best. That which is important, that which is more important, that which is most important.

You have to do this every day and other things. You have a choice of three things to do, and you choose what you must do first, and you get to it. And when it comes to a spiritual exercise, we have to determine what's most important and do that first, if it's at all possible.

I trust after these days of study on the subject of prayer, that God has indeed challenged our hearts anew to faithful, diligent ministry of intercessory prayer, and that we shall hear of greater and greater blessings from this place because of what God has done. Now our text tonight is Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7. An exceedingly familiar text beginning with verse 7. Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth. And he that seeketh, findeth.

And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask of fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being able, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that watch? Ask him. Our subject tonight is the certainty of answered prayer.

The certainty of answered prayer. All of us as believers know what it is to go to God in prayer, to get off our knees and go about the day, not even expecting God to do anything, because our conversation that day, our actions that day, betrayed the time we spent before God praying about forgiveness. Does God mean it when he says, ask, and it shall be given you? Does he mean it when he says, seek, and ye shall find? Does he mean it when he says, knock, and it shall be opened unto you? For everyone that asketh, receiveth.

And he that seeketh, findeth. And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened unto you. Is this promise true? Are the promises we've shared together this weekend, yea and amen? Or must we sit here tonight and say, when it comes to the subject of prayer, we cannot trust God or his word? Now, not one of us will buy that, will we? We stand up and fight, yea, some of us would die for the full authority of Scripture.

We say this is the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith, the full authority of the written word of God. Amen and amen. Well, beloved, it follows them that his prayer promises are yea and amen.

That's exactly what it is. Now, will you notice in these verses, first of all with me tonight, the nature of the promise. There is the human side, there is the divine side.

We saw these very verses in Luke chapter 11 our first day together. But look at them briefly with me again tonight. The human side is asking.

The divine side is giving. Ask, it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened unto you. Do you notice? Ask, ask, ask is repeated in various forms in these verses.

Brother Willie gave me a book by Guy King on prayer secrets, and I got to read just a bit of it. And there Guy King spoke of this very promise here in Matthew chapter 7, in one going to a friend in need, as it is in the context of Luke chapter 11. And he speaks out and asks for his need, and he gets no response until he walks through the gates and walks around the yard, and he has the freedom to do this.

Now, God's appointed way of getting things has it been said often enough this weekend for God to have given this to us. Don't stumble over the simplicity of it, beloved. It's like the gospel.

People say it's too simple. Call unto me, and I will answer thee. Surely great and mighty things which thou knowest not.

Hither shall ye be asked nothing in my name. Asking ye shall receive that your joy may be full. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.

And whatsoever he shall ask the Father in my name, he will do it, you see. Whatsoever he shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Ask, ask, ye have not, because ye have not.

The Bible is repeatedly giving us this very, very fundamental approach in our relationship with God. We come to Him in faith asking. And we've seen this week asking specifically, asking believingly, asking in the will of God, asking in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now look at the divine side, verse 9. Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? Why, not even a human father would do that. If ye then being evil, he doesn't congratulate us here, but tells us the truth. Ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children.

Oh, don't you love this? How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them who do what? Asking. Did you notice the word give over and over? And we ask and God gives. We ask and God gives.

So simple. So simple. But we stand rebuked tonight that we're too busy to ask.

We're too busy with so many good things to take time simply to ask. Or we've been so occupied getting the answer that we forgot to ask. God says, ask and it shall be given you.

Will you notice secondly the importance of this promise? The importance is seen in the fact that seven times in these few verses, he said the same thing. It's important when you say something two or three times. Notice, ask it shall be given you.

Seek and ye shall find. Not give shall be opened unto you. Bread, verse 10.

If he asked a fish, verse 11, if ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, give good things to them that ask him. Could it be simpler? But because our Lord repeats it again and again and again, he is saying, don't miss it. Don't miss the fundamental importance of the principle.

All take time to ask. Take time to ask. Set aside other things and take time before God to pray.

How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them who? Will you notice thirdly the proof of the promise? And the proof of the promise is the answer. My father used to tell me as a boy, the proof of the pudding to the egg. The proof of this promise is the answer to the promise.

Now you've heard repeatedly what I'm about to say. But I say it again and again because it's so important that we be reminded again and again. I don't know where the devil gives the Christian more fit than right here in this business of prayer.

Do you? Where he plants more doubts in our minds and hearts than right? We're his children. And he loved us enough to give his son to die for us on the cross. And he who spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all.

How shall he not also with him? That's the father's heart. Now you've heard repeatedly. There are three kinds of answers to prayer.

But will you mark tonight as we review them again that all three? This promise says, if it says anything, that God's going to answer. That God must answer to keep his word. That's what this promise says.

If we ask, we'll receive. If we seek, we'll find. If we not, it shall be open for everyone that asketh, receive it.

And he that seeketh, findeth, send to him that docketeth, it shall be open. His language says, that God must answer every single prayer. That's a big statement, isn't it? But that's exactly what these verses say.

Now, you say, Peter, there's a catch somewhere. No, there's no catch. There's no gimmick.

It's just that there are three kinds of answers. They're all answers, and they're real answers, and they're meaningful answers, and they're the right answers from God. Look at them quickly with me.

The first is that answer, yes. That all we all love. We say, how good the Lord was, he answered my prayer.

The inference is, how bad he would have been if he hadn't have given what I asked for. Now, turn to John, chapter 4. Text which illustrates for me very vividly, this quick answer of yes, and all we love this. John 4, beginning with verse 46.

You remember the story well? The healing of the nobleman's son. And so Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus would come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Here's a real need, an urgent need, a son at the point of death. Know anything more urgent than that? Then said Jesus unto him, except ye see signs and wonders you'll not believe.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. And Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

You know the rest of the story. The man went and met the servant's coming, and inquired when he began to amen, and it was the very hour when the Lord said, Thy son liveth, and the man believed, and his whole house. Now God delights, delights, delights to say yes to us when we pray.

Just as we parents delight to say yes to our children, and grandparents to grandchildren, and great-grandparents to great-grandchildren around here. Wonderful when they can say yes. Ah, but we know as parents that there are times when it's best to say no.

Isn't that right? The youngster has a knife in hand, and he's running around chasing his kid sister around the bedroom. Well, you know the modern psychological approach now. Don't frustrate the little thing.

He must express himself. Oh, let them give me that knife. All right, this is the second answer.

There are times when God says no. Now there are some writers on the subject of prayer who say that the only true prayer is when God says yes. I disagree.

I disagree. Turn with me, please, to 2 Corinthians chapter 12. Here is the Apostle Paul praying.

You and I have enough confidence in the Apostle Paul to believe that he was a man of God, though human to be sure. A man of prayer, of great prayer, who not only knew prayer, but would teach it as he does throughout his epistles. He has a personal problem, and that personal problem was a thorn in his flesh.

We are not told it was his wife. No, he was single, and his pockets did jingle. No, that isn't true either.

All right? No, as far as we know, he was single. We conclude that this is a physical infirmity, something very real to us. We know what it is, and we pray about them, and we should pray about them.

Now, in this context, and I won't take time for the details of the context, when you look at verse 7 now. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me.

Can't you hear the Apostle Paul? Lord, you called me to preach and teach the word, and here I go across the mountains and through the valleys and across. It may have been his eyesight. Now, Lord, you know how this is a problem to me.

You know how I'm hampered in the work. You know how much farther I could travel, and how more effective I could be. Lord, I put up with this thing about as long as I think I can.

Now, Lord, you know how faithfully I've served you. I don't know how Paul prayed. I'm just putting words in his mouth right now.

Lord, you know how faithfully I've served you. You know I've given up all to serve you. You know how important it is that we get over there into Europe, then get over there into a exceedingly reasonable region.

What does the Lord say? Verse 9, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. That's the nicest way you've ever heard no in your life, isn't it? Remember the time we were up in London. Our eldest boy consistently acts like his father, and I've met nearly every schoolteacher he's ever had.

And this time the schoolteacher sent home a note saying, I'd like to have Keith, I'd like to have your parents come to the open house. Well, we'd been at this long enough to know what that meant. So our boy, we came to the open house.

After the other folks had left the room, we came in and we said, We're Keith's mother and father, and we smiled meaningfully to the teacher, and she smiled meaningfully to us. And we are asking, and it says, What's the problem this guy? We said, How's our boy doing? She said, Well, you have a fine boy. He's just got one problem.

Well, what's that? His interest span isn't long enough. That's the nicest way I've ever heard that said. All right.

My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness. That's God's way of saying no.

God said no to the Apostle Paul. And there are times he says no to you and he says no to me. Someone has said, When God says no, he always has something better.

You believe that? The reason that statement is correct is because it's omniscience that says no. It's the all-wise God who says no. It's the infinitely loving Heavenly Father who says no.

It's the God of righteousness and goodness and faithfulness and truth who says no. And when he says no, you can be sure he has something. Did you ever thank him for a no? Did you ever thank him for a no? My first year in seminary, my wife was working on her Ph.D. That means putting hubby through.

And so she was downtown working as I was on the seminary campus preparing for the Lord's work. And I was so anxious to preach. I pastored up in New York when I was going through college a bit, and I was so anxious to have the ministry of the word and at the same time an extra dollar.

And my wife is working at a downtown department store, and she was beside a Baptist deacon's wife. And they were working together, and my wife just shared the fact that her husband was at Dallas Seminary, and he'd love an opportunity to preach, and this was to tell my husband. And this mission church is without a pastor right now.

So my wife came home and told me the story, and so we started praying the Bible. And the deacon's wife told her deacon husband in a night or two. Well, I got down there that night and expounded some portion of the word.

And those people just sat there and drank it in, and they came up afterwards and said, My, how we appreciate the word. And I thought, Well, I'm in. And the pastor said, You'll be hearing from me shortly.

Now that was in the fall of 1944, and I hadn't heard yet. Six months later, the pastor was dismissed from the church on serious charges, and God spared me from that whole mess. How good of our God to say no.

Later on, there was a Bible church outside of Dallas that needed a pastor, and the pastor was leaving, graduating, and he came to me and he said, Brother Alden, would you like to candidate for the church? I said, Fine, I'd love to. I was anxious again to have a full-time church, and so we talked together, and he said, I'll present your name to the deacons, and I haven't heard from them yet. What did the Lord do? He knew he had teaching for me in Bible institutes and Bible colleges, and so the next fall I was free to accept a teaching position at the Dallas Bible Institute halftime.

And after graduation, I stayed there for five years teaching in that school. That was the thing the Lord did for me. And he said no over here, because for me, he had something better.

Has God been saying no to you lately? Thank him. Thank him. When God says no, he always has something better.

Now there's a third kind of answer, and that's the hardest of all, isn't it? Wait. Wait. Wait.

Who wants to wait? In this jet age, when you come up to a signal light that's red, and there's a car in front of you, and it turns green, and in one split second, that lady sits there. And you lay on your horn, and you get out the window and say, how green must it get before you'll move? Hmm? Sure. We don't like to wait these days.

No. No. But there are times the Lord says, wait.

Let's look at this in principle in Matthew chapter 15. I'm aware of the fact now that the chronology is not long, but the principle is here. Matthew chapter 15, beginning with verse 21.

Then Jesus went from there, and departed into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same borders, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.

Here is a Gentile woman, a very real need, with a nobleman that was his son, with a Syrophoenician woman that's her daughter, here demon-possessed. A burdened mother for her daughter, just as some of us here tonight are burdened for our children for their salvation or their growth and maturity in Christ. And so she comes to the Savior, and look at verse 23.

But he answered her, Not a word. Ever been there? Lots of times, haven't we? And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. Ah, she's just a Gentile, you know.

She's a nobody. She's just a nuisance. Get her out of your hair.

Forget her. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She was a Gentile, so he was putting her off again.

Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. Or as we say in Alabama, Lord, help me. Now, Lord, I need help.

But he answered and said, It's not right to take the children's bread, that of the Jews, and to cast it to the dogs. The Jews considered the Gentiles dogs in that day. He's putting her off again.

He's saying, Wait again. She said, Truth, Lord, I love this. Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their mastery table.

She won't be denied. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith, being unto thee even as thou wilt. And their daughter was made well from that very hour.

I repeat, the chronology is not long, but the principle is here. Again and again and again the woman was put off, and again and again and again the woman came back in faith to the Lord who was able to heal her daughter. And the Lord replies, Great is thine.

We have seen already this week together that this is one reason for perseverance in prayer. Our faith needs to be tested. It needs to be strengthened.

May we turn now to just two portions of the scriptures as we close. Turn again to James chapter one. Notice this principle of delay, this business of the trial of our faith, which so many of us experience so much of the time.

James chapter one, verse two, my brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into various trials. Knowing this, that the testing of your faith, when the Lord says wait, wait, wait, wait, and some of us have waited a long time. Knowing that the trial of your faith were his patience, the Lord puts a premium on this commodity.

Patience, some of us don't have very much of it. Amen? I heard one amen. The rest of you all have it.

All right. Now he says let patience have her perfect work, maturing work, it says, that she may be perfect, literally, mature, grown up, and entire. That means complete in every part, lacking nothing.

Do you see from this text that the problem here is not in the daughter, or the son, or the husband, or the wife, or the neighbor, or the friend, or the business? The problem is in the one who's doing the fine. The reason for the delay is not here that God needs time to work in my daughter, or I'm the reason God is saying wait. Because God needs to perfect that which is lacking in me.

That God needs to mature me. That God needs to keep withholding the answer, so I will learn more and more and more to depend upon him, to touch him, to be complete in every part, lacking nothing. I don't blame God then when he says wait.

I don't get jitter with God then when he says wait. I don't criticize God or somebody else when he says wait. I say, Lord, what are you trying to do with me? What's the Romans 8 28 in this for me? In what way, in what area am I immature? Where are you trying to speak to me and perfect that which is lacking in my faith? Lord, show me.

Help me to profit from this. Help me to mature in this. Thank you for it, Lord.

In the meantime, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men who are liberal in a brain, if not, and I love this, it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith. Will you turn to 1 Peter 1. We saw this verse this morning, verse 5, that we're kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials. Never rains, but it pours when it comes to testings, eh? Peter says you're in heaviness, if need be, through manifold trials, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that's had a shift, though it be tried with fire, and some of us think it is the very thing that we're being tried with tonight, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom have ye not seen? Ye long.

In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul.

One of the big prayer requests we have in school business is money. The students pay only about two-thirds of their tuition, and so we have to pray much about God's provision. And we need a new building here, you know, a new gymnasium, girl's dormitory, and new this and new that, the way you need more new motels here, and new apartments, and so on.

Same thing. Now Peter says, the trial of your faith is more important than the money. You have to take this one by faith, don't you? But that's exactly what he says.

The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire. Peter says the important thing is that your faith be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. That's the important thing.

Far more important than the answer, then, is the growth, the maturity of your faith. Oh, let God give it to us. Let's quit blaming God, and let's quit complaining about our circumstances, and let's quit this impatient business, and instead face ourselves in the light of the Word of God, and realize that for we know that how many things work together for good.

Oh, that was a solo, too. Thank you. Ah, but it's the truth.

We forget, don't we? And we do complain, and we do find fault, and we do get irritable, and we do sash back, and we do get sharp, when all the time God's trying to teach us patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. So there's a reason for the wait. Three kinds of answers.

All answers, all answers, yes, no, wait. Let's go back to our text as we close. Ask, and it shall.

Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh what? Receive it.

He that seeketh what? Findeth to him that knocketh what? It shall be opened. Do you believe it tonight? Do I? Let God be true. His Word is yea, and amen.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall the certainty. Take heart tonight, dear mother.

Take heart tonight, dear father. Take heart tonight, dear loved one, friend. God's going to answer your prayer.

He says he will. You can trust him, absolutely. Our father, how we praise thee for this.

We have to bow our heads in shame tonight that all too often we have not expected thee to answer. Cleanse our hearts from unbelief tonight. We have failed.

We have been bitter. We have criticized. We have found fault.

We have questioned. We have complained. We have paced the floor.

We have worried. We confess our sin to thee tonight, and we claim the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus. Now our father, encourage our faith with thy Word this night.

Give us that implicit and explicit confidence in thy Word that will enable us to bow before thee tonight in faith and say thank you for the answer that is coming to the burdens upon our hearts. With the disciples of old, we pray again, Lord, teach us to in the name of Christ.

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