

The Benefits of United Prayer for the Promotion of God's Kingdom

by Andrew Violette

This sermon emphasizes the importance of united prayer for the promotion of God's kingdom, highlighting the benefits of unity, faith, and zeal that come from praying together as a church. It draws inspiration from biblical examples like Ezra, Nehemiah, and Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, showing how specific prayers in unity can lead to God's intervention and blessings.

Scripture: Mark 11:17, Acts 4:23, Joel 1:14, Matthew 18:19, Ecclesiastes 4:11

Topics: "United Prayer", "The Power of Unity in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

It's good to be with you. I hate beginning with an apology, but I really do feel sorry that I have to preach in the run. I really don't like doing that.

But I'd already committed to preaching elsewhere this morning, and then Neil called me up to see if I could fill in. So I said, well, I can come and preach if I can preach earlier in the service to get away in time to preach at the other service. So I'm happy to be here.

But I trust the Lord will still be a blessing even though I have to run out after. But the message which I have to bring this morning has been burning in my heart and in my soul for years now. But especially since I've moved to this area, and I've been preaching it.

This message, I've been carrying it around to other churches. And it's a message which the Lord has touched me with, and I trust He wants to touch us all with. Let's go to Him in prayer before we begin.

Father, I thank You for Your Word, which is powerful, and it is all that we need for life and godliness. It's all that we need, Lord, to know the way and to guide us and keep us out of the ditch, Lord, of error and running away from You and going our own way. Thank You for it, Lord.

Thank You for how simple it is. Thank You for how You teach our consciences, Lord. Even if our minds don't fully understand, Lord, You teach our consciences.

You teach us right and wrong. And I pray today that it would be no different, that You might teach us all, Lord. Myself included, Lord, I stand in the greatest need right now.

That You, Lord, would quicken me. That You would make us alive. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. If you have your Bibles, you can open them to the book of Mark. In the New Testament, chapter 11.

Mark, chapter 11. The message which I have for us this morning is in regards to united prayer. But specifically, I want to talk about the benefits of united prayer for the promotion of God's kingdom.

And that's what I've entitled the message. It's the benefits of united prayer for the promotion of God's kingdom. It's a bit of a long title, isn't it? But it's true.

We need to understand, I think, the benefits of united prayer. Or else we'll probably not be very motivated to conduct united prayer, will we? We could all go off and pray on our own. But to come together for prayer, I think it takes a purpose that God's given us to bring us together.

Or else it probably won't happen. But there are benefits, and we're going to get to that, of united prayer. Before we look at this, though, I need to define for you what united prayer is.

Because we might all, there's a good, I don't know, 30 to 40 or 50 of us in this room. And we might all have a different idea of what we think united prayer is. And I want to make it clear to you what I'm talking about when I say united prayer.

Some of us will say prayer meeting. Does anybody ever call it the prayer meeting? Yeah, we've got one person, I see a few head nods. I always forget, in this area, people don't raise their hands.

They just nod their heads. So if I ask you to raise your hands, a head nod will do just fine. Feel free to head nod.

United prayer is, we call it the prayer meeting sometimes. But united prayer is different from praying in our closet. When you look at the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs us that when you pray, to go to your closet, and God who sees you in secret will reward you openly.

You know what, that is a wonderful teaching that Jesus gave us on prayer. And it has its place. But that's not united prayer.

That's going and praying in your prayer closet. United prayer is also distinct from worship services. We're meeting this morning to worship.

And we're praying this morning. But this is not for the purpose of this message, united prayer. God also instructs us to pray with elders.

You can see in the book of James that if anybody among us is sick, either physically or spiritually, either struggling with a sin or just an ailment in your body, God tells us, go to the elders of the church. And the elders of the church will anoint you with oil and pray over you for your healing. And this is an important part of the church.

To come and pray with your elders. And when we come to do this, we confess our faults. But you know what, this is not united prayer.

Going and praying with the elders isn't united prayer. We also see the value of praying with other Christians. Where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst.

Right? You're familiar with this passage. And it's good to come together, maybe with a small group to come and pray. Two or three people together and lift our requests up to God.

But this is not united prayer for the sake of the message. United prayer is the body of Christ coming together to pray as a whole. So now you understand what I'm talking about, right? When I say united prayer.

There's many different ways to pray. But I'm talking about united prayer. United prayer has always been a normal function of a healthy church.

If you open your Bible to Matthew, not Matthew, to the book of Mark. Look with me in Mark chapter 11, verse 17. This is Jesus speaking.

Before I read this verse, I want you to understand the setting. Jesus has just come into the temple. And he sees people selling things in the temple.

They're exchanging money. They're doing business in the temple for convenience sake. Because people are bringing their sacrifices.

Some people are journeying from a long way. And so instead of bringing their calf or their bull or whatever, all that ways. They decide they'll just bring money and they'll come and they'll buy it when they come.

Seems convenient, right? But do you know what? This grieves the heart of Jesus. He looks at that and he's angry. And he overthrows the tables and he casts them all out.

And I think it's interesting that there's nobody who stops him. Nobody stops Jesus. Because in their hearts, they all knew it was wrong.

That there's no place for this. Do it outside the city. Do it somewhere else.

Not in the temple. He casts them all out. And with the same spirit, this is what Jesus says.

In verse 17. Is it not written, my house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer. But ye have made it into a den of thieves.

And Jesus calls his house a house of prayer. He's in the temple and he's speaking of the temple. But he's also speaking of the church.

The place where we meet together. It's called a house of prayer of all nations. You know what? When we come here this morning, we hear a lot of preaching, don't we? We hear a lot of preaching on Sunday mornings.

And I'm standing here preaching to you now. But Jesus doesn't call his church a house of preaching, does he? When we come and meet together, we enjoy fellowship together, don't we? I enjoy talking with you and encouraging each other. And being there to support each other and build each other up when we

need it.

But you know what? He doesn't call his house a house of fellowship. We've come this morning to worship God, haven't we? To lift holy hands without wrath and doubting. Clean hands to God.

Worshipping Him. Extolling Him. Praising Him.

Honoring Him, haven't we? Is that why you've come? Coming to meet with Him to worship Him. But he doesn't call his house a house of worship. He calls it a house of prayer.

You see, God's house was designed to be a house of prayer. And not just that we would call it within a house of prayer. But he says it will be called of all nations a house of prayer.

That when the nations look at Christ's church, they would call it a house of prayer. They would look and say, those are praying people. Is our house, our church, a house of prayer? Do we have united prayer? You see, Jesus certainly thought that that was the norm in the church.

But not only Jesus, we can see in the early church that this was the norm. If you have your Bibles, turn with me to the book of Acts, chapter 3. Book of Acts, chapter 3. The Acts is called the Acts of the Apostles. And some have titled it the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

It is the history of the early church. And it is where we should go if we want to see what the church looks like. There's lots of teachings in the scripture about the church.

About how we're to conduct ourselves. But if you want to put an eyeball on it. And some of us are visual learners.

I know I am. And I want to see how it works. And the book of Acts shows us how the church works.

What it looks like. We see in Acts, chapter 3, in verse 1. This is following Pentecost. When the disciples were up in the upper room, they were praying.

And they were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit to come. And He did. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and fell on them.

And they spoke in tongues. And Peter gets up and he preaches a message. And thousands of people are saved.

The day of Pentecost. The day the church was born. But after that, in chapter 3 of Acts, in verse 1. It says, Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.

Being the ninth hour. So what is he doing? He's going to the temple to pray. You see how it was a normal custom.

Even to the Jews, to go to the temple to pray. Because it was called a house of prayer. The early Christians continued this practice.

They were so used to it. God's house is obviously a house of prayer. They thought, they continued going to the temple.

They didn't have church buildings like we do now. The temple was still the place that they would go and they'd worship. But they had new meaning when they went to the temple now.

They understood what it was all about. But they went to the temple to pray. Now come with me to Acts chapter 4. Acts chapter 4 in verse 23.

I hope you have your fingers warmed up this morning. Because we're going to be flipping through a few passages here. Acts chapter 4 in verse 23.

So Peter and John are preaching the gospel. Like they're supposed to. Like God commanded them to go and make disciples.

But you know what? There are those who don't like that they're preaching the gospel. You know what? That today there are those who do not like that we preach the gospel. They won't like it when you proclaim Christ's name.

They won't like it when you hold up a standard of righteousness that is absolute. They won't like it when you lovingly but seriously and earnestly warn them about their sin. They won't like it.

And they certainly didn't like it in the early days of the church. Peter and John are preaching. And they get arrested by the Jews.

They get beaten and they get cast out. And they go and they rejoice. And it says in verse 23, Being let go, they went to their own company.

Now, who is the disciples' company? It's the church, right? They went to their own company. He's saying they went back to the church. They didn't have a building.

The church is the meeting of the saints together. That's the church. And they went back to them.

And it says, That's prayer. They lifted up their voice to God with one accord. And then they prayed.

And I'm not going to read this whole prayer. But come down to verse 29. From that point of verse 24 down to 29, it's all a prayer.

And in verse 29 it says, God, look at the threatenings of those around us. How they oppose us. And it says, This is what they pray.

God, give us boldness. They looked at Peter and John and they go, Wow, what a testimony. God, make us like them.

Are you like that this morning? Maybe that you see the testimony of Peter and John and you go, Wow, that's great. But man, I'm scared. You know what? If that's you, you're probably like everybody else.

I know you're like me. If you look at the testimony of somebody who is bold for the faith and you go, Wow, God, that's great. But I'm scared.

I don't know if I can do that. You know what they do? They lift up their voices with one accord. Together.

And they pray to God for boldness. And what happens? Verse 31. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

And they spake the word of God with boldness. These people had already experienced the day of Pentecost. But yet they needed the filling of the Spirit again.

That they might speak boldly. And God answered that prayer. You see, the church met to pray.

They came together and they united to pray. Now come with me to Acts 12. Acts 12.

Peter is arrested again. Which happens when we preach the Gospel. And I told my wife, we talked about it, before we moved here, we were over in Maine, over in the States.

Which, I joke with Canadians, but it's called the land of the free and the home of the brave. And it definitely is a little more free in some senses than being here in Canada. But we really felt that we were supposed to move back to this area.

But I told her, if we move back to this area, then we have to count the cost, that I might end up in jail someday. Because the things which I preach in Canada are not going to be as tolerated as perhaps they might be in the States. At least, in Canada, there's more authority that can actually shut my mouth than there is in the States.

But I said, you know what? If we preach the Gospel boldly, we have to accept the fact that even here in Canada, that we might be put in jail for it. And we ought not to think that that is something abnormal, is it? We ought not to think that that is something unusual. It happened to the early church.

And so, it may happen to us. And be willing to let that happen. But it certainly happened to Peter a bunch.

And he ran his mouth a lot. And he preached. And he got in trouble for it.

And he glorified God through it. But he was arrested at one time, in chapter 12 of Acts here. And the church was worried for him.

More than the first time. Because John's brother James had already been arrested and beheaded. He was killed.

And they were worried, if they killed James, they might kill Peter. And Peter was very important for the foundation of the church. He was, you could say, kind of the head elder over everything.

He was the head ancho, besides Christ. He was the head human on earth. And he was very important.

And the church was, they were concerned about him. They were concerned. He's now in the hands of these men who, they already killed one of the apostles, and now they're threatening to kill Peter.

In Acts 12, 5, it says, Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. Do you see that? What was the church's reaction? What could the church do? They had no political power. They had no rights to get Peter out.

They had no money. They were just a small minority. What could they do? They prayed.

Prayer was made unceasing. You know what that means. It means they held a prayer meeting, and there was no end time.

There was no, we're going home at 9 tonight. There wasn't an end. It was just earnestness and desperation.

They met and they said, we're just going to keep this prayer meeting going because we don't know what else to do. And I'm sure you're familiar with the story, but if you're not, here's a recap of the story. They prayed, and an angel came and visited Peter in jail and opened the doors and led him out.

And as they were praying, Peter, he goes out into the streets, and he's set free. He goes up to the house where they're praying, and he knocks on the door, and the servant girl opens the door, and she sees it's Peter. And she's so filled with joy and surprise at him, she shuts the door and goes and tells the people in the prayer meeting, and they say, you're crazy.

He's in jail. He's not here. And then she tries convincing him and then realizes, oh, he's standing at the door still.

So she runs back, opens the door, lets him in, and they all see that God had answered their prayers. Now, I hope you can tell by now that prayer, united prayer, was a common occurrence in the early church. Have I made my case? Can you see that? In fact, I suppose we probably don't pray united more, or we don't have united prayer more because we probably feel as though we are in a more stable situation than the early church did.

But I tell you, we're gravely mistaken if we think that. The early church, though, they definitely felt the desperation of the hour. They definitely felt the need for God's intervention, or all would certainly fail.

But what is the purpose for united prayer? Why do we need to meet together to pray? Because I tell you what, God instructs us to go to our closets and pray. And if there are 30 or 40 of us in this room, I don't know how many, I'll say 40. If there are 40 of us in this room and we all go off to our closet for one hour and we pray for one hour a week, 40 of us, how many hours of prayer were lifted up to God? 40 hours of prayer, right? But if all 40 of us meet for one hour together in prayer and we all take turns praying, how many hours of prayer are lifted up? One hour.

So you see how it can be we can kind of rationalize and go, well it's more productive for us to all divide and conquer. You can see that, right? And there's an error in not understanding why we meet for prayer. It is indeed more productive to pray on your own.

I could pray more productively on my own than in prayer meeting because I can just connect with God. And God indeed hears those prayers and loves those prayers. But why do we meet together as a church for united prayer? And it is this, we meet for united prayer to obtain a specific blessing from God.

To obtain one specific blessing in particular, a specific blessing. We come together as a church so that way we might pile up our prayers together with God and watch God work. The purpose is to move the hand of God.

And I don't know why God has chosen it to be this way. I could speculate. But it is this way in which God loves to answer prayer most.

And especially for the most important things. That when God's people come together with one voice, God will hear from heaven. Because he says, if my people will hear my voice, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear them.

I will hear from heaven and will heal their land. You see, God has designed in such a way that when his children come together and one voice, he will hear quickly. And that's why we come together for united prayer as a church.

Because there is need. Is there not a cause in our day for united prayer? Is there something that we need as a church right now? That we need and we desire for the world right now that is not happening? Or is everything perfect as we would have it? When we look at it, when we put our discernment glasses on and we look at the world, isn't there a cause today, brothers and sisters, for us to come to seek God in united prayer? When we look at our society and how quickly it's deteriorating, do we sense the need and the urgency of the hour? Is there not a cause? You know, King David, before he was king, when he faced Goliath, right before he faced Goliath, he comes to the battlefield and he sees his brothers at the battlefield. And they're hiding.

Goliath comes out and he's challenging the people of God. And he's mocking the people of God. You're weak.

You can't stand against me. And I tell you what, the world is mocking the people of God today. The world looks like Goliath.

It's strong. It's rich. It's popular.

It's attractive. And it's slaying our youths in almost total conquest. And it's looking at the church and mocking the church.

And just like Goliath, mocked David's brothers. And they hid. And David comes to them and says, what are you doing? Is there not a cause? Is there not a cause? He knew, see David knew that he had the power of God on his side.

And even a little shepherd boy, which he probably wasn't that little, but he was definitely a lot smaller than Goliath. He knew he would have the victory because he was fighting with God and for the glory of God. And I tell you what, brothers and sisters, if that is our purpose, we're fighting for the glory of God with the power of God, we cannot fail.

We cannot fail. Because God, no one can overcome God. You see, it is God even now who is trying to bring His people together to seek Him.

It is Him who's given this message, isn't it? It is Him who wants us to come together to pray, to seek His face. See, He's got blessings and He's got workings which He wants to work in our day. But He works through the prayers of His people.

He's the one calling us to call on Him. Now I want to take you to a few scriptures to show that God answers not only United Prayer, but to show us the purpose for United Prayer, that it is to achieve and hear a specific answer. Come with me to the book of Ezra.

The book of Ezra in the Old Testament, chapter 8. Ezra, chapter 8. So Ezra was a priest coming out of exile when the people of Israel were in exile. And they were being sent back into the land. He was being sent to rebuild the temple.

And in Ezra, chapter 8, in verse 21, this is what Ezra says. He's bringing a group of people back into the promised land. They're going to rebuild the temple.

He says, I proclaim to fast there at the river of Ahava that we might afflict ourselves before our God to seek of Him a right way for us and for our little ones and for all our substance. What did they do? He says they fasted. But in the Old Testament, when they fasted, it was always connected with prayer.

And in the New Testament as well. They fasted and they prayed. They sought God for protection for the journey.

Because it wasn't a safe journey coming from the land where they were exiled back to their homeland because there was no there was no protection in their homeland yet. And there were robberies and thieves and enemies all around who didn't want the Jews to go home. In verse 22, this is what Ezra says.

I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help against the enemy in the way. Because we had spoken unto the king saying the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him. But His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him.

So we fasted and besought our God. He could have gone to the king. Ezra could have gone to the king and asked for soldiers to protect them.

And he had the king's favor. The king would have given him the soldiers to protect them on the journey. But what does he say? I was ashamed to ask for help from the king.

He was ashamed because he testified to the king that our God will protect us. And he was none too quick to run to man for help. Especially when God's glory was at stake.

So what did they do? They prayed. Now when they met for prayer what do you suppose the prayer meeting looked like? Do you think they prayed for Aunt Susan's cancer to be healed? Or do you think they prayed for Bob to have a safe travels home? No, these are good things to pray for. And there's certainly a place to be praying for those.

They weren't praying for those things, were they? They were praying for one thing, weren't they? They were praying that God would give them a safe journey into their homeland. And what does it say at the end of verse 22? God was entreated of us. It means he answered the prayer.

A specific prayer that people came together to pray for a specific prayer. And God heard it. Now come with me to Nehemiah.

The book of Nehemiah. In chapter 4. It's the next book over to the right. Nehemiah chapter 4. This is a similar situation.

The Jews are coming back into the land but Nehemiah is being sent to rebuild the wall. To fortify Jerusalem. To protect it against enemies.

And he's working. But he's got opposition. You see there's armies all around them.

Who hate them. And they want to destroy them. So much so that they had to build with a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other.

Because enemies were so close and threatening that they had to be ready to fight at any moment. So what does Nehemiah do? Nehemiah chapter 4 and verse 9. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God and set a watch against them day and night. What was Nehemiah's response? What was the people's response? We made our prayer unto God.

And what do you think their prayer was? Do you think they were praying for Aunt Susan to be healed of cancer? Or for Bob to have a safe trip home? No. Then like I said there's a place for praying in such a way. But that's not what they were praying.

They came together for a specific answer. It was for protection from their enemies. And what did God do? He heard it.

And he blessed the work. And they got done in record time. In fact in miraculous record time that it's astounding.

It's beyond even human reason that they could have built the walls as fast as they could have with the tools they had and the manpower they possessed. They prayed for a specific purpose. And God heard it.

He answered. Now come to Joel. The book of Joel chapter 1. Joel is a prophet.

If you don't want to flip there I can read it to you. That's fine. But you're welcome to flip there with me.

Joel chapter 1. Joel is a prophet. And in this book he's warning the people of God. This is before they went into exile.

He's warning them of God's judgment that's coming upon them or his chastisement. It's a little different than judgment. Judgment is usually condemnation.

But God chastises people in that he kind of gave them a spiritual spanking. We do that with our children, right? We discipline them because we love them. We see they're on a bad path and so we discipline them because we want them to walk the right path and to learn.

And God did that with his children. And he did it through plagues. And he did it through allowing armies to come in and invade so that they would turn their hearts back to him.

Well Joel is warning. He's a prophet that God raises up to warn the people of God to bring them back. To cry out to the people and say come back to God because you've wandered away from him.

And in Joel chapter 1 in verse 14 this is what Joel is proclaiming. He says, Sanctify ye a fast. Call a solemn assembly.

Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God and cry unto the Lord. He is instructing them. Call a fast.

Get together and seek God. Pray because there's a plague that was going to come of locusts and it was going to just demolish the land. Now when they met for prayer, what do you suppose they prayed for? Do you think they were praying for Aunt Susan's cancer or for Bob to have a safe trip home? No.

Although there's a place for praying in this way. But they were praying for a specific goal, a specific purpose. Something was before their minds that they needed, that they sought God for.

And that's what they prayed for. And that's what drove them together to pray as a church in a united way. Well, as a church, as a congregation for sure in the Old Testament.

You know, I could go on with more examples. But even just thinking of the ones I shared in the book of Acts, when they prayed for boldness, when the early church prayed for boldness, it was a specific prayer. When they prayed for Peter to be delivered from prison, it was a specific prayer.

In fact, most of the prayers we see answered in the Bible are all specific prayers. Do you see that? Do you understand? When we are to come together as a church to pray and to believe in God for the answer of that prayer, it is because we are to come together with a specific purpose in mind. And we don't know why we're meeting together to pray.

Other than that, we just meet to pray. Tell you what, our meetings are not honoring. They're not pleasing.

You imagine the heart of God, when He knows the needs we have, and He looks down on us, even convicting us of the need, but we're coming together, and we say, well, it's just that time of week. It's that time of day. I've got to come and I've got to say my prayer, because that's what I'm supposed to do.

Imagine if you treated your spouse that way. Imagine if you came to the evening, and husband, you came home maybe from work, or you came in the evening, and you said to your wife, alright, I've got a half hour for you. Let's sit down and let's talk.

How cold that would be, right? It's just my time. Then, oh, half hour's up. Alright.

And you get up and you don't think about her again. Right? It goes both ways. How cold is... How offensive is that, isn't it? Wouldn't that actually be the opposite? Wouldn't it actually offend you, if your spouse came to you in that way? Wouldn't you... You'd almost rather that they didn't even come to you, than to come in that way.

You know what? God wants us to come in seeking Him. He wants us to come and know why we're coming before Him. To seek His glory.

But I wanted to talk to you, in closing, this is my last point here, is what are the benefits of United Prayer? What hope do we have that our prayers will be answered? And what benefits can we achieve through coming together? The first is that, when we meet for United Prayer, it promotes unity among the church. It promotes unity among Christ's body. It brings us together.

You can't really be bitter with somebody and be praying with them at the same time. That just doesn't work. You can't be gossiping about somebody and also praying for them at the same time.

Can you? Have you ever tried that one? Oh boy, sometimes I've been convicted. I go to pray for somebody and then I realize my heart condemns me because maybe I've gossiped about them or I just had a bitter heart towards them. And as soon as I start to pray, I realize, wow, it's hard to pray for them.

And what a refining experience it is. But coming together for United Prayer, it unites us together. When I love Jesus with my whole heart and I'm seeking His glory and seeking Him in prayer, and you are coming and seeking Him in the same way, that builds a bond between me and you.

A bond which is stronger. It's, I think, the strongest bond in the church that can be built when men and women and brothers and sisters in Christ meet together to pray. When I pastored up in Lincoln, I pastored

there for a little over four years, and the most important service that we had and the most important service any church has is the prayer meeting.

And it certainly wasn't Lincoln. It was the most precious service. It was the service that everyone who went looked forward to the most.

And it became in such a way that those who came to prayer meetings built a special bond with one another. Because how can you not build a bond of love with one another when you're seeking God together in prayer for His glory? See, it removes pride. It removes arrogance.

It removes selfishness. It's just the Spirit of Christ in me and in you. Coming together for United Prayer builds unity among the church.

But it also does something different. If you have your Bible, turn with me to John, the Gospel of John, in the New Testament. Gospel of John 17.

This is Jesus' high priestly prayer, or so it's called. It's the end of His upper room discourse. It's just before He's going to the Garden of Gethsemane, and then after that, the cross.

He has just shared a wonderful time with the disciples, and He said many important things. And He's ended this time with a prayer. And He prays for His disciples, and He prays for you and me.

All of the disciples who are far off, all of those who, He says, believe on me, the apostles' word. And that's me. I read the New Testament.

Those are the apostles' words. I'm a Christian, thanks to Christ, but also thanks to the apostles and how they wrote these things down. If you're here today and you're a Christian, and you believe on God through the apostles, the foundation set by Christ is the cornerstone, and then the apostles.

This is what He prays. In verse 20, I don't pray for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that's us, the Christians. 21, that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.

That they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. Now, this verse, I would love to preach on, but not this morning, because we don't have the time for that. But what an invitation He is giving us, that we could be one, just as God is one, and join in the Trinity.

And when we pray, we join in with the Trinity. God is, the Father wants to answer prayer, but Jesus, the Son, is interceding for us now to the Father. And when we pray, we join in with Jesus Christ in interceding, in praying, in bringing God's kingdom to earth.

God does not just work and move the pieces around without our involvement at all. He works through us. He works through our prayers.

And if we are a praying people, we too will see God working in this area. Do you want to see that? Do you want to see God at work here? Do you want to see God shaking the foundations of this world? Do you want to see God tearing down the strongholds of the enemy? When we come for prayer, we will see it. And God says here that He is inviting us into this relationship with Himself.

That we could be one as He is one. That we all might be knitted together, just like the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are one. Three individual persons, but one Godhead.

Perfect unity. This is what He wants of us. And this is what He says at the end of that verse.

That if we are one, the world will believe. That's what it says at the end of verse 21. The world will believe that Thou hast sent me.

We will see conversions if we are united as one. If we are one church, not just one fellowship. The Stone Church is a wonderful fellowship.

I mean, if we're not one here in this room, how can we expect that sinners will be converted? But more than that, are we one body of Christ? With all the other fellowships in the area, coming together to pray and to seek Him. You see, when the church, there's only one church of Jesus Christ, you realize. We have various fellowships.

We call it the Stone Church, but it's really the Stone Fellowship of the Church of Christ. You know? Well, I call it the Stone Church. That's not the name, is it? I've always called it the Stone Church.

But we have fellowships all around. But as we are all one, all the children of God, and we seek God together in prayer. You know what? We're going to see.

The world will believe. They'll see, because it's impossible for us all to be one, unless if God lives in us. Oh, you can have a lot of things where we come together and we're similar on and united in, but not the bond of love.

That only comes from God. How can you look at your brother in Christ in another denomination who believes what you think are some wacky beliefs, but still have the bond of love with them and meet for prayer in the glory of God? You see, the world will see that and they will believe. And God will work for you.

What are the other benefits of united prayer? Well, it gives grounds for faith. Matthew 18 tells us the promise of, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. What does he say? Let me turn there.

You don't have to turn there if you don't want to, because we're short on time. I'm out of time as it is, but I want to finish with this and one closing thought. In Matthew 18, he says, that if two of you shall agree as touching anything, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven.

That if we, two of us agree in prayer, God's going to do it. He will do it. It's a promise God gives us that when the church comes together to pray, when we unite in prayer, that God will answer.

You see, if we don't have faith in our praying, I guarantee from God's word that our prayers will not be answered. Jesus tells us that, or James tells us that, God's word tells us that. That if we, if we don't have faith, we're like a wave tossed to and fro and we will not receive anything from God.

Prayer is an absolute, faith is an absolute essential when we pray. So we need to have faith. But where does our faith come from? It comes from God's word.

God's given us promises in his word and this is one of them. That when we unite together in prayer, we agree, and the spirit in me is testifying, this is God's will. And the spirit in you is testifying, this is God's will.

And we're uniting together because we only want God's glory. And we seek him earnestly. You know what, we have faith.

God's going to hear those prayers. You understand that? It gives grounds for faith. That's why we need to come together to pray.

Because when you're off on your own, you can't get that same faith or the same thing. Because you're not united. But when we come together, it gives us faith.

God will hear and answer our prayers. The last thing, as I close, is that it kindles a flame of zeal. As it tells us in Ecclesiastes, that, I'm summarizing here, but, one of you lies down, you'll be cold, but if two of you lie down together, you'll keep each other warm.

And nothing kindles a zeal in our hearts than praying another Christian has zeal in God. You know, if you're here today, maybe you've been zealous at one point, and you think, man, I'm just not as zealous as I used to be. I'm just not as earnest as I used to be.

I'm just not as full of love as I used to be. You know what? When you get together with somebody else who's got a little bit of zeal, and you pray with them, you know what? It ignites a flame. And God does not want any of us to be cold, to be lukewarm.

He intends us all, as it says in Hebrews, to be ministering flames, fire, burning fire. And if there's somebody in this room burning on fire, I tell you what, that fire will catch, and it catches through prayer as we meet together as a church. You see the importance of united prayer.

You see what we need in united prayer. We need to be coming together as a church in united prayer, and we will see God do great things. Lord, I thank you for your word.

I pray, Lord, that I know the devil is standing at the door, to pluck up the seeds that are fallen by the wayside. But, Lord, I pray that seed is fallen on good soil, that it will bear fruit. Lord, may it bear fruit in our lives, may it bear fruit in the church in this area, and may we see revival.

We don't want it for our sakes, we pray that Lord may receive it. Lord, that you would slay your enemy in Jesus' name. I welcome you.

We're going to engage in worship. I welcome the music leader back up.

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