

02 - the 100 Year Anniversary of the North Korea Revival

by Ben Torrey

Effective prayer involves communing with God, listening in silence, and praying according to His will, leading to a deeper connection with Him.

Duration: 8:09

Scripture: Matthew 6:11, Matthew 6:25, Luke 11:13, James 4:3

Topics: "North Korea"

Description

In this sermon, Ben Torrey discusses the importance of prayer in seeking revival. He emphasizes the need to pray according to God's will, as stated in James 4:3. Torrey encourages listeners to spend time in silence, listening to the still small voice of God, rather than relying on background music. He also shares a personal experience of having a conversation with Jesus in a restaurant, highlighting the intimacy and friendship that can be developed through prayer.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey. It's good to be back with you again this week. As we remember the 100th anniversary of the Great Pyongyang Revival, the Church is praying for another great revival, another similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

All over the land, churches and organizations and individuals are calling on God to work once again, just as He did so long ago in the city of Pyongyang. The last time I spoke, I reminded our listeners that this revival was based on humility and repentance. Today, I would like to speak about the importance of prayer, especially as we think about all the prayers that have been offered to God these past many months, crying out for this outpouring of power.

Prayer is our communication with God. It is the best, indeed, possibly the only way that we have to get ourselves in tune with Him and His will. Of course, it is critically important to read and study His Word in order to know what His will is and how to discern it, how to learn what is of God, what is our own imagination, and what is from the deceiver.

Yet, as critical as this study of the Word is without prayer, it is well-nigh useless. It is in prayer that we enter into the very heart of God. But what sort of prayer, we might ask? Jesus taught us to ask the Father

for our daily bread and for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

He also told us not to fret about what we have or don't have, to remember how the Father clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air. So often, I think, our prayers are focused on our own physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. It seems to me that Jesus was not so concerned about these things, even the spiritual needs.

Ask for your daily bread and then trust the Father to provide. That's the sort of message He gave. On the other hand, we know that the Lord spent long hours alone with His Father in the hills praying.

Was He asking for things that perhaps He did need, like strength, wisdom, or power? I think not. I believe that He was simply drawing strength from communing with the Father. Perhaps He spent long hours simply in silence, in the presence of His Father.

We do have a record in Scripture of His anguished prayer in the garden the night before He went to the cross, but there are so many other instances where we are not told what He said. I believe that those were times of just being with and being close to the Father. So much of our prayer should be just that, communing with the Father, being close to Him, and listening in silence.

Of course God wants our praises and our petitions. Of course He revels in our loud vocal offerings as well as hearing our outcries. But there is something very special about just listening quietly.

How often do we do that? How often do we listen to God and let Him direct our prayers, rather than us telling Him what we think is important? When you prayed last, did you have a sense of what was important to God, or what He wanted you to talk about with Him, or were you thinking only about what you wanted? Think about that. As we pray for revival, perhaps we should spend less time imploring God to pour out His power, and more time asking Him what He wants to say to us about revival. I wonder what would happen if the whole church stopped making so much noise, crying out to God, and got silent instead, waiting to hear from Him.

Would our prayers then be more in line with what He wants to do? If we pray according to the will of the Father, we can be most definitely sure that He will answer those prayers. As amazing as it is, He often waits for us to connect with Him before He works in the world. Watchman Nee, in his incredible little book about prayer, in writing about Matthew 18, put it this way, Heaven is under earth, meaning that God in His heaven has chosen to submit Himself to the desires of His church here on earth.

He waits for us to pray before He works. But, as James tells us in his letter, chapter 4, verse 3, you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly. If we want God to work, we need to pray, but we need to pray according to what He wants us to pray for.

As odd as this seems, it is the way God has set things up. He knows what He wants to do, but He also wants us to want it. He wants us to be involved, to be vested.

He wants our energy, our efforts to be joined with His. As you add your prayers to those of the rest of the church asking God to send revival once again to our land, this land that needs it so much, perhaps it would be good to spend some time, even a lot of time, in silence, listening, not to a musical instrument playing in the background. It might even be good to have no music playing, but to the still, small voice of God.

Speaking to you in your heart and into your mind. I cannot describe the awesome sense of the presence of God that I have experienced when a whole church full of people are waiting in absolute silence upon the Lord. You could have heard a pin drop.

At times of quiet waiting like this, it is not uncommon to be overwhelmed with the solemn glory of God. It is also good to spend time getting to know Him as a friend. Try having a casual two-way conversation the way friends do over a cup of coffee or tea.

I remember one very special time when I happened to be eating alone in a restaurant in a strange city some years ago. As I ate, I had the strongest sense that Jesus was sitting at the table with me, and we talked, just talked, about the job I was doing in that city, about family. About things that seemed to be on His heart.

It was a really precious time, and I remember sitting there with a big smile on my face and being completely relaxed as I dined, not alone, but with my best friend. Of course, I should mention that our conversation occurred in my mind. I wasn't talking out loud.

They probably would have kicked me out of the restaurant if I had. Do you spend time in conversation with Jesus as your best friend? I think that He would like that. I think that He would appreciate an invitation to dinner or tea sometime.

Certainly, God wants to pour out His Holy Spirit on the church once again, as He did of old, but I think He is waiting for us to draw close to Him, to love Him, and to depend on Him, but not demand things of Him. Draw closer to the heart of God as you pray, rather than trying to pull Him into your heart. See if that doesn't change your prayer life.

I think it will.

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