

God Answers Solomon

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and prayer in order to receive God's answer to our prayers, as stated in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Duration: 41:51

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Proverbs 1:23, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Solomon"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of turning back to God and seeking His forgiveness. He references Hosea 14, where God instructs the people of Israel to turn to Him and ask for forgiveness. The preacher highlights that God communicates with us by showing us our sins and urging us to return from iniquity. He also mentions the powerful preaching of Billy Sunday, who had a profound impact on people's understanding of the crucifixion of Christ. The sermon concludes with a story of a woman who accepted Jesus into her heart after witnessing the Welsh Revival as a young girl.

Transcript

I've been given a text, 2 Chronicles 7 verse 14, which most of us would probably know off by heart. If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now there are some, some good brethren, who feel that this is not, has nothing to do with the church age at all.

This particular promise was given to Israel in the land. The problem is this. In Romans 15, the word of God says that whatever things were written before, that's the Old Testament, they were written for our learning.

And remember this too, when the apostles went out to preach. They preached, the Bible says this, they preached from the law of Moses and the prophets from morning to evening. Okay? They didn't have a New Testament.

They told, of course, they shared things they'd heard Christ say, but they preached from the word of God, the Old Testament. So I think we're on safe ground to say that this text has something to say to us today. Now to get the background, we have to go back to chapter 5. In chapter 5, Solomon was king and they brought the ark of God from the city of David, Zion, and they brought it to the Levites, the elders, and they brought it down to the temple, and they had a great time of rejoicing.

They had 120 trumpeters. Can you believe it? Have you ever heard 120 trumpeters at once? Then they had 288 singers and the singers had harps and other instruments and they sang and played. And it says that they were so synchronized they were able to do it as one.

And when they did it as one, the glory of God came and filled the temple, and there's a message in that entirely which I'm not going to enlarge on today. Then in chapter 6, now Solomon was a very wealthy person, as we know, a very powerful person and a very wise person. And that can be a snare.

I read an article a while ago and this Christian lady said, I refuse to be poor. I will not be poor. So I wrote her a letter and reminded her of James chapter 2, which says, Harken, my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith? Well, let's be practical.

They have to be rich in faith or they couldn't survive. Solomon never really had to pray about anything because he had it all. And that was a problem to him.

It comes out in his prayer. He's not sure that God will listen. He begs God to listen to him when he prays, to listen to the nation when they pray.

He could foresee they might get into trouble with their enemies, for example. They might get into trouble because of their sin and God might have to send famine or pestilence or something else. He was concerned that maybe God wouldn't listen when strangers prayed.

You know what a stranger was in those days? It was a non-Jew that joined himself to the Jewish nation, in other words, a Gentile. And at this particular time, as comes out in the story of Solomon and the temple, there were 153,600 of them in Israel. That's a lot of people, strangers.

And Solomon was afraid that if a stranger prayed, God wouldn't hear. So twelve times in chapter 6, he says, then hear thou from heaven. He used the word hearken sometimes.

But the phrase mostly is, hear thou from heaven, O God, hear, hear us when we pray. That's not really the problem. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers.

What a promise it is. And God's invited us to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. By the way, when the trumpeters and the singers, when they played and they sang, they sang about two things, the goodness of God and the mercy of God.

And as long as we live, we need to be singing about the goodness of God. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. The Lord is good to all.

And in Romans, Paul told us that the goodness of God is intended by God to lead men to repentance. It often doesn't, because people presume on the goodness of God. But that's its intent.

Hereby we perceive the love of God because he laid down his life for us. And this was manifested, the love of God, toward us because if God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Here in his law, not that we love God, but that he loved us.

The goodness of God, the mercy of God. God be merciful to me, literally, the sinner. The Bible says God is rich in mercy.

I've never yet heard of a person, however wicked, that called on God in repentance and faith that God turned away. I've never heard of that. And it will never happen.

Our Savior said in Matthew, all manner of sin and blasphemy should be forgiven unto man. I don't even know people that told God never to save them that got saved a day or two later. I have a relative, a close relative, when he got married and he and his wife were alone, they shook hands.

You know what they did? They promised each other they'd never ever become Christians. So guess what he's doing today? He's an evangelist. I mean, so much for that.

But the goodness and the mercy of God, dear people. In Jeremiah 13, God said, Hear ye, give ye, or be not proud, for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he causes darkness and your feet begin to stumble on the dark mountains.

I think he means on the dark mountains of a lost eternity. And you look for light and there's none. God turns it into gross darkness, it says.

The New Testament makes it clear that there's a thing called outer darkness and there should be wailing and gnashing of teeth. And God said in Jeremiah 13, If ye will not hear, my soul will weep in secret places for your pride. So Solomon wasn't sure that God would hear, and so God cleared the air.

He says, If. You know, in the first six books of the Old Testament, there are ten references to this thing called If. That is, the promises of God are not always, but usually, associated with an If.

I will do this if you will do this. I mean, you find it all through the Bible. And If puts the ball in your court and in my court.

If my people, are you saved, do you know it? Praise God. Would you get to heaven on the basis of 1 John 4.7? What does he say there? Beloved, the word means divinely loved ones. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and everyone that loves, let's do it again, everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.

He that loves not, knows not God. Now if you had to get to heaven on that basis, would you make it? There's a lot of Christians that probably would have some problems. How can I be born again if I don't love? You know, we think of being filled with the love of God, that's a second step later.

Maybe you've been a Christian ten years, you can think then about giving your life totally to God, committing your life completely to God, and ask Him to fill you with His love and His Spirit, and that happens ten years later. Is that what the Bible teaches? What about 1 Peter 1.22, seeing you have purified your souls and obeying the truth through the Spirit unto, the word means motion toward unto what? Unto unfeigned love of the brethren. See that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently, being born again.

Simply because you're born again, if you're truly born again, then God expects you to love one another with a pure heart, fervently. So 1 Peter 4.8, it comes up again, he says, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins. Moody, before he died, said to a group of 400 Christian workers, brethren, hold the churches to love, because this is where we've gone wrong.

Now that was true in his day, it's truer today, here's where we've gone wrong. Am I really one of God's children, if my people, in the last chapter of 2 Corinthians, the people of Corinth, some of them at least, did not believe that Jesus Christ was speaking through Paul. So he said, here's what I suggest you do.

You better examine yourself, whether you're even in the faith. He said, don't you know that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? Now a reprobate in the biblical sense is a person that has been tried and rejected. So on what basis are we rejected? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of His.

It's made very clear, Romans chapter 8. Our bodies are the temple of the Spirit of God. And if they're not, we're not saved, we're not a child of God. You remember, Jesus said, not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name have cast out devils, and in your name have done many wonderful works? What was the answer? You're not of mine. And in Luke 13, it comes up again, people are going to be saying, Lord, Lord, we ate and drank in your presence. I suppose the reference is to the Lord's table.

And you taught in our streets, Sunday school, young people church. And he said, I never knew you. I don't know who you are.

It's scary, shocking to think we could sit at the Lord's table in an evangelical church and go to hell. But it's very possible. You know, the great revival in Shantung, China in 1932, the cry of the revival was, are you born again? And they said thousands and thousands of baptized church members, preachers, Sunday school superintendents, evangelists, discovered they'd never been born of God.

They had the right answers. And they knew the language. But they didn't know the Lord.

And it was all kind of a mechanical thing. God has a people, my people, who are called, he said, by my name. By the way, Solomon chapter 6, he mentions the name of the Lord 14 times.

And the name of the Lord, you know, it stands for the person of God, who He is, what He is, the essence of God, the name of God. A good name is wrought to be chosen in great riches, it says in Proverbs chapter 22. And so it is.

But we don't have a good name. I don't have a good name. But I have a good name I believe in, even to them that believe on His name who were born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.

Through believing in the name, in His name shall the Gentiles trust. Isaiah said, it's quoted in Matthew again, in His name. The disciples were called, what first at Antioch? Christians.

You know, it was a real blessing to me when I was a young Christian, I still smoked, you know. I used to smoke a pipe, I smoked cigars, I smoked, when I was a kid I used to take cigarettes off the sidewalk and smoke them. I want to know how I didn't die of something or other, but anyway, I didn't.

And after I became a Christian, I didn't see anything wrong with it. I remember sitting there, reading the Bible, cigarettes, ashes fall, just blow them off. And my mother used to jab me about it.

Now remember that nagging is constant reiteration of the truth. And so, you know, she'd never call me Bill, she'd say, Will, how can you say it? I'd say, get off my back. I'd say, here, come on, show me.

Poor mother couldn't show me. So I had her beaten. Not quite because she prayed.

Oh, I tell you, you've got a godly mother praying, you're in trouble. And I read somewhere in an article, it said, a Christian is a little Christ. The word Christian means little Christ.

I thought, hey, that's neat, little Christ, hey, that's neat. So the next day I'm smoking a cigarette and the Lord came and said, why are you smoking this cigarette? You're a little Christ. Would I smoke a cigarette? Right between the eyes.

Never touched tobacco since, because I'm called by His name. There's a beautiful thought in Titus 2, it says, we are to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things, okay? The word adorn, you may know this, I'm sure some of you do, the Greek word there, it's the word from which you get the English word cosmetic. We are to cosmetic the gospel, the doctrine of God, or to dress it up, or to make it look as attractive as we can, not with words, but with a godly life.

They can argue with your words, but they can't argue with a godly life. You know, in Romans 14, 17, 18, it says, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost for he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God and, listen, and approved of man. We think everybody's going to be mad at us if we commit our lives to God and are filled with the Spirit of God.

Not really. Some people will be mad. Some vested interests won't like it, but a lot of people will be attracted to it, because really that's what it's saying in Romans 14, 17, 18.

So dear people, we're called by the name of Jesus Christ, and we can't live the way we lived before. It's sin even to think of it. If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, do you know what we do as Christians? We're constantly praying, Lord, humble me, Lord, humble me, and he says, humble yourself.

I mean, God does humble us certainly, but those that walk in pride, Nebuchadnezzar said, he's able to abase, and you know what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. So God knows how to do that. He likes to do it too, by the way, because surely he scorns the scorers, but gives grace to the lowly.

Though the Lord be high, and he has respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knows are far off. Sometimes we're praying for God to fill us with love, fill us with a forgiving spirit or whatever, but we're so proud God can't do that. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.

Even there, dear people, I have to do the humbling under the hand of God. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you or lift you up in due time, and he'll do that. How do you see yourself? Before God, I mean.

Let me ask you another question. Would you be happy if every Christian in the world was exactly the way you are? I guess not many of us would want that to be. Dear people, we're proud people, especially here in North America, we're proud of this and proud of that and proud of a lot of things that we probably should be ashamed of.

This is a perennial sin. This is a sin that stands in the way of revival, because when this is taken care of, everything else flows, and God responds with the power of his Spirit. If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, and if you have any trouble doing that, read Isaiah 40.

It starts with grass and it ends with grasshopper, and we're called both, you know, and in between it says we're less than nothing and vanity. You know, sometimes in prayer, you've probably felt this way at times too, and I get close to God. I've told the Lord sometimes, dear Lord, I'm just a bag of garbage, why don't you dig a hole about a thousand miles deep and throw me in and bury me and forget I ever lived? I really honestly often feel that way, and sometimes I've used stronger words than garbage, but that doesn't discourage me, because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

It gives me a firmer hold on God when I see myself as God sees me, and it's really helped me to see myself. I know this may not go along with a lot of the psychiatric counseling we get today. You know, a while ago, somebody asked if I would counsel this dear woman.

They told me, they said she's been to every counselor in the city of Winnipeg. She's been going, it's going to be going on for years. She's worse now than when she started.

Could you find some time for her? So I did. You know, when that lady walked into my office, I never saw anybody quite so bad in all my life. I mean, she was shaking from head to foot.

She was thin and emaciated. She was not coherent, and so I found out what they've been telling her. They've been trying to build up her self-image.

She didn't have any to build up. So I just pushed that aside, and I said, listen, what you need to do is to build up the image of Christ she claimed to be born again. I talked to her for half an hour.

You know what happened? She burst into tears, and she says, oh, she says, you're helping me. You're helping me. Thank you.

Thank you. She'd never said that in 10 years. I'm not a counselor, but when we know what the Bible says, dear people, we don't make the mistakes that other people are making.

We don't have to have our self-image built up. We need to have it broken and destroyed. And comes a place where Job was when he said, behold, I am vile.

I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. That's where we have to come, and he was revived after that. Job was.

Oh, dear people, we need to be humbled in the dust, but remember, the ball's in your court. God is calling on us to humble ourselves. Deal with it.

And God will work with you. Shall humble themselves and pray. You know, we can't really pray effectively if we're a proud person.

I can pray effectively if I'm humble, because then God will listen to me. You and I don't have anything. We don't have any cookies on the shelf at all.

We don't have anything in the barrel at all. You've got nothing to commend yourself to God, absolutely nothing, neither have I. So the starting point is always the mercy of God and the goodness of God, the grace of God, the grace of God. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich the grace of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, the goodness of God.

If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray. I once led a lady to Christ, it's about 35 years ago, she was Welsh. She was an Anglican living in Brittle, Manitoba, and I forget how I got to meet her, but I talked to her about the Lord, and she began attending our church.

And one day she said, I want to accept Jesus into my heart, and she did. Then she told me why she wanted to accept Christ. As a young girl in Wales, she was only six or seven at the time of the Welsh revival, and she said, I could never erase it from my mind, strong men, ten, twelve, twenty men kneeling on a sidewalk with their arms around each other, praying.

And she said, I knew all my days, those people are something I'm a total stranger to. I don't know a thing about it. But she had a longing to know God, and she used to walk past these men on the sidewalk praying and listen, and they had a contact with God she knew nothing at all about.

Pray without ceasing in everything your thanks, this is the will of God and Christ Jesus concerning you. Prayer has been called the breathing of the soul, that's based on Lamentation 356, where Jeremiah said, hide not your ear at my breathing, at my cry. And so, it's just like breathing, breathing is an involuntary thing, if you have to think every time before you breathe, you'll die every time you fall asleep.

It's not that way, I mean, we just breathe, don't we? And we should be praying like that. Pray about everything, when the phone rings, pray before you answer the phone, before you write a letter, pray, before you open a letter, pray, before you answer the doorbell, pray. Before you cook, pray, you might do better.

You know, sometimes we forget, and this is to digress a little bit, but in the book of Exodus, there was a man called Bezalel, and he had a friend called Aholiub, and these two men were filled with the Spirit of God so they would be cunning workmen, remember that? Not so they'd be soul winners, but to be cunning workmen. If you're filled with the Spirit of God, you'll be a better wife, a better husband, a better father, a better carpenter, a better schoolteacher, a better anything, if you're filled with the Spirit of God. You'll have skills you didn't have before.

And if you lack wisdom, ask God that gives to all men liberally, not braids not, and it shall be given him. But it says, let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

First Timothy 2, 1, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, first of all, for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth. Then in verse 8 he comes back to it again, Paul does, I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. That sums it up very, very well, doesn't it? Lifting up holy hands, not praying in anger against people, and not praying in doubt and unbelief, but praying in faith.

Well, we've heard all this before. I mean, this is not new. But I guess the question is, are we doing it? First of all, prayer, supplications, intercessions.

It's a breathing of the soul, dear people. And we're weak because we aren't breathing. This is the problem.

So, humble yourself, pray. My dear dad, before he became a Christian, he prayed every night. And one night I went into the bedroom where my dad was, I had to go through that room to get to another room.

I thought my dad was in bed asleep. He was kneeling by the side of the bed praying. And when he realized somebody else was in the room, he shot off his knees like a rocket and landed in bed and gave a funny little laugh, you know.

He was really embarrassed. Somebody caught him praying. Until the sinner goes by and their voice drops down so nobody can hear them, you know.

Then when the sinner's gone by, they come back to normal levels again. Why is that? Some of you heard the story probably about this missionary went with some people to a restaurant. And he noticed that when it came to giving thanks, they just sort of went like this and scratched their head.

And so he got off his stool and he knelt down there and he prayed for about ten minutes. He thundered. The whole restaurant was watching, you know.

And he prayed all around the world, you know. And then gave thanks for his food. Then he got up and sat down and they turned to him and said, You always pray like that? No.

He said, You always pray like this? I know. So, people, if they can't say anything else about us, at least let's hope they can say we pray. We're praying people.

Oh, I get so discouraged sometimes. But for the grace of God, you know, when you look at the prayer situation, I ask pastors sometimes, What did you do in the way of extra prayer before I came? And they look at me proudly sometimes and say, We had two extra prayer meetings, Brother Bill. I said, What? You had two extra prayer meetings? Really? Didn't that kill your people? French churches in Quebec, I was there a couple of years back with Alex and Grace McCready.

Those people had prayer meetings for a solid month every night, four or five French churches before we came. And you could sure tell the difference. Oh, I will let men pray everywhere.

Everywhere, lifting up holy hands of godly life without wrath and doubting. And then it says, Turn from their wicked ways. You know, Proverbs 123 is a great promise.

The Lord said, You turn at my reproof. Behold, I'll pour out my Spirit unto you. Now, isn't that a promise of personal revival? Sure it is.

If God is going to pour out His Spirit on some person, then that person is going to experience revival. But what's the secret? The secret is turn. You turn, He said, at my reproof.

I'll do two things for you, He said. Two promises. If you turn.

If you turn. I'll pour out my Spirit unto you. And two, I'll make known my words unto you.

That is, the Bible will come alive. You'll have an understanding of the Bible you never had before. George Mueller said he learned more of the Bible in a couple of months than he learned in several years when he found out who the teacher was.

The Spirit of God. Turn, God said. Return.

The words often occur together, like in Hosea 14. O Israel, you have fallen by your iniquity. They turned away from God.

So God even told them the kind of prayer to pray. He said, Turn with your words and turn to the Lord and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously. So will we render the calves of our lips.

Indeed, the fatherless finds mercy. So God is saying turn. You know, Billy Sunday was a famous American evangelist who died in 1935, by the way.

They said he preached to more people face to face than any preacher ever did. A hundred million, they figure. And a million people found Christ as their Savior.

And he was very picturesque. But a friend of mine heard him preach in 1914. He preached on the crucifixion of Christ.

He said when the man was through, he said, I can never explain it. I can never forget it. He said we could see Christ hanging on a cross.

He said it was such a powerful, powerful dynamic experience. Billy Sunday was very blunt. And he said, you know, sometimes people say, Billy, you're too hard in your preaching.

You rub the fur the wrong way. He said, I don't. Just let the cats turn around.

So, you know, that's Proverbs 1.23. That's what it's saying. Turn. And dear people, we go to this counselor.

We go to that counselor. We go to some other counselor, you know. What you really need to do is turn.

Are you one of those people that thinks that God can't communicate to you? I've heard it different times in counseling with people. They say, well, you know, God never communicates with me. He doesn't have anything to say to me.

Well, I pray all the time and God never says anything to me. Well, I say, either you're lying or God is. Which one? Because you know what it says? In Job 36.

It says God never takes his eyes off the righteous. Isn't that comforting? If it's scary, then deal with sin. He never takes his eyes off the righteous.

But with kings are they on the throne. We know we're kings and priests unto God. See, that's an Old Testament thing, too.

Job is the oldest book of the Bible. With kings are they on the throne. It says he establishes them forever.

And they are exalted. That sounds like the New Testament. Then comes an if.

In the next verse. If they, the righteous, if they be bound in fetters and held in cords of affliction, then what? Then he shows them their work and the transgressions that they've exceeded. And he opens their ear to discipline.

And he commands that they return from iniquity. And then they've got the nerve to tell you God never communicates with them. He shows them their work.

How does he do it? He shows us. However he drives it. He shows us.

He makes us aware of what the sins are. The reason why they're tied up and bound. He shows them their work and their transgressions that they've exceeded.

He shows us our sin. He opens our ear to discipline. And he commands us to return from iniquity.

Don't tell me God can't communicate. Because he's doing it all the time. The mighty God, even the lotus, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun even as we're going down of the sea.

My God's calling and talking all the time and people are not listening. It's amazing how much you hear from God when your ears are tuned. I mean it's all the time.

All day long. It's marvelous. And turn from their wicked ways.

In 2 Peter 2 he talks about people who are following the way of Balaam, the son of Boaz who loved the wages of unrighteousness. You know to some extent at least that can be applied to the church of God today. In Isaiah 1 there's a verse that says everyone loves gifts and follows after rewards.

We're living in that kind of a time it seems. Everybody wants to get something for nothing. He who makes haste to be rich sins, the Bible says.

You sin if you make haste to be rich. So people are buying these lottery tickets and sweepstakes and all this kind of thing. That used to be called gambling.

It's not called gambling anymore. That's just taking advantage of an obvious opportunity. Everyone loves gifts.

Everyone is following after rewards. God couldn't find a person in the nation of Israel that would close the doors of the temple or kindle a fire in the altar unless he had his palm greased with some money it says in Malachi 1. Dear people, the way of Balaam, he had all kinds of meetings with God. He saw visions of the Almighty.

He fell in trances. He gave us a beautiful prophecy of Jesus Christ. But he was a wicked man and his heart was not right with God.

He said, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his. But as somebody has said, you can't die the death of the righteous if you don't live the life of the righteous. How did he die? Dear people, he died on the end of a sword in the hand of a Jew.

That's how Balaam died. Following the way of Balaam, the son of Bozer, who loved the wages of unrighteousness but was rebuked for his iniquity, the dumbass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet. People, it's a form of insanity to be chasing dollar bills.

An absolute form of insanity to be putting your love on these things, you know. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Have you taken enough insurance on that? Listen people, they don't make asbestos thick enough, you know.

2 Peter 3, 10 and on. Just read it. It's shocking, but dear people, that's how it is.

You know what Wesley said? Wesley, one of the things he said was this. He said, if when I die, I leave behind me more than, I put it in Canadian dollars, if I leave behind more than \$200, history will bear me

record that I died a dishonest person. How can I have so much when other people have so little? And people, don't forget, there's 75 countries in the world whose average annual income is 6% or less of what it is in Canada, in the United States.

75 countries. My son Tim's in Bangladesh right now. The average annual income there is \$85 a year.

I've got friends that are making between \$400 a day in Canada. Canada's the most strike-ridden country in the world. This bothers me.

We've got more than any country in the world. We're the most strike-ridden country in the world. Everybody wants more.

Listen, we Christians have got to teach the world how to live, and in this area particularly. The Bible talks about some Christians. It says, He took joy for the spoiling of their goods because he knew that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance, and so have we.

I don't want to get sidetracked here. Anyway. And turn from the wicked ways, then, then will I hear from heaven.

Is that too big an order? Is he asking too much? Oh, some people think so. I don't think so. He's just telling us the truth because if these other things aren't right, faith can't be right.

And if there's no faith, without faith it's impossible to please God. Hebrews 11.6. God is trying to bring us down to the basics. Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin.

But God forgives that which is confessed. Some while ago I made a study of prayer in the Bible, and I was dimly aware of the fact that, you know, there's places in the Bible where God refused to answer prayer. But I didn't know there's over a hundred places, so I got picked out, there's a hundred and six or something, and I got these out, and I cataloged them and everything.

And then I discovered that there were three major categories, types of sin. That prevented God from answering prayer in the Bible. The first was selfishness.

The second was insincerity. And the third was no confession of sin. There was other things, unbelief and bitterness and so on.

But these were the three major things. Selfishness, praying for myself. Insincerity, fooling around, not being honest with God.

Then no confession of sin. Dear people, God will hear. God will forgive because of what Christ did on the cross.

And He'll heal us. You know, Jeremiah lamented in chapter 6 of his book because he said, we have been slightly healed. That's the condition in our churches today, slightly healed.

Not really healed at all. And later on, Jeremiah, he said he was looking for a time of healing, but he said no good came. We looked for healing and behold, trouble.

And you get it spelled out in 2 Chronicles chapter 36 when it says, they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and misused His prophets till the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there

was no remedy. And the word in the margin there is healing. The Hebrew says healing.

There was no healing. I don't think we're at that place yet, thank God. But we need to be healed by God Himself.

He can do it. He wants to revive His church. So we shouldn't be saying, hey God, listen to my prayers.

God, are you listening up there? That's not the problem. God is always listening. The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.

If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, seek my face, turn from the wicked ways, then I'll hear from heaven, I'll forgive their sins, and I'll heal their land. That book I mentioned, The Event of the Century, you know where the title came from? It came from a godless man. He was not a Christian.

He was a very prominent public figure and he'd gone through the revival and he sought the fruits of the revival and he said, this is the event of the century. That's where the title came from. When you read that and see what God did in the nation, the United States, and then in England, Ireland, Scotland, the same thing.

Tens of thousands of people. At the height of the revival, 50,000 people a week finding Christ. The population of the states then was only 30 million people.

That's something like the population of Canada. A few more. We have 27 million here.

50,000 conference a week. No special evangelist meetings. Very little of that.

Prayer meetings, prayer meetings, prayer meetings. People getting up in prayer meetings asking for help. They wanted to be saved.

Then the fruits of the revival lasted for 40 years. All kinds of missionary and evangelist organizations were spawned by God through that revival in the 40 years that followed. And Spurgeon and Finney and Moody and Andrew Murray and these men, they labored under that revival umbrella without even knowing it.

We look back and we can see it. They could not see it. They were caught up in it.

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