

Pleading God's Promises

by Bill McLeod

Prayer is the key to a successful Christian life, and it is the breathing of the soul.

Duration: 47:59

Scripture: Zechariah 7:8, Zechariah 7:11-13, Hebrews 3:12-13

Topics: "Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of a pastor who struggled with addiction to pornography. The pastor realized the impact of his actions on Christ who lives within him and was deeply remorseful. With the help of the speaker and a song leader, the pastor prayed fervently for deliverance and experienced a powerful encounter with God. He was set free from his addiction and gave a testimony of his transformation. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking complete deliverance and not settling for partial freedom, and also highlights the power of prayer and God's intervention in bringing rain to a campsite.

Transcript

I want to read two portions of scripture, one in Zechariah chapter 7 and one in John 15. Zechariah 7 verse 8, And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother. And do not oppress a widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor.

And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to listen, and pulled away their shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yes, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear those words.

Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore has come to pass, that as he cried, that is God, and they would not hear. So they cried, and I would not hear, says the Lord of hosts.

But I scattered them on the world, and among all the nations, whom they knew not. Thus the land was desperate after them, that no man passed through, nor returned. Did I say John 15? John 16? Speaking of the day of his resurrection, Christ said, verse 23, And on that day he shall ask me nothing.

In truth, in truth, I say to you, whatsoever you shall ask a father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

These things I spoke unto you in proverbs. For the Father himself loved you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came up from God. I came forth from the Father, and I'm coming to the world.

Again, I leave the world. I don't know how many prayers there are in the Bible. I've read different accounts, 400, 500, 600.

I've never really counted, so I don't really know, but there are a hundred, so it's just... Okay. Now this I know, because I counted. There's 120 places in the Bible where God refused to answer people's prayers.

There were that many. Very clear, and I think, very powerful. Now those 120 places where I picked it all out, and then I saw it kind of a pattern.

It was selfishness, and then no confession of sin. These are the three things that dominated... I'd like to begin, I'll give you an example in a contest. I met a fellow in a bush camp years ago.

He was a cook, and he said, I quit the ministry because... And we talked about that for a while, and nothing happened that I know of in his life. But 85,000... The others took a little longer, some of them took 40 years. He read the Bible through 200 times.

He read it through a hundred times on his knees. He wasn't worshiping the Bible. It was just an attitude of adoration as he was reading.

Sometimes we don't walk out of that way, and we get into trouble. Now somebody said that prayer is a beggar talking to a millionaire. That's not a good definition, because you know, this millionaire might be tight.

There's another thought that's sort of odd. He's saying, it doesn't get any better. Well, I think I have a better way.

David was told by the prophet that there was 10 or 11 things God was going to do for him. Do you know how he handled it? He went to the temple, and he sat before the wall. Do what you said.

So he was pleading the promise of a God. So prayer is standing... And I just love Romans 4. I've quoted it before in these meetings here. That Abraham, he did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith.

And then in Hebrews 11, you read about his wife, Sarah. And it says, she received strength to conceive, when she was past age, because she judged him faithful. So he and his wife were together on this.

They got a promise, totally impossible. Not something you talk about to other people and think you're going crazy, you know. A child of their own.

But they both believed, and they both saw. And it's the same for us today. We have the promises.

7,487, right? At least half of them should be for you. So half of 7,487. We'll reduce it to 2,000 if you want.

Won't that get you by? It ought to get us by. I don't care what kind of a problem you run into in your life as a Christian. There will be an answer for it somewhere in the Word of God.

And I defy anybody to blow that out of the water. I've seen it solved. There's something in all this.

Because after all, you know, God knew your life before you were born. He said to Jeremiah, and you might say, well, that's Jeremiah. Well, who do you think Jeremiah was? Was he part of the Trinity? We're told he was a man of like passions with us.

So really then, prayer is a believer pleading the promises back to God. You know, when Christ healed the ten lepers, you ever notice how it happened? They stood as far off as they were supposed to having this. He said, they said, he didn't heal them, didn't lay hands on them.

He just said, go and show yourself to the priest. Now, they knew what that meant. You see, the Jewish law said if you had leprosy and you thought you were healed, so they could have stood in the circle and said, hey, this isn't going to work.

The priest won't even look at us. You still got it? You've got it? You've got it? You've got it? I've got it? That's not what they did. They obeyed Christ and it says in the account.

They weren't healed when they were standing there. It would have been easier to go then. They still had leprosy when they started going.

There's a spiritual lesson in that for you and I. Now, the Christian life begins when a sinner prays. You know, there's a fellow, he's been eternally now. He was related to us through marriage.

And he was really a totally godless man. I don't know if I ever saw him sober. And when he talked, there was always silt coming out of his mouth.

It never quit, you know. And he mocked me in my stand. And I shot him down one day.

I shouldn't use that term, but here's what happened. So, I had some little cans about this size. I filled them with water.

You know what happened? I took all 20. There were 20 shots. That was God.

I couldn't do that normally. And there wasn't a sound to me. No one could see me.

He was in a wheelchair. Normally, if I mentioned anything about God, he just went wild. He just sat in the wheelchair.

And I said, now, I know where you stand, you know where I stand. We're not going to fight, right? He went like this. But I said, I want to give you a verse from the Bible.

Because you may not belong to this world. And here's what it says. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And his head went down. I think I repeated it five times. Slowly, explain, whosoever it all is.

And finally, his head was between his knees. Not a sound. Never said a word.

And I left. He died the next day. And his son asked me if I would come with him to see his dad before they worked on him in the funeral home.

So he went. He was lying on the slab. And people, he had the biggest smile on his face you've ever seen in all your life.

That was not him. It didn't even look like him, you know. But that was simple.

And I told him, I said, Nels, you don't have to pray a fancy prayer. You just have to call. Call.

And he'll answer you. And I think it happened. Anyway.

The Christian life begins when the sinner prays. It's carried on by prayer. The early conference in Acts chapter 2, the continued steadfastness.

They're all praying. So we're told the earth is in prayer. We're to pray in the spirit.

There are so many references to prayer. It's astonishing that we miss it somehow. That's how the Christian life is carried on.

Through prayer and, of course, the study of the word of God. And then, you know, the Christian life ends when the saint prays. Is that right? Well, not always, but we have an example in the Bible.

Because Stephen, when he was dying, he said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And that's how he wept, you know. Now, you and I may not be alert when we're dying.

We may be. We can do the same thing. Dear Lord, take me home.

I had a friend, you know. He was an Irish guy, and he was a real, real hot Christian, you know. And one day he said to his wife, he was about 50.

He said, honey, I'm going home today. She says, darling, we don't have any money. No, no.

He said, I'm going home to heaven. Aren't you feeling, I'm feeling great. What do you mean you're going home? I said, you'll find out.

So he just, we don't always get that kind of advanced information, but. So the Christian life begins and ends, and it's carried on by prayer. Prayer brings glory to God.

The word of God says that. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done. And he said, well, I'm just saying, it's by this that God is glorified, it says in the context there, you know.

When we pray, that's another reason why we should be praying all the time. I had a senator, a neighbor in my home one night, and I told him about an answer to prayer I had, you know. And I'm sure he could hardly walk out the door in a straight line, you know.

You know, people don't, they don't believe that God really answers prayer. I mean, the sinners don't believe that, you know. And so you're talking about some answer to prayer you have.

I know we're not supposed to cast our pearls before swine, but not every. We have to keep that in mind as well. It brings glory to God, and then we already know it in the scripture we read, it brings joy to men.

I mean, little things, big things, whatever. There's a lot of little things God does for us. I read a book that said you should never ask God to get you a parking place.

Or maybe when you have arthritis as I have, you'll start to pray that kind of way, you know. I've never seen it said, yeah, I've seen people pull out of a parking place so I could pull. Remember Christ said, you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you.

Now you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should be, that's abiding fruit. You get it from God. So Ecclesiastes says, whatsoever God does, it shall be forever.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole world. Be one of those. Don't be afraid to get outside.

I mean, they didn't more than just criticize Christ. And they'll say, Christ said, all manner of evil, they did the same. You know, fathers of his day should all be sublime.

Prayer is being called the breathing of the soul. And I believe it's based on my breathing at my cross. Prayer is the breathing of the soul.

If you have to think every time before you breathe physically, you'd die every time you fell asleep, right? If you would. And praying can be an automatic thing. You find yourself, Spurgeon said, I've never spent long hours in prayer.

He said, the last thing I do at night before I fall asleep, I'm talking with Jesus. And in the morning when I wake up, now there was a time when he prayed through all night. But he didn't make this a common practice.

And I like Lamentations 3, 56. Now it's meant for all men everywhere. First Timothy 2, 8. I will therefore let men pray everywhere.

My wife and I would have some neat times later. They quit eating, you know. And they'd turn and they'd face you, you know.

Tim Hortons, that's a good place, Tim Hortons, you know. I'm sitting here in Tim Hortons. There's a guy sitting there.

And he had a cup of coffee. And for 15 minutes he never moved. I was sure, I thought he died, you know.

I looked at him. But there was slight breathing, you know. But he never moved.

So I said, look. I said to the Lord, what's going on? He says, we'll talk to him, you know. So I offered him a gospel tract.

And he grunted, looked at it, started to read it. Finally put it in his pocket and he went back to his desk. We just kept talking about the Lord.

Why is it that we as Christians, if we talk about the Lord and the sinner sails by, our voices go down to a whisper, you know. We know, we don't want to offend this guy, right? Over and over, I don't know why it is, but the last year or so, we've seen it again and again and again. Just talk normally about Jesus, you know.

And see what happens. It's incredible. Try it.

You don't believe it, I see that on your face. But just try it. We don't have to be ashamed of Jesus Christ.

In any place. I've lived with it. Men pray.

Everywhere. And don't be afraid to pray in a restaurant either. You bring up something, you're trying to relish, hey, let's pray.

And when you walk up, all these eyes are looking at you. Who are these people, you know? It's not a way of having fun. I pastored and I did that deliberately.

And I think they suffered a little bit of discernance. There was a lady, I attended a couple of times. And God told me clearly, go and talk to her.

So I did. She was an older lady. She was from Wales.

As a child, she told me, there was this great revival that went through our country. And I was just a little girl, about five or six. And she said I'd be walking down the sidewalk and there'd be a bunch of men.

Eight men or so. And they're kneeling there with their arms around each other and they're praying. She said.

I saw it happen again and again. And she said, I knew that I never had what they had. I was an Anglican, she said.

And I don't have it yet, she said. What is it? And I had the joy of leading her to Christ. But you know, these guys didn't know until they were kneeling in the sidewalk praying that there was going to be a lady saving a brutal man.

I told them many, many years later, you know. See, you never know. We're not trying to make a showcase out of anything.

We're trying to be, you know. I will ever let men pray everywhere. Without wrath and doubt.

Normally when two Christians meet, it's the last thing they do, if they do. Okay. So there was a crusade one time in California, and I want to repeat this because it was really interesting.

And they went to that church. They had a week of meetings. Fifty people got saved.

They were back in the area three years later. And they phoned the pastor and said, how are the converts making up for those meetings? Now that's unusual. They're telling us that the average is about three percent.

So then they asked this pastor, what happened? Paulie said, very simple, every one of those guys that came forward to be saved in your meetings are men we've been praying for for several years. Every one of them. So this prayer, when they get converted, they get converted.

They don't just cough a couple times behind a curtain, you know. Under these promises, I will cry unto God most high, unto God who performs all things for me. He's the God that performs for his children.

Psalms 57, I think the second verse makes that quite clear. Of course, call unto me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you do not know. That was a great promise.

You know, years ago I bought a quarter section of land in the wilderness for a Bible camp. And by the way, it's still carrying on today. But this camp, oh, we had great camps.

It went on for years until I moved to Saskatoon in 1962. And we had a lot of people saved and so on. And then we had a long dry period.

And the forest fire danger was so bad, on the opposite side of the river from where we were, they closed it all down. You couldn't drive in there at all. And they knew, we knew, they're going to close us down too.

So all those kids, 140 kids, on a forest fire, no way. Well, before they got around to that, we got around to something else. We had a prayer meeting for Ray, one night.

And you know what happened? No surprise. We got four inches of rain that night. And so a year later I was talking to a forest ranger.

We got talking about the year before when it was so dry. And he said, Jack, you know, he said, there was a big rain, four or five inches. And you know what, he said, your camp was smack dab in the center of that rain.

It went on about 15 or 20 miles on all sides. Your camp, and I said, I can tell you why. He said, well, I'm not surprised that we got most of the rain, you know.

And he stood there, I think if he didn't have his arm around the post, he'd have fallen over. But people need to know, God's alive. But Christians need to know.

Great. Now, fasting is praying without words. Did you get that? There's a verse in Esther, it speaks about, there's a phrase, the matter of the fastings.

Look what the Bible says, the Old Testament, New Testament. There's many, many instances of people fasting. Or the matter of the fastings.

And we need to learn how to fast, as well as pray. Because it adds power. We've done it again and again.

In meetings where maybe, anyway. Remember one case, we started on a Monday, nothing happened, Tuesday, Wednesday. So we fasted on Wednesday and Thursday night.

We had a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit of God. And we've seen it happen again and again and again. And so, Christ once said, this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

Okay. So fasting, fasting is praying without words. Then Spurgeon said, tears are liquid prayers.

I like that. Tears are liquid prayers. Our tears God puts in his bottle.

He sees, he hears, he understands. In all of their affliction, he was afflicted. You know, Spurgeon one time, he had a lot of pain, gout and respiratory problems and what not.

Had to spend three months every year. And one time he was suffering terribly from the gout and stuff. Some relatives were visiting there.

He asked everybody to leave but his wife. And then he prayed and here's what he said. Hey God, he said, and if you were me, I wouldn't let you suffer like this.

You want to try it sometime. Don't be unreasonable but reach this. But we know that sin, of course, hinders.

Hear me, we all know that. And he that covers his sins won't prosper. You have to confess and forsake.

We sin, we repent, we ask forgiveness, knowing in our mind we're going to do it again. So we keep on sinning and repenting and sinning and repenting. We're not different than they are.

We're doing exactly what they do. Anyway, sin hinders prayer. Likewise with husbands, go with your wives according to knowledge.

What does he say, why did he say that? He said that your prayers may not hinder. You should treat your wife as your equal. And take her into counseling.

I don't know how many times I had counseled couples where he told his wife nothing. He did everything, he ran everything. And maybe the financial couple, he wouldn't even tell her.

And she had more plans. It's amazing. I don't know how she does this.

With a little bit of money she could stretch it. Isn't that right, Jeff? You must follow God's path. Anyway, we're so stupid sometimes.

He was 85, she was 65. And they were like two teenagers in love, you know. And he'd go past and bump her with his elbow.

And she'd look at him and she'd pinch him. And then he'd go by and hit her on this side. And got down around to this side.

But not all day long, you know. And one day she and I were doing the dishes. And he'd gone out to dawn.

I didn't know he was up a ladder putting on stone. When he's 85 years old, you know. So we're here and it's morning.

All of a sudden the ladder goes past the window like this. And he's hanging on for dear life. It's so good to see you.

He started to cry. I miss my beloved wife. I miss her so much.

You don't see much of that today, you know. I remember recently about a case where this guy died. He had a lot of money.

But he never said anything to his wife. And so now she's got to take care of all this. And it is a mess.

And she had to hire a lawyer. She had to hire another lawyer. And one day she said to him, Mom, you know, the way things are going, I sometimes wish my husband hadn't died.

Was there something wrong? I've heard people argue fiercely that there was absolutely nothing wrong with Joel. But you know, chapters 29 to 31, there are 96 verses. And there's 190 references in those verses to I, me.

I was eyes to the blind. Joel did. Now, listen.

Just take one of those statements. My righteousness, I hold it fast. He had a meeting with God, you know. He had a revival, really, is what happened. No more of this stuff. My righteousness, I hold it fast.

I will not let it go. We all offend. James tells us that.

We all offend. We all offend. Anyway.

God is good. We're told the Lord's hand is not firm, that he cannot say, that his ear is thick or heavy, that he can't hear. The problem is my sins.

They get in the way. And they prevent God from doing what he can do, and so often what he wants to do, but cannot, because of our sins. All right.

A man told me one time, he said, you know, I have a problem. So what's new? He said, I can pray in our church, and the pastor told me to pray, and I haven't stopped praying. He said, if it's a big rally, a thousand people, I can pray like, no problem at all.

He said, but if my wife's in the crowd, I can't pray. Why is that? I said, you're a hypocrite, and she knows it, and you know it, right? And so he got that straightened. And one preacher told me one time, he said, you know, I'm getting blackouts, and I used to get them once every... And I shot up a prayer, and the Lord showed me what to do, and said, well, how was your attitude to your wife? And he looked at me and said, well, I think I married the wrong girl.

She's a wonderful person, we've got great kids, but I think I married the wrong girl, and I've been blaming her. And so we talked about that, and then he broke before God, and he got his life straightened out, you know, and made things right for his wife in the black time. God was dealing with him, and he needed to be dealt with.

You've got to have, I mean, wives and husbands, this has got to be dealt with, and in so many cases, it isn't, you know. And so they're mad at each other, and they don't even have a reason. You don't have to have a reason to be mad, you know.

Did you know that? Some people are just born mad, and they'll likely die mad too. Okay. I remember one time, a fellow came to me after a meeting, and he said, my wife and I were in a missionary meeting recently, and they gave an appeal for people who give themselves a full-time missionary work to come forward, and my wife and I talked, well, yeah, we should maybe be doing something like that, so they went forward.

And I said, that's nice, what's the problem? And he said, the problem is we can't go to any mission field. And I said, why not? He said, well, we're hoped on pornography. And he said, I got into it first, and then I got my wife into it, and now we're watching the dirtiest films we can find, the rottenest books and stuff.

We read it all. And I said, don't you want to get out of this? And he said, no, I don't. He said, I'm enjoying it too much.

And I said, before you go, let me tell you one thing. Every time you watch that rotten junk, you're forcing the Christ who lives in you to watch it with you. Did you ever think of that? You know what happened? He fell flat face on the floor and just bawled for half an hour.

And he kept saying, dear God, I didn't understand, God, I didn't know this, and I never thought of this, and please forgive me. And then not long after I went to Bible college, and I think I'm a mission field today. God can do it.

A case like that in Edmonton only was different. But this guy was a pastor, not of the church we were holding meetings in, the Beulah Alliance, he was from another alliance church. One of these days I'm going to fall, and I'll be on a ministry, and I'll lose my wife.

I don't know what to do with it. He said, I think I've got demons. Well, we checked out.

He didn't have demons, you know. Just a demon called self, you know. That's what he had.

So we talked to him. He really meant business. I had a song reader with me.

And he knelt on a chair and he started to pray. And people, his body began to snap back and forth. I thought he'd break in two.

He was crying to God. And all he did, he started to laugh. And you'd hear the chains hit the floor, almost.

When he got to the seat, he started laughing and crying. It was God, and they knew it, you know. So he said, I want to give my testimony.

Well, he said, listen, if you give your testimony tomorrow night, don't mention the porno stuff. That's not, you know the Bible says you're not to speak of some things that are not. He said, OK, I'll be careful about that.

So the next night he told us, he said, I'm going to sing my testimony. OK. So, the guy taping the tapes, I talked to him before the meeting and I said, now, I want you to tape everything.

Now this guy gets up to sing. And the song was, Oh, every day they fix my choice. I'm thinking of my Savior and my God.

Well, may this glory, whatever, God came. The whole congregation was shaking. Everybody started to weep, you know.

God was there. And he could sing after a bit and he got this place, now rest my long divided heart, fixed. We just sat there crying.

And I thought, isn't this wonderful? I got this on tape. I talked to the tape director, I said, I hope you got everything. No, I said, I just got your sermon.

I said, what? Don't you remember the film meeting you sat there and I stood there and I asked you to stay there and he said, I don't remember that. I said, okay, forget about it. I walked away chattering on my teeth, you know.

I said, get on your knees. He said, I didn't want to go tonight. I was just for this meeting tonight, you know.

So, and I thank God for that. I can never forget it. I tell you, the power of God is that God was singing, you know.

But he really met with God. he got the whole thing cleaned up by the grace of God. Sometimes we want 50%, you know.

We don't want to go all the way to go 50%. Well, maybe to 70%. Come on.

But 100%, that's how God wants it. He wants it to be 100%. You know, when the Israelites were escaping from Egypt and the Egyptian army made the mistake of chasing them on chariots and when the chariots were all in the mud there, then it says the Lord took the wheels off.

He must have had a lot of fun doing that, you know. Just pulling the wheels off the chariots, you know. Let me tell you something, sometimes God does the same to you and me to our chariots.

He pulls the wheels off and it's hard going, you know. And He does that to get our attention. So we listen.

He's got something to say. He always has. And we need to listen to what He's saying.

You know how David said, Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight. At the same time, it says, in 2 Samuel 12, By this deed, you have sinned to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. The sword will never leave your house.

You can be forgiven, but there's some things that can't be changed even after you're forgiven when you sin against God. What are you doing? The Bible says you're praising the wicked. You don't have to do it with words.

You just have to forsake the law of God. Then you're praising the wicked because that's how they live. That's what they think.

So keep the law and contend with the wicked is what they should be doing as Christians. As far as I'm concerned, I think unbelief is probably the worst problem we have as Christian believers. It's called an evil heart.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. When you get into the Bible more, spend more time with the word of God. For years I've been studying 12 chapters a day.

Don't follow my example. You might want to know. But anyway, lately, God has been putting such a burden on my heart.

I've been reading sometimes 30 chapters a day. Making notes and stuff, you know. You can't get too much.

But we need to spend all the time to see what it says. Learn it. And share it.

Live it. And God will bless us. What I was really thinking about for tonight was simply just a prayer.

Unbelief and all these other evil things that come from unbelief. You know how often Moses had to deal with Israel. Normally he just sat on his face on the ground.

I suppose he raised his hand on high to let God know what he was doing. They were constantly filled with unbelief. No nation ever had the demonstrations of the... What did they do with it? How did they handle it? They doubted and doubted and doubted and doubted.

It's a wonder that God didn't wipe them. He threatened to do it. And Moses talked about it.

He couldn't believe that Christ has come. Christ hadn't come in those days. Now we have the completed Bible.

They have parts of the Old Testament there. So we have to look at it a little differently. Take heed brethren Christians.

Take heed brethren. Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily as it's called today.

Lest any of you be hardened. The remedy is exhorting one another. I'm not going to ask the question I have done it occasionally.

I've asked this kind of a question. How many of you Christians have exhorted another believer in Christ in the last 12 months and not a single hand goes up? There's a lot said about it in the Bible you know. We just don't do that.

What does it say in Hebrews 3? Lest any of you be hardened through the Lord's upon us a sin. It's an antidote. One of the sweet things that would happen to me was in some meetings in the states.

I stayed with this preacher who had a room for the prophet and that's where I was staying and he had a bunch of kids. The best order of order of of order of of order of order order order of of of order of of this

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