

Prayer - Founded on the Law and the Gospel

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, supplication, and intercession in persuading men to be saved and demonstrating God's power and glory.

Duration: 44:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 6:4, Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 1:8, 1 Timothy 2:1

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prayer in the church. He shares a story of a pastor who was struggling to see any results in his ministry until he called on a group of praying men to intercede. After their prayers, the church saw a significant increase in attendance and salvations. The preacher urges Christians to learn from this example and embrace a Book of Acts type of Christianity, where prayer is central. He also shares another story of a couple who prayed daily and believed for the salvation of their relatives, eventually seeing their prayers answered and their church growing. The sermon highlights the power of believing prayer and encourages believers to prioritize prayer in their lives.

Transcript

1st Timothy chapter 1, and I'll read from verse 8, and I'll not read the entire chapter, we'll read so far and then read a few verses from chapter 2. So the Apostle Paul says, but we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully, knowing this that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for homosexuals, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. And then drop down to chapter 2 verse 1. I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 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 unto the

knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, I speak the truth in Christ and lie not a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I will therefore that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Our Father do guide us in our meditation on this particular portion of your word.

We ask Lord God that you would you would indeed be our teacher, because who teaches like him so we read. And refresh and bless our hearts dear God and and lead us deeper we pray as we were just singing. Lead us deeper Father in the school of prayer for Christ's glory.

Amen. The printed title of the message I'm to bring was not entirely correct. It's not prayer founded on the law and prophets, but prayer founded on the law and gospel.

As evangelicals we sometimes feel, oft times I think, we feel that the law really has no purpose any longer and yet Paul asks and answers the question, do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid. Yea he says we establish the law. And here we're told that the law is good if a man use it rightly.

It's good. And Romans chapter 7 he tells us that the commandment is holy and just and good. He even says that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

And Paul tells us that if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily in truth righteousness should have been by the law. But then in Romans 8 what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned or judged sin in the flesh that the righteousness or requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now we understand the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. The Puritans used to talk about the law work. They call it the law work.

And they always preach law before they preach gospel. Spurgeon did the same. Finney did the same.

These people felt that there couldn't be an effective gospel work done if there was not first of all a law work done. Because you see as far as the mass of mankind are concerned it's still true there is no fear of God before their eyes. And men must realize their loss before they can be saved.

And the law is there to show men they're condemned and they're lost. And it does something in our hearts also because when you understand what the law of God is saying and realize it's binding on the entire world, that there is a hell to shun. That God is angry with the wicked every day.

That the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. So then with Paul we say, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. And I might say something else, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we pray for men.

Because part of persuading is praying. So that the persuading will come in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Paul once said, our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

And you became followers of us and of the Lord having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit. So in some cases the gospel, the word of God, comes in word only. But when it's backed up by

believing prayer, it comes in power also.

Now whenever you have in the word of God the word therefore, you have to go back in the context. Because he's making an appeal on the basis of something he's already discussed. And I'm thinking as a text of 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, I exhort therefore.

And that automatically projects us back into chapter 1. He's going to make a strong appeal now for prayer. But it's based on something he's already been saying in chapter 1. And we discover it's based on the law and the gospel. We should pray for men because they're lost.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one. In Psalm 14 in Romans chapter 3, the word none occurs four times and the word all occurs four times.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, no not one. There is none that seeks after God.

They are all gone out of the way. There is none righteous, no not one. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's true for your brother, your sister, your son or daughter, your neighbor, your employee or your employer. And because this is so, God wants us to pray. A well-known author, I was so blessed in reading this and I've shared it many times, this man, he and his wife, they got concerned because they had so many relatives that were not Christians.

So they decided that what they would do is this. They would preach the gospel to these relatives. They made a list of 37 names.

And they went to all these relatives and preached the gospel and nobody got saved. As a matter of fact some of them got very angry, some of them showed them the door, some were very upset. But nobody found Christ.

What do we do now, they said between themselves. Here's what they did. They decided they would pray daily.

And listen to the next word, believingly. For these 37 relatives, and they never missed a day, and six years later 27 were converted. And they never led one of them to Jesus Christ, but they prayed in faith.

All right, men are lost. And you know if you've ever tried to win people to Christ, how hard it is to help men to see that they're lost. I sat once with a pastor in an air terminal and an Air Force fellow sat down beside him and he began to talk about this and that.

A young man, probably not more than 20. And I knew the pastor, at least I was sure he would eventually preach the gospel to him, so I was silently praying. I couldn't help but hear what went on.

And finally the pastor said, now I am a pastor and I would like very much to pray for you, do you mind if I pray for you? And the fellow said, no go ahead. So the pastor prayed for him. And in the middle of his prayer he stopped and said, don't you think it would be a good thing if you were to pray this little wee prayer, Jesus come into my heart? He said, yeah, I guess so, sure, sure, I'll do that.

He said, okay, say it, Jesus come into my heart. And the kid said, Jesus come into my heart? And the preacher clapped him on the back and said, you're saved, brother, you're saved. And I felt sick.

And there was nothing I could do about it, without creating some embarrassment. There was no law work. Sure the boy was lost and sure the pastor knew it, but it wasn't exactly the way to go about it.

All right, because men are lost and because God has a way of saving them, he wants us to pray. You notice what Paul said here, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. He talked about himself being a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Somebody has said that Paul was probably the most prayed for person in the British or in the Roman Empire, because Jesus Christ had taught the disciples, pray for those that spitefully use you and persecute you. And there's a verse in Psalms that says that God ordains his arrows against the persecutors. And Paul was full of the arrows of God, winged into his heart through the prayers of his people.

No wonder he got saved in that dramatic, marvelous way that he was. Christ came to save sinners. Men are lost.

Men can be saved. Therefore I exhort that men pray everywhere. He said that in verse 8. Verse 1, I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercession of thanks, intercession and giving of thanks be made for all men.

Because, I say, men are lost. Religious perhaps, but lost. Cultured, civilized, polite, kind, even merciful, and perhaps loving, but lost unless they're born again.

And you notice something here. He says the law is good, but the gospel is glorious. Because it saves men from the condemnation that the law of God brings.

Because of these things, brethren, God wants us to be men and women of prayer. I exhort therefore that first of all, no matter what translation you you're reading from, it may not say it exactly this way in your translation, but if you look at it in context, it's really saying, let's put prayer first. Let's make prayer first.

I was in Scotland several years ago and they told me that the fastest growing church in the British Isles is a church in Tyneside, England. I never had a chance to get there. At that particular time, three, four years ago, they were running around 800 Sunday morning.

And a remarkable thing about the church was this, that they were running 800 Sunday evening. Now I get into a lot of churches in North America and other countries as well, and in North America at least, I don't suppose there's one church in a thousand that has as big a crowd Sunday evening as they have Sunday morning. Now it used to be before the advent of TV the big crowd was Sunday evening and the smaller crowd was Sunday morning, but it's not that way, it hasn't been for many years.

But this church has as big a crowd Sunday evening as it has Sunday morning, and the church is growing constantly. And here's the secret, they have as big a crowd Wednesday night at the prayer meeting as they have Sunday morning. When I first read that or heard that, I just had to shout hallelujah.

At least there's one church that believes God. I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. Why? Because God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, that's why.

He explains that in the verses that follow. What would the difference be between supplication and prayer? The idea in supplication is of course an inferior talking to a superior, but it's not just that, because it speaks of Jesus supplicating. Daniel said, I made my supplication.

Did you notice that when Daniel made his supplication it was principally confession of sin? He not only confessed his own sins, he identified himself with the sins of the nation. I just finished some meetings in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. I came into the motel room late one night a few days ago.

I thought there might be some late news, and I just pulled a thing on the TV set, and it was the Playboy Channel. I didn't know people, I didn't know, because I never watched that kind of stuff. I didn't know what kind of absolute rotten filth was being fed into Canadian homes until I saw that program.

About 30 people in a room, an orgy, nobody with their clothes on, homosexuals, lesbians, fornicators, adulterers, the whole thing. And that's being fed into our homes in Canada, and I had to get down on my knees and say, God, the sins of my people, my nation, I have to identify myself in that way, with the dear people we need a revival in the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't know how that kind of stuff ever got into our country, but it's there.

I thought it was just something related to the motel, and discovered, oh no, anybody with cable TV can tune in on the Playboy Channel. And I don't have the slightest doubt that many Christians are doing it. I know some Christians are doing it.

I know that. Supplication. When we come to God, dear people, we must begin by confessing sin.

Do you remember when it tells us, when God invites us in Hebrews 4.16 to come boldly to the throne of grace? Why? What's the first thing he mentions? That we might obtain mercy. And that has to do with sin. And after that, to find grace to help in time of need.

But before we find the grace to help, we must find mercy for our sin. Sins of omission, sins of commission, whatever they are. Oh, search me, oh God, and know my heart.

Did you ever read Psalm 139 carefully? Did you ever notice how it starts? We all know how it ends. Search me, oh God, and know my heart. Try me, know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

That's how it ends. How does it start? Oh, Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Now, if that's true, why does it end with this prayer? Because, dear people, I need to know what God found out when he searched me.

And I want to know how I look to God. I don't want to go on the way I am because I may be living and walking in a fool's paradise. I may think things are great when things are awful.

I knew of a couple who went home from a revival meeting. They were somewhat stirred by what they'd heard. So he said to his wife, Honey, do you know anything wrong in my life? Be absolutely honest and tell me if you know.

And she said, No, I think you're a perfect husband and a great Christian. I don't know of anything wrong in your heart. And then she said, You tell me now if you know anything wrong with me.

He said, I feel the same about you. I think you're absolutely perfect. You're a fantastic wife and a great Christian.

So then the two of them decided on the basis of this that they didn't need revival. I thought to myself, What would have happened if they'd asked God to search their heart? You know, Job was described in the opening chapters of his book as being a just man, an upright man, one that feared God and turned away from evil, a perfect man. And don't forget that he knew it.

My righteousness I hold fast. I will not let it go. That's what he said.

I was eyes to the blind and I was feet to the lame and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy and I broke the jaws of the wicked and plucked the spore out of their teeth and I brought the naked to my house and clothed them. And then the same man, when God was through speaking to him out of the whirlwind, the same man said, Behold, I am vile. He did not say, I have done some vile things.

He said, I am evil. I am vile. And then he said, the same man said, I abhor myself.

He didn't say, I abhor some things I've done. I abhor myself. I repent in dust and ashes.

Do you want an echo of that in the New Testament? Peter in a fishing boat. He hears Jesus teaching. It's possibly the first time he met him.

And then Jesus tells him to let down the nets and they catch a great draft of fishes. Jesus knees and said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. James 4.8 says, Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. That's God's recipe for personal revival, dear people, and that's where prayer starts. Don't ever come in the presence of God without asking God to search your heart.

You draw near to God and he'll draw near to you. And the first thing he says is, Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts. Supplication.

I made my supplication unto the Lord. O God, we have done wickedly. Supplications, prayers, well I suppose we understand that it's asking God to do this, to do that.

That's quite legitimate. It isn't wrong to pray for yourself. It isn't wrong to pray for your family.

Just make sure that you pray this way for the glory of God and for the good of others. That's all I think that God would require. Intercession, of course, that's praying for other people.

And certainly we all should spend some time at least daily on behalf of others that don't know enough to pray for themselves. I mean, the average person doesn't. Something beautiful happened in a church in Winnipeg a while ago.

A nephew of mine is one of the two pastors of that church. It's a fast-growing church and everything's based on prayer. And God is answering.

There's not a week goes by that people aren't one to Christ. The church is three years old. They're running now more than 200 Sunday mornings.

This summer they have to enlarge their building. I'll demonstrate something here, illustrate something. One of the men in the church, one of the two pastors who then worked for an insurance company, he led his secretary to Christ.

Her husband was an atheist. I met him one time. Hard, cold, bitter, you couldn't do anything with him.

So all the church did was pray. And one day he phoned up my nephew Gary and said, Gary, I want to talk about this God thing. I don't believe in God.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not about to believe in God, but I'd like to talk about it. So he said, come on over.

And they sparred for a while and then Gary said he realized that they weren't getting anywhere. So he said to this man, do you mind if I pray right now that God will speak to your heart? Well, his answer was, well, you know, there's nobody out there. There's no one out there.

How can you speak to my heart? But go ahead. So he prayed and he said, did God speak to your heart? Now, by the way, you don't learn this in Bible school. He said, do you mind if I pray again? No, he said, go ahead and pray.

So he prayed the second time. Then he said, did God speak to your heart? He said, no, nobody spoke to my heart. There's nobody out there.

So Gary said, do you mind if I pray the third time? You know, Paul prayed three times, so I guess maybe he thought, I don't know if that's the basis on which he prayed the third time. But he prayed the third time. He said, Ray, did God speak to your heart? And Ray said, there's a God out there.

He spoke to my heart. And he turned and dropped on his knees and he prayed for hours and he got saved. He's deeply involved in soul winning now, thank God.

There's more to the story than I've told this afternoon. But it's a praying church. There's many things of this kind that have been happening there because this church has learned to put God first by putting prayer first.

I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, pray for others to be saved, and giving of thanks. Are you a thankful person? You know, we sing that song, come you thankful people, come raise the song of harvest home. So we sing it once a year.

The word of God says in Colossians chapter 2, abounding therein with thanksgiving. You know, I found when I start to thank God, there's no end to it. Did you ever thank God that you had two eyes? I've seen some people with no eyes.

Ever thank God for two hands? I've seen people with no hands. Ever thank God for feet to walk on? I've seen people with no feet, especially in foreign countries, some of these things. Are you really thankful for the house you live in? In India, I've seen people sleeping on the streets, sleeping under carts.

My wife and I in Madras, one time we walked along and there was a dead woman lying there, and there was a house. If you want to call it a house, there was a fence here, and some poles stuck up, and some cardboard stuck on top of the poles, and there was about six people living under this thing, and I suppose she belonged to them, but she died the night before. She never made it through the night because she never had enough to eat.

Ever thank God for the things we have? Thank God you can think, you can see, you can talk, you can walk. God daily loads us with benefits. The Lord is good to all.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Ever thank God that the sky is blue? I was in the hospital in Saskatoon several years ago, and I got tired of counting the cars in the parking lot, you know. I spent a lot of time reading the Bible and praying, but then there was some other time.

And one day I was lying there and I saw the clouds, and God flashed into my mind that verse that says, The clouds are the dust of God's feet. And I had one of the most glorious times in my life. As a matter of fact, I got a message out of it.

The clouds are the dust of God's feet. There are clouds in every country in the world. Even the communists can't build fences high enough to keep the clouds out, and so they can't keep God out either.

The clouds are there even during the night when I'm sleeping, so God is always there. And there must have been 12 or 15 things like this. I just lay there in my hospital bed, praising God as thought after thought after thought flashed into my mind.

I'm sure from the blessed Spirit of God. Oh, dear people, how thankful we ought to be. For whatever you have, sure you don't have as much as some, but you've got a lot more than others.

And a poor man in Canada would be a rich man. In many countries of the world today, even in the Philippines, I was there recently, some of you know, we asked some Christian girls who were domestics what they were being paid, and it was the equivalent of two dollars a week. And they were trying to send some of that money back to their parents who had nothing to live on.

You know that Canada is the most strike-ridden country in the world, worse than Italy now. And our economy is going to get better because they don't deal with the problems, it's our selfishness, and people have gotten into the church of God. Abounding therein with thanksgiving, do all things without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless as sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

There's nothing that impresses the world so much as a thankful person. Do you know what a specialist said to me one time? I had to see him, and I got sharing Christ with him, and he called the girl in from the room outside, and he said, hey, just lock the doors, close the door, don't bother us because we're talking about an important thing. Bring us in some tea and cookies.

So we had tea and cookies. I don't drink tea, but that day I did. And I talked about the Lord, and I went as far as I could.

He didn't get saved, I wish I could say he did. But do you know what he told me? He said, I spent two or three years in many different countries of the world. He was from England.

And he said, Canada is the most marvelous country I've ever been in. Let me just remind you that one-half of all the lakes in the world are in Canada. Did you know that? Did you know there's more oil in the Athabasca tar sands than in all the oil deposits in the world put together? I saw the figures a while ago.

If the figure for the world is six, the figure for Athabasca is 11, and 75% is recoverable. That's all the Arab countries and Soviet Russia and the United States of America, the whole thing put together, we've got almost twice as many oil, twice as much oil in the Athabasca tar sands alone. And why did God give all this? And this specialist, he was talking about these things, and then he said, the beauty, the mountains, the lakes, the room, what is it, six to a square kilometer population density for Canada, something like that? I've been in countries where it's 700.

Bangladesh, 89 million people, jammed in an area you could stick in the corner of Saskatchewan, 40,000 square miles. Saskatchewan's got probably 250,000 square miles. 89 million people, there's no hope at all.

This specialist said, but Mr. MacLeod, I have never in my life been in a country where the people complain the way they do in Canada. And then you know what he said? He said, now it's rubbing off on me, and I'm not satisfied. And dear people, we find this virus in the church of God.

Get a little scratch in your car, and then you're not at God for a month. I mean, some Christians are, you know. It's so evil.

Oh, abounding therein with thanksgiving, I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 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 unto the knowledge of the truth. For there's one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

Then he comes to another therefore. He's summing it all up again in verse 8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere. Literally, that the men pray everywhere.

The next verse says, in like manner that the women also adorn themselves in modest clothing. So men, he's talking to you. Men, we should show our wives how to pray.

I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Did you ever hear about the praying men of Barbus? Duncan Campbell told us about them in the Hebrides revival. Those men would come home from their jobs, have supper, go to bed, and sleep until nine o'clock at night, get up at nine o'clock and pray through till two o'clock in the morning, go to bed and sleep until seven, get up and have breakfast and go to their jobs.

That was their prayer program for years. They were known as the praying men. This came out of the revival there.

And Duncan Campbell told me he'd gone to the Isle of Skye to reopen a church that had been closed for years, and I was really interested because the McLeod clan came from the Isle of Skye, the Misty Isles they call it. By the way, it's a beautiful island. And so Sunday night he had five people in the church, and Monday night he had five people, and Tuesday night he had five people, and nobody was getting saved.

Nothing was happening. So he got a message across to the praying men and said, please take this burden on your hearts. And the first night after those men had prayed the night through, there were 200 in the church.

And he did tell me how many were saved, but I forget now how many there were. Christian people, when will we learn to move the arm that moves the world through believing prayer? I will therefore that men pray everywhere. Why don't we do that? I remember hearing of some men, they went to a restaurant with a missionary.

And when it came time to eat, the missionary noticed that most men sort of scratched their forehead like this and then they ate. I mean, that was their way of saying prayer. So you know what he did? He got off his seat and he turned and he knelt at his chair, and then he began to storm heaven in a stentorian voice.

So everybody in the restaurant was looking at these people, and the pastors were so embarrassed. And he prayed on and on and on and on, and finally finished and sat down, and the pastor said, do you always pray that way? He said, no. Do you always pray this way? I thought it was a fitting rebuke.

I remember when I was a very young pastor, and a Welsh lady in Brittle, Manitoba came to see me. She wanted to be saved, because she'd been through the Welsh revival. She was an Anglican, but she'd been through the Welsh revival as a young person, and she had seen these Christians meeting on the street, and getting on their knees, and praying on the sidewalks.

And she said, I've known all these years that I don't have what those people had, and I want to have what they had. That was common then. Christians would meet.

They couldn't part without praying. We can today, which doesn't speak too well for the state of our spirituality. You know, that kind of Christianity, which has to be begged to attend its own prayer meeting to its people, it's on the way out.

It'll never stand up to the philosophical and other rough-and-tumble we're entering in today. The shadows are lengthening, the skies are getting darker, and we're going to have to have a Book of Acts type of Christianity, and we're going to have to learn again how to pray. You know, in the last two years I've been in five churches.

I don't like to use this phrase, it's kind of crude, and it's not too spiritual, but I'll use it anyway. I've been in five churches that had a handle on God. Let me tell you about one church.

I preached Sunday morning. There were 300 people there. The church was six years old.

I didn't give an invitation. The minute I closed in prayer, there was 30 people came and surrounded me at the front, and they fired questions at me about the Word of God for maybe, I don't know, an hour. And then when we finished, they said, now let's pray.

And everybody in that group prayed. It was a beautiful experience. It's the only time it's ever happened.

But it happened. One of these five churches was having prayer meetings at four o'clock every morning. All five of these churches, prayer was the heart of everything.

It would be an exaggeration to say, but it's fairly close to the truth, they wouldn't even open the door without having a prayer meeting first. Literally pray without ceasing and everything give thanks. One of

those churches had 11 pastors, Nashville, Tennessee.

I just had a letter the other day from some people that were tremendously blessed at that particular time. What a joy to be there and to sense the spirit of prayer. That was a young church too.

And you know, one of the things that happened there, they had a heart and compassion for souls born of prayer, of course. And some people from Thailand came to Nashville, I think 250 of them altogether. The government had arranged this, and the city of Nashville played host to them for a week or so, and they gave them all a few dollars and turned them loose.

And they didn't know the language. They didn't have any jobs or skills. And this church heard about it.

And they went and contacted those people. They got the whole group of them together and brought them to their church and said, we want to look after you. We'll teach you how to talk the language.

We'll try and get you jobs. They got them a Thai pastor finally. I'll tell you, they might have been blessed when I was there, but I'll tell you, I was blessed more than they were.

Just to be in this kind of an atmosphere of prayer, I say again, moving the arm through prayer, the arm that moves the world. So I exhort therefore that first of all, people, why is it last of all? Why does our prayer life languish? I guess it's because we feel we can pay the bills without God, and we probably can, at least in some situations. But if our churches are going to be what God wants them to be, we're going to have to get back to first causes.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. We don't do it that way. We give ourselves continually to the ministry of the word and prayer.

Let's do it the Bible way. Prayer and the ministry of the word. I read an article in an African publication, and I'm sure some of you have heard me give this illustration before.

Please pardon me. A fellow found Christ in Africa. Shortly after, went to the missionaries and said, give me a church.

God's called me to be a pastor. The missionaries had a little private meeting. This guy's just a young convert.

We can't give him a church. And besides, they knew him well enough to know he never had it up here. He just didn't have it.

So they said, come back and see us in three months. Well, he came back in three months. And they said, well, now we've been thinking about it and praying about it.

We're not clear yet. Come back in six months. So he came back in six months, and they kept putting him off and putting him off, and he kept coming back.

So finally, the rascally missionary decided on a certain course of action, and here's what they did. They had a church that could have written its own history of the wars of the Lord, and they were reduced to 12 people. So they decided, we'll give him this church, we'll make him the pastor, and of course the church will go belly up.

Then we'll be able to say to him, look, you're not called to be a pastor. See, the church failed under your leadership. So that's what they did.

When the article was written, he was still the church, and the church had 5,000 members. But what had happened? He knew his weakness, and every now and then he would say to the church, God is calling me away to pray. I do not know when I will be back.

He would take a little sack of food, he'd found a creek back in the bush somewhere, and a cave. And he'd go into the cave with a sack of food and his Bible, and he'd stay there. Sometimes he was gone three weeks.

Sometimes he'd fast for a whole week, and then he'd eat from his sack and drink from the brook, and call upon God by the hour. And that was the secret of it all. It wasn't the program.

It was God that came in through prayer. Am I speaking to your heart? What do you think about it? Men, what are you going to do with that? I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, dealing with sin as we saw before, without wrath, not praying that God will knock some people down because they're such stubborn sinners, or doubting, but praying in faith. And I close.

Mark 11 24. What things soever you desire when you pray, believe that you receive them. It's in the past tense, really.

Believe that you receive them, and you shall have them. You shall have them.

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