

(Deeper Waters) Session 4 - Prayer

by David Ravenhill

Developing a consistent prayer life is essential for effective spiritual warfare and living a life surrendered to God.

Duration: 1:34:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:1-17, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Ephesians 1:17

Topics: "Worship Priority", "Faithful Service"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of serving God and the different areas of ministry. He emphasizes the importance of worship as the first priority in serving God. The speaker references Luke 17:7, where Jesus talks about a slave who is expected to serve his master before taking care of his own needs. The sermon also touches on the challenges faced by new believers when sharing their faith with skeptical family and friends. Overall, the message encourages believers to prioritize worship and faithfully serve God in both evangelism and pastoral ministry.

Transcript

You can either serve the kingdom of God or Babylon that is going to crash and fall, that's your choice. One kingdom will last forever, with the increase of his government there will be no end, the whole world system is going to crash, the whole world is going to cry out, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. And the Bible says the people of God are going to rejoice.

I wonder if we could honestly rejoice if we heard that Wall Street collapsed tomorrow and everything that we longed for and all the luxuries and everything else were not available. That's what the Bible says, it's supposed to happen. Anyway, I want to shift gears this morning a little bit and talk to you about prayer.

I believe it was Spurgeon that says the locusts that have devoured the church, or the lack of personal prayer are the locusts that have devoured the church. You're familiar with the saying that if you give somebody a fish, you feed him for a day, if you teach him to fish, he can feed himself for life. I think we could take that and adapt it to prayer and say you can pray for somebody and meet their need, or you can teach them to pray and they can meet God the rest of their life.

And so, I have been challenged to pray, I guess, ever since I saw my father praying. And yet, in one sense, he never taught me how to pray, I just observed him praying. I had to sort of struggle in that area myself.

But I want to share with you how to develop a prayer life, because I'm convinced that very few Christians have a consistent prayer life. And if you open your Bible, first of all, to 1 Samuel chapter 13, there is an interesting story here that I want to apply to prayer. As far as I know, this is the only time this story is mentioned in the Bible.

I wish we had more details, but it tells us that the Philistines came up with a scheme, and that scheme was to go into the land of Israel, the people of God, and systematically eliminate the blacksmith shop. The Bible doesn't tell us how long it took or how they actually did it, whether they burned them to the ground or whether they bought them out, some sort of big consortium or whatever. But over a period of time, every single blacksmith shop in the land of Israel was totally annihilated, to the point where Israel was dependent upon the Philistines to fix all their agricultural weapons.

Every time an axe broke, they had to go down to the Philistines to get it fixed. Every time they broke a fork or some other agricultural implement, you've got them listed there, the mattocks, the forks, the axes, and the hoes, they had to run off to the Philistines to get them repaired, and the Philistines came up with a price. It was two-thirds of a shekel.

But that was not the real plan in the mind of the Philistine. It was not to undermine the agricultural effectiveness of that nation. It was far more subtle than that.

You find it there at the end of verse 19, lest the Hebrews make swords and spears. You see, the blacksmith shop was not only the place where the agricultural implements were made, but it was the place where the armory was made for the nation. They made the swords, they made the shields, they made the weapons of war.

And the Philistines, again, long before Israel ever dreamed that anything was happening, they were undermining the power of Israel. Notice what happened, verse 22, so it came about on the day of battle that neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and his son Jonathan. It's almost hard to believe that they were so effective that on the day of battle there wasn't a single sword or spear in the entire nation of Israel with the king and with his army, the only two men that had them were the king himself and his son.

I believe the greater Philistine, the devil, came up with a plan many, many years ago to undermine the effectiveness of the spiritual Israel of God, if you like, the church, and over a period of time began to systematically eliminate prayer from the house of God. Not only corporate prayer, but individual prayer. And now on the day of battle when the enemy is coming like a flood, the church is powerless to do anything about it.

We find ourselves overwhelmed as we see the enemy sweep into the land and people involved in immorality and drugs and every other sort of debase type of thing, and we look at it and say, you know, I wish I had an answer. I wish we had something that could change the situation and we find ourselves powerless. We need to get back to prayer.

The Bible says the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. And the enemy is still alive and well and again has destroyed literally prayer from the house of God, the very thing that puts us into contact with God, the very source of our power and our authority has been taken from us. And so I want to challenge you this morning to begin to pray.

I am indebted to two men in my life, my father, who I've already mentioned, and then a wonderful man of God that I had the privilege of working with for 15 years in New Zealand. He's now gone to be with the Lord, a man by the name of Peter Morrill. We had a church that grew from about 400 to 1800.

It was the largest church in New Zealand for at least some period of time. It was a city church right in the heart of Christ Church, big old theater building, four stories high, and like any city church, there were always needs, people coming, wanting counsel, and we had a lot of activities going on, but Peter would insist that the staff pray. And periodically the phone would ring and I would get a call from the senior pastor and he would say, David, I'm coming into town today.

He used to very seldom come into the church. He didn't have an office in the church. He had an office in the back of his bedroom that was maybe six by six at the most.

It had a little window in it and an easy chair, and then the rest of it was lined with books and we used to sort of nickname it the Holy of Holies. But he spent hours in there fasting and praying. He was the skinniest man I think I've ever, ever met.

He wore long johns year round. I mean, literally, he was so skinny. And he fasted and prayed most of his life.

But again, the phone would ring and he would say, I'm coming into town, how about going out for a milkshake? And everybody on staff, there were six full-time pastors. We all knew what a milkshake was with Brother Peter. We would go down from the fourth floor, walk down into the center of town, find a little coffee shop somewhere, find a table somewhere in the back, and he would begin to grill us a little bit as to how we were doing.

He'd talk about our marriage, how you and Nancy getting along. And you know, you couldn't just sort of give him pat answers. He had a way of sort of weaseling his way in, pointing that bony finger, come on now, how are things really going? But somewhere in the course of that conversation, you could be guaranteed he would ask this question, how's your prayer life? And I heard him tell me many, many, many, many times, countless times, I don't ever want you coming into the office until you've spent at least an hour on your face before God.

Again, there was always activity going on at the office. There was always things that we could do. But I could go into that office at 10 o'clock in the morning or 12 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

He really didn't care as long as he knew I was seeking God. He understood that ministry flows out of relationship. And he was a real stickler when it came to putting God first.

And I had a little room at the back of my garage. I had to go out of the house and into the garage. And there was a little room that when we bought the house just had paint cans and things in it.

It was maybe eight feet long and about five feet wide at the most. And I sort of gutted the inside of it and put a carpet down there and put a door on it. And that was my closet.

And I used to go in there and fall on my face before God and at least get my hour in every day before going to the church office. By the grace of God, I've maintained that over the years. And you could call my secretary when I was pastoring and she would tell you I was always in at the church before eight o'clock in the morning.

And she knew that there were to be no telephone calls, no interruptions at least until sometime after nine o'clock. We need to get back to prayer. And so that's what I want to talk to you about is the area of prayer.

Luke 18 verse 1 says, men ought always to pray and not to faint. It doesn't say men ought sometimes to pray, but always to pray. God's intention is that we maintain a prayer life constantly.

1 Thessalonians 5 verse 17, pray without ceasing. That doesn't mean that you are on your face 24 hours a day, but you're in fellowship, you're in communion. That if you're in some sort of crisis like Nehemiah who came into the presence of the king and he recognized that things weren't going well, Nehemiah received word of the devastation of his own people and so on.

It was showing on his countenance and that was not a good thing to be in the presence of the king and look sad. So he shoots up a quick prayer, God help me right now. You know that's praying without ceasing.

But then there are also times when we just seem to, we need to get alone with God. But we should be in that place of constant prayer, constant fellowship, constant communion. It's like being in love.

You may not be with your lover, but you're constantly thinking about her or him and anticipating when you can get together and so on and they're constantly in your mind. You may be driving the UPS truck or whatever it is, but you're thinking about your girlfriend or your fiance and so on. We've got to have that sort of relationship, if you like, with the Lord.

Mark 11 verse 17, my house shall be called a house of prayer. Acts 2 verse 42, they were continually devoting themselves to prayer, to the apostles' teaching and so on. Romans 12 and verse 12 talks about being devoted to prayer.

And so we are exhorted all the way through the word of God to be in a place of prayer, to constantly be in fellowship and communion and intimacy with God. Now the first thing we need to know about prayer is that God is for us. In fact, there are three essentials if we're going to get anywhere in prayer.

We need to know God's presence, God's passion, and God's power. Those three things are essential. Let me illustrate it this way.

Suppose I'm walking home at night down some back alley. I'm all alone. There's very little light.

And coming towards me is a man who towers over me. He's got one of these muscle shirts on and he's drunk and he's making all sorts of threats and so on. And I look across the street and there is a man who is even bigger than this guy.

He's greater in strength. He's greater in power. He is present.

He is powerful, but he doesn't know me from Adam. And he doesn't want to get involved in this potential conflict that is about to happen. I need somebody that is not only powerful, not only present, but somebody that is passionate towards me.

Again, the same scenario. I'm walking down the street. Here's this man coming towards me.

And immediately I think, you know, if only my friend were here. If only my friend were present right now. He's again, you know, seven feet tall, weighs 400 pounds of pure muscle.

You know, he's an expert in all the arts and so on. And he could take care of this guy in a second. The problem is, even though he is passionate towards me, even though he's my friend and he's powerful, unfortunately he's not present.

Again, the same situation. The guy is coming towards me and I look across the road and there is my friend, my lifelong friend. He is passionate.

He loves me. He would lay down his life for me. He is present.

He is passionate. But he's only three feet tall. He has no power whatsoever.

You see, you take any one of those scenarios and take one of those things out and the whole thing falls apart. We've got to believe when we get into the place of prayer that we have a God that is for us, if God be for us, who can stand against us, that he is passionate towards us. The thoughts I have concerning you are not thoughts of evil, calamity, and so on, but thoughts of good and well-being, that God, again, is for us.

He loves you. We've also got to believe that God is present. And the Bible says, I'll never leave you.

I'll never forsake you. He is a present help in time of trouble. But we've also got to believe that God is powerful.

You see, you can have a friend who is passionate and present, but if he's not powerful, in other words, he can't do anything about it, so what? Let me give you an outline here of the Lord's Prayer because in Luke 11, the disciples came to Jesus and said, teach us how to pray. And Jesus said, when you pray, pray according to this pattern, if you like. Let me give you at least the outline that the Lord quickened to me many, many years ago.

Our Father, or let me put it this way, his person, our Father, I'll go over this again, his position, which art in heaven, his preeminence, hallowed be thy name. His power, thy kingdom come. His purpose, thy will be done.

His pattern, as it is in heaven. His provision, give us this day our daily bread. His pardon, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

His protection, lead us not into temptation. His praise, for thine is the power, the kingdom, and for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Okay, I've got just a little bit of it here.

Let me go through that again because here you've got sort of an outline, here you've got a recipe, if you like, ingredients. In other words, when Jesus said, this is how to pray, he did not mean memorize this prayer and the faster you can say it, you can jump into bed or out of bed or whatever, you know. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, I can, you know, said my prayers now.

I mean, that's what Jesus said. I had to pray, so, you know. No, obviously, there's tremendous insight in this prayer.

We need to break it down. So, first of all, his person, our Father. In other words, we need, before we pray, thy will be done, we need to know something about his character, what sort of a person he is.

Wouldn't it be terrible if God was like Hitler, so to speak, and we are saying, your will be done. So, we've got to know something about his person, our Father. And take a concordance sometimes and look up what it says about God as our Father.

He's a compassionate Father. He's a merciful Father. He's an unchanging Father.

He's a Father with no variableness, no shadow of turning. He's a loving Father. He's a kind Father.

In other words, we need to know the God that we're praying to. What sort of a Father is he? And then, not only did he say our Father, but who art in heaven, his position. I've read numerous books on the Lord's Prayer, and for some reason, and I'm baffled by it, they never ever go into this particular little phrase, which art in heaven.

When I was a kid, I thought, you know, our Father which art in heaven, he's somewhere up in that black hole, and by the time my prayer gets there, even at the speed of light, you know, I'm going to be dead and gone before it returns. That God is way up in the wild blue yonder, our Father which art in heaven, that was not what God was trying to say, because heaven was always associated with the throne. We talked about the throne last night.

Swear not by heaven, it is the throne of God. Heaven is your throne. That's what Jesus said.

In other words, to the disciples, they understood that. It was rooted in the very fabric of their understanding from the Scriptures. In other words, we can have a loving, compassionate Father who is merciful and kind and all of those things, but unless he is on the throne, he is powerless.

Imagine two kids playing in the street. Here they are maybe in the city of Chicago, let's say, and, you know, for miles around them, there's nothing but a concrete jungle, and maybe there's a whole area where the building has been torn down, and it's nothing but rubble, and the kids have got to try and play ball there. And, you know, one kid says, wouldn't it be great if this whole area was turned into a park? And the other guy says, wow, yeah, that's a neat idea, I'm going to ask my dad about it.

And the other kid looks and says, what do you mean ask your dad about it? I've asked, I've sort of made statements like that to my dad, and he just laughs at me. He says, you don't know who my dad is, do you? He says, my dad's a city planner. You see, it depends where your father sits.

He may be loving, kind, merciful, compassionate, and so on, but unless he's on the throne, your prayers are not going to get answered. Our Father which art on the throne, he reigns, he rules, he sets up kings and kingdoms, he has the heart of the king in his hand, he can turn it as he does a river of water. And then, hallowed be thy name, again, his preeminence.

We need to understand that the names of God, that God is not capable of being described by one name. Names are very significant, they deal with nature, character, especially in the Scriptures when a baby was named, it had to do with the nature of that baby, the character of that baby. The closest we come to Biblical names today are nicknames.

Nicknames are really far more descriptive, aren't they? If I say to you, my friend John's coming this afternoon, it could be 20 guys walk through the door there, and you have no idea which one is my friend John. But I say, hey, my friend Big Red's coming this afternoon, and all of a sudden this guy comes through, he's about six foot six and flaming red hair, and you think, hey, that's Ravenhill's friend. And so,

nicknames are very descriptive.

God, if you like, is described by his names. One name is not sufficient. And so, do a study sometimes, hallowed be thy name.

He is the God of peace, the God of righteousness, he's our healer and provider and so on and so forth, all of those names. And then if you run out of names, if you like, or descriptions of God, then he's also the I am. And according to Rotherham's translation, he translates it, I am becoming.

He says it's an incomplete name. It's really, I am blank. Fill in the blank.

I am whatever you need. I am your peace. I am your joy.

I am your provision. I am your protection. You know, Moses says, who shall I say sent me? I am.

In other words, I'll be whatever you need, Moses. I can meet every single need. There's nothing too hard for me.

Call unto me and I will answer you. I am whatever you need. Just fill in the blank, so to speak.

You can go through this and, you know, just break it down, but notice again one other thing. It's our Father and it's give us this day our daily bread. It's important that we recognize that we cannot be selfish when it comes to prayer.

In other words, we don't sort of have a monopoly on God and he's sort of there as some great big divine ATM, so to speak, and all I've got to do is, you know, punch in and I get out what I want. No, we've got to think again more corporately. That was driven home to me a number of years ago when we were in Kansas City and we helped the church that I was involved in with Mike Bickle.

We helped sponsor a man that was working in the inner city, working with drug addicts and prostitutes and so on and so forth. And he told the story how one night he had a dream or a vision, I can't remember which now, and he saw two bums, two homeless people, sitting maybe six or eight feet apart, both in tremendous need, you know, dressed in rags and sitting on the side of the street and they were praying. And they were both praying the identical prayer, Lord, I'm hungry, give me some bread.

And he said, in this dream or this vision, all of a sudden he saw two loaves of bread tumble out of heaven and land in one guy's lap. And the guy began eating the bread and he said, Lord, both of them prayed. Why didn't you, you know, you answered this guy's need, but what about this guy's need? And the Lord said, no, I answered both needs.

And I think about it. He gave this man sufficient to meet this man's need, our Father which art in heaven, not my Father. I've never forgotten that.

You know, so often we think, boy, God's provided me with, you know, this amount of money, you know, I need the rent this month and, you know, I need 500 bucks and, boy, I got 1,000, you know. Can't believe it. And then you go to your home group and somebody's saying, you know, I don't understand it.

My rent's due tomorrow and God's given me the assurance that, you know, He's going to provide, but I've only got a matter of hours, I need 500 bucks, and I don't know what's going to happen. You know, you sort of smile and say, you know, well, I can testify God can provide, you know. But God gave you sufficient to

meet His need.

It's our Father. That takes us into a whole new dimension of prayer, doesn't it, out of the selfish realm. God doesn't want prayer just to be selfish.

One other thing, before we can effectively pray, we've got to believe that we have access. There's nothing worse than trying to get a hold of somebody only to find out you can't get through to them. You know, they've got an unlisted number or something.

I've often thought that'd be a good title for a book, you know, would God have an unlisted number? But, you know, you try and reach somebody and you get a busy signal all the time. I think one of the most misunderstood, at least to me, portions of Scripture is John 14, where Jesus said to His disciples, listen, I'm going to be leaving in a few days, basically, but I'm going to prepare a place for you, that where I am, you may be also. You know, I think there was more to that than some future place that God was preparing.

In other words, that one day when we die, we'll go to heaven, and that God is up there frantically, you know, with a construction crew trying to get all the condos finished or whatever, and, you know, postponing the rapture a little bit because there's a union strike, you know. Yeah, I mean, in other words, that's the concept that we've got in my father's house, is, you know, these incredible housing developments, and, you know, there's going to be different degrees of reward. We know that, and so, you know, some are going to be on the golf course and others are going to be in the slums.

Not quite, but, you know, in other words, we're not all going to receive the same reward in heaven. But I think Jesus was talking about something different than that. In Hebrews, it says that the veil was not rent at this particular time, and so only one man once a year had access into the presence of God.

That was the high priest, and only on the Day of Atonement, and, of course, he went in with incredible trepidation and fear. Historians tell us that they would tie a rope around the foot of the high priest in case, you know, something happened. He went in and approached in an unworthy manner, and the bells, you know, because he had bells and pomegranates on the bottom of his robe, and there'd be the tingling sort of a sound, and if that ceased, they knew that, boy, something's happened.

High priest has been struck dead, and, of course, nobody else could go in there, and so they would drag him out by this rope, you know. But only one man in the entire nation had access, if you like, into the presence of God, and that all changed with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. I go to prepare a place for you.

That veil was rent so that we can come with boldness and confidence. A few verses later, at least in that portion of Scripture, John 14, 15, 16, he says, and in that day, you will ask the Father, in that day. In other words, where I am, you can be also.

That's incredible, isn't it? That we can approach the throne of God. In fact, the Ephesians says, he has raised us up and he has seated us with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Not in the future someday, but right now, we have access.

I remember the story being told of two businessmen. One went into the other's office. They were both believers and on his desk.

He had a little sign. It said, keep looking down. And the other believer looked at it and he says, you know, brother, he said, that's a negative sort of a statement.

He said, you know, it should be keep looking up. And he said, no, brother, it's keep looking down. He said, no, it's keep looking up.

And they argued for a while. He said, listen, it depends where you're seated. You see, he's raised us and seated us with him in heavenly places far above.

And we look down. I fly a lot and, you know, things have a totally different perspective from 30,000 feet than they do from five feet. Everything is colossal and, you know, you look at buildings and they tower over you, but when you fly over them, they have a whole new perspective.

We need to enter in, if you like, to that realm where we look at things differently. Because we are seated with him and nothing is impossible with him. Luke chapter 11, let me take you back there for a moment.

This portion of scripture, and it came about that while he was praying, verse one, in a certain place, after he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples. My father used to say this is the only time in the Bible where the disciples ever asked to be taught anything. We don't have them ever saying, teach us how to preach.

There's no record of them saying, teach us how to teach like you do. There's no record of them saying, teach us how to cast out demons, apart from one occasion where they came back and they said, Lord, you know, yesterday we had no problem, they were popping out, you know, all over the place. But today we really, I don't know, they just want to come out.

And he says, well, you know, skip the golden arches and try again. This kind doesn't come out but by prayer and fasting. My interpretation, you know, skip a couple of meals, you know.

But that's the only time where he sort of gave them, in that sense, they asked, you know, what was going on. And my dad's conclusion to this is this, that they observed him praying constantly, and they knew that the reason he could teach and preach and do everything that he did so well was because he was constantly touching the throne of God. And so they were basically saying, Lord, if you can teach us to pray like you pray, we can do what you are doing.

We can preach like you with your anointing, we can heal the sick, we can raise the dead, we can do all the miracles that you do. If only we can make contact with the power that you're making contact with, so to speak, if only we can touch the throne of God, teach us how to pray. And of course, we have in Luke's account the abbreviated version that is shorter than Matthew's account.

But in Luke's account, Jesus went on in this instruction about prayer, in verse 5, and he says, suppose one of you shall have a friend. Shall go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him. So here is a situation, this guy's expecting his friend to arrive, and he arrives at midnight.

Maybe he miscalculated, maybe he thought the guy lives a long way away and his donkey's getting pretty old, but he's not gonna get here before 10 o'clock in the morning. By then, I'll have time to get up and get some Starbucks and Krispy Kremes, and by the time he gets here, I can feed him. Instead, the donkey got a tailwind and he arrives at midnight.

And the guy's hungry, and he is embarrassed because he doesn't have a single thing to give him. We need to understand the importance of hospitality, especially in this culture. And how embarrassing it is not to be able to provide somebody, especially a friend, with some food.

After all, he's come to see you, he's come on a long journey. But then he remembers something, I've got another friend. And so he goes to his friend, even though it's midnight, and begins pounding on the door.

And his friend says, hey, you're gonna wake the baby up, shh, what's going on? He keeps on pounding, and finally his friend gets up, and it says, he will give him as much as he needs. Therefore, I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given. Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you, and so on. Now, here we have, I think, one of the greatest illustrations about prayer, because you and I will constantly be confronted in our lifetime, in the course of our lifetime, with friends that will come to us in need. And the sooner we recognize that we have nothing to set before them, the better.

Because then, it will drive us to our greater friend, who has what your lesser friend needs. That's what prayer is all about. The realization that I cannot heal you, I cannot meet your need, I don't have the wisdom to counsel you, I don't have the wisdom to tell you what to do in this crisis, and so on.

But I have a friend that does. And prayer is going to your greater friend on behalf of your lesser friend to get the bread that your lesser friend needs. And so, prayer brings us back to this place of absolute, total dependency.

I believe it's the key to ministry. I've just completed a book now. The editors will be cleaning it up, hopefully.

The working title so far has been *Surviving the Anointing*. According to James Dobson, 1,500 pastors a month leave the ministry. Number one reason, sexual problems.

Number two reason, burnout. That's 18,000 a year in America leaving the ministry. These are men that have been trained, called, trained, gone through some sort of Bible college or seminary.

Actually ended up pastoring a flock, and 18,000 a year leaving. And so I've tried to think at least from my own life and gleaned things from the lives of others. And I'm convinced that the number one key to surviving the anointing is dependency.

Jesus said the son can do nothing of himself, nothing. What I see the father do, that's what I do. What I hear the father saying, that's what I say.

I do not initiate anything he says. I am totally and completely reliant and dependent upon the father. And then he says, and apart from me, you can do nothing.

And so we've got to remain in that place of total dependency. And that's what Jesus said prayer is all about. My dad used to say the reason we don't pray is because we are self-sufficient.

We don't need to pray. I've been to Bible school, I've got a degree in counseling, I've got a degree in music, I've got a degree in this and that. And so we sort of wing it because after all, I've been trained to do this.

That's my training. Or I've been in the ministry for 10 years or 20 years and I've got lots of experience and I don't need to pray now like I used to pray. And gradually then, we allow the Philistine to come in and take the blacksmith shop from us, so to speak.

No, it's a constant reliance upon God on a daily basis. And saying, Lord, there's another need and I don't have the answer to it. But Lord, you've got all the bread.

And it says he will give you as much as you need. Thank God he doesn't upbraid. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.

He upbraideth not. God is not stingy when it comes to giving us of his resources. The thing that brought the prodigal back from the far country was a realization in my father's house, there is bread enough and to spare.

Dad's always got a full refrigerator. You can never drain his resources. I'm better off back with the father than I am here.

Let's look at some hindrances to prayer, because it's no use praying, only to find out that your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. The first one is selfishness, James 4 and verse 3. It says that if we ask with wrong motives, we will not receive. Our motivation, why do I ask? Winky Prattney, some of you know Winky, he's a good friend of mine.

I guess it'd be about 35 years ago now, we were having a conversation. And I've never forgotten this statement. He looked at me and he said, you know, David, I've been thinking lately, when we stand before God, he will not ask us what we did.

He'll ask us why we did it. Ouch. He'll not ask us what we did.

But Lord, I built the biggest church in Texas. Bigger than First Baptist in Dallas. Yeah, but why? Well, Lord, don't ask that.

Well, the fact is, Lord, I know you know everything anyway, so you know, I'll come clean. I was jealous of that First Baptist church and the size, and I was determined to prove that I was a better preacher than that guy and better organizational skills. And I was determined to have the biggest church in Texas.

It was all about competitiveness, all about making a name for myself. God said, I thought so. You've already got your reward.

You ever thought of that? That's what Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, you have your reward. They stood on the street corner to be seen of men, not to commune with the Father. Wonder how many people are going to get to heaven and God's going to say, you know, you had your reward.

You got your jet. You got your million dollar mansion. You got your face plastered over every Christian magazine.

That's what you wanted. You have your reward. There's your shack over there.

And some little lady that buried herself in some back room and prayed for Billy Graham for 30 years faithfully, two or three hours a day, engaged sacrificially from her washing, you know, the money she made washing people's clothes and so on. Nobody ever knew her. God will say, there's your mansion.

God's got a whole different economy than we did, but we ask with wrong motives. The next one is sin, and obviously selfishness is sin, but Psalm 66 and verse 18, if I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me. So it's no use coming to God as a sinner unless, of course, you're prepared to repent of your sin.

In other words, this verse doesn't say that God will not hear the prayer of sinners because if that were true, none of us would have been saved. We all came to God on the basis of being a sinner. And the Bible says that if we pray and confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin.

So what is the Psalmist really saying? He's saying if I regard iniquity. In other words, if I leave, which I will this afternoon, drive back home and I meet somebody and say, hey, I'm going down to College Station next week. I said, listen, if you're running to Ryan, give him my regards.

In other words, there's a regard there, there's a friendship. I cherish this relationship. If I regard iniquity, in other words, the Spirit of God has been trying to deal with this area of my life and I have been repeatedly objecting, if you like, or walking in disobedience, and the Spirit of God has been trying to highlight that thing, say, David, you need to go and put that thing right with so and so, or whatever it is, or get rid of that particular thing.

It's my secret sin. That's what the Bible talks about, the secret sins in the light of your presence. That thing that I regard, I cherish.

I like my odd cigarette, I like my odd whatever it is. If I regard iniquity, God will not hear me. I'm holding on to that thing.

It's something that I cherish, I like, and so we need to come before God again with clean hands and a pure heart. Submission is another area. 1 John 3 verse 21, it says that whatever we ask, we receive from him because we keep his commandments.

We receive because we're walking in the light, we're walking in obedience, we're doing what God has required of us, and therefore, God answers prayer. When there's disobedience, there's no answer to prayer, the heavens are brass. You have the story of the revival in the Old Testament under Hezekiah.

One of the things that happened after that, it says their prayers went to the throne of God. They got rid of sin, they removed all the high places and everything else, and opened up the house of God, carried all the uncleanness out, and so on. But one of the end results was not just incredible praise, and worship, and evangelism, and so on, but prayers all of a sudden were answered.

And the last one, it doesn't apply to everybody, but one day will, I trust. 1 Peter 3 and verse 7, spouse. Live with your wives in an understanding way that your prayers be not hindered.

In other words, our relationship, one with another, especially as husband and wife. There's been times I've gone into my office to pray, and I've realized that maybe I've been a little short with my wife, or we've had an argument or something, and I thought, I hate to do this, eat humble pie, but this hour is going to be absolutely wasted if I don't. Darling, I'm sorry.

Take a dive. I don't understand it totally, but it is a type, obviously, of our relationship with God, and we can't be in a wrong relationship. And I think it applies both ways.

It's not just husbands that have to be right with their wives. I'm sure it has to do with wives being right with their husbands as well. But those are some of the hindrances to prayer.

The last one, of course, is Satan, and that gets into the whole realm of spiritual warfare. But we have the story in Daniel 10 of Daniel fasting and praying, seeking insight as to what's going on in his nation. And an angel comes.

He's been fasting for 21 days, three entire weeks, it says. And at the end of those three weeks, an angel arrives, and he's got the answer for Daniel. And you've got to ask yourself, what on earth is going on? Because the angel says, from the very first day that you started to pray, God heard you and he sent me in response to your words.

The very first day. So here it is, three weeks later, the angel just shows up. And yet God says, the angel says, I was sent the very first day, the very first day that you started praying, God heard you.

So I guess that proves conclusively that angels are males and they're afraid to ask directions. No. He tells us that the Prince of Persia withstood me.

He says, I came in response to your words, but the Prince of Persia stood opposing me. You see, Daniel's in Persia, Iraq, and there is a principality in that region that governs the spiritual life, if you like, of that nation and does not want the kingdom of God being advanced and so on. You're in my territory, and so this angel is barred from getting through.

And so the angel shoots up a prayer, I guess, to the throne, and God sends a big shot, Michael. And Michael is dispatched to wrestle against this principality, and this angel is released and gives Daniel the revelation. And he says, hey, I hope you've got the message now.

I'm going back because the Prince of Greece has come. And it's one of the few times in the scriptures where we have this cloud, if you like, parted, and you see what goes on over nations, principalities and powers that we're up against. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers.

I'm sure there are principalities over college station, intellectualism and humanism and all the other things that are there, built, if you like. A major shield, the God of this world has blinded the minds of them to believe not, lest the light of the gospel should get through. And whether you're doing mass evangelism, child evangelism, door-to-door evangelism, personal evangelism, praying for an unsaved loved one, husband, wife, brother, sister, the God of this world has blinded that person in case the light should get through.

But anyway, we're getting into spiritual warfare there. Let me give you now some specific areas to pray about. Because I find that people have come to me as I pastored and said, you know, pastor, I can pray for about five minutes and then I run out of things to pray about.

I don't know, it's like God bless mommy and daddy and all the missionaries and then what's left, sort of thing. And we never sort of mature in our prayers. So these are some things to focus on.

The first one is worship, and I would put that as the first one if the others aren't necessarily prioritized, but this one certainly is. We talked a little bit about worship last night. But Luke chapter 17 is a passage that I've mused on many times.

Verse seven, which of you having a slave, plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he comes in from the field, come immediately and sit down to eat. Will you not say to him, prepare something for me to eat, properly clothe yourself and serve me until I've eaten and drunk, and afterwards you can eat and drink. He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you've done all these things which are commanded, you say we're unworthy slaves, we've only done that which we ought to have done.

Now here is a master and he's got a slave, and this slave is working in two areas. Either that of tending the sheep of the master or plowing. There's two great fields, if you like, of ministry, evangelism and the pastoral ministry, looking after the sheep, teaching, encouraging, praying, exhorting, and so on.

And then there's evangelism, breaking up the fallow ground, out there plowing up the field. And so here is this man serving his master, and he's out there all day. He comes in at the end of the day exhausted, maybe it's a sweltering day, and the ground is dry and his hair is full of dust and grime.

And what he wants to do is just sort of kick back, grab a Coke, and turn on the news type thing. Or maybe he's been out there and it's freezing cold, and the sleet and snow. He's just frozen to the bone because he's been dealing with sheep all day.

They've broken out again, and he's had to fix fences and bring them back. And he's exhausted, and again, he just wants to come home and get a hot shower and change his clothes, and again, curl up and read a book, type thing. And he gets in, and his master says, hey, before you do anything else, go take a shower, clean yourself, and then come in and feed me until I've eaten and drunk.

Then afterwards, you can take care of your own needs. I could have a little bit of a chip on my shoulder. Here I'm serving this guy, doing his dirty work, so to speak, out there looking after his sheep, plowing his fields all day long, exhausted, weary, tired, and I come back, and the first thing he says to me, go clean up.

And then minister to me, and then take care of your own needs. You see, that's what worship is. Robert Murray McShane, that we've mentioned a couple of times, had a saying.

No amount of activity in the king's service will make up for the neglect of the king himself. Let me say that again. No amount of activity in the king's service will make up for the neglect of the king himself.

And you can do all the evangelism in the world, and you can do all the exhorting and teaching of the flock of God, and so on and so forth, but don't ever neglect the king himself, and worship is simply coming into the presence of God until his needs are met, getting on your face, coming with clean hands and a pure heart, properly clothing yourself, and if you can sing, sing, whatever, but just ministering to him. How great thou art, then sings my soul, my savior God to thee. My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine, worship.

The Father seeks those that will worship him, the Bible says. He is your Lord, and worship thou him, the psalmist says. The ongoing priority of the church, I think I mentioned, after all the evangelism in the world is done, after all the counseling and everything else, all the church planning, a million years from now, our calling is to be worshipers.

It's the highest calling possible, surpasses the apostle prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, and everything else. So some of our time should be spent in worship. I find many times I write songs and different things, even though I can't sing them, but things will come to me and I express, I guess like the

psalmist wrote out his prayers and so on.

But maybe you're gifted again musically, and you can just sit and minister to the Lord. The next one is the word, because prayer is not simply a shopping list, it's also God speaking to us in the primary way, although we can't limit God, but the primary way that God speaks to us is through his word. Psalm 119, verse 18, open mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things or wondrous things out of thy law.

The psalmist was saying, Lord, give me a revelation, understanding, insight. He wasn't saying open my eyes, because he was blind. We can prove conclusively that David could see, because that was part of his downfall.

He looked at the wrong thing at the wrong time, in the wrong place, and so on and so forth, so he wasn't praying open my eyes in that sense. He was talking about my spiritual eyes, revelation, illumination, understanding. Give me insight, Lord, into your word, into your ways.

And that's the way that God speaks to us. Luke 24, we looked at this the other day, verse 45, he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. We need, again, a spirit of wisdom and revelation, because the Bible says the letter kills and the spirit gives life.

I have never forgotten, I believe it not, did study a little bit of homiletics, how to preach. I don't know if it did me too much good, but the greatest lesson in homiletics I ever heard was a story about Duncan Campbell. During the revival in the Hebrides, he had a dream one night, or a vision.

And in this dream, he was making his way into a village. And as he got into the village, there was a huge crowd, some sort of a street meeting, and he heard the word of God being proclaimed. And as he made his way through the crowd, he didn't recognize who was preaching and so wanted to find out.

And as he got closer, he saw that it was the devil. Could not believe that the devil was preaching. And after the crowd dispersed in his dream, a vision, he went up to the devil.

And he says, you're the devil, aren't you? He said, yes, I am. He said, what are you doing preaching God's word? And God gave him this in this dream, a vision. The devil responded by saying, Duncan Campbell, don't you know the greatest weapon I have is the preaching of the word of God without the anointing of the spirit.

The letter kills. All over America this morning, people are gonna sit under the unanointed word of God. And all it's gonna do is keep on callusing them.

They're just gonna be stories. Oh, I've heard that story before, and I've heard that story. And they've just got a buildup of knowledge.

But there's no sort of cutting edge, and it is the anointing that puts that cutting edge on. The word of God is powerful, quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. And so we need to ask God again to give us revelation.

The Bible says he hides these things from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes. And so we've gotta come with a simplicity of faith and ask God. He speaks to us again through his word.

Wisdom, another thing to pray about. The Bible says in Proverbs 4, verse 5 and 7, with all you're getting, get wisdom. Wisdom is the principal thing.

We need wisdom. Wisdom in our relationship with one another. Wisdom in how to raise our children.

Wisdom with our finances. Wisdom with all of your getting. Make it number one priority.

With all of your getting, get wisdom. Wisdom is what to do with knowledge. How do I handle knowledge? And so on.

And there are many, many scriptures. Of course, the Bible says, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. James 1 and verse 5. Proverbs 14 and verse 1 talks about the wise woman who builds her house.

Or by wisdom, a house is built. By understanding, the rooms are furnished. Those of you going into ministry, you need wisdom.

Paul says, I am a wise master builder. We've gotta know how to, you know, put it line upon line, precept upon precept, so to speak. But wisdom is absolutely essential.

How many of you have ever heard of Graham Cook? Anybody? Graham Cook is a prophetic brother from England. Got some of the most amazing stories. Maybe I'll tell you a couple in a moment when we get to another area.

But he shares about going into a leadership meeting of some sort. I believe it was in England. And the pastor says to him, you know, if God gives you a word for any of the leaders, just feel free to share it.

And so they're praying, and suddenly he looks at one of the men, and God gives him an open vision of this man with a knife stabbing the senior pastor in the back. And of course, the congregation sort of chuckles a little bit like, well, that's an easy word to give. You know, God made it so obvious.

But he says, I've learned, whenever God gives me revelation or information like that, to say, how do I deliver it? Because he said, God is always a God of redemption. And he said, if I expose that brother in the sight of the rest of the leaders and say, you know, brother, God's just shown me you are a backstabber. He will never, ever rise to his potential as a man of God, because his brothers will always doubt his credibility, because that seed has poisoned their understanding about this brother.

And so even though he does try and rise up, they'll always remember him as a backstabber. So he said, there's no redemptive value. And God is a God of redemption.

So he said, I prayed, and God said to me, I want you to have the senior pastor stand, and I want you to have this brother stand. And he put them back to back, and he said, brother, God has called you to protect your pastor's back, as a shield bearer, so to speak. And he said, all of a sudden, this brother was just obviously under conviction and broke, just began to weep uncontrollably.

And he said, I knew, and he knew, and God knew that he was on the wrong side of what God wanted him to do. He was not fulfilling his calling and his destiny, and he was absolutely shattered. But he said, the rest of the people in that room thought, what an incredible privilege and honor is being granted to this brother to protect the pastor's back.

I said to my wife, as we were listening to that tape, driving from Pensacola up to Dallas one day, I said, that's wisdom. That's wisdom. We need wisdom.

Knowledge can be incredibly dangerous. We've got to speak the truth in love, and that love includes wisdom. And so with all of your getting it wisdom, cry out for it, spare not.

Wisdom is available. Read Proverbs, you've got the two women, wisdom and the harlot, contrasted, and the foolish guy that has a choice of being with either one, basically. And the devastation that comes because of the lack of wisdom, because he's a fool.

All right, the next one is warfare. We're in a spiritual battle. We need to recognize that.

Part of our prayer, again, should be involved in warfare. We wrestle not, again, against principalities and powers. I think one of the greatest teachings on warfare was a parable that Jesus gave, a parable we all know, the parable of the sower.

If you look at that parable from a spiritual warfare point of view, there's incredible insight in it. Matthew 13, it says that the sower was sowing the wood, or the seed, rather. And then when Jesus interpreted it, it wasn't just the word of God, according to Matthew's account, it was the word of the kingdom.

So what you have, you have the king trying to establish his kingdom, and he is sowing kingdom principles. It was specifically the word of the kingdom. He's wanting to establish his kingdom in the lives of individuals.

But as soon as that seed was sown, of course, some of it fell on stony ground. And the Bible says immediately Satan comes along and takes the word. Satan's job description is to undermine everything that God is doing.

I think we're hearing Darren here talking about every revival is messy. In other words, if the devil is not a part of a revival, it's not a genuine revival. Because that's his job description, where God is actively working.

He's gonna be there 24-7. Satan cometh immediately, not a year later, not six months later, but immediately, trying to destroy the effectiveness. And of course, people go to revivals, and they see the flesh, and they see the devil, and they write it off and say, that's not God.

Some guy was standing on his head or doing whatever type thing. No, the devil's there just as much as God is there. Because if he isn't, you've got to question, why isn't he? My dad went to a Methodist school in England.

Sat under the ministry of a wonderful man of God, Samuel Chadwick, who was a real revivalist. And on the weekends, it was an all boys school. But on the weekend, they were given preaching assignments.

Sent out around Yorkshire area to preach in various churches as part of their training. And he would assemble them in the chapel on a Friday morning, my dad said, and give them a little exhortation about going out and ministering and so on. Then he would pray.

And my dad said many times at the end of his prayer, he would pronounce the benediction. And then he would pause, and he would say, go, and may the devil go with you. Then he would pause again, and he would say, because if the devil doesn't go with you, you're not worth sending.

See, there was a Methodist that understood. Our job is to go into the enemy's camp. Our job is to take people out of the kingdom of Satan, open the eyes of their understanding, and so on.

And when we do that, all hell breaks loose, because the strong man also guards his house. And he doesn't want to be ripped off, so to speak. And so he says, go and may the devil go with you, because if he doesn't, you're not worth sending.

And so we are in a warfare. If you're involved in any type of ministry whatsoever, if you are pursuing God, even as an individual, you're in a warfare. The enemy's going to do everything he can to bring discouragement and doubt and fear and unbelief and sin and trip you up one way or the other.

And so we've got to learn how to fight. But going back to the, I'm getting off track here. Going back to the parable of the sower, I used to think that was the extent of the enemy's involvement, until I realized that if the enemy can't take away the seed immediately, he'll allow that seed to fall into shallow ground and it springs up quickly.

And then the Bible says that the sun rose and began beating upon that seed. And Jesus began to interpret it. He says that persecution arises for the word's sake.

So here is a seed that actually germinates, and it springs up rapidly, but it has no depth of soil. And the sun rises, which is the persecution, and over a period of time, may take a day, two days, three days, four days, ten days, whatever. Gradually, that thing withers up.

You see, the enemy doesn't care how he accomplishes his goals as long as he does. He'll use different methods, we're not to be ignorant concerning his devices. And so here is a person, let's say they get gloriously saved, and they go back home for a winter break or something.

And they say, hey, Dad, guess what? Last week I got saved down there at U of A&M, or Texas, how do you call it anyway? Texas A&M. And Dad looks at me and says, come on, don't give me that nonsense. He says, no, Dad, I really did, and I feel this peace, I feel this incredible joy, and so on.

Come on, it's not going to last, kid. Then his buddies come around, hey, you're back home, hey, we're going out tonight. And he tries his best to testify, and they just laugh at him and mock him.

And over a period of time, the sun rises and begins to beat, and it may take a week, it may take two weeks, but eventually he succumbs, and he takes the drink, and he goes back with his kids and friends. And pretty soon, he just withers away. And then the enemy comes even in a more subtle way than that.

Because some of that seed falls into ground, and it has something that springs up with it, thorns and thistles. And the Bible says those thorns and thistles choke the wood, so it never produces fruit. And Jesus explained it, he says, the riches and the worries and the cares of this life choke the seed, and it never brings forth a harvest.

You see, the enemy doesn't care if you are born again of the Spirit of God or not, as long as you're not fruitful. But what's the whole purpose of sowing seed? I was raised on a farm. You don't go and take 20 bushels of seed, and plow up the ground in the sweltering heat or whatever, and sow it, and pray for rain, and only to find out that you get 20 bushels back.

That's pointless doing all that work if you get back what you, no, the whole purpose is 30 fold, 60 fold, 100 fold. That was the good seed that produced. The farmer and the father were expecting a harvest.

And you see, the enemy comes, he comes as a roaring lion. That's where he just comes in and takes away the seed. I mean, if a roaring lion came in right now, we'd be swinging from the chandeliers, not that there are any, but I'd be up on top of the speakers before anybody else.

We'd know we're in trouble, but he also comes as a wolf in sheep's clothing. And that's a little more subtle, a little harder, unless you've been around sheep, you think, boy, this nice woolly looking thing, come here, and all of a sudden, it gets you. But more subtle than that, he comes as an angel of light.

In other words, if he can't take away the seed just by grabbing it, so to speak, then he'll allow persecution. If he can't get it that way, then he'll allow the riches and the worries and the cares of this life. Or not major sins, just getting you so busy, giving you a promotion at the job, so that you can't go to the prayer meeting anymore, and you can't have a home group now because you gotta work nights, and you're testifying about this incredible promotion, and what a blessing it is, but the enemy's giving you that, not God.

Because he knows, ultimately, he's gonna strangle you with riches and worries and cares, and I would say maybe 80% of the church, conservatively, are in the snare of the devil with the riches, and the worries, and the cares. They're not committing gross sin, they're not out there raping, and murdering, and stealing, and foul mouthed, and so on. They're just caught up in the busyness of life, trying to get the new car, the bigger house, the bigger this, the bigger that, and they don't have time to produce fruit.

And the enemy smiles, he says, you know, they don't trouble me, and I'm not gonna trouble them. Spiritual warfare. See, it's more subtle, isn't it, than we realize it is.

You know, we think of the devil, you know, red suit and pitchfork type thing, no, he comes as an angel of light. John Kilpatrick in Pensacola shared how when he was a little boy, well, he wasn't that little, I think he was in his teens. He thought he was at home, alone, and he heard somebody walking down the hallway, and came into his room, and it was the most beautiful being, he said, he'd ever seen in his life.

He thought it was some sort of an angel, just absolutely radiant, glorious being, and he was ready, he said, to get down and begin to worship. And he said, something within him, as a little boy, said, look at his hands, and he said, I looked at his hands, and there were no nail prints. I remember goosebumps sort of going down my spine.

He shared that one Sunday morning, how it was a demonic manifestation. But you see, the enemy comes as an angel of light. And we are not to be ignorant concerning his devices.

Anyway, spiritual warfare, we could go on and on, but let me move on. The next one is the world. All these have a W beginning.

My mind thinks that way sometimes. In fact, I was in a conference, and we were in the middle of worship, and for some reason, these words kept coming to me, and I wrote them down. I've added a few, but they're all with Ws.

The world, we need to spend some time praying, not just for our own needs, but the needs of the world around us. Pray the Lord of the harvest, that he sends forth his laborers. Ask of me, and I'll give you the heathen for thine inheritance.

The uttermost part of the earth is thy possession. It's amazing that we can have an impact in the Middle East, even though we've never been there, and so on. I think it was Hudson Taylor who went back to

England on one trip, and a gentleman came up to him in one of the meetings and asked him some details about a particular base, I guess, missionary base in China, where there'd been a move of God.

And he was asking very specific questions, and Hudson Taylor said, how do you know these names, and how do you know all these particulars? He said, well, I correspond with the missionary there, and he said, he sends me names, and I've been praying faithfully for the names that he's been sending me. And Hudson Taylor said, that's the only base we have in China right now, where God is moving in a sort of almost a sovereign way. Here is a man in England, thousands of miles away, impacting what's going on in China.

That's what we can do by entering into our closet. I'm convinced that all these marches on Washington and calls don't amount to a hill of beans, because we can enter into our closet and do it. God doesn't listen anymore if you're in the mall at Washington, D.C. with 1,000 people.

There's something happening on the mall every single week, it doesn't impress anybody. Think of all the millions of dollars that's spent getting there, and all the speakers that they have to pay, and so on. Just to make an impression, there were 10,000 of us praying in Washington this weekend for revival or something, big deal.

We can enter into our closet and touch the throne of God. Shut the door, pray to your father in secret, never get some CNN. After all, it's gonna be an agricultural show the next week, a bunch of farmers driving their tractors, and then a gay pride parade the next week.

And the media just treat it, what's going on today? We don't make the impact we think we're making with all of these things. But I tell you, there's nothing more powerful than the church going into the closet, touching the throne of God, and praying. We need to pray for the world.

Pray for kings and all who are in authority, because he's not willing that any should perish. And then the next one is works. And by works, I'm talking about the supernatural.

And I know that not everybody is of that persuasion here, and I don't wanna step on toes. I just want to say this, that I do believe there is a supernatural realm that God is wanting us to touch. The Bible says, earnestly desire spiritual gifts.

I had a professor in Bible school, or a teacher, we didn't call them professors, but, and he says, that's as much a command as thou shalt not commit adultery. Earnestly desire spiritual gifts. My dad used to say, the gifts of the spirit are the tools of the trade, and they've been replaced now by psychiatry and psychology.

In other words, psychiatry and psychology have replaced the gifts of the spirit. This guy, Graham Cook, let me tell you a few stories. He was in a church ministering in England, had to drive back after the Sunday morning service like I will this afternoon.

And the pastor invited him to come to lunch. And around the lunch table, he had several of his elders, and his wife, and himself, and there was a lady there who was going as a missionary to China. Young lady, I guess maybe late 20s, early 30s, or something.

And the pastor said, he introduced this lady, and he said, we're so excited she's going out to China, our first missionary, if I remember the story. And he said, we'd love you to pray for her, and if God gives you a

word of exhortation, prophetic word, just please feel free to share it. And so after the meal, he said, they gathered around.

This lady shared a little bit about what she was gonna do and her calling. He said she was a very sincere, wonderful lady. And he said, as soon as I closed my eyes to pray, God spoke to me very, very clearly and said, tell her I hate mommies and daddies.

And he immediately started arguing with God, sort of, I'm not gonna tell her that, that's crazy, it doesn't make sense. And he says, the natural mind understands not the things of the spirit of God, because it's foolishness. And he says, the mind receives information, and the spirit receives revelation.

And the mind and the spirit many times go to war, because we've gotta understand it. And he said, I don't understand this, God. I'm not gonna embarrass myself and tell her that you hate mommies and daddies, because you made mommies and daddies.

Why should I tell her you hate mommies, and so he couldn't get his mind around it. And so this argument was going on. And the pastor, of course, didn't hear any prayer or word of exhortation.

And so he said, now, Graham, if God gives you something, feel free to give it. And he said, well, let's just wait a minute, see what God's saying, hoping that God will shift gears on him and let him off the hook. Nothing comes, God just very powerfully impacts him and says, tell her I hate mommies and daddies.

Finally, he gets the courage and he looks at this lady and he said, God has told me he wants you to know how much he hates mommies and daddies. And he said, all of a sudden, the color just drained out of her face and she became livid. And he just touched her and she collapsed on the floor.

He had to go change his clothes and the pastor said, don't leave us now. And he said, listen, you're the senior pastor, you got two elders here, you're fine. He's got quite a sense of humor.

He comes down and this lady's still sort of somewhat groggy, but they begin to talk to her and she begins to open up about her past. Never told anybody in her life. She said, for many years as a child from the age of, I can't remember what it was, seven to 12 or something.

She said, my grandfather, two uncles, and a friend would sexually abuse me. And she said, my grandfather would come into my bedroom and he would always begin with these words, we're going to play mommies and daddies. See, no psychiatrist can unravel that.

Takes a word of knowledge. And he said, that woman was just gloriously set free. She carried all of that shame, all of that baggage, and God set her free.

That's the power of the supernatural. He talks about going into a deli to get some cheese one day. And as he's approaching the cheese counter of the deli, God just downloads, if you like, and this is foreign to me, I have to admit.

But he said, this woman that's about to serve you doesn't know me. But last night, she prayed to a God she doesn't believe in. Because she's got a daughter she hasn't seen for four years, they've been estranged in their relationship.

All she knows is that she went to London. She doesn't know if she's dead or alive, on drugs, doing prostitution. And she cried out last night and said, God, if there is a God, bring my daughter back.

That was the gist of it. He goes up to the counter, and the lady, of course, says, can I help you, sir? And he said, well, before you do, he said, my name's Graeme Cook, and I'm a Christian. He said, that may or may not mean anything to you.

But he said, God just told me something about you, and that is, you prayed last night because you've got a daughter you haven't seen for four years, and she starts to cry. And as he's talking to her, God says to him, he said, tell her that on Tuesday at three o'clock, he names a day. I think it was Tuesday or Wednesday, and at a certain time, two or three o'clock.

But he said, tell her that her daughter will call. She rearranged her schedule, went home, sat by the couch, made herself a cup of tea. The phone rang exactly at three o'clock or two o'clock, and the mother and daughter were reconciled over the phone.

He said, they are both in the house of God today, serving God. And then he tells the other side of the story. He said, the daughter was walking down the street in London.

She sees a telephone booth, and she has this overwhelming urge, doesn't understand where it came from, to call her mother, make contact with her mother. And in her mind, spontaneously, she goes in, dials the number, her mother's at home. Only God can do that.

You see, there's a supernatural realm. When my wife and I first got married, we worked with David Wilkerson in New York City, the Cross and Switch played had just come out. And my dad invited a man to come to a prayer meeting that he had in his apartment with some of the staff.

I guess there were maybe 15, 20 of us at the most. And this man was a very unusual man. He's gone to be with the Lord now, Brother Barclay, his name was.

And he ministered, and then afterwards, he was praying for people. And I was right in the corner of the room, I mean, buried. We were all down on our knees, facing into chairs, praying.

And I was right in the corner of the room, and I was crying out for wisdom. I wasn't verbalizing a single thing, it was just an internal cry. I said, Lord, I've been to Bible school and so on, I've got this and that.

But I said, Lord, I need wisdom. I knew I wasn't smart, I knew I wasn't, like I said the other night, two brothers that were brilliant. And within about ten seconds, I felt hands on my head.

I mean, here I am in the corner. And the very first words out of this man's mouth were, God has seen your desire for wisdom and he's given it to you. Well, of course, I was just melted and started weeping.

But then he went on and he said, I'm having a picture right now. And he said, I see you speaking into a microphone. And he said, in front of you, there are literally hundreds and hundreds of people.

He said, they've got brown skin, not black skin, but brown skin. And he said, you're speaking. And he said, God is gonna take you before kings and rulers.

And I thought, this guy's, as one prophetic brother said, there's a little bit of hamburger helper with this prophecy. If you're familiar with a prophetic, sometimes there's a certain burst of anointing. And then because it's short, they keep it going.

And you know that there's a little bit of hamburger helper being added. That God stopped, but they think, listen, I'm sure he's got more to say, and so they keep it going. Well, I thought this was the hamburger helper.

Two years later, my wife and I, well, before that, but we went down to New Zealand. And we were instrumental in getting Youth with a Mission started, and we took teams in the Pacific Islands. My wife stayed at home because of the baby, but we went to the island of Tonga.

We'd been there about three weeks, and different members of the team were asked to speak at the local Methodist open air service. And it was a custom that they had in Tonga. If you know where Tonga is, a little tiny prick there in the middle of the Pacific, tiny little islands.

And we were in Nukalofa for the capital. And the third week, I was asked if I would speak. And we were there at the time of the coronation of the king.

And it so happened that my particular time to speak, they changed the venue. Because the following week, I think it was on the Tuesday or something, was gonna be the coronation of the king. And this was gonna be Sunday.

And so they changed the venue from downtown to this huge grassy area right outside the king's palace. And when I'm talking about the king's palace, just something like a big old weatherboard house you'd see somewhere in Louisiana. Anyway, with a picket fence around it, just on the outskirts of town.

But the moment I stood up, and the king's palace was about 50 yards behind me, something like that. I stood up, they gave me a microphone. And there in front of me were literally hundreds and hundreds of brown-skinned Polynesian people, Tongans.

After I got through speaking, some of the YWAM kids said to me, guess what? I said what? They said, the king stood and listened to you on the veranda. And I remember instantly that prophetic word coming back from two years ago in the middle of New York City, of all places, concrete jungle. And I remember when the word came about kings and rulers.

I thought, I couldn't even think of a king at that particular time. I was born in England. I knew we had a queen, but, and here two years later, here I am speaking in front of a king, but also to hundreds and hundreds of people.

And I knew that I was in the will of God, and that the very center of God's will at that time. There's tremendous power in the supernatural realm. Let me just take you to one scripture, and then we'll move on.

Cuz I think it's interesting to me, the way Paul introduces the church of Corinth to this particular realm. 1 Corinthians 12, now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I don't want you to be unaware, I don't want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, if you like, unsaved, before you were converted, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you were led.

Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the spirit of God says, Jesus is a curse, no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. There are varieties of gifts in the same spirit, varieties of ministries in the same Lord, varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. Now, Paul is introducing the church to the spiritual realm, the gifts of the spirit here, and he says, listen, I

don't want you to be ignorant.

But he says, when you guys were unsaved, when you were pagans, you were led astray to dumb idols. Now, we use the word dumb, unfortunately, today to mean stupid. You know, I sit beside this kid in class, he's a real dummy.

Man, I've never met a bigger dummy than, you know, and we use it that way. Paul, of course, is using the correct way. He said, listen, your former religious life was spent worshiping dumb gods.

In other words, gods that were unable to communicate. You never heard them speak. You never heard from their mouth a word of wisdom.

You never heard from their mouth a word of knowledge. You never heard from their mouth a word of encouragement, the prophetic. You never heard them perform a miracle, God conveying his compassion and his mercy and so on.

They were dumb idols. But I make known to you that no one speaking by the spirit of God says. In other words, the god that you worship now is not a dumb god.

All the way through the Old Testament, you've got descriptions of idols. And many times, there's a commonality about them. They have eyes, but they can't see.

They've got ears, but they can't hear. They've got a mouth, but they can't speak. And people bow down to them, looking for answers, looking for wisdom, looking for knowledge, looking for direction, and so on.

And they never, ever, ever hear that god speak. And the great tragedy in Christendom is that we have a dumb god. That we have invented doctrines that have silenced the voice of God from the house of God.

And we're no different than the pagans. We cry out for direction. We cry out for wisdom.

We cry out for knowledge. We cry out for healings. We cry out.

And Paul says, no, it's not that way. No one's speaking by the spirit of God. And then he goes on to say, this is how God speaks.

He speaks with a word of wisdom. He speaks with a word of knowledge. He conveys his compassion by healing.

He gives words of encouragement through prophetic gifts, and so on and so forth. And I don't want you to be ignorant about it. Let's move on.

Works, we need to pray. I pray, God, rend the heavens and come down. Every revival has had some manifestation of the supernatural.

Healings or whatever it is, and I don't understand. Some of them are unusual, obviously, but God, do something. I believe the church is going to be reduced back to a Mount Carmel situation, where we're going to be able to look at the Muslim or any other faith and say, the God that answers by fire, let him be God.

Where is the God of Elijah? We've got to get back to that. Otherwise, we don't have anything to offer people. If our God can't do these things, then he's no different than anybody else's God.

The God that he set apart because of his power and his authority. The next one is wife. And again, I imagine some of you are praying along these lines.

But by wife, I mean family. We need to pray for our family. Job 1.5, Job would rise up early in the morning, and he would pray for his family, offering the various sacrifices.

In other words, even though his children were away from home, seemingly married at the time, he never neglected his high priestly role or his priestly role as being the priest of the home. And he prayed. There's hardly a day goes by that I don't pray for my kids.

Got a daughter in China, one in London, one in Florida. Two of them are married. But I bring them before the throne of God on a daily basis, praying for wisdom, direction, and so on and so forth.

Hebrews 11, Noah prepared an ark for the salvation of his house. In other words, here was a godly man concerned about his family. We get all wrapped up in his pets, if you like, and this menagerie that he had.

But the real reason behind the ark was that God was going to destroy the earth, and he cried out, God, spare my family. And God says, make an ark, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man. We need some spiritual knowers that can prepare an ark.

You that are married and you've got children, some of you here, you need to prepare an ark for those kids. But somehow, God is going to protect them from all the pressures. And you think of what it's like today, imagine what it's going to be like if God tarries 15 years from now.

Where there's going to be unbelievable, blatant sin of a magnitude that we can't even dream of. I imagine 15 years from now, we'll have full-blown nudity and everything else on television and so on. After all, Psalm 2 says the kings of the earth are going to take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us tear their fetters apart.

The only last restraining morality in the world is going to come from the church. We are the ones that object to abortion. We're the ones that object to pedophiles.

We're the ones that object to this and that and the other, and raise that moral standard. But the kings of the earth are going to say, listen, let's tear away their fetters. They're restraining us.

And there's all sorts, as we know now, all sorts of mandates, if you like, to get homosexual marriages approved and so on. And pedophilia now, where men can be involved with young boys. And I mean, we're gonna see that, as it was in the days of Sodom.

And we need to pray for our kids. Manoah, in the Old Testament, he was the father, of course, of Samson. His wife was barren.

The angel of the Lord came and said, you're gonna conceive. And the moment he knows his wife is gonna have a baby, he prays, God, send those guys back again, the angels, basically. And when they come back, he says, listen, how do we raise this child? What will be his mode, or I'm trying to combine.

Anyway, look it up in different translations. One says, how do we educate this child? Another says, how do we raise this child? Another said, what will be his mode of life? In other words, here is a father, his wife hasn't even given birth yet, and he is praying about the outcome of this man, or this baby, when he is an adult. Lord, how do we train him? How do we equip him? How do we prepare him? Lord, you've got a

destiny for this kid, and I want to know now.

He could have ran to his neighbors and said, hey, we've never had kids before. Could you teach us how to change diapers? Could you teach us how to do this? And no, he goes back to God, and he says, Lord, how do we raise this kid? How do we educate him? Talk about a father taking his responsibility seriously, and we need to pray. Two more quickly.

Waiting, Psalm 40 and verse 1, I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined his ear and heard my prayer. Psalm 62, verse 1, my soul waits in silence for God only.

Psalm 130, verse 5, I wait for the Lord in his word do I hope. In other words, there's time spent waiting for God to respond, for God to quicken something, for God to add maybe a burden, maybe to lay somebody upon our heart, maybe somebody very specifically a missionary going through some crisis at that particular time. We need to spend time waiting.

And waiting is not, while it's passive to a degree, there's activity involved. It's sort of like waiting for a bus or waiting for a plane. I was in France a number of years ago, and there were two sort of gates in the one waiting area.

And for some reason, I was facing the other way, not knowing the language and so on, I came into the right gate, but I was facing the wrong way. And the whole plane boarded one side, and they announced it in French, of course, and I missed the flight. But we've got to be actively waiting.

It's like waiting for a bus, and this isn't the best illustration in America. But in England, there's buses every ten seconds almost, and they've all got different numbers. And if your bus is 56, you've got it, no, this is 58, no, there's one behind it, that's 62, no, and you've got to, in other words, you're actively anticipating something, that's waiting on God.

It's not just falling asleep, although God can even redeem that time. Peter fell asleep while he was praying, and God gave him a vision of all the creepy crawlies coming down, remember? But anyway, the last one, weeping, weeping. The psalmist says, they that go forth weeping, Psalm 126, will doubtless come again with compassion, bringing their shoes with it.

My dad used to tell a story, Steve Hill has it in one of his books. True story of the Salvation Army, if two or three ladies had gone out to pioneer in a particular area and had nothing but opposition, became incredibly discouraged. They worked and slaved away, did everything they knew how to do, and could not make any headway.

Finally, in desperation, they sent a telegram to William Booth, saying, we've done all of these things, what do we do now? Basically, we're ready to give up. William Booth sent back a telegram, true story. It simply had two words on it, try tears, try tears.

There's something about weeping. Again, he that goeth forth weeping, Jesus wept over Jerusalem. It's that compassion, it's allowing God to give you that burden that moves you beyond just the intellectual realm.

There are times in my own devotional life, I don't have it down to a day or an hour type thing. But if a season goes by where I can't break in the presence of God, I've gotta ask myself why. Have I become so hard, so callous, so indifferent that I can't be moved with the needs of people around about me? Jesus

was moved with compassion, he wept over Jerusalem.

I think, and I'll close with this, I think one of the greatest statements that Paul ever made about anybody is what he says to Timothy when he says in 2 Timothy 1, verse 4, he says, Timothy, let me find it, 2 Timothy. Longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. Now can you imagine if some great man like the Apostle Paul, let's modernize it, Billy Graham, were to write you a personal letter and somehow that letter leaks out onto the Internet and the whole world reads it.

And Billy Graham says, David, I long to see you because of your crying. Man, Billy, why did you have to say that? It sounds like I'm a crybaby. Well, obviously, that's not what Paul was saying.

Paul was giving Timothy the highest commendation. Timothy, the thing I miss about you, are the times we would spend in prayer together as we made our way around various cities, and I would see you break. And weep over the condition of a city, or weep over the condition of a church, or weep over the condition of some brother or sister that had fallen into sin.

And I miss that, Timothy. I miss your tears, I miss your compassion, I miss your heart of mercy. What an incredible statement.

You see, I would have liked it if Paul would say, David, I remember your great teaching, I remember your great preaching, I remember your great this, I remember your great singing, I remember your great vocal ability and musical. Something that in our culture has got some sort of value to it, but not tears. And now Paul says, I recall your tears.

God is wanting to break us, I believe, in prayer, where we can weep. And there's something about that that produces something in the spiritual realm. I don't understand it.

But he that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, will doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his shoes with him. All right, there's a list. Again, God may just get you into worship and you may spend an entire time in worship.

On the other hand, you may lay a burden upon your heart to pray for some country, and you may spend the entire hour just praying for the world. On the other hand, you may end up praying for your family or something else. This is just something to, if you like, jump start you in the area of prayer.

Don't be afraid to open your eyes. Don't be afraid to write down some things and say, I'm gonna pray about this for a while, this for a while. Just to get you going to the point where ten minutes means nothing, or 20 minutes means nothing, or half an hour means nothing.

And then from there on, you're on your own. But begin to pray. Get into your closet.

Pray without ceasing. It's gonna make all the difference in the world, not only in your own life, but in the community, in the church you're involved in, the mission field that you end up going to, and so on. Teach us how to pray.

Let's close. Father, thank you for this time together. Lord, I pray that out of this congregation that is here right now, this gathering, that Lord, you would raise up some praying hides.

Raise up, Lord, some intercessors. Raise up men and women that know how to touch the throne of God. Lord, they know how to bring heaven down.

Father, they know how to gain access. Lord, they know how to use the weapons of their warfare to bring down the principalities and powers. Lord, we thank you that you're for us today.

We thank you, Lord, you sit on the throne. You're a powerful God, the all-powerful one, and that, Lord, you're present. That where two or three are gathered, you're here in our midst.

So, Father, that we think of all the vast possibilities that are there in prayer. To touch nations, Lord, without ever even leaving these shores, we can have an impact. So, Father, quicken this word, I pray.

Take everything that has been said and shared, everything we've sung, every message that has come out in song, and seal it in our hearts, Lord, we pray for your glory, in Jesus' name.

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