

(South West Baptist Church 2008) Disecting the Burden of Prayer

by Gerhard Du Toit

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and understanding the burden of God, highlighting the secret to praying through the burden and the power of testimony in changing lives.

Duration: 1:05:10

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Romans 8:1-2, Ephesians 2:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:16, 1 John 5:14-15

Topics: "Burden Of Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of personal growth as Christians through reading and studying the Bible. He shares his personal experience growing up in a country with apartheid and serving as a chaplain. The speaker then discusses the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Mount Sinai, where the will of God was revealed through the law and worship was established through the tabernacle. He transitions to the New Testament, highlighting Jesus' teaching on worshipping God in spirit and truth and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, resulting in the salvation of 3000 people. The speaker also shares a personal anecdote about a trip to Balakula and emphasizes the importance of receiving and sharing valuable spiritual material.

Transcript

I want to thank you for coming back this evening. I think what happened last night is that we chased most of the people away. I trusted God the first night for 50 people, and so there were about 48 of us, which meant that there were two people running out here in the hills of the Adelaide Valleys, in the boonies of Boggaboggaland amongst the sticks, and we never saw them.

I guess they didn't sleep too well that night, but that's what we were trusting God. Now, if there were 52 people, you say, what does that mean? It would have meant that there were two people that shouldn't have been here. No, we don't mean that.

But we are delighted to have you with us this evening. We only have tomorrow morning and tomorrow night, and then this very brief weekend is over, and I want to remind you, you know, I'm a great believer in that 75% of our growth as Christians will always be determined by what you and I read as a Christian. And you know, God can't bless lazy lives.

I was brought up in Africa, in a country that had a terrible system called apartheid, and while I was in that country, I had to do national service. And then eventually I became a chaplain, but I remember we had an instructor. He was a brutal man, and he used to give us a minute and a half for breakfast in the morning.

And his famous saying to us was, swallow now and chew later. Never be able not to remember that. This man, I witnessed to him about Christ, and a few years later someone was being unfaithful to him and his wife, to him I should say, and he got so upset one night that he took a revolver and just went and shot this man, killed him instantly, and then he landed up in prison.

I've been praying for him through the years. I will never be able not to remember those days because I was in a battalion where there was hardly any Christian. And I knew Christ, and I knew that I had to take a stand for God.

And I took a stand for God that I was a Christian, and that I knew Christ as my personal Savior. And we had a lieutenant. It was a German fellow.

Big, big man. You know, if you are in a national service, in my country those days, the commander of the battalion or your company would shout it out. And he shouted out to us, and he said, run to this point, and then I want you to shout this word, which was a terrible cursing word.

And before, because I knew Christ, I felt, you know, he was not allowed to do that. And I ran over to this lieutenant and I said to him, you know, you're not supposed to do this. But if you know anything about army life in those days in my country, if you just came out and you were a soldier, you were nothing.

I mean, you were just a simple number. And he'd just look at me if I was a piece of dirt. And then he said, you'd better get and run there.

I said, yes, sir, I will, but you're not supposed to teach these young fellows to curse and swear. And I said, I'm going to need to report you if you do that. Well, of course, you know, I was nothing.

I was just absolutely nothing. And he said, you'd better just get there. And I ran.

And he did that. And when these young soldiers and basic training shouted out this word, I went and I reported him. And believe it or not, but from that day, he absolutely hated me.

He couldn't stand me. We were playing rugby together, you know. And I was in his steam.

But, you know, he so absolutely hated me that if someone tackled me and he was close by, I mean, he was my buddy, but he was ready, you know, just to let it into me. And he just couldn't take me. But, you know, I prayed for this man.

You wouldn't believe it. It was about, I don't know how many years later, because you do your national service in that country and then they called you up. If you are in the medical field, every three months, every two years they call you up for three months.

If you were a chaplain, the same kind of thing would happen. And I was called up to do three months of chaplain's duty on the borders of my country. And I would never forget, you know, we were in a war zone situation.

And I never could have been in this base camp. And while I was in this base camp, one day I came out of my office and when I was coming out of my office, I saw this Land Rover that stopped at the gate and the soldier at the gate opened it and this Land Rover drove in and as it was coming in, I was coming out of my office walking and I saw this fellow. And I would never forget this, you know.

His name was Luther. And he was a major by that time. So I was coming out walking and he came walking across and I came right close to him and he looked at me and he recognized me.

And he stopped and he said to me your last name is Detroit, isn't it? I said yes and your last name is Luther, isn't it? He said I need to talk to you. And I said about what? And I will never forget this. Brother and sister you know, our testimony is a powerful tool in the hands of God.

And he turned to me and he said to me, let me tell you something. He said I've faced death a number of times on the borders of the country. Times when the bullets were flying over my head.

And he said every time when that happened, he said I saw you standing in front of me and said, Lieutenant you're not supposed to do this. And he said I have had no idea how to be able to find you. But he said I found you today and he said I want to ask you I mean if you know the army, it's a rough life.

We used to preach to soldiers in a chaplain's period on a Thursday morning and next week they were gone because they were killed in an ambush as they were on patrol. But he just turned to me and he said to me I need to ask you to forgive me. And I said listen Major, let me tell you something.

I have forgiven you. I said the big question is has God forgiven you? And have you made peace with God and your relationship with Him? And brother and sister you know we have no idea the impact that your life and my life are able to make upon the lives of people. And quite often you know what happens to us? God uses us when we are not aware of it.

If you come to the province of British Columbia out in western Canada it's a huge province. On your way to the Yukon in Alaska and once a year I take Janice and Monica and we go into a very remote area which is called the last frontier. And you drive for about nine hours into the Cariboo and you come towards the Rocky Mountains and then you turn west and you go into what is referred to as the Chukwulkin.

You climb for about five miles until you are in a mountain range for about 450 kilometers of mountains and lakes and just absolute wild country. Lots of grizzly bears and cougars. And you know if you see a grizzly bear the Canadians told me that the best thing for you to do is to fall on your knees and pray.

And they said then when you stop praying the bear will sit in front of you and he will say to you what have you been doing? And you will say well I've been praying. And he will say well I've just said grace. If you know anything about those animals you don't mess around.

But you know what happened? I take Janice and Monica into those remote areas and we are friends. There are tons of lakes. I don't know if you know this.

There are three million lakes in Canada. I just read this in Time magazine some time ago on a plane. And there are only about 2.8 million fishermen.

So there are more lakes than people fishing. And on this lake I fly fish. And I just love being out there.

And Janice and Monica is with me. But you know what happened? We were out there a number of years ago and the house that we were in we were not able to have it the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. And there is a very remote community at the coast called Bella Coola.

And it was about 250 kilometers away. And I turned to Janice and Monica and said listen we can't have the cabin for the weekend. Why don't we drive to Bella Coola? And so we took the docks with two retrievers and all our stuff.

And we took off to Bella Coola. And we were in a park called Tweed Smear Park. And it was getting late at night when we had a blowout in the back tire of this SUV that we were driving because of the snow in the mountains in Canada.

And it was in the summer. And so by the time I was able to replace the back tire it was almost dark. And I said to Janice and Monica I think we should turn back.

We didn't have a spare. We were out there in the bush. And I said why don't we go back and find a cabin for the night and then we can take off tomorrow.

Well we came to a place called Anam Lake. Very remote. People fly in with float planes to do fly fishing.

And we stopped there. There was no, you know you're out there in the bush of British Columbia. And I stopped and there was these cabins.

And I got out of the vehicle. And as I came out of the vehicle went into the office. And as I walked into the office a man was sitting behind the desk.

And so I said to him, he hardly looked up to me, I said Sir, I just wonder if you have a spare cabin for the night. And the moment when I said that he just looked at me kind of like this and he said, I recognize your voice and I recognize your face. I said what do you mean? He said my wife and myself were on the point of splitting up.

Our marriage was falling apart. We came to a place or we went to a place with the name of Whistler. We rented a hotel and we were going to begin to work out the details of divorcing.

And he said we saw a pamphlet of special services in Pemberton Gospel Chapel. And he said, I said to my wife why don't we just go to one of these gatherings and we come back this evening. We had no idea this man and his wife walking to this meeting where I had the privilege of speaking that night.

And they walked out before the end of the service back to their hotel room. You know what they got gloriously saved. And he opened his drawer and he said, since then I got all the messages.

And he said I've made notes of that. And he said I remember every message that you preach. And he turned to me and he said to me, now there is a little issue here.

He said you're not going to go to Balakula. We're going to give you the best cabin for the weekend. And he said you're going to be our guest, but Sunday morning you're going to preach.

You know these terrible Canadians. And I went back into the vehicle and I told Janice and Monica, I mean my daughter you know, you know we tell her that God answers prayer. And her eyes were just you know like what is going on here? And Monday morning when we got into the vehicle and drove away, I said let's

pray together.

And we prayed together. And after I prayed I turned to Janice and Monica. And I said I have a question for the two of you.

And Monica said what is it Daddy? I said when do you want the next flat tire? We've never had a, brother and sister, we've never had a flat tire ever since that day. So you know God answers prayer in wonderful ways. I want to make sure that you get all this material that we have available for you.

If you were not with us this morning, we just touched on the first aspect of the ingredients in developing a personal prayer life. And there are nine of those ingredients as you systematically look at what we would refer to as the Lord's Prayer. And then we've got tons of other material.

People have asked me about those seven principles, sorry, the eight principles that you discover in the teachings of Christ and prayer. And we would love to be able to put that in your hands. And then all kinds of other things that we really would like to give to you that we don't want you this evening to leave without it.

I mentioned the first night about the questions of personal accountability. And we would like you to get those questions. Something else that I want you to take with you.

I love these kind of things because it holds me accountable. I refer to this as my spiritual checklist. And it has to do with my relationship to the world, my relationship to my house, my relationship to my occupation, my relationship to my choir time, my relationship to my church attendance, my relationship to my choir time, what we spoke on this morning.

What role does my choir time play in my life? Do I make time for prayer and intercession? Do I read God's Word on a consistent basis? Has there been clear growth in my relationship with God in the past year? How much of my choir time deals with myself? Or how much is devoted to praising God? My relationship to my house. Do I live my Christian life as an example? Do those who know me the best believe in me the most? Do I honor and respect those who serve me on a daily basis? Do I criticize the church in the presence of other people? Or do I criticize the church in the presence of my children? Do I regard my possessions, my house, as mine? Or do I regard them as God's? My relationship to my church. Do I like going to my church? Do I prepare my heart and mind for the sermon? Do I criticize? Do I go to listen to what the pastor says? Or do I go to listen to the pastor? Do I pray for my pastor so that God will give him a message? My relationship to my own rights.

Have I learned the secret of abandoning my right to defend myself? My right to be understood. My right to possess things. My right to be treated with respect.

My right to be recognized for what I've done. Have I abandoned the right to feel offended and to be hurt? Have I abandoned the right to become angry? Have I abandoned the right to choose and exercise my own choices? My right to pleasure. My right to my finances.

My ambitions. And my plan for the future. So if you would like to receive one of these, we would like to give it to you.

And put it in your hands. You know, our time is running out, but I've got such great material, brethren and sisters, that I desperately would like to put in your hands. And some of this you will not find in books

anymore because they are out of print.

But if I can put this in your hands, you know, this morning one of the things that we discussed, or I think last night, was this understanding of the burden of God. And in the understanding of the burden of God, we did not only discover those steps as it relates to the burden of God in Scripture, but one of the things that we need to learn is to how to dissect the burden of God. And I said this morning in our time together that when you and I study the New Testament in prayer, and we come to the understanding of the possibility of those 248 passages as they relate to prayer, then we will discover that those passages is taking us to the possibility of looking at 12 aspects of New Testament prayer.

And one of those aspects has to do with what you and I would refer to routine praying. You say, what is that, Gerard? That's when you and I have learned the secret to pray for the same things every day. Now maybe you sit here and you say, don't you get tired to pray for those things? My brother and my sister, there is a way for us to discover the secret in not getting tired when we pray for the same things.

You see, sometimes people would come to me and they would say, you know, I sometimes don't understand this because when I pray for someone, I run out of words. I would say the same things to God every day. And they said, isn't that repetitive? Isn't that repetition? And I said, let me explain to you a secret.

And you say, where did you find that secret? My brother and my sister, I found that secret in a life of a man with a life of George Muller of Bristol. Muller of Bristol was the man that had 85,000 answers to prayer. George Muller of Bristol was the man of whom there were two books written about his prayer life.

They both are out of print, but there were two books written about his prayer life. And the first one had the title, 35,000 answers to prayer in 24 hours. The second book had the title, 50,000 answers to prayer in more than 24 hours.

Do you know the longest that Muller prayed for someone? 63 years. Do you know when that person became a Christian? Three weeks after George Muller died. And someone went to him one day and said to him, Mr. Muller, do you ever stop praying for people? And Muller made a statement and he said, as long as God keeps the burden on my heart, he said, I never cease to pray for people.

Because he said, as long as the burden is prevailing upon my heart for that person, then what happens is that God helps me on a consistent basis to pray for that person. And when you study the prayer life of Muller, and you know, I get so many people who come to me and say, Gerard, the secret of Muller's prayer life was the times that he spent in prayer. It was the answers that he had to prayer.

And I often say to them, no, no, no, that was not the secret. And they say, what was the secret of his life? And I say, the secret of his life was the understanding and the perception and the concept that he had of the nature of God in prayer and, brother and sister, the righteousness of God in prayer. Let me explain to you two things about Muller.

First of all, as it relates to the burden of God. Someone asked me today, and they said, how do you speak about dissecting the burden of God? If God has given you a burden, let me say to you tonight, my friends, if God gives you a burden for a country or for a place, we have this simple habit, Janice and myself, that if we go into a country, we try the first number of days in that country just to take time to spend time in prayer and in fasting and being alone with God. I love to get a place where I can be on my own and just

really take time to sense the burden of God for this country.

But if God has given you a burden, you need to learn how to dissect the burden of God. And there are ways for us to be able to come to grips with it. Let me give you a little bit of my own personal insight, and it's quite possible that there are many other aspects of what we would refer to as dissecting the burden of God.

But when I sense the burden, the first thing that I ask God is that He would take me, because you see in this burden, there are different phases of understanding the need of this burden. And my brother and my sister, what needs to happen is that you and I need to ask God to give us a sense of insight into the area that is the most desperately needed as it relates to this burden. And this is what I do in my own inadequate understanding of prayer.

I ask God and say, show to me the most difficult aspect of what it's going to take to pray this thing through. What it's going to take to sense the witness of the Spirit of God that I prayed through. And we don't have time, but there are numerous examples in Scripture of men and women that prayed through.

Now the essence of praying through is to discover the will of God. And so you say, what happened? When you discover the will of God as it relates to the burden of God, and I want you to try and stay with me in what I'm saying. When you discover the will of God as it relates to the burden of God, and you pray, you know that you are praying in the will of God.

And so then you say, what do you do? You focus and concentrate on the area that is the most difficult. And you know what I learned from Muller of Bristol? When Muller of Bristol, and you don't use these terms, you know, but when you read his journals, I have in my library two journals of about 400 to 450 pages each of all the journals on the life of Muller of Bristol. And you will discover that when you read his journals, that when you refer to a burden, brother and sister, you will discover, although he doesn't use the word, dissect the burden of God, you will discover that he would take it apart, and then he would ask God and say, God, I want You to give me promises for this burden.

And then brother and sister, step by step by step, in the life of Muller of Bristol, you will discover that God has given him these promises. And he will be able to stand upon these promises. And then Muller of Bristol, and I really want you to understand this, because people came to him and they would say to him, Mr. Muller, that when you pray, when you pray for these things that you are praying for, would you claim the promises of God? Would you stand upon the promises of God, and then you would pray those things? And Muller of Bristol, he was a German, you know, and Muller of Bristol would say, no, I don't do that.

And so people would say to him, what happens? And do you know what he would say? No, I don't claim the promises of God. But he said, what is happening is that the promises of God claims me. You say, what do you mean? Let me explain to you.

Muller would say, I would take the Scriptures, and when those promises that God has given to me, he said, I won't go to the burden, because when I go to the burden, I become discouraged, because my friends, sometimes when you pray about the issue, my brother and sister, often it gets worse before it gets better. You see, the tide goes out, and there is a moment when the tide turns. And Muller would say, I would go to the Scriptures, and I would let the Scriptures become part of my life.

And as the Scriptures become part of my life, Muller of Bristol would say, when they have become part of my life, he said, I pray through the Scriptures. And he said, I allow the Scriptures to become part of my relationship with God. And he said, as I pray through the Scriptures, and the Scriptures refresh me, and the Scriptures quicken my heart and spirit, and the Scriptures renew my strength in God.

And then Muller of Bristol would say, the consequences of those promises are the things that I am praying for. And he said, I never get tired praying for people. Do you understand what I am trying to say to you, brother and sister? I mean, this is so precious, you know.

This is so wonderful. Because you see, when you allow God's Word to become... If you were not with us this morning, I made this statement and said, if you want to learn the language of prayer, you need to learn what God's Word is saying to us about prayer. So what is it? There is routine praying.

You remember what the Lord Jesus said? He said, men ought always to pray and not to faint. You say, can you give me a foundation passage that lays the foundation in what we refer to as routine praying? And look, chapter 18, we find this beautiful passage of this woman that came to the unrighteous judge. And she continually came to him on a consistent basis.

Eventually he responded and he said, because of her continual coming to me, he said, and I said, I will avenge her, and he said, I will do that which she wants me to do. He said, what is it? It's consistent praying. You know, I love Martin Luther, not because he was a German, but Martin Luther was an amazing man.

Martin Luther, the reformer, used to say, I've got so much work to do today, and as a result of that, I need to spend three hours alone with God. But Martin Luther had a friend. And there were times that they were not friends, theologically speaking.

But Martin Luther had this friend, and I'm trying to remember his name, it just slipped my mind. But Martin Luther had this friend, I put it in the back burner and it will come back. But Martin Luther had this friend, and they were told that they became wonderful friends, and his friend took terribly ill.

And Martin Luther went to him in the Reformation, and he said to him, I don't want you to die. He was going to die because he was Melanthin, I got it. His name was Melanthin.

And he went to Melanthin and he said to Melanthin, he said, I don't want you to die. And Melanthin said to Martin Luther, I want to die. I want to be with Christ.

And Martin Luther turned to him and said, you can't die. I need you in the Reformation. You see, the Reformation was the revival of coming back to the Scriptures, being set free from Catholicism.

And you know what happened, brother and sister? Martin Luther began to pray for his friend. Now listen, you need to be a German to be able to do this, but this is what he prayed. He said, I ferociously, this is it, I ferociously, and you should hear this word ferociously in the German language.

He said, I ferociously attack God on the basis of His promises. That's why I said you need to be a German in order to be able to pray that. Ah, you know what happened? God, the Holy Spirit touched Melanthin and healed him.

You know what happened to Melanthin? He lived longer than Martin Luther. I mean, that's the way to go, you know. You say, what is it? Ah, it's routine praying.

Can I mention to you about George Muller again? You know, George Muller was crossing the ocean on his way to Quebec to speak, and an intense fire came upon the ocean, brother and sister. And when this fire came upon the ocean, Muller of Bristol went to the captain, who incidentally was a believer, a Christian, and he went to the captain and he said to the captain, because for sixteen hours the captain was standing behind the wheel of a ship. And Muller, because of the intensity of the fire.

And so Muller of Bristol went to the captain and he said to him, Captain, I have an engagement, an appointment to speak in Quebec on Saturday afternoon at such and such a time. And the captain of the ship turned to Muller of Bristol and said to him, Mr. Muller, we can't move forward. He said, I've been standing behind the wheel of a ship for sixteen hours.

He said, we can't move forward. It's too dangerous. And Muller of Bristol turned to the captain and he said, I suggest that we go on into the cabin to pray.

And you know, this is exactly what happened. They went down into the cabin to pray, my brother and sister, and George Muller began to pray. And this is what he basically prayed.

He said, God, he said, I believe that I'm in your will. He said, I have an appointment to speak on Saturday afternoon. I think it was something like two o'clock in Quebec.

And he said, God, I ask in Jesus' name that you will remove the fog in the next five minutes. And the captain began to pray. And do you know what happened? George Muller of Bristol put his hand upon the captain's shoulder and he said to him, I don't want you to pray.

And the captain said, why not? He said, first of all, you don't believe that God is going to answer your prayer. And he said, secondly, he said, look through the window, the fog is disappearing. You see, brother and sister, God answers prayer, you know.

You say, what is it? It's routine praying. I wonder if I would be allowed to mention to you another aspect of what we refer to as prayer. You know what I discovered? It's what does it mean to pray in the will of God? You see, there are twelve aspects of prayer that we are speaking about in the New Testament.

You say, how do I discover what does it mean to pray in the will of God and New Testament Scripture? Brother and sister, you need to go to the life of Christ. You say, why do I have to go to the life of Christ? Let me explain to you. Jesus was the only one that was ever able to say, Father, I thank you that you always listen to me.

You say, what does it mean? That means that there was not a moment when the Son of God spent time in the presence of His Father that His Father was not listening to Him. And you remember when He came to the grave of Lazarus and He made the statement and He said, Father, I thank you that you always listen to me. Have you ever asked yourselves that when Jesus turned to the grave of Lazarus and He turned to the grave and He said, Lazarus, come out.

Have you ever asked yourselves, why did He say, Lazarus, come out? My wife asked me this question some time ago and she said, Daddy, why do you think Jesus said specifically, Lazarus, come out? You know what I said to my wife? If Christ wouldn't have said, Lazarus, come out, the whole graveyard would

have turned up, you know. Brother and sister, this was the voice of the Son of God, you see. And so He was the only one that was able to say, Father, I thank you that you always listen to me.

And brother and sister, if you want to discover the secret of what does it mean to pray in the will of God, you need to study the life of Christ. You need to go to the Gospel of John. You need to discover the relationship that He had with His Father.

And when you discover the intimacy of the relationship that He had with His Father, when He said, Me and the Father, we are one. When He said, The Son can do nothing. This is the greatest statement of prayer in the Gospel of John.

He said, The Son can do nothing unless He sees the Father do of it. That's why He was able to say to the women at the well in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, He said, You've had five husbands. And He said, The one that you now have is not your husband.

You see, He was the Son of God. He knew exactly. The night when Nicodemus came to Him in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, and when He came to Christ and He said to Him, We know that You are a teacher who has come from God, because no one can do these things unless God be with Him.

Brother and sister, even in the midst of the night, I don't think Christ was asleep. No, no, He knew what was coming. And so He knew what it meant to be in the will of His Father.

And do you know what I discover? It's a marvelous statement for us to this understanding of praying in the will of God. Let me ask you a question tonight. Do you know the secret of living in the will of God, brother and sister? Do you know there is the possibility that you can live outside the will of God? You say, how do I know when I'm outside of the will of God? If God is not in the process of sanctifying me as a Christian, you say, why do you say that? Because the Apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians, he said, this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

You say, what do you mean, brother and sister? If I'm indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. And so, this is the will of God, my sanctification. You say, what does that mean? God needs to sanctify me.

That's why we read in 1 Peter 1, that the Apostle Peter said, be ye holy as I am holy. That's why we read in Hebrews 12, he said, follow peace of all men and holiness, wherewith no man shall see the Lord. That's why the Apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians, when he prayed for those Thessalonian Christians at Thessalonica, and he said, there is something that is lacking in your faith, brother and sister.

And listen to this, in 1 Thessalonians 5, he brought the prayer and the burden of his heart to a moment of a climatic reality, when he said to those believers at Thessalonica, he said, I pray that the very God of peace sanctify you. And the King James Version of the Bible says sanctify you holy. Let me explain to you something about the Greek New Testament.

And in saying that, I'm not taking anything away from the text in the English language. But let me explain to you the structure. He said, let the very God of peace sanctify you through and through.

I love a German translation. You say, why? You say, what is it? It's a wonderful statement. Heilig und durch, und durch.

Listen, brother and sister, to the Greek language. These are two tremendous words that come to the surface. You say, which are those words? It's the word in the Greek language, halotilios.

You say, Gerard, what does that mean? Halotilios means that God is able to sanctify me extensively. And there is another word that is following that. You say, what is that? It's the Greek word halotilos.

You say, what does that mean? It means that God is able to sanctify us, not just extensively, but brother and sister, God is able to sanctify us experientially. So can I ask you tonight, do we know what it means to live in the will of God? Do we know what it means to follow God? Do we know what it means for my life to be set apart unto God? You see, it's the will of God. Because, my brother and sister, how can the Holy Spirit in you criticize the Holy Spirit in me? You see, that's not possible.

So you say, how do I survive? I need to see people with the grace of God, and I need to look upon myself without the grace of God, and you never will be able to condemn the lives of men and women. It's just not possible. Can I explain to you? So what does it mean to pray in the will of God? Here comes a marvelous passage.

Listen to it. It's in the first epistle of the Apostle John. You say, what is it saying to you? Listen to it.

This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, what happens? The Bible said, He's listening to us. And then the Bible says, if we know that He's hearing us, we know that we are the petitions of those things that we ask of Him. Brother and sister, would you allow me just to take this one statement apart? Because there are two aspects of praying in the will of God.

You say, what is it? Here comes the third aspect. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, that He hears us. Those are marvelous statements.

You say, what are they? This is the confidence? What kind of confidence? The confidence that we have in Him. Why do we have confidence in Him? Because if we ask anything according to His will. Why is it that we ask according? Because if we ask anything according to His will, express an imperative mood in the Greek language, He is in the process of listening to us.

And if we know that He's in the process of listening to us, we have the petitions of those things that we ask. Can I ask you this night? Do you know what it means to have confidence in God? Some of you were not with us this morning. We mentioned about this thing that Jesus said, when you go into your closet, it means your secret den, it means the storehouse of God.

When you go into that, and then the opposite to the Hebrews comes, and He said, God has given us, brother and sister, freedom to enter into the holiest of all. Can I ask you tonight, do you know the confidence of God, the Holy Spirit? The confidence that we have in what? In the Lord Jesus Christ, you know. All the promises of God.

The greatness of the life in Christ. The Apostle Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians said, sitting with Christ in heavenly places. This is the confidence that we have in Him.

And if we are in Him, what will we do? We will ask. You say, what does it mean to ask? Do you know that in what we spoke of this morning as the New Testament tabernacle of prayer, I said there are six pillars. Those are the six words in the New Testament and the Greek text that I use the most.

And you know what? One of those six words is this word, ask. And He said, this is the confidence that we have in Him. If we ask anything according to His will, oh, brother and sister, it's a marvelous thing to pray according to the will of God.

I wonder if I may share something with you personally. You know, in the beginning of this year I was allowed to take Janice and Monica away for a vacation. And when I took Janice and Monica away for a vacation, you say, how did it come about? Well, a man was in a prayer conference we did quite a number of years ago.

And this man came to us and he said to us, a very serious man, and he came to us and he said to us, I want to do something for the three of you. Janice and Monica and myself. And I said to him, what do you mean? He said, I want you to pray about this.

And I said, but explain to me. And he said, you know, I want to give you and Janice and Monica a free holiday or a vacation. We speak of vacation.

A free holiday on the island of Maui. And so I kind of look at him and I thought, okay, where is this coming from? And what is the agenda? Why does he want... But he was a very serious looking man. And he turned to me in all his seriousness and he said, Gerard, he said, how much time do you need to pray about that? You know what I said to him? I don't need a lot of time to pray about that.

And he thought, now what do you mean? I said, you know, the Bible says before you ask, I will answer. You know, this is what he's been doing to us. Oh, it's wonderful, brother and sister.

And when we were away, one of the things I did was, at the beginning of this year, it's just to go through the Scriptures. You know, just really sit. I'm one of those people, I want to be six months or a year ahead of myself.

You say, what do you mean? I never like to be caught unguarded. And so I want to have a sense in my devotional times, what is happening six months from now, and the understanding of discipline. I'm not talking about legalism.

You say, what is legalism? Legalism is when your convictions determine your relationship with God. The opposite of legalism is that you have a relationship with God that determines the things that you do and the things that you don't do. You see, many of us, you can be separated unto God, but you're not you can be separated from the world, but you're not separated unto God.

That's quite possible, you know. And so I never like to be caught unguarded. And I want to know what's happening in my times of God for the next six to twelve months and the beginning of this year.

You know what happened? God brought me into this aspect of the Christian life as it relates to prayer. Brother and sister, just to pray through the Scriptures. You say, are you going to look for the Scriptures? No.

Just as you spend time with God, you know, as you linger in the presence of God. Brother and sister, you know what happens? If you and I live in the Scriptures, you know what takes place in our relationships with God? Oh, God brings His Word to us, you know. And most of the wonderful things.

Brother and sister, God is not a slave driver, you know. God is not a tyrant. God is not a dictator.

No, no, no, no. The God that we serve is a God of love, you know. Oh, He hates sin, but He loves the sinner.

And God is not the kind of God, you know. I hear people preaching about the wrath of God and the righteousness of God and all these things. And you know, it seems to me they stand there with a whip and they just try to hit you wherever they can.

Listen, that's not the kind of God that we are speaking about. He's the one that initiates prayer. He's the one that wants to spend fellowship with us.

And oh, brother and sister, when we are in these times alone with God, do you know what happens to us if we live in the Scriptures? The Scriptures just come to us. And to me, one of the greatest aspects of my little understanding of prayer. And I need to tell you, I don't have this thing together.

You need to get to the place where you know how to pray. But you know what happens in my little understanding of prayer when you are in these times with God and the Scriptures come and they become part of your life and you say, this is a conference to have fellowship with God. And there is a sense of liberty.

And there is a sense of boldness. You say, why? Listen to the Apostle Paul. He said, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Why is he saying that? He said because of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Brother and sister, has set us free from the law of sin and death. You see, we are not under the condemnation of the law.

The Holy Spirit of God never condemns you. He convicts us with the Spirit of God. And do you know what it is? Praying through the Scriptures.

Praying in the will of God. Confidence that we have in Him. That if we ask anything according to His will, He is listening.

Can I ask you this evening and I want to ask myself this question, the times that you are spending with God, are you getting a listening ear, brother and sister? Is God listening? Do you know Christ, when He introduced to us these ingredients in prayer, and He said, when you pray and He said, you are going to say, our Father, you say, what did He do? He spoke about the paternity of God in prayer. Would you allow me to suggest to you this evening, when Christ spoke about the Father, He didn't use the Greek word pater that we discover for the word Father. No, no brother and sister, He didn't use that.

He used the Aramaic word Abba. And so when He spoke about the Father, He said, Gerard, what was He doing? He was speaking about a relationship with God. Listen folks, prayer is the relationship with God.

Those black African pastors that we learn to pray within the mountain in Africa, those black African pastors, you know, they would spend long extended times within the realm of the presence of God. But brother and sister, I would ask them and say, how many hours do you spend in prayer? And those black men would never tell me, and I could never get it out of them, how many hours they would spend in prayer. And then I would insist, and I said, I really want to know how many hours you spend in prayer.

And they would never say to me, but when I would get an answer out of them, you know what they would say? They would say, listen, my nickname was Medalla. They would say Medalla. We don't know how

many hours we spent in prayer.

But you know what happens? We never go through an hour without praying. So what does it mean? Brother and sister, it's a relationship with God. It's a fellowship.

And I wonder tonight, have we lost the art of fellowship with God? Have we lost the art of worship? Can I clarify something to you, brother and sister? When we speak of biblical worship, can I explain to you it has nothing to do with worship today, of what people speak about, you know? Not a single thing. You say, what is the distinction? What's happening today in the so-called evangelical church has got nothing to do with worship. You say, what does it mean? It has to do with styles of music.

That is not worship. In fact, a pastor said to me in the United States some time ago, because his church was in a terrible thing about all the stuff that they were trying to bring into his church. And I tell you the pressure.

And he said, I'm resisting and I'm resisting. And he said, I need prayer. And you know, he was so desperate.

I mean, he was so desperate. He looked at me and he said to me, Brother Gerard, he said, you know what? When Satan was cast out of heaven, you know what happened to him? I said, what? He said he fell right into the worship team. I'm not going to say that to you.

Nothing to do with worship. It's styles of music. And you know, let me just caution you tonight.

You know, when we sing some of the old great hymns, and I don't want you to misunderstand me, but when we sing some of the old great hymns, brother and sister, we sing biblical theology, you know. On Christ a solid rock I stand. No other ground.

You know, the beauty of singing biblical theology. Oh, the precious, precious blood. What can wash away my stain? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. So what are we doing? We're singing theology. Why are we singing that? Listen, folks.

Those hymns were born in revival. They were saturated with the greatness of the presence of God. So what is it? Worship.

Can I explain to you something? I'll have a swear for worship. You say, why are you saying that? We're dealing with these aspects of prayer, by the way. Praying in the will of God.

Routine praying. Here's another one. Fellowship praying.

That's when we speak about worship. So what do you mean by fellowship praying? Listen to the Old Testament. How can two walk together except they agree? That great statement that comes out of the ministry, the epistles of the Apostle Paul, when he said, husbands, love your wives, and then he spoke about walk in love.

You know, the classical Greek gives unto us the possibility of using an illustration to illustrate when Paul said, work circumspectly. He said, what's the best way of illustrating that? It's when you go to countries sometimes and there are walls and they don't have money to put these wire fences up. And you see this

brick wall and then you see there is cement on top of it.

And when brothers and sisters, they poured the cement, what they did in those countries, they would break bottles because it's cheap to do that. And they would break bottles and they would put the sharp edges of these bottles and cemented them in. And so you can't get over that wall because it's going to cut.

The glass is going to cut you. And have you ever seen a cat walking on those walls in these countries? That cat walks circumspectly. That's what it means.

So, worship. In the New Testament there is this great word for worship, you know. You say, what is this word? It's the word proskeneu.

You say, what does it mean? Do you know what that word means? It means to crawl in the presence of God. Do you know what it means? It means to be prostrate before God. Listen, Abraham in the Old Testament said, I'm going to worship.

In what context was he saying that? He turned to the men that went up to him towards the mountain that God told him and said, go and sacrifice your son. And so when he said, I'm going to sacrifice my son, he left those men with the animals and everything. And then he had his son Isaac and he said to them, me and the son are going yonder.

And do you remember what he said? We are going yonder to worship. Brother and sister, he was going to sacrifice his son, you know. And if you and I want to understand New Testament worship, let me explain to you something tonight.

The heart of what worship is about, brother and sister, happened in the Old Testament. You say, why do you say that? Here it is. It happened during a period of 11 months and 19 days.

You say, how did it manifest itself? It was on Mount Sinai. You say, to what degree did it happen? Ah, you remember the people of Israel. God brought them out of Egypt.

God brought them through the Red Sea. Brother and sister, when they came through the Red Sea, what happened? God brought them to Mount Sinai. You say, how long were they at Mount Sinai? For 11 months and 19 days.

You say, Gerard, what happened at Mount Sinai? The will of God was unfolded through the law. The way to God was appointed through the tabernacle. And the walk with God was revealed through the book of Leviticus.

Brother and sister, that is the essence of Old Testament systematic theology as it relates to worship. Now we come into the New Testament. You say, can you explain it to me? It's wonderful, you know.

Jesus said to the woman at the well, God is the Spirit and those that worship Him, they need to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Now you remember on the day of Pentecost. You say, what happened? The Holy Spirit of God came.

And you remember when the Holy Spirit of God came? 3,000 people were saved. Why? Because the Spirit of God came. The Apostle Peter preached his first sermon.

He laid emphasis upon the crucifixion of Christ. He laid emphasis upon the Scriptures. He laid emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

And he had a practical application. He said to them, you are the ones who have crucified this Christ. And when he said that, the Bible says, they were pricked in their hearts.

It's one of the two words in the Greek language for the word conviction. And they were pricked in their hearts. And you remember what they said to Peter? They said, what must we do to be saved? And you remember what the Apostle Peter said? Oh, brethren, history is precious.

He said, repent and believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. You say, what was the gift of the Holy Spirit? It was the understanding of justification by faith. 3,000 people were saved.

And ah, when they were saved, what did those early disciples do? It's wonderful. Here comes New Testament worship. You say, what did it say? This is what they said.

The early apostles and the converts came together. For what? For the apostles' doctrine, for the breaking of bread, and for prayer, and for fellowship. Those are the four pillars of New Testament worship.

So let me ask you this morning, do we know the secret of lingering in the presence of God? You know, we live out there in the west coast of Canada, and Janice and Monica and myself, Monica and myself, we love animals. I was brought up in Africa. At some point wanted to become a vet.

I got involved in a place in the name of Honours the Poor, and then found myself going to study theology, but we love animals, because I was brought up amongst animals. And when Monica was born, I discovered that Monica loves animals. Now my Janice, my wife, she don't care one bit about animals.

Not one bit. In fact, when Monica was small, we had a hamster, and he died and went to be with the Lord Jesus, I hope, because I was ready to have him for breakfast. And you know, being an African, Monica and myself, we had a snake.

Oh, it was fun, because he got out of the fish tank. We had this empty fish tank, and my wife was up the wall. I mean, she was ready to sleep on the ceiling upside down, you know.

And we never found the snake, and I knew he didn't go to heaven, so he probably went to hell if he had a soul. And so you say, what happened? Well, let me tell you something. We love animals, and so we've got a cat.

We used to have a rabbit. We used to call him Fumper. It was a rabbit that got out of a cage somewhere, landed close to our house, and we got this gray thing.

And he was a rascal. I always said he had a demon. You say, why? Because when I would be on my knees praying in my room where I pray, and in the mornings I feel sorry for him, I let him out of his cage, and then he pops all over the floor, and then the phone would ring.

I'm on the phone, and you know what he'd do? He'd bite the line off because he wants my attention. And so I'm on the phone, and bang! There's no line. And I thought, you know, this simple rabbit, we're going to have him for lunch one day.

And he kept doing this, brother and sister. And one morning, you know, we've got a thing called in Canada self-assisted suicide. I mean, here in Australia, of course, you don't have something like that.

And one morning I was on my knees, and this simple rabbit was around me, and I thought, you know, I don't have it in me to kill him, but I'm going to help him to kill himself. And I put out this electric wire, and I turned it on, and I thought, you're going to chew on that thing, and you're gone. And I got so convicted, I crawled over and plucked the thing out.

You know, you can't do that. And we got rid of him, you know, you can't do self-assisted, we call it self-assisted suicide. Listen, we have two dogs, Rusty and Sunshine, Golden Retrievers.

And oh, they're great. I mean, I love those two dogs. We've, of course, got a cat.

You come to my house, and there's a place where I kneel to pray in the early hours of the morning, and the cat lies right next to me, and her tail keeps wagging me on my head. And I knew it's not the Spirit of God, by the way. It keeps happening to me.

And I've got two dogs between my legs. I mean, you know, I've got great fellowship in praying. These animals, they just love me.

Janice said to me today, oh, Daddy, the dogs really miss you. You wouldn't believe this. I would whistle to my dogs on the phone, and they know it's me.

I mean, they go wild. She said, they're all over the house, Daddy, you know. She put the speaker's phone on.

But you know what happened? Rusty and Sunshine. Rusty is the brother. They're 110 pounds, huge old fellow.

And Sunshine is the sister. And Sunshine is the typical woman. I would bring her home.

We used to have a conference ground, and Rusty would stay with our caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Boyle, the Irish folks. And I would leave him there, and then I'd get Sunshine to jump in the back of the vehicle. And I would bring her back home, and we'd come to the house, and I'd open the back, and she jumped out and ran into the backyard and the lawn.

And I would go into the house and spend some time with Janice, and then I'd come out, and here's Sunshine. And you know these retrievers, they're terrors. She, within a half an hour, has dugged this hole in the lawn.

And she's at it. Man, you know, I'm so upset, you know. It's like some people in the church who are pastors, they say, you know, they're not a thorn in the flesh, but oh, they're a pain in the neck, you know.

And you know, here's this dog. And I would go to her, I'd say, Sunshine, you've been such a bad girl. And you know this golden retriever, oh man, they're incredible, you know.

She would come running to me. I mean, she knows she's in trouble. And she would come running to me, and she would come running right up to me, and then she'd lie flat on the lawn.

And as she would lie flat on the lawn, her little paws would be like this, and she'd put her face just flat on the grass, and then she looks like this, and then she'd look up. I mean, how can you do something to a dog like that, you know? Yeah, I mean, these women, they have a way to get around, you know. I tell you.

And so, she'd lie like this, and I would look at her, and serious on my face, I'd say, Sunshine, Sunshine, and she would just look. I'd say, Sunshine, Sunshine, you've been such a bad girl. Do you know what this dog would do? Oh, it's so funny.

She just rolls over on her back and say, I've had it. I'd say to Janice one day, I wish everyone else would do it, you know. I've had it.

You know what she said? I've got nowhere to go. Our time is gone, you know. I've hardly started, but listen.

Our time is gone. Brethren, sisters, listen. Have you learned the secret of coming into the presence of God and just roll over? I'm not speaking about physically.

No, no. I'm speaking about an attitude. Can I tell you something tonight in closing? Let's say, what about your simple inadequate walk with God? Let me tell you something tonight.

This is the absolute honest reality. There are times when I'm on my knees and I say to God, I don't feel like praying. I say, Father, I feel like an old dry stick.

But you know what I say to God? I say, Lord, I have nowhere to go. If you are not going to come, nothing is going to happen. Brethren and sisters, those mornings become some of the greatest.

It's not what you come to receive at the church, you know. So what do you mean it's what you are bringing into the morning service? That's the difference. Heavenly Father, our time tonight has just gone brutally fast and I felt these minutes just slip by in the greatness of Your presence.

And yet we thank You tonight that we've got a day left tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock when we spend time together and tomorrow evening in our last session. And we really want to pray that You will prepare our hearts, that You will give us a sense of Yourself, and that as we wait and consider the understanding of Your day, this beauty of the Lord's day, prepare our hearts. If You want to touch us tomorrow morning in very deep ways, just come and break our hearts, we pray, because we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our service is over. Thanks for coming.

We've been here for an hour and a half already. I'm sure it didn't feel like that, but time is gone. Remember some of this material.

If you are interested in that, we would love to put it in your hands. We trust to see you tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. Thank you.

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