

# Prayer for America

by Glenn Sheppard

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*Glenn Sheppard's sermon emphasizes the critical need for prayer and revival in America, urging believers to seek a deeper relationship with God and to engage in intercessory prayer for their communities.*

**Duration:** 34:31

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:9, John 17:21, Acts 6:4, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Revival", "Spiritual Awakening"

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## Description

This sermon by Glenn Shepard emphasizes the importance of revival and spiritual awakening, highlighting the need for deep prayer, obedience to the Holy Spirit, and a return to biblical Christianity. Glenn shares insights on the power of prayer, the impact of revival on individuals and communities, and the necessity of being doers of the Word. He calls for a genuine move of God that draws people to the heart of God, leading to transformation and awakening.

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## Transcript

We're so delighted to have Glenn Shepard speaking for us this morning. I got to know Glenn many years ago and got to know him very well when he was Director of the Office of Spiritual Awakening and Prayer for Spiritual Awakening at the Home Mission Board. He had served there as also Director of Personal Evangelism.

He's currently President of International Prayer Ministries and it's an exciting ministry they have, including a home for young ladies in Thailand and then a very thrilling ministry he's got right in the heart of Nepal in Kathmandu. What a great place to have a ministry, Glenn. Founded in over 200 churches, led by Native leaders.

Glenn is also a founding member of the National Prayer Committee. He's also served as Senior Associate for Prayer for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism. He's preached in over 100 countries in all 50 states.

So the Lord has given him an exciting and wonderful ministry. Makes his home along with his sweet wife Jacqueline right here in Greenwood, just east of Kansas City. And maybe sometime you'd like to have Glenn come to your church and lead in a prayer emphasis, a prayer focus, or just to preach and encourage your people.

Glenn, welcome back to Midwestern. After our special music, I believe that's on, you'll have the blessing of hearing from Glenn Shepard. Thank you very much, Josh, for that wonderful time and bless you for leading us into the presence of the Lord.

It's a delight to be back at Midwestern and a real thrill to be with my friend, your wonderful President. I don't know whether you know how blessed you are to have this man as President of your seminary, but he is an outstanding leader. We've known each other, he said, 20 years this morning.

It's been closer to 30-something now, I think, Dr. Roberts. He just doesn't want to admit he's as old as I look. And I'm not as old as I really look.

My hair's turned gray, not loose, like several of yours. It fell through, but it held on. It's a privilege to be with you this morning and these brief moments that we have.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to return to the campus. I think I was here on either the first or the second prayer emphasis that Dr. Roberts implemented immediately upon his coming to the seminary as President back about eight years ago. And subsequent to that, I love this area so well, told my wife, and I moved to Greenwood area.

Though I'm not here more than two or three weeks out of the year, it seems like, my wife says. But it's a delight to be back on campus. It's a thrill to feel the atmosphere.

It's a joy to walk across these facilities and see the dreams that are coming to fruition. I wish I had more time to reminisce with you, but I have two assignments this morning. Number one, I want to introduce you to a book Dr. Roberts shared with you that I'm one of the founding members of America's National Prayer Committee.

A number of years ago, when I went to the North American Mission Board to serve then the old Home Mission Board and we were pioneering the area that my wonderful friend Henry Blackaby called me in, the Office of Prayer and Awakening. Dr. Bill Hogan asked me to come and begin that work and I had the privilege of writing my own job description. Now that's a good thing to have happen in your life at any point.

Any of you that are planning to get married, you need to write your own job description. It'll be very helpful, I promise you. I have 45 years of experience in that this past Sunday.

And Bill allowed me to write my job description. At the end of the job description, I put a little thing that was in my heart. It had been there, I don't know where it came from.

Well, I do know where it came from. It came from the heart of God. And I wrote a last final phrase on that job description that I would build bridges to the rest of the body.

We Baptist, because of our largeness and our absolute domination of numerical numbers, have often been isolated from the rest of the body. And we've been careful to be very doctrinally sound and biblically solid. But I've always discovered across the bridge there are those who love the Lord with the depth like ours.

And when I checked the last time, I did not think that Jesus was labeled a Baptist. He was just labeled Christ, the Son of the Living God. And so I began to build bridges.

Dr. Hogue backed me into a corner. He was director of the Department of Evangelism, my immediate supervisor at the whole mission board. Backed me into a corner and assigned me the responsibility to come here to Kansas City for the American Festival of Evangelism.

That was back in 79. Boy, you remember those times. And I said, Dr. Hogue, I don't have time.

There's so much to do with Baptists. They need something. And he said, I know, but I want you to go out and meet with these people.

And I went out and met with a group of prayer leaders from around the nation. Bonette Bright, wife of Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. Dick Eastman, heads up now, Every Home for Christ, at that time was developing *The Hour That Changes the World*, a book that he wrote that sold literally millions of copies in 62 nations around the world, 38 different languages.

Norval Hadley from the Friends denomination, Quakers. Jim and Joy Dawson from Youth with a Mission, New Zealanders who had migrated here. I'd heard about these people.

Evelyn Christensen from the American Baptist Convention. I'd heard about them, but I'd kind of grown up, like most of us Baptists do, somewhat isolated in my little theological perspective. And I was very scared of this Crusade crew because, you see, they'd get you Baptist student union people when I was in college.

And so I kind of backed off. I met some of the most delightful people I've ever met in my life. That began a long journey, a journey literally that has spanned almost three decades now.

And out of that American Festival of Evangelism, that little group of prayer leaders, I happened to be the only denominational representative, we determined that we would begin just meeting together. We officially became the North American National Prayer Committee as an ad hoc committee, self-appointed, but now authorized and approved, and we helped implement the National Day of Prayer, which is observed across the nation on the first Thursday of May and is observed in every state and around the nation now. Last year, literally multiple millions of people participated in it.

During the course of these 30 years, I began to say to the committee, as we began to draw in others from other denominations, para-church organizations, we must train our seminarians. I went all the way through college and all the way through seminary. Part of my college degree came from a Baptist college in the state of Georgia.

Part of my seminary degree from Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville, the mother seminary of Dr. Roberts. I just thought you needed to know that. And during the course of all of those times, I was taught many things.

Homiletics, how to preach. I was taught doctrine. I went through church history.

I dealt with philosophy and numerous other things. Miserably failed all of my Hebrew and Greek stuff. I passed it, but I don't have much memory of it.

But nobody ever taught me to pray. And the only thing the disciples ever asked the Lord was, Lord, teach us to pray. They saw him raise the dead, heal the blind, walk on water, defy gravity, cast out the demons.

He did the supernatural. He did all of that. But they never said, Lord, would you teach us how to do that.

He said, Lord, would you teach us to pray. And of course, you know, he gave them the model prayer. And often we call the Lord's Prayer, Our Father which art in heaven.

That's really the model prayer. If you want to read the real Lord's Prayer, go to John chapter 17. It's the high priestly prayer of Jesus.

In the middle of it, in verse 21 I think it is, he says, Lord, I pray that they will be one even as we are one. My New Zealand friend, Joy Dawson, coined a phrase that I'd never heard before. She calls that Trinity Unity.

Not luring your beliefs to the lowest common denominator, but coming together at the denominator that brings us all out of our darkness and our blindness. And so, during these 30 years, I kept saying to our National Prayer Committee, we must do something to impact the theological streams in our nation. All the branches, Bible colleges, theology, schools, seminaries, etc.

And we created a theological task force, and Dr. Dan Crawford, who is now retired, but Professor Emeritus of the Chair of Prayer, Senior Professor of Evangelism for many years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, that little thing out in Texas, you know, Dan was the compiler of it. But it's written by 108 different authors. And it's called Giving Ourselves to Prayer.

There's a theological perspective, there's a practical perspective. It's very applicable to how you, as people who are going to lead the body of Christ, can implement the theology of prayer, the practice of prayer, and the operation of prayer. Not only in your personal life, but in the corporate life.

No one ever taught me how to lead a prayer meeting. When I went out of seminary and ended up in my first pastorate, though I had been pastoring all through college and seminary, I really did not know how to lead a prayer meeting. I knew how to do Bible study, I knew how to do exegetical scriptures, but I did not know how to lead people to pray.

And so we compiled a book. I'm giving a copy to your president. I wrote one chapter in it, but that doesn't make it worth anything.

Probably diminishes the value. The others that wrote in it, from across the broad spectrum, from many different backgrounds, parachurch, denominational organizations, international representatives, a multitude of our Southern Baptists have written in here, strategists that have developed things for the International Mission Board, for the North American Mission Board, professors, theologians, numerous perspectives. Not all the same.

Some Protestant, basic evangelicals. Some dancing, shouting, charismatic. Some on warfare.

Some on the theology of warfare. But it's one of the best pieces of material I've ever seen. And so I want to put a plug in for it this morning, give a copy to your president, and say to your curriculum division, why not train students to pray? That's what Jesus trained His disciples to do.

It's the only hunger they had. And if you want to teach a student to pray, you don't tell them the methodology of prayer. You pray with them.

Someone says, Glenn, would you teach me to pray? I often have that because our ministry is prayer. And so they get out their notepad. I say, look, if you want to learn how to pray, let's pray.

Prayer is caught, not taught. Prayer is issued through the heart. You never stand taller than when you kneel to pray.

The devil is never intimidated by our articulation or gesticulation from pulpits, no matter how oratorically gifted we are, no matter how deep our voices or broad our academic educations are. Let me tell you what intimidates the devil, scares the demons, and delivers people from bondage and captivity. A weeping, broken-hearted intercessor who walks into the closet and binds the powers of darkness and sets the captive free.

You will never stand taller than when you kneel to pray. And so I put a plug in for that dimension of the book. If you're interested in it, Dr. Roberts can tell you all about it.

It comes out of a publisher that's relatively new on the block called Prayer Shop Publisher out of Terre Haute, Indiana. I hope I've whet your appetite. Now, if you'll give me your ear for about eight or ten minutes, that's all the moments we have.

I wish I had three hours with you. You may not wish I did. I'll try to be patient with you.

If by people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray. Seek my face. Turn from their wicked ways.

The Word of God gives a prescription for revival. I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sins.

I will heal their land. I'm pushing towards 70. I've pastored almost 50 years, preached, taught, evangelized around the world.

The Lord's given me open doors to all the continents except the southern hemisphere down in the under where the Antarctic is. I've been a lot of places. I've watched programs from every denomination you can imagine.

I've watched the parish church organizations where they have filled the gap for those of us who've not done the work in some other areas. I've watched the changing of the music styles and all of that. I've listened to the programs that have come out of every Vatican city, of every denomination on the face of the earth.

But I'm deeply convinced our greatest need today is not a new program or not a new building. Our deepest need today is for an old-fashioned, God-sent, Spirit-anointed, Holy Ghost, Glory, Hallelujah, foot-stomping, sin-killing, gully-washing, God-honoring, life-changing, nation-shaking revival. Sent from the heart of God to the heart of His children.

Now you see, revival is not an effort to have a crusade to get out there to them to get them in here to look like us. I personally don't think Jesus wants them to look like us. I think God gags on us trying to make them like us.

But I'll tell you what we should look like. We should look like that one who walked the Via Della Rosa and bore the burden of the world, who wore the crowns that He sang about while ago, and bore the burdens of what my body should have bore. The deepest need is revival.

Now, for just a brief moment, and only a brief moment, there is a price to pay in order to obtain revival. There is a cost to invest in order to maintain revival. At least you think I'm talking about a crusade, a

meeting that begins on Sunday, ends on Wednesday, which very few churches do anymore.

I'm not talking about that. That's wonderful. I believe in it.

I did one in Cordele, Georgia, last week. I'll be in Kentucky next week. I believe in those.

I do them as often as I can when I'm at home. Revival is not a meeting to get them out there and hear. Revival is the work of God among His people to bring them from cold, carnal complacency to biblical Christianity.

It is a deep work of God that turns us inside out, upside down, and makes us, when squeezed, leak heaven on earth. I have a favorite theologian. I've been married to her for 45 years.

When we first got married 45 years ago, you can see, even though I'm old, I still get excited. She's as level as the rock of Gibraltar, solid as can be, seldom ever raises her voice, you know, well, you can imagine. God chuckled when we got married.

He said, hmm, son, watch, the sparks are going to fly. And they did. She'd do things that were so stupid it seemed.

Now some of you who are just getting married, you wouldn't admit that. If you did, you'd be in trouble. Sleeping in the guest room, probably.

Or on the floor, since you don't have a guest room here, I don't think. And I'd say, how do you make me so mad? My eyeballs would pop out, blood vessels would almost burst. And she'd look at me and say, darling, I don't make you mad, I squeeze you.

What's inside leaks out. Are you with me? See? The world is not interested in what we say. The world is interested in what leaks out when they squeeze us.

They're not impressed by the pseudo-sophisticated, intellectualized theological discussions that we can have. They're not impressed even by the power that we can develop in our conservative, evangelical, political action groups. But I'll tell you what does impress them.

You bleed like Jesus bled for their hearts. You open your life to the anointing of God's Holy Spirit and let His glory flow through you to such a level that you touch them with the power, not by might, not by spirit, not by my power, but by the spirit of the living Christ. You touch them with that and their lives will be revolutionized and rejuvenated.

Revival. It's for us. I'm hungry for that.

I'm a byproduct in case you say, you act like you're a baptocostal. Folks, get over it. A long time ago I discovered something.

I work interdenominationally all the time. And I'm in and out of charismatic churches, pentecostal churches, Lutheran churches, Presbyterian churches, every kind you can imagine, red, yellow, black, white. I'm in and out of countries.

And I discovered a long time ago, I'd rather refrain a bunch of fanatics than try to resurrect a bunch of dead Baptists who are setting their ways. Now fanatics, if you're not careful, will pass heaven in their

excitement. But some of us who are so solid in our ways will lose it all because we are more determined that we hold on to what we have than we move on with what God wants for a changing generation.

God is up to something today. A couple of years ago, about, oh, what was it? 1999. How many years ago has that been, Dr. Roberts? Ten years ago.

About ten years ago. I'm not a good mathematician. About ten years ago, a young guy from England.

I met a professor from England. Dr. Michael something is out here. He got enough of me in the prayer meeting.

He's not here. He's from the UK, I understand. There's a young fellow named Pete Gregg.

He started a group called 24-7 about ten years ago. It started in an Anglican church, a group of young kids, and they began praying together. And let me tell you what's happened.

That prayer movement has spread around the world. Like it, agree with it, disagree with it. Theologically, I don't adhere to everything, but there's something happened among a generation that's really younger than most of you in this congregation, and they're grabbing hold of the horn of heaven, and they're saying, God, we can't let things continue like they are.

You must invade. Lord, do it again. Now, literally, tens of thousands of boiler rooms are springing up around the world.

Say, what's a boiler room? It's what most churches ought to be, where sin's boiled out and we're setting the concrete of God. You can take the International House of Prayer. Like it or love it, it's here in Kansas City.

You can't get around it. More folks come there than they do to anything else in this city, and you can't get around it. We're going to save all of little Joe's family.

If you've been to the Looks 726, And we have a bit of prayer meeting one And we sign a passage Uncle Joe's liver, would you bless Aunt Susie's kidney? And we don't even pray for the desperate needs of our communities. But there's a generation that's beginning to pull down the strongholds. They're weeping, they're travailing, desperate praying.

Not only is there a price of desperate praying, but there's the price of instant obedience to the prompting of God's Holy Spirit. You read through the New Testament and you will discover, all through the New Testament, many times, many references, Paul in particular said, I couldn't go here, I had to go there, the Holy Spirit forbade me. Instant, joyful obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Now the Spirit was not given to us in order that we might jump and dance. He was given to us in order that we might know the Word, have it quickened in our heart, and be empowered with the glory of God to change this world. And we are baptized into Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But there's a world of difference in receiving the gift of the Spirit and operating in the obedience of the Spirit. And you see, obedience is what God honors. That's what He blesses.

The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, the word there, and I'm not a great Greek scholar, I know a little Greek, he lives on Fifth Avenue in New York. Some of you explain it to some of the Hebrew

scholars, they'll get it later, professors especially. The word righteous has the indication of obedience.

God is not interested in our sacrifices, He's interested in our obedience. I wanna ask you a question. Have you ever tried to obey God and fallen flat on your face? Raise your hand if you've ever done that.

I have. I brought that before God one time. I said, Lord, I made a fool of myself.

I really thought that's what you said. Obviously it wasn't. I fell flat on my face.

People thought I was a religious fanatic, an idiot, crazy, going out of my loony bird brain, and perhaps they were right, but God, what do you think about it? The only thing that came to my heart, I didn't hear any audible voice. I think God can if He wants to because He's God, speak audibly. Didn't hear that, but I'll tell you what came to my heart.

He said, I'd rather if you're going to fall, fall down running toward me. Than running from me. When the Spirit speaks, obey Him.

Now, the Spirit never speaks contrary to this word. The passage that is on the front of this little primer for ministry, Acts 6, verse 4 says, they gave themselves to prayer and the word. Listen, that's the key to a balanced ministry.

Prayer without the word leads to exuberant excitement and often fanatical exuberance doesn't accomplish a thing. But listen, the word without the balance of prayer will lead to pharisaical dumbness. You see, the Pharisees knew the word of God, but when the author came along, they killed him.

It takes both the anointing of the word and the power of the warmth of God's Spirit coupled together. That's what the apostles had to determine to do in Acts chapter 6, verse 4. When the church began to explode, they called aside and said, we've been busy doing things that we're not called to, but we've got to get some people who will handle the business deals. We want to give ourselves to prayer and the word.

And the church exploded across the entire world at that time. Some of you are going in the next few years to mission fields and you say, oh, I'm just going down to Clinton, Missouri. Let me tell you what, the greatest mission field I encounter in the world today is pseudo-sophisticated, intellectualized, stained glass, climate controlled, padded pew religious churches in America.

I get a much easier hearing in the Himalayas with the Hindus, in Thailand with the Buddhists, in Egypt with the Muslims. I get a much easier hearing from most of them than I do with those who have calloused and cauliflowered ears of religious dogma that they have listened to but never obeyed. You see, be doers of the word, not hearers only.

Least you begin to deceive yourself. So my young friends, as we move into a season of prayer, and I'm just, good sermon's like a good piece of bologna. You just chop it off, stick it in the fridge, and pick it up again.

I'll finish this if he ever lets me come back again three, five, eight years from now. Stick it in the incubator. Begin to pray for revival.

Not a campaign that draws the crowds, but a move that draws the people. Draws the people of God to the heart of God. In such a spiritual atmosphere, I call it awakening.

And in that atmosphere, as it was in the great move of God that deeply impacted my life in the 70s, Asbury Revival, February the 3rd, 1970, a chaplain service that began at 10 in the morning and lasted the next eight days, unabated, 24-7 around the clock. Go to the Hebrides, same thing happened. Go to the Welch Revival in 1945.

Going to Korea in the late 70s, up through the 80s. Going to Argentina today. Going to Nepal, where just 20 years ago, when I first began ministering in that nation, there were about 20,000 known believers today, between one and a half and maybe two million believers.

And God begins to create an atmosphere and people come under conviction. Conviction is different from condemnation. Condemnation is the work of the devil.

He tells you how sorry you are. He brings to your remembrance things that you've done, that you've already settled. You've begged for forgiveness.

You've restored relationship. You've humbled yourself before your wife. You've told people you're sorry.

You've returned money that you stole. But the devil brings it up again. Conviction is where God works.

Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring you back into relationship and the work of the Holy Spirit to bring those who have no relationship to brokenness so they can be radically transformed. But for the world to be touched and awakening, the church has to be revived in the power of God. That's birthed in the closet of intercession.

Well, let's spend these last few minutes, Dr. Roberts, you lead us in prayer as you would like to. And as you pray, humble yourselves. Seek the face of God.

Tell Him you'll do anything, go anywhere, be anything He commissions you to be. And I promise you one thing, this little old dirt poor South Georgia boy who grew up many, many years ago, never realizing that he'd ever see the world or go anywhere in the world, He may give you doors that open beyond your wildest dreams. May give you the privilege to touch a nation and change the course of human history.

Let's turn to our prayer partner. Please do prayer with us. On my behalf, let people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray.

And seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, that I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land. Ask that partner for prayer requests, a prayer of concern, let's spend some time one-on-one in groups of two praying for revival, then I'll close us in a moment. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Lord, we love you, we thank you for your unspeakable love for us, for your grace that indeed is amazing and incomprehensible, But, Father, we revel in it, we rejoice in it, and we pray, Lord, that you would indeed choose to quicken the hearts of your people, to send spiritual renewal and revival upon our nation. And we don't know how or when that will happen or the critical mass that must occur in terms of our own repentant spirit and prayerfulness, but, Lord, move us in that direction and bring it soon, hasten the day when it comes. Thank you, Father, for what you're doing in places like Nepal, and fan the flames for the cause of Christ and the gospel there, that yet millions more will come to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Give us a great day today, serving you, a great day of prayer and encouragement, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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