

Praying Without Ceasing (Having a Spiritual Life Outside of Church Meetings; Psalm 139)

by Hans R. Waldvogel

Praying without ceasing is a vital aspect of a Christian's life, allowing us to maintain a close relationship with God and trust in His presence in our lives.

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-2, Psalm 139:14, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20, John 14:1, Romans 12:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Living Faith", "Praying Without Ceasing"

Description

Hans R. Waldvogel emphasizes the importance of maintaining a spiritual life outside of church meetings, highlighting that true connection with God occurs in our daily lives, not just during worship. He encourages believers to practice the presence of God in every moment, recognizing that God knows our thoughts and actions, which should inspire us to pray without ceasing. Waldvogel illustrates that real faith is tested in difficult times, and it is during these moments that we must trust in Jesus, who is always present. He warns against hypocrisy, urging Christians to embody their faith consistently, rather than just during church gatherings. Ultimately, he reminds us that our relationship with God should be a continuous, living experience, akin to breathing.

Transcript

Selected Verses:

Psalm 139:1,2,14. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 14I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. parts of the earth.

Opening:

I was trying to sing a Negro spiritual to Walter and Bertha the other day, and I couldn't remember but a few words. But those words were significant. They didn't know it: "Oh, Miss Hannah, ain't you goin' out tonight? The mockingbird am singin' and the moon am shinin' bright." And then he says, "Put on your Sunday go-to-meetin' clothes." Well, that's what we do: our Sunday go-to-meetin' clothes, and our Sunday go-to-meetin' face.

But you know, the thing that really counts is what we do between meetings. That's the place where we meet God. Have you ever found that out? That is not near as important: to make a holy face in meeting, and then to look like an old hag outside of it. Oh, no. In between meetings, to practice the presence--oh, that's a wonderful thing! That's where Jesus lives out His life within us. And that's how He taught His disciples. And I'm so thankful for the simplicity--the utter childlike simplicity--of this godliness. "Godliness is profitable for all things." And, oh, God, "Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off."

What are your thoughts? When you get up in the morning, when you go to [the] breakfast table, when you go to your work, when you meet with trials and difficulties: God watches, God knows, God sees. "Thou knowest my thought afar off." Why should God be interested in knowing my thought? Shouldn't I be interested, then, to adjust my thought. Why, that's praying without ceasing. Nothing else is.

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Selected Quotes:

What would you think of a soldier who struts around during the parade, and then when the real fighting starts, he runs and goes to pick strawberries? Well, that's the kind of soldiers we are very often, isn't it? Yes, as long as the parade lasts and we sing "Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it," why we have quite a good a time--we're quite spiritual. But to be anointed, to have a wonderful blessing when everything goes wrong!

Yes, when everything goes wrong. That's the proof of real Christianity: when everything goes wrong. "The man worthwhile is the man with a smile when everything goes dead wrong." Oh, God, what hypocrites we are! What "whited sepulchres"!

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You know, after all, the Lord Jesus is our Redeemer--He has come to redeem us from "the corruption that is in the world through lust" by giving us His own life, by living out His own life within us. Here's the new creation, and only God can create it, only Jesus can do it. How strange that we think we can sanctify ourselves and we can choose how to please God, and how to live before God. We're choosers: we choose our prayer time, we choose our Bible study time when it really ought to be God working "in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." How will I ever expect to be like Jesus unless I really get down as Brother Gardiner said, get close to Jesus so that He will have His way?

Oh, His way is life! "I am the Way!" "I am the Way." The Lord says we have not found the way unless we have found Him to be the Way. Oh, it eliminates all my own plans, and all my own wishes, and decisions, and desires, and all my own opinions, all my own knowledge of what God is going to do or should do. It eliminates all that. It takes "out of His fulness" the kingdom of God, the reign of Christ moment by moment.

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My, just to think of those things, just to contemplate these things makes your heart leap within you! And if the body is so marvelously constituted, what shall we say of the soul, this soul of mine? Oh, "mount high, mount high, O soul of mine. Rise up and soar away." This soul that takes in the whole universe, takes in heaven, and eternity--this wonderful creation that no one can fathom!

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Beloved, praying without ceasing is breathing without ceasing--is the privilege of every newly-born child of God. And if I confine that to meetings--to prayer meetings--I cut myself off from the Fountain of Living Waters.

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The trouble is we try to have faith in ourselves, or we have faith in our faith. But Jesus does not want us to have faith in our faith, but He wants us to have faith in Him. And that's why He says, "Let not your heart be troubled--right now, at this moment, don't let your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. I'm here. It's okay."

Is the storm tossing around your barque? Why that's the time to have faith because Christ is there. "O ye of little of faith." After He had commanded the storm to cease and there was a great calm, they didn't have to believe anymore. But while that boat was going up and down and Peter was hanging on to the mast, that was the time to recognize: "Why, Jesus is here. Hallelujah! Okay."

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We will meet storms, and that's the time to be spiritual. And that's the time not to let your heart be troubled. That's the time to put your confidence in Him. I've learned to say this when everything seems to go wrong: "Jesus, this is the time I trust you all the more." It's a wonderful experience. And you'll find that He never fails. He'll never come back and say, "Well, I wasn't able for that situation." Never.

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Illustrations:

An illustration of careless young ministers who lived as hypocrites. "They'd make a joke of it... They'd say, 'Now, put on your holy face.' And then they'd go into the church to preach!" (from 3:40)

An illustration of the manifold works of God in the simple act of eating an orange. "The whole process was done by God Himself. Scientists will say, 'Nature.' Nature nothing! It's God that does it." (from 7:31)

Missionary children who frolicked during a storm at sea. "Children! It's time to pray! Don't you know that we're dying? The boat's going down!' 'Ha!' little Fritz said. 'This boat? My Pa is the pilot.'" (from 15:08)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/hans-r-waldvogel/praying-without-ceasing-having-a-spiritual-life-outside-of-church-meetings-psalm/>

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