

Sober minded Praying In The Midst of Severe Trials

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being sober-minded in prayer, especially in the face of trials and persecution. It highlights the need to have effective prayers by maintaining a mindset focused on eternity, love for one another, and using spiritual gifts. The speaker encourages a dedicated prayer life, striving for maturity, and full assurance in God's will.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:7, Philippians 1:9, Colossians 4:12, Ephesians 6:18, Acts 4:29

Topics: "Sober-mindedness in Prayer", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

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Transcript

Here is a question for you. Is there a certain event that for certain is going to take place that if you and I think about it, it should motivate us? And I'm going to give four ways it should motivate us. We're going to look at one of those today.

What is this event that will take place? We're going to have to look at what the event even is. But see if you recognize the verse. These are the four responses that the biblical author gives when one thinks about this event.

Number one, they become sober-minded in order to have effective prayers. Number two, they become more earnest in their love for one another when they think about this event. Even to the point where they cover over sin.

They're kind to one another in a way where there aren't offenses in order to maintain unity. A third thing, when they think of this event, they're busy earnestly loving one another by even having people over into their homes, showing hospitality without grumbling. Then the fourth response when they think of this event, is they want to faithfully use their spiritual gifts to advance the spiritual lives of others in their body.

What event? And this is kind of a trick question because we've got to look at what the event even is. But what passage comes to your mind when I share all of this? 2 Peter 1? No. No, there is something in 2 Peter.

Yeah, 1 Peter 4. So turn to 1 Peter 4. And what would the event be? Yeah, you see it right there. Verse 7. He uses this phrase, the end of all things. So, if you have an open Bible, you can see the logic here of this biblical author.

Peter. He says in verse 7, the end of all things is at hand. We're going to have to look at what the end of all things is.

It sounds like it's referring to something. And then we need to think of how it applies to us. Because the end of all things being at hand should lead to something.

When you think about this event, he says, therefore, so in view of the fact the end of all things is at hand, what's the first thing he calls us to? To be self-controlled and sober-minded. There's kind of some overlap here on those words, but the idea is to be sober-minded. What's the reason to be sober-minded? For the sake of your prayers.

So the conduct? Sober-mindedness. The result? What does it affect? Your prayer life. Your prayers.

You see that right there, right? And then he has in verse 8, he now says, above all, and what's he call us to next? In view of the end of all things being near, above all what? Loving one another earnestly. And then he gives a reason. Why should we love one another earnestly? What's that going to bring about in the church? And what's his answer? Yeah, since love covers a multitude of sins.

And so if the love is earnest, it's going to lead to this covering of a multitude of sins. Defining that is a sermon in itself. And then he gives two examples of how you can love one another.

The first is in verse 9. You can earnestly love one another by showing hospitality, but you've got to show that hospitality without what? Grumbling. Or else it's not an earnest love. And then what's the second thing he gives here? When you earnestly love one another, and you think of the end of all things being near, what's verse 10 going to bring about in your life? You're going to faithfully use the gifts God has given you to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

You see that? So you've got these four thinking about an event, the end of all things, affects your conduct. You see that right there, right? That's exactly what Peter is saying. And you've got to love simple logic like this in the Bible.

The end of all things is at hand. In view of this, be self-controlled, sober-minded. Why? For the sake of your prayers.

And then he says above all, your conduct should be full of loving one another earnestly. And then he gives a reason why. It's going to cover sin.

It's going to promote unity. It's not going to cause strife. And then he says also show love with hospitality without grumbling.

And show love by using your gifts to serve yourself. No, to serve one another. You see that logic right there? So we're going to look at this, but we're just going to look at this topic of prayer.

Right now, we're going to look at the topic of prayer. So let me pray and then we're going to dive in. Father, Lord, I pray You'd help me right now to feed these sheep.

Lord, we do want You to speak, O Lord. And Father, Lord, I'm just thinking again about our brother John Bondock. And Lord, knowing one day, many of us are going to be in his chair right now in front of a loved one who's nearing death.

And Lord, that is really a sobering reality. It really is. And so again, we just pray, help that brother.

Lord, sustain him, Father, in the midst of the situation. Lord, would You save his mother? Would You work in that situation? And Lord, I pray You'd work in our hearts right now. Lord, give me more of Your Spirit.

The text goes on to say that we can serve with the strength that God supplies. Lord, I need You to supply me strength right now. Please, Lord, I'm weak, but You are all-powerful.

Please help. In Christ's name, Amen. So in view of the end being near, he gives some Christian duties before us.

He's describing how to conduct yourself when you're facing severe trials. And notice the priority Peter puts. We're going to look at what the end of all things is in a moment.

But let's think first. Does Peter put a big priority on prayer? But what does he mention before he talks about prayer? Where does he put the priority before prayer? Come on, it's right there in the text. Sober minded.

Which shows what? There's a link between your prayers and what? Your mind. How you're thinking. Whether you're thinking correctly right up here.

Right? When we come to pray, what's going on here? I can go and pray and it not really be effective because something up here, there's a lack of sobriety in my mind. So Peter really puts a massive priority on being watchful, as some versions render it, being watchful in prayer. And that's what I want us to think about.

The importance of effective prayers when you're facing severe trials, when you're even thinking of the end, effective prayers in order to do what? To maintain your spiritual stability. If our prayer life is not just are we praying, but are our prayers being approached with a sober mind by which that helps us have stability in our own Christian life. Peter doesn't say be sober minded for the sake of your Bible reading.

It's for the sake of your prayers. What is prayer? Communing with the Lord? Do we see Christ pray? Who's Christ praying to? His Father? And who am I in comparison to the Lord? I am what? How does God view me? As one of His sons? So you could think of it as communication between a son to a father. Right? You see that with the Lord Jesus Christ? You see that with us.

We're adopted sons and daughters of God. Prayer is I am going to my Father and I'm talking to Him by faith because I have access to Him through the blood of His Son who I've now become a co-heir with not because of my own works, but because of Christ. And before we even dive in here, think about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think about what was Christ actively involved in when He was facing His own end in His own life? What was the priority in His life? Prayer. Yeah, turn real fast to Luke 22. Look at Luke 22.

You can keep your spot and 1 Peter, we'll be back there in a moment. I know we haven't defined what the end of all things is yet. But look at Christ.

He was facing His own personal end. However we end up defining the end of all things, the reality is all of us, our own personal end is closer than we might even realize. Today, our soul could be required of us.

We don't know, but look at Luke 22. Verse 39, "...And He came out and went as was His custom to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, Pray." And what's His reason? That you might not enter into temptation.

That's interesting, right? A lack of effective prayer right here could cause one to enter into temptation. And here Christ is about to face a significant, severe trial in His life. The cross.

Verse 41, "...And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and He prayed." And then we see His prayer. Father, see, it's a son to a father. Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from Me.

Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done. So He's resigned to the will of His Father. Verse 43, "...And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven." And what did this angel do? Strengthen Him.

He's praying, facing His own end, and what's the result? Did He fall into temptation? No, what did God do? Strengthened Him. You see that? He prayed, facing the trial, and God sends angels to strengthen the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the Lord Jesus Christ, living as a man that needed to be strengthened, needed the help from above.

But you see, if He didn't pray right there, does He get strengthened? No. Verse 44, "...Being in agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down to the ground. And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and He found them sleeping for sorrow.

And He said to them, why are you sleeping? And then He says the same thing He just said a moment ago. Rise and pray that you might not enter into temptation. So, Peter who's writing in 1 Peter, at this moment in his life, was he having a sober mind as he was facing a significant trial in his life? Was his mind sober? Was he thinking correctly about things? No, he fell asleep.

This is astonishing. Christ, on the other hand, is praying and being strengthened by an angel and praying more earnestly, and the disciples fell asleep for sorrow. They were exhausted from the grief and they were unable to stay awake.

And by being unable to stay awake in the midst of the prayer meeting, they lose this ability to cry out to God for specific help in a specific way. And then what was the result? Christ prayed and He was strengthened. The disciples fell asleep and what happened to them moments later? Were they strengthened? What did they do? They fled in fear? What did Peter go and do? Denied Christ three times.

Where does part of that all start? You could say it starts with this boastful, arrogant comment, Lord, I'll never deny You. Well, that comment led into this garden and him falling asleep in prayer, not getting strength, not having a sober mind, and then he's facing this severe trial and he denies Christ three times. And Christ says pray that you might not enter into temptation.

And so you can see at the end of the Lord Jesus' life, was prayer really important and essential? It absolutely was. And so the same thing is said for you and I in our lives and in the severe trials that you and I are going to face. And Peter, not only did he respond later by denying Christ, but what happened when the soldiers got there? What was Peter, who didn't have a sober mind at that moment, what was his reaction to do? Take out the sword and just cut off the guy's ear.

And what did Jesus say to him? Jesus looked at him and said, no more of this! No more of this! That's pretty humbling. But one, you're following is the most significant trial of his life and you're falling asleep in the garden, not being sober, not staying awake, not being earnest in prayer. Then they come and you think the great thing to do is to defend Christ by cutting off the guy's ear.

And then Jesus looks at you and says, no more of this! And then He heals the guy's ear and it comes back. Peter didn't know how to think right here in the midst of the trial. And so Peter says to you and I, the end is near.

Be sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. I mean, this is coming from a guy who was in a situation where he fell asleep at the prayer meeting. And then Christ entered in the greatest trial possible.

Peter can look back at that and realize how vitally important it is to be sober-minded for the sake of your prayers, right? He can look and see something shameful that happened in his life because this was not a reality in his life. So, let's go back to 1 Peter. Go back to 1 Peter in your Bibles.

And the thing is, when you read that account in Luke, does it mean Peter didn't pray at all? No. It implies they were there praying. Christ was there praying.

What happened? They fell asleep, right? I mean, they might have been praying 5-10 minutes. And this is important because what Peter is hitting on for us here, it's not just about praying. It's about prayers not being hindered and being not effective.

The sober-mindedness is vital that the quality of the praying is actually effective. This isn't just some call to pray. It's a call to pray with a sober mind and that will change then how you pray and how you approach the Lord and what you're even saying to the Lord in the midst of your prayers.

And so this is so important, this is so vital, that us as children even learn how to go to our loving Father in Heaven, wrestle with Him in prayer, receive help from Him. We need this in our lives. This is a massive priority.

Is your own secret prayer life a massive priority? Is your own corporate prayer life a massive priority in your life as Christians? When it gets tiresome and weary, what's your response? Do you see what happened to one guy falling asleep at a prayer meeting and how his conduct was thereafter? I'm not trying to beat you up if you've fallen asleep in a prayer meeting, but do you see what I'm saying? Like it affects his mind and then he responds in a carnal way that does not honor the Lord. And so how much more when we're in a trial, am I already praying in a sober way coming into this trial in order to approach it in a way that honors the Lord? And so if you look, look at 1 Peter 4. Notice what he says here. The end of all things is at hand, therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded.

Then he says, for the sake of your prayers. Why does Peter put prayers in plural form? He doesn't say for the sake of prayer. He says for the sake of your prayers.

He's saying this to people. What's implied by him saying this to people? Be sober-minded for the sake of your prayers implies what? What's already happening in their life? They're already praying. Right? I already hear it.

You guys are all praying. So I'm not telling you, hey, you guys need to pray. I'm actually coming along and saying, you need to be more sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

You see, that's what Peter's thinking about here. Peter is not calling them to pray. They're already doing that.

Peter is calling them to have a sober mind for the sake of the prayers that they're already making as Christians. You see, this is a very important distinction to get because I'm not calling you all to pray. You're already doing that.

What I'm wanting you to see is the sobriety of mind is going to affect how one prays. That's what Peter is focused on. And he uses the same language.

Look, one page to the left. Chapter 3, verse 7. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life. And then look what he says.

So that your prayers, that's plural, these husbands, they're already praying. The husbands haven't stopped praying, but what's happened to their prayers? Their prayers are being hindered. What are their prayers being hindered by? Not living with their wife in an understanding way.

They're over here praying, their prayers are hindered. Why? They're not in an understanding way with their wife. That's the same idea in chapter 4, right? They're over here praying, but they're not having a sober mind about the end of all things and what's approaching, and therefore their prayers are not being as effective as they could be.

You guys see what I'm saying? This is what Peter is getting at here. He is speaking to people who are praying, but he wants those prayers effective, answered, and acted upon. So this is how I want to approach this message.

I want to first consider what does it mean to be sober-minded? Second, what does Peter mean by the end being near? Thirdly, I want to look at the purpose for which he wants us sober-minded is for praying. So I want to think about how does a lack of sobriety hinder our praying? And in all of this, there's a place to pray as I'm preaching that God would reveal things in your own prayer life or in your own thinking where you could grow. Right? The disciples asked Christ, teach us to pray.

So say that, Lord, teach me to pray. Teach me to pray in a more effective way and use this message for good in that way. So, let's consider this.

So first, what is sober-mindedness? You see that right there, 1 Peter 4.7, the end of all things is at hand, therefore be self-controlled, sober-minded, or be watchful for the sake of your prayers. And he's not speaking primarily here about being sober as far as abstaining from alcohol, right? That's not his main point. He does deal with that though in verse 3. So that's not far off.

Verse 3, for the time is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties. It sounds like he's saying the time's past, meaning don't engage in these things. So maybe some of those Christians were engaging in that.

They were actually physically not sober because they were intoxicated. But I think Peter means something more than just don't get drunk when he says be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. To be sober-minded means you're able to think properly.

You've got a mind that's right, thinking about and reasoning correctly according to what? To God. You're thinking about everything according to the Lord. You have a sober mind about the update from John Bondock, right? When you hear about that update, you're thinking about how do I pray with a sober mind for my brother going in the trial he's in? When my neighbor last night is being carried away and he didn't die, but he's going to the hospital, he feels like he's going to die.

I'm thinking in a sober way about how to pray for him based on the reality of his soul. There's sobriety there. There's a sense of you're living in view of eternity.

Peter has already brought this up multiple times. 1 Peter 1.13 Look what he says there. Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded.

So to be sober-minded is to prepare something in your mind for action. You kind of think about the soldier going into the war. He's not laughing in the barracks with the buddies.

He's actually thinking about the fact they're about to be on the battlefield. But what does he say in verse 13? Prepare your minds for action. Be sober-minded.

Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And then he calls us, verse 14, to be obedient in view of this reality. Well, what's he talking about there? He's sober-minded means to set my hope fully on the grace that's going to come at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What's that? Well, do you know what's going to happen at the revelation of Jesus Christ? Do you know what you and I are going to get? We're going to get undeserved blessings that God is going to pour out upon us because of His Son. Peter wants them thinking about that. He wants them thinking about heaven.

He wants them thinking about eternity. He wants them thinking about things that are above. Even earlier, I think it was mentioned, Colossians 3, set your mind on things above where Christ is seated.

I mean, that leads to sobriety. Hearing about the message on hell and the 10 A.M., does that lead you to be sober-minded? Yeah, that effect. You see, truth of God and who He is affects how we think and how we live and how we conduct ourselves and how we pray.

And so he also says this in 1 Peter 4. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, He uses the same idea. Arm yourselves. You're going to the arsenal and you're wondering what weapon do I get? What do we put on? Arm yourself with the same way of thinking for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of time in the flesh no longer for human passions, but for the will of God.

So to be sober-minded is to arm yourself with the thinking of Christ. And then as you approach the trial, as you approach the end, as you approach whatever severe persecution you're facing, guess what your mind

is already thinking? You're thinking like the Lord Jesus Christ. You're thinking about Christ.

You're thinking like Christ. How did Christ even pray? Hebrews 5.7. It says, in the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death. What does it say next? Christ was heard because of what? What does it say? He was heard because of His reverence.

He was heard because of His devotion. I would even add there, He was heard because there was a sobriety of mind. He wasn't just praying.

There was something gripping Him. A reverence of God. A sobriety of mind viewing everything for what it is.

And He's praying in view of that. And here it says of Christ, God heard Him. You see, this comes up.

Luke 5. What would Christ do? He would withdraw to desolate places and He would pray. Why do we have the need to be sober-minded? Look at chapter 5, verse 8. Why do you want to think in a right way? He says be sober-minded. Be watchful.

Why should I be, Peter? Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. So why should you and I be sober-minded? Why should we take it seriously to think in a correct way? To put on the mind of Christ? To arm ourselves with the thinking of Christ? To live that way? It's not just that it's going to make your prayers all the more effective when you go before the Lord because you're thinking in an eternal way, but it's going to actually protect you from the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

That's exactly what we saw in the life of Peter. He lacked a sober mind. Satan is there trying to devour him.

And apart from the grace of Jesus Christ, that would have been the end of Peter. The big difference between Peter and Judas is Christ was praying for Peter. Judas did not have Christ interceding for him and he went and ended his life.

Sober-minded. Is this a big, important topic? Yeah. What's the one command Paul has in the book of Titus to the young men? I know the ESV, it says self-control, but it's the word sober-minded.

He says, likewise, urge the younger men to be sober-minded. Is that your men's meeting message? You've got one thing for the young men. Be sober-minded.

Arm yourself with the thinking of Christ. Be able to say no to certain things in order to go to a desolate place and pray to the Lord and seek Him and have His help and think about eternal things. So, there's many things that could lead you and I to not have a sober mind when we pray.

Now Peter calls us, verse 7, to be sober-minded for the sake of our prayers because the end of all things is at hand. What's that? What's the end of all things? I mean, what does it sound like it's saying? I feel like I've gotten this wrong the last time I preached on this. My interpretation of the end of all things, I didn't give it enough study.

Now, I don't want to put a ton of time into it right here at this moment because the bigger application in the end is for you guys, right? And like I already said, however you interpret the end of all things, your vapor of a life, my vapor of a life, is our own personal end near? Yeah, it could be who knows when? Thirty years? Thirty days? Thirty seconds? I mean, George Whitefield was preaching and he read his text and a person dropped dead. And then he read the text again and another died. I mean, in one sermon, two people died in the first minute of it.

I mean, what a sobering reality. You don't know when death is going to come. But what does Peter mean? Because we want to understand what they would think when they heard this.

The end of all things is at hand. Something's about to happen. Therefore, be self-controlled, sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

The end of all things is the truth that gripped them to be sober-minded in order to have effective prayer. So we need to think what's that mean for you and I? So here are four quick views. Does this mean the final day? Was Peter saying this is the final day before Christ is going to come back? How do you know Peter wasn't saying that? Because we're 2,000 years later.

Has Christ come back yet? No, He hasn't come back yet. So some would actually say Peter made a false prediction in that the Word of God has an error. What would your answer be to that? No, it doesn't have an error.

They don't rightly understand what Peter was saying. They're misunderstanding what Peter was saying. So, it's not view number one.

Paul even warned about those saying the final days come already and it hasn't. In 2 Thessalonians, he brings that up. Your second view is, does the end of all things mean the final period of time before the ultimate end comes? Is that what he's saying? Is he not thinking of a specific point, but a period that's been entered into that he describes as the end of all things? Meaning all major events have been fulfilled and we are in the last stage.

Look at 1 Peter 1.5. He makes a statement here. Through God's power or being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Okay, that's interesting.

Does he say any more about that? Yes. Verse 20. Chapter 1. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times, meaning Christ.

So whatever time Peter's in right there, he describes that time as what? The last times. For the sake of you who through Him are believers in God. And then if you look at 4.5, he says, they will give an account to Him who is what? Ready to judge the living and the dead.

He's right now, 2,000 years ago, ready to judge the living and the dead. Is he as ready today to judge the living and the dead? Yes, he is. The judge is ready.

And you could even think, well, 2 Peter 3. Look at 2 Peter 3.8. Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is 1,000 years. So I mean, how does God view time? One day to Him, or 1,000 years to Him is like one day. And 1,000 years is one day.

And then he says in verse 9, the Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness. But is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. Verse 10, but the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

And then the heavens will pass away like a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved. Interesting.

He's talking about this end. And look what he says. What sort of people ought you to be? It's interesting.

This viewing of the dissolving of all things and his natural conclusion is what type of person ought you to be? You should live in holiness and godliness. Waiting and hastening for the coming day of God because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. And then he mentions waiting for a new heavens and a new earth.

So, is that what Peter means? Many would take this view, and I understand why they would, that it's just talking about this final period before the end is coming. And as you can see from 2 Peter, the fact is, things being dissolved should affect your conduct. Thinking about heaven and hell.

Thinking about eternity. Thinking about the judgment. Thinking about the brevity of life.

Should that have any effect on our sobriety of mind as Christians? Yeah, it absolutely should affect our sobriety of mind. It should affect our conduct. And what's the primary conduct that Peter wants to be affected by us having a sober mind? Our prayer.

Peter puts a big premium on prayer. A big premium on prayer. Then the third view, is he talking about the end is near personally for you? He says in 4.1, he says, 4.2, so as to live for the rest of time in the flesh.

You hear that? I mean, you and I have got the rest of the time. You know your kid, they say, well, how much time do I have left to play? You've got 20 minutes, and then you've got to come in. Well, the Lord says to you and I, you've got the rest of the time.

There's a rest of time that you've been given with your one life to live. Rest of the time. Could this be talking about your own personal end? It said Jesus loved His disciples to the end.

And so the fact is, all of us have a race we're trying to run, and there's an end that we're wanting to get to, and when that end is going to come, we don't know. And should us thinking about that end, thinking about eternity, affect how we think right now? Yes. And then that will affect how we pray? Yes.

And then that affecting our prayers will affect what? How we respond in the midst of a trial. It's going to affect us in that way. But here a fourth view is, which as I studied this, I really think this might be what Peter is getting at when he says the end of all things is at hand.

And so the fourth view is that he's actually referring not to the end like the end, but to a very specific trial that is about to come upon them. And he's doing this in order to prepare them for this trial. And if you look a little later in the passage, look at v. 12.

He says, beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial. He doesn't say trials. He's thinking of some specific fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

And then he says I want you to rejoice in that. So Peter's looking at a fiery trial that's going to come upon them. He doesn't want them surprised.

I mean, is being surprised at a trial, is that thinking sober-mindedly? When you're really shocked at a trial that comes upon you, do you all of a sudden feel like you're sober-minded? No, it's like Peter in the garden with the men coming and you just take out the sword and do something based on an impulse. What trial? Look at v. 17. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.

What's he talking about there? Is it about judgment day? Or does he mean judgment meaning suffering is about to come? For it's time for judgment to begin at the household of God, and if it begins with us, so Christians are going to face whatever this judgment is first. Then he says what will then become of the outcome of those who do not obey the Gospel of God? So some sort of suffering is going to happen to the Christians. And then the unbelievers are going to face some sort of suffering.

And he even says if the righteous is scarcely saved, meaning out of this suffering, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? And then he calls them in the midst of suffering to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. You see, that makes it sound the end of all things is near. Something's near.

The time of judgment is about to begin. And there's a fiery trial he doesn't want them to be surprised about. Doesn't that make it seem like something that was actually about to come upon those Christians? Doesn't it make it sound like he's saying Christ is about to ride through the heavens and the end of the world is going to come at that point? Do you see what I'm saying? So, this makes you think.

Who else taught the end being near should lead to sobriety of mind for the sake of your prayers? Who else taught that? Christ. Look at Luke 21. Look at Luke 21.

And Peter actually sat in front of someone who spoke almost the exact same way he's speaking now. And again, why are we even looking at this? Because it'll help to understand how they understood it in context and therefore we can apply that to you and me. Because there might be something more specific here than just thinking of the end in eternity.

Though that, as we saw from 2 Peter, is absolutely something vital that should affect your and I's conduct. But Luke 21 starting in v. 6, "As for these things you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon the other that will not be thrown down.' And they asked Him, "Teacher, when will these things be and what will the sign be when these things are to take place?' And He said, "See that you are not led astray, for many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and the time is at hand. Do not go after them.

And when you hear of wars, tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place.'" And then He says, "'The end will not be at once.' Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes in various places, famines, pestilence, and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all of this, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for My name's sake.'" So something's going to happen to these Christians.

And He says this will be your opportunity to bear witness. Boy, you want to have a sober mind going into that, right? You want to make the most of that opportunity to bear witness. Verse 14, "Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and a wisdom.'" Just like

He said in 1 Peter 4, if you're going to speak, speak with the words that God supplies and His strength in order for Him to be glorified.

He says, "I'll give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict." Verse 16, "You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends. And some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for My name's sake, but not a hair of your head will perish.

By your endurance, you will gain your lives." Verse 20, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,' so here He's speaking about something that's going to happen to Jerusalem that has not yet happened. "A physical city surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it.

For these are days of vengeance to fulfill all that is written. Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations.

And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled." And you know, Christ is speaking here about what seems to have started in 67 A.D. where the Roman army came into Judea and they started to take out cities and all of it eventually led to the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. where they would say over 600,000 people were killed. Over 95,000 people were taken captive. It was so bad it got to the point where Josephus records this, whether you question his credibility or not, he recorded certain women would even eat their own children because starvation was so bad during that time.

It was a dark time that happened. And during that time, Jerusalem was destroyed. And guess what was destroyed in Jerusalem? The temple.

It was just wiped out. And Christ knew this was going to happen. He knew this was going to be coming right here.

And so, when Peter wrote 1 Peter, it's estimated it was in the early 60's when Peter wrote this letter. And so Psalm, the fourth view, is that he's actually referring to what happened in Jerusalem. That that's the fiery trial that he was speaking about that was about to happen and he was letting these Christians know about this ahead of time that when it happened, though Christ had already spoken about it, and Peter heard that, and Peter's just saying this again.

Something's going to happen. This mass destruction. People dying.

The end of a system of Judaism. And the temple being destroyed. And this is something that Christ Himself is bringing about.

And as you saw there, the first people to suffer were who? The Christians. They're the ones being delivered over into synagogues. And that's exactly what Peter said.

He said it will begin with the household of God. And what was the second thing that was going to happen in 1 Peter? Next, it was going to be a judgment upon them. So he said what will happen to the unbeliever? And so Luke 21, first thing that happens, the Christians suffer in a severe way.

The next thing that happens, the Jews are taken out. Jerusalem destroyed. And then after that, this ongoing destruction.

And so this could be what he is thinking about an actual specific trial. Mark records that children during this day will rise up against parents and have them put to death. Imagine that.

Your parents burst in these doors to take you away to have you killed because you're a Christian. How important is prayer right at that point? How important is being sober-minded? It's always important to be sober-minded. But if you're not sober-minded at that point, if you're not communing with the living God at that point, you're not going to make it.

You could end up denying Him before men in the midst of that trial. So that's a fourth option. Luke says that they didn't know the time of their visitation.

And he uses the same language in 1 Peter 2.12. He says, "...Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that the Word does." Not in the original. It just speaks of a day of visitation. So some would say that's what's happened in 70 A.D. Even it adds light to this command to show hospitality without grumbling.

We can take that out of this context. But if they're facing this severe trial and all these people being killed and all these people fleeing, what does it mean to show hospitality without grumbling? These people who Peter's writing to, these ten different tribes who are dispersed all around, it means that those people coming from all this carnage, you're taking them into your home to live with you. And there might be people out to kill them and bring persecution upon you because you housed them.

And they're going to be all manner of distraught in the midst of this significant trial. And Peter says you don't grumble to them. You love them earnestly.

You use your spiritual gifts to help encourage them in the midst of all of this that they're facing. So, this is another possibility. Because Christ said this generation would not pass away until everything He spoke about was fulfilled.

Right? And there's a physical reality of it being fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. And then in Mark's account, Mark even makes it show that a lot of these things point to the end, to the final judgment. So all that to say, not to confuse you, for you and me, you know what? There's specific trials we're going to face right here in the present.

It might not be an army turning around our whole city to wipe us all out and us starving. We don't have that at this moment. But you know what we do know for certain? There is going to be a day when Christ is going to come back.

We know that our family members are being taken from us. We know that our own personal life is but a moment. Our own personal end, you could say, is near.

So what type of people ought we to be? We ought to have a sober mind. We ought to think in a sane way. We ought to live with our eyes gripped on eternity because that will affect how you and I pray.

And how you and I pray is vital. If we don't have a prayer life, if we don't have communion with the Lord and we go into a trial, it's going to be dangerous. It's not going to be well for us.

So, intense persecution. Clearly, whatever specific persecution they were facing in Peter's day, they were facing some intense persecution that was coming their way. A fiery trial that was going to happen.

Mark even says in those days, there will be such tribulation. It says, never been since the beginning of creation. Wow! Do you think we've suffered? Christ says what happened back then in those years, 67 to 70 A.D., there hadn't been suffering like that ever in the world.

What about the flood? So, where does that put us right here? Well, how do you live? How do you live in view of this? Sober-minded. How do you live in view of this? You should earnestly love one another. I love that, right? All this destruction's happening and what's Peter's focus? Love one another.

He didn't even say go evangelize. He talks about your conduct being a witness of the truth, but Peter's whole emphasis is for us to love one another. To love each other in the midst of suffering.

To be there. To bear one another's burdens. To not grumble.

To cover over sin. This is the type of people we ought to be in the midst of this. This is what eternity should do to us being gripped with eternity.

It should make us just recognize this reality. So let's think thirdly here. How does a lack of sobriety hinder our praying? If He says be sober-minded for the sake of your prayers, you can't even think that the heat or going long or the work day was hard.

You've got the physical weariness of the flesh. That is one of the biggest things we battle against. Right? The Spirit is willing, but what? Flesh is weak.

Like there's this intentional battle to not fall asleep when praying. Or even, however I'm preaching, whether it's putting you to sleep or not, there's even a battle there to receive the Word. Like we're always in this war to think, to wrestle, to pull in, to understand.

To think about the Lord in a correct way. I mean, what do sober-minded prayers look like? What does it look like where a person prays and they're not sober-minded? Because He implies there's people praying and they're not sober-minded. Well, we already know what one of those looks like.

It's the husband who's impatient with his wife and he's not living with her in an understanding way and he's not doing anything about it. What did Peter say? That man's prayers are hindered. They're not being as effective as they could be because he's not loving his wife as he ought to be.

So there's that type of praying. So, let's think of this. Here are a few things about lack of sobriety that hinders our prayer.

And we just already mentioned it, but the first would be the sin of lacking love hinders your prayers. We saw that in 1 Peter 3.7. He mentions that right there. That your prayers may not be hindered by not living in an understanding way with your wife.

And then he goes on in v. 12, for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayer. He's not saying the perfect person is the only one who can pray. He's saying as you approach the

Lord, you know what part of prayer is? According to Christ, it's confessing your sin.

And you've gone to the Lord in prayer. You know what being sober-minded in prayer is? You've confessed everything to the Lord. You've been honest with Him.

You're not just going into prayer and ignoring all these infractions, but you're actually throwing it before your Father and saying, Lord, You've seen what I've done. Please forgive me for these things. And Lord, I need Your help over here.

I need to think right. I need to respond well in the trial. James 5, it says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it's working.

Righteous person? What's that mean? If I come and I'm living an unrighteous life, Psalm 66 says God won't hear my prayer. So this is important. If I'm going to pray in a sober-minded way in order to respond well in a trial, is there anything in my life right now that I'm not dealing with and I'm trying to maintain a prayer life with the Lord? A second thing, don't approach sober-mindedness as something you just need when you go to pray.

Is that what Peter says right here? Verse 7, the end of all things is at hand, therefore be self-controlled, sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Meaning, he's wanting you to live in a state of sober-mindedness, of self-control for the sake of your prayers. The idea isn't, oh, I'm going to go pray, I better think sober-mindedly.

The idea is I wake up and I'm already thinking in a sober-minded way, so when I do go to pray, I've already been thinking sober-mindedly, so guess what I have now? I actually know certain things to pray for. Because you know what happens when you're not sober-minded? When you're not thinking about eternity? You're not thinking about others and the trials they're going through? You don't even pick up on matters to pray for. You go to pray and it's like, well, what do I even pray for? The sober-minded person, the one whose love is abounding, they're recognizing they're going through that, they're going through that, they're going through that.

And they have all these sayings and they've been in the Word, so they're able to take verses and say, well, I'm praying for this brother and this person, and Lord, here are verses, here are promises. You see, that's a sober-minded prayer. You have these order and these arguments that you're bringing before the Lord as you're contemplating the trial someone's going through, as you're contemplating the end that someone is facing.

You're more aware of people's needs. A third thing, being surprised and fearful when a trial comes will lead you to be ineffective in your prayers. And if you look, we saw that in 1 Peter 4.12. He's trying to prevent them from being surprised at the trial when it comes to test them.

And he says in verse 13, he wants their response to be to rejoice and to recognize their sharing in the sufferings of Christ. This is the same path that Christ went through. And they should be glad because the glory of God is going to be revealed to them.

And so when they're insulted, they're able to cover that over. Verse 16, as anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. I mean, that's from Peter.

Peter's the one who suffered as a Christian and he denied Christ. And he left and he saw Christ look in him in the eyes and he felt ashamed. And you can go back to the garden falling asleep.

You go back to the road and saying to the Lord, I'll never deny You. That was not a sober-minded comment. Was that thinking in a sober-minded way to boastfully say, Lord, I'll never deny You.

And all the other guys will, but I'm the Mr. Spiritual in the church and I'm going to be the one who's going to stand in the fire. Peter got consumed by the fire. That was not a sober-minded comment.

The enemy wants us to be fearful, but you know what? If you're living with this sober mind, you're thinking about eternity, you all of a sudden face a trial and you realize, oh, this is from my father. You know, you get a package sometimes and you don't know who it's from and you're calling up, who sent me this book? It's usually my mother-in-law who sends me all the books and she doesn't put her name on it. But, I mean, we're getting a fiery trial from our Father in Heaven.

When that gets there, whose name is on it? The sober-minded person recognizes this is from my father. It's not exactly what I expected, but it's going to work for my good and His glory. So I'm going to rejoice, not be surprised.

Alright. And then, you know what? You could respond like Peter. Or not Peter, Stephen.

You're being stoned. You're being killed. And you're saying, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Okay, here a fourth thing is to think about in order to be sober-minded in the midst of your prayers. And this is interesting. Turn to 1 Corinthians 7. Five.

I think there's an interesting principle here that it could be misunderstood. Let's look at it for a moment. 1 Corinthians 7. Look at verse 5. Again, the Corinthian church was wrongly making arguments about husbands and wives not coming together in intimacy.

And Paul is saying no, they need to be. But then he makes this statement in verse 5. Do not deprive one another. Right? That was their problem.

They were doing that. He says don't do that. And then he gives an exception.

Accept perhaps by agreement for a limited time. And then what's his reason? That you may devote yourself to prayer. I mean, that you might be sober-minded in your prayer.

That you might be watchful in your prayer. Why is that interesting? Is there anything sinful about a couple enjoying this intimacy together? No, meaning this is something that is a legitimate blessing given from God, yet in Paul's mind, what's the implication? There's a time for them to abstain from that. They both agree.

And it actually helps them be more devoted to prayer. Isn't that what Paul's saying right there? And so, the fourth thing, you know what could prevent you from having a sober mind when you pray? You could refuse to fast or to give up for a moment in the midst of this severe trial certain liberties and rights that are nothing sinful in and of themselves, but those things could dull the edge on your sober-mindedness in the midst of the trial and it'd hinder your prayers from being as effective as they could be. That's what I get from 1 Corinthians 7-5 right there.

They're saying no to something. It could be a husband and wife agreeing. Here, you're in this trial.

And you realize we've got to be in tune and praying in the midst of this. And so they mutually agree. We're not going to come together for this amount of time in order to really pray.

Really pray for this child of ours that's going to go in and have surgery or this family member who's going to die. Well, take that in other areas of your life. You know, I've got the liberty to go watch some sports highlights or something.

You know what? I've got to be really sober-minded with this trial that's happening. The end of all things that's near for this certain person. Their life is on the line.

And I need to go and really devote myself right now for prayer for them. But you know what's also interesting? It almost makes Paul sound like he's saying that 24-7, you're not always devoted to prayer as much as at certain seasons in your life. Right? If he says agreement for a limited time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, well, Paul also is creating a category where the husband and wife are coming together and enjoying one another even though that makes their ability to pray maybe not be as sober-minded or as devoted as they could be, but the Lord's allowing them to enjoy this intimacy that they have together as a husband and a wife, and that's okay.

The point being, you don't want to take away from the sermon that I've got to be paralyzed trying to be sober. Should I always have a sober mind and be self-controlled? Yes, but there is a certain intensity at certain seasons in your life. That's what Peter's getting at.

And that's what Paul's getting at. It's not like this bondage of 24-7, oh no, I can't think about any other thing other than eternity. Is Edwards right? Do we want eternity stamped on our eyeballs? We do.

But eternity is stamped on your eyeballs when you go to work and you're faithful at the job to your employer. That's living out what's said in 1 Peter as well. Eternity is stamped on your eyeballs when you stop praying and you go get reconciled to your wife with an offense you had against her in order that your prayers would then be effective.

You guys see what I'm saying? So there's some freeing reality in this that Peter is calling them to be sober minded in view of this fiery trial that is coming. And just like he's calling the husband and wife to abstain for a season for the sake of their prayers, what that means is there are seasons in our life that are going to feel more normal. Where you might look and say, man, I'm not fasting and devoted to prayer as much as I always, you know, the same intensity.

Paul expects that from Christian. Paul's not holding up some standard where you're always just walking around fasting every day and praying, you know, significant amounts of time. But he's saying there's seasons in your life where you let go of that liberty.

You choose by agreement to not come together. You're facing this trial and you make it a more intense focus at that point in the Christian life. You see what I'm saying? I don't want to twist what Paul or Peter are saying, but there's something to me that is freeing there.

There are trials that the intensity demands more watchfulness. And we're always to be sober. I'm not saying we aren't.

Young men are always to exercise self-control. I mean, a lot of people's problems is they're not sober enough. It's not just when there's an intense trial.

Paul said in Romans 12, be constant in prayer. Should you and I always be constant in prayer? You better believe it. We should.

I'm not saying that shouldn't be a reality. But there's going to be seasons in your life where you and I are facing trials and there's severe persecution. And brethren, we want to have effective prayers during that time.

And we will not have effective prayers if we're not thinking about eternity, if we're not thinking about the thinking of Christ, if we don't have a sober mind. And it's fine to cut all manner of things off in order to be there in prayer before the Lord. And you are glued in to the Lord and the trial and everything, and your prayers are all the more effective at that moment in your life.

And that's God's design. And so don't fight that. I mean, that's some of our problems, right? We're unwilling to beat the flesh.

We're unwilling to fight in order to have this sobriety of mind in our lives at certain points when we face a trial. We should all be able to be going along living what you could call normal Christianity, and then all of a sudden, severe persecution, severe trial comes. We should be able to transition.

It doesn't mean we weren't praying, we weren't in the Word, but we're able to transition into an all-devoted prayer life at that moment because we realize without prayer, without committing this to my Father in Heaven, without wrestling with Him, I'm not going to make it in this trial. I could go deny Christ like Peter did. So, Peter really views everything in your life how it is in reference to your prayer life, your communion with the Lord.

And we should think in the same way. So brethren, I guess right here in closing, maybe I'll read some verses. One that means a lot to me.

Philippians 1.9, what does Paul pray there? He prays that our love would abound more and more. And brethren, you see that in 1 Peter 4. He says to have love that's earnest. And we should be praying that.

Lord, give me love that abounds more and more. You know one thing? Peter might have been praying for those in the trial. Those who were at Jerusalem or those who were fleeing.

Maybe the pregnant woman who was pregnant at the worst time possible in the midst of all of that that happened in 70 A.D. You know what Peter might have been praying? The same thing that Christ was praying for Peter. And what did Christ pray for Peter in Luke 22? I've prayed for you. Let your faith not fail.

That's something you can pray for one another. Lord, help John Bondock's faith not fail in the midst of the trial. Trust the Lord and His goodness.

Not, as we heard in the first hour, if you're not sober-minded, you go into trial, you might come out the other end of it with heretical doctrine. The trial got so tough, you change your view on who God is. You go read one of those articles on the Internet that just poisons your mind with some plausible argument.

So pray for them that their faith not fail. And you know, he even says here in another application, the end of all things is at hand, and he says, for the sake of your prayers. Meaning, it sounds like they actually

have specific times they were already praying.

Do you have that in your life? Are there specific times where you try to make time, intentional time to pray for one another? I was with a brother recently and he had a card for every day for all these different people to pray for him. Monday, Tuesday, etc. He was being intentional with that.

What did David do when he wanted to fly away? And it was one of the most grievous trials in his life. He says in Psalm 55, evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint. And that's at least three times he's intentionally going to the Lord.

How important is it for you to make time in secret to pray? How important is the corporate prayer meeting even that's coming up this Wednesday? Do you believe that prayer really moves mountains? Do you believe that it's important to be sober-minded for the sake of your prayers? Do you believe that in the midst of trials and every day your life is full of trials to different degrees? Do you pray as much and as long as God will let you? How long I'm going and praying, Lord, I'm here to pray until there's a sense I've prayed everything that You want me to pray. The devil wants you and I to have our communication cut off with the living God. He wants you to feel defeated so that you don't go to the Lord.

He wants you to not believe the promises of God so you feel condemned like you can't go to Christ. Colossians 4.12, Epaphras, who is one of you. What did Epaphras do? Struggling on your behalf in his prayers.

And what was he praying for? You want to know some of the things sober-minded people pray for one another? Epaphras is struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you might stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. I mean, what a thing. Pray that for me.

Pray that for one another. Lord, make them be mature. Make them have full assurance that they're in the will of God in their life.

Lord, they're questioning, is this on the right path? What do I do here or there? Pray. Pray in a sober-minded way. Think about eternity.

Think about these verses. Think about the well-being of their soul. And pray by faith.

Pray with reverence and fear to God. Pray constantly, believing the Lord. Pray expectantly, looking to the blood of Christ and His sacrifice and realizing He delights to hear you come to Him.

Ephesians 6, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert. Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplications for all the saints and also for me.

Paul's saying pray for them all. Hey, don't forget me. Pray also for me.

And what did he want to be prayed for? That words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly. Romans 15, I appeal to you brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf. What did he want them to strive? Well, he was facing a trial.

Strive that I might be delivered from unbelievers in Judea. Lord, protect that missionary. There's wicked, evil men over there wanting to put them in prison.

Lord, protect them. Deliver them that they might be able to boldly speak the Word of God. Acts 4, Peter and John.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats. Grant. Grant to Your servants to continue.

Lord, we've already been speaking boldly. We want to keep speaking boldly. But we can't do it, Lord, without Your help.

Grant to Your servants to continue to speak Your Word with all boldness. I mean, that's a time you need prayer. You're in the midst of serving the Lord.

You think you're going to start the same heat you start the service with? You're going to end with that same heat? No. Sometimes fear comes in the middle of it and you know what you should do? You pray. You go to the Lord.

Constant in prayer. Constantly struggling and striving in prayer. John Flavel, he said, prayer produces and maintains holy courage in evil times.

When all things about you tend to discouragement, it's you being with Jesus that makes you bold. He that is used to being before a great God will not be afraid to look such little things as men in the face. So brethren, the end is near.

Personally for you. One day in the Lord's eyes is a thousand years here. If we live to be 90 at best, we've got a few more rolling suns at most.

But you know what's going to happen to get to that end? We're going to have severe persecution and trials in our life. It might not be persecution per se. And when you face those, make sure you're already living in a sober-minded way.

Make sure you already have a life of prayer. And that when those trials come, you will be able to have effective prayers before your Father in Heaven. Because your mind is armed with the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You've set your mind on things above. There's a sobriety there. There's a sense of reverence in your life.

Even it talks about elders, one of their qualifications is to be the KJV uses the word grave. What's the ESV use? What's it say there? I guess I should know that. It mentions they're even sober-minded.

In Titus, it talks about the women being sober-minded. So you and I though, we're going to have seasons of trial. We must be sober-minded specifically during those seasons for the sake of our prayers being effective because prayer is vital for you and I to make it through the trial.

We're not communing with the Lord. We're not going to make it. And thank God that the times we're too defeated to pray.

Like Peter. Jesus is there praying for Peter that his faith not fail. Praise be to God.

What a Savior we have. Well, let's pray. Lord, our minds are an amazing thing.

Lord, the thoughts. We all have thoughts. Lord, if we could take all the thoughts that different people have had while I've preached.

Lord, who knows what thoughts have been thought? Lord, You know our minds every day. Lord, thoughts come. And Lord, we want to have our minds armed with the thinking of Christ.

We want to have our minds armed with thinking on eternity. And Lord, we don't know what severe persecution, we don't know what trials are going to come, but Lord, we see it. Peter's plea to these people to love one another, to show hospitality, to use their gifts.

And Lord, we see Peter first calling them to be sober-minded for the sake of their prayers, to be self-controlled. Lord, give us the ability to say no to certain things that are hindering us when we go to pray. Lord, we want to grow.

We want to grow in our prayer life. We want to be able to have a greater sense of you in the midst of our prayers. And Lord, there might be things that we don't even recognize that are hindering our ability to pray.

Or it could be a wrong view on prayer. Or it could be feeling like a bondage in prayer. Not going to you as a father.

Lord, it could be a bad marriage and sin that's undealt with with a spouse. Lord, I don't know what it is, but Lord, we're wanting to gather even this Wednesday night and we're wanting to hearken our voices unto You with effective prayers. Lord, we hear that the effective prayer of the righteous availeth much.

Lord, we want to be a church that's not just praying, but Lord, that's seen in effect. And Lord, I trust that in many ways we have seen that throughout these years. But Lord, help that not to wane, not to drift off, but Lord, grow us.

Grow us in our prayer lives. Lord, help us to not fall asleep in the midst of the trial. Lord, help us to watch and pray.

Lord, help us to be able to labor in prayer. Lord, I think even of Samuel, how he said to them, to Israel, he said, if I would have ceased from praying for you, I would have sinned. And Lord, there's times, no doubt, where we didn't pray for something and we should have, and Lord, we feel like we sinned.

Like Samuel said, Lord, we don't want that too. We don't want that in our lives. Lord, bring people to our minds to pray for.

Lord, even right now, what are the issues and matters, Lord, that I'm just too lacking sobriety in mind that I'm not praying for, for these brethren, for the church? Lord, bring those to remembrance in our minds. Please, Lord, we want to be a praying church. We want to be people who are free to pray to You with a sober mind, thinking on eternal things.

Lord, help us. Help us. Grow us.

Please. Lord, even if it takes trials, Lord, as I heard from a brother before the service, Lord, the trials in his life recently have been the best thing that have just caused him to all the more have sobriety of mind and think rightly in his life. God, help us.

We pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

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