

The Prayer Life Of Jesus

by John McGregor

This sermon delves into the prayer life of Jesus, emphasizing the importance of humility, intensity, insistence, simplicity, and unity in prayer. It highlights the need for repentance, seeking God's presence, forgiveness, personal revival, and praying in agreement for nations and personal lives. The speaker shares powerful examples and encourages a deep connection to God's throne of grace through prayer.

Scripture: Luke 11:1, Matthew 6:6, Matthew 18:19, James 5:16, Genesis 32:26, Isaiah 43:2, Isaiah 41:10, Proverbs 14:34

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Description

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Transcript

God's throne in a little while. We want to just look a bit at the prayer life of Jesus. Now obviously in in one session we will not cover everything about his prayer life but we're going to.

It is a joy to greet you at this solemn assembly of prayer and indeed it is a very precious privilege to come to God in prayer together. I'm John McGregor and I'm speaking to you here from Regina, Saskatchewan up in Canada and I'm thankful to join many other brothers that I've known over the years who will be speaking to you and have been speaking to you throughout this weekend. Especially good to be able to work together again with Dan and that Dan we sure appreciate all the work that you put in to keep pointing us to God's throne of grace.

So as we gather we've been thinking about that solemnness of coming before God in corporate prayer as peoples and nations and our world is in quite a turmoil because of COVID-19 and many are the other things also that cause difficulty within our world today. As I speak to you this evening I want to just think about a variety of scripture verses. I've been praying and asking the Lord to guide that we might give a word in season and I've been thinking about the prayer life of Jesus.

My mother used to say in times where you're not a hundred percent sure what you should say just tell people to look at Jesus and that's exactly what we want to do in prayer. When we study the prayer life of Jesus we see so many things that help us to know that teach us how to pray. For the disciples asked the

Lord Jesus didn't they in Luke 11 and verse 1, Lord teach us to pray.

And so as we gather tonight and as we come before God's throne in a little while we want to just look a bit at the prayer life of Jesus. Obviously in in one session we will not cover everything about his prayer life but we're going to look at many of the aspects that the Lord Jesus teaches us about prayer. And as we come solemnly before God in repentance and looking for his hand to come into our land, into our hearts, into our homes we need to know the best ways to approach the throne of God's grace.

And as you look at the life of Jesus we see so much about prayer. There is not a part of his life that is not bathed in prayer. And so may the Holy Spirit teach us this evening how we too can connect to the throne of God's grace through this mighty gift of prayer that he has given to us.

I want to begin by saying you know if you if you just look at the life of Jesus you will see if you divide it into four simple sections that prayer is there in every section. For instance all the events of the life of Jesus are bathed in prayer. And all of the ministry that he does is bathed in prayer before there's conflict with the Pharisees.

We find him praying. We see that in all of the miracles they all engage prayer. Are we not asking God in these days for a miracle to touch our land and to bring a mighty move of the Spirit of God so that we could see deep and abiding revival and awakening such as the world has seen in past centuries.

But oh how desperately we need that today. And I know that's why you're connected to this solemn assembly of prayer. As you look at those events and things in Jesus' life you see that in every part of it he is engaging in prayer.

He engages in intercessory prayer for others. You'll notice in John 17 that high priestly prayer that Jesus is praying not only for himself, not only for his disciples, but for all who would believe. Now that gives me a little blip in my heartbeat to know that Jesus prayed for me that night and he prayed for you that night.

And we ought to follow along and engage ever more deeply in this thing of prayer so that as we walk with him we begin to see and experience all that he has for us. I think about our union with Christ in prayer for he is still the great intercessor at the right hand of God the Father. Oh my dear friends, as we connect in prayer we see so much in the life of Jesus that can help us and does help us, speaks to us in these times.

He went apart to pray and so there are times when we must come away from people and just seek the face of God. And perhaps God is calling you tonight to do just that in the prayer time after this session. He made time in a busy life every day to pray and God is certainly calling us as believers in these days to engage in that kind of prayer that bays everything in life, brings everything before the throne of God.

He insisted on extended times of prayer. In Luke 6 and 12 we read that he prayed all night. Now when I was a young man in Ireland the church would sometimes have half nights of prayer.

It meant that they would pray from 7 until 11. And those were glorious days where people were coming to Christ and growing in faith in him. But oh sometimes those meetings went all night long and it was as if we'd been there a short time because God's presence was there with us.

My dear friends, this was a lifestyle and a pattern that we see in the life of Jesus and the harder and longer his days the more we see they are invested in prayer. He prayed in times of deep sorrow and in times of great joy. In Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 7 it tells us that he prayed in anguish.

We certainly need to pray in anguish in these days and times, do we not? For the nations of the world are rampant with all kinds of sin and the only answer for that is salvation in Jesus Christ alone. It is the power of the gospel that will change hearts and homes and nations. And oh how we need in anguish kind of prayer to come to God and ask him, pour out your spirit Lord, pour out your power.

He prayed in spiritual conflict and we must too for there is a battle that is raging. It is raging for souls and it is raging for hearts and it is raging for homes and nations. Oh how we must hear that voice of the Spirit of God calling us to be a people of prayer.

In the Psalms we see, Psalm 40 verse 8, these words, I delight to do your will. And one thing we know for sure as you read in Thessalonians, pray without ceasing. That's his will.

May we become such a people of prayer. May we ignite such prayer around us in our homes and churches. May our children and grandchildren catch the sense of the power of prayer.

In this solemn assembly we have come to do business with God and to call upon him and seek his face and know his touch in a fresh and powerful way. When you think about it, why did Jesus pray? As the Son of God, he is God. But in his humanity he also is subject to dependence upon his Father.

We must be too. What significance should his prayer life have in my prayer life? Well we read in Romans 8 that we are to be transformed into his image. Therefore this thing of prayer ought to grow within us in such a magnificent way that people would say there is a man or a woman of prayer.

I remember visiting in a home where the husband and the wife were fighting, and as I came into the living room I heard one of the children say, the pastor's here and he's gonna pray. And I thought that's a compliment. I'm going to keep that.

I'll remember that all through my life. That this little boy knew the one thing that I could do and would do in that troubled situation was to pray. Here we are.

There's trouble on the streets of our nations. There's trouble everywhere around the world. We need to be a people of serious prayer.

Now as we look at the prayer life of Jesus, there are several things that I want us to think about. As I said, in Jesus' name we are in union with him. It wasn't just an accident that he said, in my name.

So as we come to the throne of God tonight and plead in the name of Jesus, we are in union with him. We are seeking to pray as he would pray. Friends, there's nothing selfish in the prayers of Jesus.

There's nothing demanding our own way in the prayers of Jesus. There is simply seeking the will of God and the power of God and the work of God. And so I want to think about what are the things that Jesus knew about prayer that can help us tonight as we pray, as we seek him.

I want to begin by reading a verse here from Luke's gospel and chapter three. I believe I just get the reference right here. Luke 3 and 21, and here's what it says.

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized. And while he prayed, the heaven was opened. So as you and I pray in Christ, look at this right at the beginning of his ministry as he is preparing and demonstrating in baptism.

It says, while he prayed, heaven was opened. Believer, do you know that tonight? Can you take that assurance from God's word that as you come to him in the name and in the authority that Jesus is Lord, that as you come you can say, heaven can open. The power of God can be engaged into these dire circumstances that we face in these days and times.

Oh, is that not exactly what we want to ask tonight in the solemn assembly? Lord in Christ, as we come to you, open heaven. Isaiah prayed that way, didn't he? Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down. May we tonight in our assembly, wherever we are across the land, continent, or world, seek him who opens heaven and pours out his spirit into situations.

There are several words, Hebrew words, that impact prayer in the Old Testament and in the day of Jesus as well. And as we think about the prayer life of Jesus, we see them demonstrated. I'll just use the English term and give you some verse references as we go along.

If you're following in your Bible, turn with me to Luke chapter 18, and I'm going to read verses 10 through 14. Luke 18, 10 through 14 says, two men went up to the temple to pray. One a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess, and the tax collector standing afar off would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you this, that man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

That first word is *damam* in Hebrew, and it means humility in English, and you see the principle here in this text. The Pharisee and the publican, they both presented prayer, and then it is only the publican that receives this response. As Jesus says, he went down to his house justified because his heart was humble and right.

Now dear friends, let's take this one to heart in our solemn assembly. Do you have a broken heart, a humble heart? David says in Psalm 51, a broken and a contrite heart you will not despise. Dear ones, sometimes we come with a list of what we want God to do, but when we come broken, seeking his will and his touch, that's a whole different attitude.

That's an admission that we can't fix it, and that we have become desperately dependent on God intervening in the situation, for he can bring change. The Pharisee, you see, was quite self-satisfied with where he was at. When I look at my world and I see those who die on the street from injections, drugs, and I see women taken off to be sex slaves, and I see children aborted by the thousand every day, and I see all of the social immoralities lauded as the modern and the new norm.

But my dear friends, my heart breaks, for God called us to follow him in humility and in holiness. Be holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord. Now there is no easy way to accomplish this.

It requires that we stop and examine our hearts before God and allow the searchlight of his Holy Spirit to show us those things that we must put away. The wrong attitudes, the sin that is so easily besetting us, says Hebrews 12. There is so much in this one thought here in the prayer life of Jesus about humility.

He who could have exalted himself instead remains dependent, and he says, I speak what the Father gives me. I do what the Father asks of me. You see, there is nothing of self there.

There is this sense of absolute humility, the humility that says I'll take the nails and I'll take the punishment that they deserve so that they can be washed, so that they can be cleansed, and so that they too can discover the pathway to the throne of God is the way of humility. I was preaching at a church general assembly in Peru, and I was supposed to speak four times. In the third session, I preached about pride and how it gets in and it causes trouble and it brings us down.

And I waited for them to pick me up for the fourth session, and nobody came. And I thought, oh, well, I suppose I must have offended everybody, and now I'm not going to preach that last session. But then the president of that denomination came to my hotel room and said, you probably wondered why we didn't pick you up an hour ago.

That's because we ended the assembly last night in a vast season of prayer. When God spoke to us about pride, we realized how much we need him, not just the things that he does. So my dear friends, tonight as you think about the prayer life of Jesus and this solemn assembly, let's allow the Spirit of God to search us and sift us and show the wrong attitudes and give us a brokenness before his throne, for out of brokenness comes blessing and blessing.

Did you think about these words? Oh, I want to just go to a second one. I'm going to turn over to the gospel of Mark and the 13th chapter and the 33rd verse. Mark chapter 13 and verse 33.

Here's what it says. Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is. You know the setting for that.

The setting there is Gethsemane and that night of the Lord's Supper and so on. And the Hebrew word is kahweh, and it is intensity in the English language, to pray with intensity. That is what Jesus is saying here in Mark's gospel.

Watch and pray, but do it with an intensity, because when you bring watchfulness into prayer, there is a vigilance in prayer. There is an attention to what the Holy Spirit is speaking to our hearts. There is that sense of drawing near and knowing that God has also come and drawn near.

It is to stretch and to have that tension, just as a rope or a cord is drawn taut, so it is for us in prayer. Something to hold on to, the hope that we have as we lay hold of God with intensity. As we think about it, it is that garden of Gethsemane prayer, where he comes and prays, not my will, but yours be done.

And there's an intensity in prayer there. Yes, the disciples have gone to sleep, but the master is still there at his father's throne. It is this kind of prayer that brings triumph and temptations.

It is this kind of prayer that causes us to persevere when we feel like giving up, when we are overwhelmed by circumstances, and we must have an intensity at the throne of God. Faith is implicit in watchful prayer. Do you ever get yourself in deep trouble? As I was working for the Billy Graham team in the city of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, I had one day taken a check for ten thousand dollars to give it to the Saddle Dome and the facility that the crusade was going to happen in for one of Dr. Graham's associates.

And a few days later, I happened to be at the Billy Graham office, which was then in Minneapolis, and I ran into my boss, and he said, get out of the Saddle Dome. And I thought, oh, and I said, well, I just give them

ten thousand dollars. And he said it again, get out of the Saddle Dome.

I'll speak to you tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, and I want you to tell me that you've gotten out of that trouble. I knew that I could not change the contract with the Saddle Dome. I knew that this was a done deal, and they could sue or do whatever they wanted to if we did not follow through.

And you can bet that I spent an evening and an all-nighter praying with intensity. God, only you can change this circumstance. I need your wisdom.

I need your help. I need some way to work through this. At 9 30 the next morning, I saw my boss in the corridor, and he said, I'll get with you in about half an hour.

And you know, I had those sweat beads. And then I got a phone call from the lady in Calgary who managed the Saddle Dome. Do you know what she said? She said, John, would you be terribly upset if we changed this? If instead of being all week in the Saddle Dome, we started in the Saddle Dome and ended in the Saddle Dome, and the rest of the meetings were in the Corral, another vast place that we have here, I will give you a total reduction on the cost of the facility.

Instead of \$150,000, I'll give you the whole week for \$30,000. But please, if you don't help me, John, I'm going to lose my job. Wow.

Intensity. You know, I have to confess, I said to her, well, I suppose I could think about it, when inside I was saying, oh, Lord, look at what you did. So then I told her the whole story, and she said, it's okay, I won't put the price up again.

You know, I had such a good strong witness into that woman's life, but it came because of intensity in prayer. As we think about God at work in these ways and times, tonight our seeking Him in a solemn assembly, there is a third word, chul in Hebrew, insistently in English. In Matthew 7, verses 7 through 11, you know what those verses say.

Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

Yes. Yes. Praying insistently, asking, seeking, knocking, not letting go of things.

Did not Jacob say in Genesis 32, as he wrestled with God, I will not let you go unless you bless me. And if we would become a land that is blessed by God, we must lay hold of God in prayer, insistently seeking Him, that He and He alone would intervene and change the circumstances, and bring about His glory, and His power, and His strength. When people came to the shores of North America in the first place, they came because they were persecuted religiously.

They finded, first of all, places where the Bible could be taught. Oh, how we need to come back to what the Bible teaches, and lay hold of God insistently. It is amazing how He can work, as we will not let Him go.

Some years ago, I think 2009, I was going to preach in the Ivory Coast, La Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa, and there was civil war in the land at the time. And the civil war was just drawing to a close, and my family were very concerned. I was going to be there for a crusade at the beginning of February, and it was just coming up to Christmas, and some of my children were saying, Dad, cancel it, cancel it.

No, I was seeking God insistently, because you see, it's easy to look at the wisdom of man, but what we need is the wisdom of God. And I was just seeking Him. The family, children, grandchildren, came home for Christmas, and my little grandson, Lucas, not very old at the time, one morning everybody else was up, but I was being lazy and having a lie-in, and he came into the bedroom, and he jumped up on the bed beside me, and he picked up a book, a devotional book that Roberta and I were using at night before we went to sleep to seek God and pray, and he just opened it up and said, Granda, read that.

And I said, oh, you want me to read it to you? No, he said, you read it. And just like a flash, he was gone. And I looked, and the verse on the top of the page was Genesis 28, verse 16.

I will be with you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. And after that insistent prayer, I had my answer. Dear ones, we sometimes stop too soon.

We accept what the world will say, but we really need to break through and lay hold of God, and let Him lay hold of us. That's what will bring change. That's what will introduce the power of the living God into our situation.

Oh, you see, when you look at the prayer life of Jesus, you begin to see all of these aspects, and so much more. I am not even scratching the surface in this short message this evening, but as you think about it, may God empower you and I tonight in the prayer time just to know His touch and to know His wisdom as we pour out our hearts and find the heart of God. There is in my mind and heart no doubt the United States and Canada and any other nation in the world needs so much more of God and so much less of human wisdom.

So as we see these words and the impact that they have on prayer, we begin to see that the prayer life of Jesus is somewhat different than yours or mine. Not only should we pray in those ways, but there is again another word that we need to consider. It's a Hebrew word, chakah, and in English it means simplicity.

In Matthew 6 verses 5 through 7, where we come into that introduction to the Lord's prayer, we see that the Lord is teaching His followers, pray with simplicity. Go into your room and close the door. That's simple.

There's no pretense. There's no show. It is just God at work.

There is a childlike spirit and an honest state. And you know when we get to that vulnerability, that honest place before God's throne, this is where things begin to change. That word simplicity also has the implication of tarrying, waiting in the presence of God, knowing that we need His touch so much.

As we come to Him in this way, you see there are many, many Bible examples. You read in James that Elijah was a man like us, that when he prayed, the heavens closed. We're asking God, would you open the heavens and pour out a blessing? When Elijah did that, he prayed simply seven times, God, honor your word.

And there comes out of the sea a hand-sized cloud, but within minutes there's a downpour. Praying, simplicity, simply taking Him at His word. What are some of the promises that you and I should plead before God tonight as we think about our world? Promises that we find, for instance, in Isaiah 43, when you go through the waters, I will be with you.

We need to see Him demonstrate that very principle in our world and in our lives today. Promises that we find in Isaiah 41 and verse 10, do not be discouraged or dismayed. I will hold you with my righteous right hand.

I don't know about you, dear friends, but I pray, God, hold me in your hand. Help me to know you are invested in this in every way. I had a friend some years ago down in Ontario in Canada here, and a gentleman that he knew, whose name was Jesse, he became a Christian.

And Jesse would always begin his prayers by saying, Lord, this is Jesse. He prayed in such a simple way. Jesse became very, very ill, and Jesse, as he lay in the hospital bed, heard the doctor say to the nurses, he won't be with us in the morning.

But in the hours through that night, someone came into Jesse's room and said, Jesse, this is Jesus. Not only was he there in the morning, but all of that simplicity in that man's heart was answered by the simple touch of the living God. Isn't that what we want? God, touch our land.

God, touch our homes. God, touch my heart. God, touch my life in simplicity seeking him.

I'm going to just touch on one more. There are eight of them. You can dig them out for yourself if you look at the prayer life of Jesus, but we'll look at just one more as we go along here.

And as we think about these things, in the prayer life of Jesus, we see that there is a Hebrew word, shamar. It means unity in English. In Matthew 18 and verse 19.

I'm just going to go there and read it. Matthew 18 and verse 19. Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst. There is that sense of unity in prayer, and we see it in the life of the Lord Jesus and in his prayer life. He taught so clearly that where we gather, he is there in the midst, and he is our great advocate.

United prayer. You think about Jonathan Edwards and that long title to his book that brought about that great awakening, where it was united and explicit prayer. The church coming together to pray, and that it can be as few as two.

I read the other day about a revival in North China in 1934, where a missionary had been praying, God give me somebody whose heart is the same as mine, that we too may agree in prayer. And when that person came into her life, she began to say, thank you Lord for the revival. And indeed it did come, with hundreds brought into the kingdom of God.

Unity in prayer, united explicit prayer. Somebody asked me once, Pastor, why is it that two is mentioned? Why not 200? Why not 2,000? Why two? And I said, because there is a husband and there is a wife, and they are two, but they are one. And who does not pray as couples for our families, for protection for our children? Unity in prayer is so, so necessary.

Let me demonstrate with an illustration, and then I'll close with some suggestions of things that you can go to prayer about tonight. While I was pastoring some years ago in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, my associate pastor came to my office one day and said, I'm devastated, my wife has been diagnosed with cancer. About two hours later, one of my elders came into the office and said, Pastor, I'm feeling low.

My wife has been diagnosed with cancer. That evening at a Bible study, another of my elders came and said, Pastor, would you pray for me? I've been diagnosed with cancer. I asked the church the next Sunday morning, said I've been here a number of years, I have never asked you for anything personally, but I want to ask you to do something today.

I want to ask you to do it for me. I want to ask you to do it especially for the Lord and for his work. I said we will open the church on Thursday evening at seven o'clock.

I want to invite you to come and pray. Here are three desperate needs, and there are so many more. Come as families, and you know a lot of people said, well it's not going to work.

That congregation of about 350 on that first Thursday night had 187 adults and 40 children. The children were in a side hall and they were sat in a big circle praying. God's people begin to say to me after that meeting, Pastor, we need to do this again.

Can we do it again next week? And the next week they said, can we do it again next week? And so for many weeks we continued to pray. Every one of those people in the three who were diagnosed with terminal cancer with short time to live lived more than 15 years. I believe it's because there was unity in prayer.

And I'll never forget walking into that side hall and listening to those children as they prayed, as they agreed together in unity, asking God to help with such passion and simplicity. Friends, I must wrap things up. It's been good to be able to come technologically and join you in this solemn assembly.

I will be praying tonight along with you, although not present there with you. And I want to ask you to pray about these things. As you seek the Lord in prayer, may it be that you would really ask him, first of all, make your presence known, Lord.

The world is skeptical and in unbelief, and so we must say, God, make your presence known. Touch this needy situation again. Secondly, as you seek the Lord tonight, ask him for forgiveness.

We as a people have much to repent of. We have great need to draw near to God and just to see. Oh, sin so seriously affects life, doesn't it? So let's come clean before the throne of God tonight.

What are the sins? Oh, we always say, well, that's not me. I'm not doing that. But Nehemiah, when he prayed, prayed that he was part of the people of God.

Could we admit tonight that spiritually we've grown cold? Could we admit tonight that spiritually we've drifted away from Scripture? Could we admit tonight that we no longer believe in the power of the gospel? And I would say that because there was a day when evangelistic meetings were rampant across the land, and today there are so few. May we come to him in repentance. May we seek him about our attitudes as well, because if we're going to reach this lost world, then we need to take the advice of Philippians chapter 2. Let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Friends, let's come to him in repentance, and let's come in agreement. As you gather wherever you are, may you bring that sense of agreement in prayer, that unity, that corporate prayer that oftentimes is so wanting. But Jesus taught us to pray together.

It was 120 in the upper room when the Spirit came. May it be that the Spirit of God would come tonight into our various gatherings and places, because our hearts are right and open before him. May we pray for forgiveness for our nations, and for the rampant sin that goes on there.

May we seek God tonight for righteousness and truth. We read in Proverbs that righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. May we ask God to help us, by his grace, to remove the reproach that we may experience again times of refraction from the hand of the Lord.

God bless you in these seasons of prayer as you seek him. Lastly, may I encourage you, ask him for personal revival. There is not one of us tonight, including the speaker, who could not say, God, I need more of you.

I need more of your Spirit, and less of me. John the Baptist said it in John 3 verse 30, he, Jesus, must increase, and I must decrease. May God bless you as you go to prayer.

Gracious God and Heavenly Father, we have looked at a few things in the life, the prayer life of your Son. They challenge us, and we admit our weakness. We need your strength, that we might pray in humility, that we might seek you insisently, that we might know you in unity.

Walk in these days, in the world, but not of the world. So, Father, would you, from the throne of grace tonight, put in our hearts the very things that you desire us to pray for. For all prayer begins and ends at the throne of God.

Bless, my dear brothers and sisters, as we continue to seek you. May this be a changing point in our lives, and in the life of our nations, for it is in Jesus' name that we ask it. Amen.

God bless you.

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