

Gv1601 Prayer

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the transformative power of prayer and the necessity of a deep, passionate prayer life for believers.

Duration: 35:07

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Joel 1:13, Joel 2:13, Amos 1:9, Jonah 1:17, Malachi 3:1, Matthew 6:33, Romans 9:2, Jude 1:20

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and the need to prioritize it in our lives. He shares an example of a man named Buck Singh who dedicated three hours of his Sunday service to praise and worship, three hours to prayer, and three hours to other spiritual activities. The speaker also mentions the story of Hannah from the book of Samuel, highlighting how she fervently prayed to God for a child. He encourages listeners to make the most of their time and prioritize prayer, as it has the power to bring about blessings and change in our lives.

Transcript

I want to share some thoughts with you on the subject that's very vital in our lives and of course I couldn't arrive better than on a prayer meeting night. Just some thoughts from the first book of Samuel and the first chapter. One of the, amongst many amazing things I think in American history.

America has given birth to some of the most awful religions. Christian science, Quakers, no, no, no, not Quakers, Christian science, some of the Adventists, Mormons, a crowd of others. But the scale is more than balanced by the fact that America has had some of the greatest prayer warriors in history.

I was talking with a man the other day who had been down into Washington in Georgia, not as famous as the other Washington, except in eternity I think it is, because it was there that Dr. E. M. Bounds lived. He has a son there, 95 years of age, he has another son there, 91 years of age, who has just got saved. And he has a daughter there, 84 years of age.

Dr. E. M. Bounds birthed the classic which is called Power Through Prayer, one of the greatest books I think ever written on that subject. But not only was Dr. Bounds one of the great stalwarts of this country, there was another man by the name of Payson. I like to alliterate that and say he was praying Payson of Portland.

He was a man who, when they prepared him for his casket, they discovered he had some hoofs on his knees. Tradition says that James the Apostle had calluses on his knees with prayer. Payson had the same thing.

In fact, before luxury came and we got so soft, he slept in a bedroom that had no covering on the floor. It had a hard floor like this. And at the side of his bed they found two grooves, two places that were worn six or seven inches long and deep, and they wondered why they were to the side of his bed.

And then somebody said this was the place where he always prayed. And actually he had plowed two grooves in the floor of his bedroom in his intercession. Praying Hyde was another of the great giants of prayer in this country.

But a man died just a few months ago. I met him once. My mother said to me, I suppose she knew I was destined for greatness, that she said, uh, when you're in the presence of royalty, never turn your back on the king or distinguished people.

Always walk backwards. And I did this because I'd been with one of the great men, not one of the greatest men in American history, but I think one of the greatest men in any history since the days of the Apostle, the Apostles. He died this year, on the 9th of February.

I saw him five or six years ago. He was a little Scotsman. He lived a few miles north of Chicago on the border of the lake.

And I got to see him for about ten minutes. He began to thank me for the books I'd written, particularly on prayer, and I, I hushed him and said, no the honor is, is the other way I'm honored to see you. Well they carried him out of his little house on the 9th of February this year, and would you believe it, it was the first time he'd been out of the house in twelve and a half years.

Never been out of the door of his own house in twelve and a half years. Never been to bed one night for thirty years. This isn't back in Finney's day, or in the days of the, when they were breaking the frontier here.

This, this is in our day, in your day, in my day, just a few months ago. Of course they didn't put his picture on the front of Time magazine, if they did I'd have objected to it anyhow. But this little man learned the art of intercession.

He prayed every night from ten at night until five or six in the morning, whenever the burden lifted. Now somebody will ask me the question, did he sleep? Well what do you think he was? Of course he slept. But he learned to do what the hymn writer says in that work for the night is coming, give every flying minute something to keep in store.

He pushed the day around. In case you don't know, there are 24 hours in it. They're divided into three eights, normally.

You work eight, you sleep eight, what do you do with the other eight? On the same basis, you live sixty years, you work twenty, you sleep twenty, and what do you do with the other twenty? I have a sign in my office, and I look at it many times a day, it's just one little word on it, eternity. We used to have it in the old chapel I think that was, stood somewhere near here, I was asking Brother Hegley where it is, you should have kept it, it's very sacred. I love that little chapel, and we had a sign if I remember right in that chapel,

on live with eternity's values in view.

The poet said that more, more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Montgomery, the great-grandfather of the famous warlord Montgomery in England, and Montgomery's great-grandfather was a bishop in the Church of England, and he wrote a hymn about prayer, and one of the phrases in that hymn is this, all earthly things with earth will fade away, but prayer grasps eternity, therefore pray, always pray. I've said this often and it's got me into trouble, but I'm still going to say it anyhow.

I'm quite sure of this, that no man, I don't care how large his church, don't care how many books he's written, how far he's traveled, I do not believe that any man or woman is greater than their prayer life. If you learn this lesson while you're young, you younger folk, you know nobody can impress God. Ever thought about that? You can impress other people, you can't impress God.

You can't even impress yourself, you're somebody. Even if you're just one big fat zero, you can still do it. But we can't impress God.

I wish I'd learned that years ago. I learned a lesson through a serious trial many years ago, that if I were voted the greatest Christian in the world, God wouldn't erase my name and put it at the top of the list and say I've been holding the universe up, I didn't even notice he was so great. That he'd been voted as the greatest Christian alive, and I'd better put his name at the top of the list.

And then afterwards, if I became unpopular, he would have to change it. No, no, no, you can't get, the only person who can change God's mind about me is me. You slander me to high heaven, I wouldn't lose any sleep over that.

If you ridicule me, if you criticize me, so what? All we have to do is live with eternity's values in view. All we have to do is to know what God, the Holy Ghost, says by his Spirit in our hearts. Otherwise, as Christians, I don't know how we live.

All right, prayer. People these days are offering so many proofs of the spirits in life. Well, I'm quite sure that one proof of the spirits in life is a revolutionized prayer life.

The epistle of Jude is really an epitome of the whole Bible, and I think the 20th verse there says what? Praying in the Holy Ghost. Now I've got a thousand sacred memories about Bethany. I could keep you here, and it would save them the food bill for about three days if I told you everything I knew about it.

I wouldn't tell you everything, but if I told you a lot of things. And some of the outstanding memories were prayer meetings that we had behind the other sanctuary. Man, I remember one night Toby Dugan, I think he changed his name, it's more dignified, but I'll find out anyhow.

But Dr. Dugan, I remember one night he struck up like a mighty sea till I was nearly seasick. We sang it and sang it and clapped our hands, and you know Lutherans didn't do that kind of thing at that time. But anyhow, we got really blessed, and I remember a fellow Bruce Robinson was trying to climb the wall, he couldn't get out any other way anyhow.

And you know people have told me all around the country about those prayer meetings in that back lot there in the sanctuary. And I have spent some of my greatest hours of my life, not with great preachers, I've preached with them, preaching some of the greatest churches in the world. But they don't leave much of a memory.

But I never pray with people who really pray in the Spirit, what the Word of God talks again about praying in the Holy Ghost. One of the hymn writers said, I often say my prayers, but do I ever pray? Like the little boy went to church with his daddy, his daddy bowed his head, did this, and the little fellow said, what did you say? He said, shut up. Because he couldn't remember, never mind the Lord, he couldn't remember what he prayed about, it was just a habit, way of life.

All right, let me come to this prayer. This prayer to me, has all the elements of intercessory prayer. Prayer comes in many, on many levels.

Right now there's a wonderful man in this country still, he came to Bethany, I think I first met him in Bethany, called Buck Singh. He's in the country right now somewhere. I remember asking him about the services they had on the Lord's Day, and there he looked straight at me, he said, well Brother Raven, do we have a real time of blessing on Sundays? I said, I guess you do.

Well he said, the first three hours of the service, what? The first three hours of the service we give to praise, and adoration, and thanksgiving, and worship, we have a great time. And the second three hours, yes, we give to prayer, intercession, supplication. The third three hours, by that time we'd need the deacons coming around with popcorn and soft drinks.

We couldn't, we couldn't weather six hours straight off, could we, without some refreshment. And then he said, the final three hours, somebody has a psalm, a hymn, a spiritual song, so forth. But I remember talking with him about prayer.

Now I think he's one of the great men, I guess Brother Hegre does too. He's one of the great men of our generation, and he knows an awful lot. And if he ever comes at us, you'll ask him to speak on this great subject of prayer.

Hannah, why did you pray? Let me just read through, I don't know how much time I have, I've never enough anyhow, so let's get a bit of it here. Let's get over the second verse. A man had two wives.

You'd have thought he'd have been praying, but he didn't. It says in the first book of Samuel, the first chapter in the second verse, that he had two wives, the name of one was Hannah, the name of the other Penina, and Penina had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship.

Come down to verse six. Her adversary, this is about Hannah, her adversary provoked her sword to make her fret. If you notice those two words, she was provoked and she fret, and the next verse, as he did so year by year.

Let's jump into the story a minute and say this, why does this woman pray? Read the chapter yourself and get all the ingredients. She's a praying woman, she's a weeping woman, she's a fasting woman, she's a traveling woman, she's a heartbroken woman, she's a bitter woman. Well all those are ingredients of passionate praying.

And she prayed for the simple reason she was a barren woman. Her sister had children, she had no children. One day she got to the end of her life.

I'm convinced of this, disagree if you like, but I'm convinced of this, God does not hear prayer. He hears desperate prayer. There are millions of prayers prayed that never reach the throne and they're never

answered, but never, never, never is prayer of this nature ever denied.

Hannah prayed why? Because she got tired of all the trinkets. She got tired of eating and drinking and being happy and sharing the most time with her husband, getting the nicest clothes, all the other things. There came a place where she said, listen I can't put up with this.

You find the same thing in the 30th chapter of Genesis where Rachel comes down one day and says to her husband, listen Jacob give me children or I die. Do you remember that passionate phrase in the middle of the 11th chapter of Numbers? And remember it's dangerous to pray. In that chapter the people began to reproach God and say well we've had nothing like we had in Egypt, we don't get meals like that, we don't get onions like we used to get, meat like we used to get, none of that.

And God says, alright, you've asked for it. Well you're going to get it. He says not for two days, not for ten days, not for two weeks, a whole month.

And we say sometimes, you know, we had it till it was running out of our ears. Do you know what God says? I'll give you it till it runs out of your nostrils. And Moses the man of God says, listen I've got a number of complaining people.

God says, well they complain more to me than they do to you anyhow. But Moses says, don't leave this burden upon me. If you do, kill me.

Now that's a bit of desperate praying isn't it? The Scots people will tell you over and over and over again of their marvellous reformer. He was a thundering preacher. He was one of the greatest men that ever lived I think, John Knox.

And you remember he got to the place of despair when everything was stagnant. And wasn't it Mary, bloody Mary, who said I fear the prayers of that man more than all the marching armies? I've said sometimes I have an ambition to get my name in big letters. I'd like them about ten feet high.

How high is that? I don't know. As tall as that wall, higher than that wall. In big neon lights, you know, like the Broadway people like the names.

I'd like my name in letters about that height. Oh, if you could get them 25 feet, I'd like to see Leonard Ravenhill in blazing big letters. Well, oh, well I'll tell you.

I'll spell it for you. H-E-L-L. Because if you're going to be a preacher or a missionary, if you're not known in hell, well I don't think you're worth much anyhow.

Some demons one day pounced on a preacher. As a matter of fact, they beat a few preachers up. And you remember finally one of them turned around and said, listen, Jesus we know and Paul we know.

I think that's the greatest thing I envy about the Apostle Paul. Not that he raised the dead. Not that he cast demons out.

Everybody's casting. You go to some meetings, you have a headache, you've got a demon. If you sneeze, you've got about 50.

You know the devil doesn't care a hill of beans how long we chase demons as long as we don't hit the devil. Jesus we know and Paul we know. You remember John Knox prays one day when he gets to the

end of the line and he says, listen, I don't want to live.

If God doesn't breathe on my nation, I don't want to live. Give me stuff or I'll die. To me that's praying not how long you pray.

Though sometimes we count a thing, all we have to do is send a five word telegram to heaven and all eternity will operate for us. Forget it, that's not true. The great theme of revival which has burdened my heart for many years.

I cannot find any revival that hasn't been birthed by praying people. Hannah prayed. Her adversary provoked her year by year.

Hannah wept. She not only wept, she wept until she was sore. You know why she prayed so profoundly, so successfully? Because she never said a word.

Prayer will exhaust your vocabulary. Prayer Montgomery said is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try and prayer is the sublimest strains that reach the majesty on high. And the final phases of prayer have no language.

Sure it's true as I quote it to you that Moses daringly says well if you're going to leave me like this, well kill me, get me out of the way. And God says look I'll give 70 other men the same baptism of concern that you have to carry this nation. It always startles me that the disciples never said to Jesus, Lord teach us to preach.

They heard the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest man that ever lived, the Sermon on the Mount and yet not one of them ever said, Lord teach me to preach. They never said, Lord teach us to do miracles. They did say, Lord teach us to pray.

Dr. Chaucer I guess I quote him more than anybody but anyhow I remember going in his office one day and he said Len lock the door and let your hair down. And before I could get to a bench to sit he said, Len I want to tell you something. There are not many Christians ever lived that are going to look God straight in the eye at the judgment seat and be able to say to him I finished the work which thou gave us me to do.

Oh I'll have my embarrassing moments there, you may not. But you know I think three of the most embarrassing, embarrassed men in all history will be those men who went into the Garden of Gethsemane and fell asleep. I find that more difficult than any story about if the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale I'd believe it anyhow.

There are a lot of strange stories but to me the most amazing thing of all is that they were allowed to go with Jesus into the most terrible vortex that any man in history ever went into. Will you understand if I said to you Jesus did not die on the cross, he died in Gethsemane. If he hadn't have died there he wouldn't have died there.

In that prophetic psalm it says all thy billows are gone over me. Let me say a couple of things and quit. I was going down the street in England about 1934.

I pastored a church then, that's a few years back. I was in my twenties, God gave us a phase of revival, people lined up outside the sanctuary on a Sunday night like a movie house. Not because I could preach but because we had some fantastic prayer warriors.

Some of them were 80 years of age. I remember one day going down the street and as I went down this poor neighborhood a lady opened the door and she said hi. I said hi.

She said would you come in and drink tea. I said no thank you I'm due to go home. I was a bachelor living a distance away and I had to walk.

Oh she said you won't come in because I'm poor. I said I'd come in. I went in the house, this woman was notoriously filthy.

She was sitting at an old table and she could reach into the sink and believe me the dishes were this height. She hadn't washed them for weeks. She said you take tea.

Yes. She reached in the sink just blindly like that and brought out a cup that had all the drainage marks outside where she'd been drinking. And inside was filthier than the outside.

And she took a teapot and poured out tea that I do not like. It was just about as black as your boots and it was cold. And civilized people as you know do not drink cold tea.

And so we had hot tea. No we had black cold tea. Do you take cream? I said yes.

I don't have any. She said alright. Do you take sugar? I said yes.

Thank you. You know she handed and her fingernails were in mourning. Boy they were a sight.

And she handed me that cup with the dirty marks outside and the cold black tea in and as she held it I just had to put one hand down here because I've got some strange feelings. And you know she handed me that cup just like that. My mind went back two thousand years to the man I just mentioned in Gethsemane.

The purest, holiest man. If you put the sanctity of all the saints of all the ages we'd still be deficient. The holiest man that ever lived and God handed him a cup.

And it was full of filth. It was full of all uncleanness. And he says almost tremblingly if there's a way out, if it be possible let this cup pass.

But if not, I'm not being facetious or funny, I drank that tea. I hated it but I drank it. I drank it as a kind of penance.

I drank it as a kind of, in anger of my own pride. Isn't it amazing that in that critical hour when they had received everything from the hands of Jesus, they had nothing to give him in that critical hour. And he came and they were asleep and he came and they were asleep and he came and they were asleep and he says alright.

Chance is gone. If there's any prayer that needs to be prayed in the church of God today as far as I'm concerned it is Lord teach us to pray. Not teach us to want to pray, teach us to pray.

Teach us what it is. Teach us not the vocabulary, the disposition, not a latitude and altitude. Prayer is not a position whether you kneel or face the east.

Prayer is not a position, it's a disposition. That's why the Apostle Paul says that it is possible to get into that place where you pray without ceasing. Where every moment of your life you're in an attitude of relationship to him, not for something you want, but that somehow God might come again and breathe.

You see the answer to America tonight is not in the White House, forget it. The answer to America is in God's house. Every piece of paper that comes to my desk these days and I get it from the ends of the earth.

Everybody gets your name somehow and they all send me literature on revival and how to get it and not one of them is within a million miles as far as I'm concerned. And you know the old quote? It was right across the middle of Decision magazine on the 4th of July. Remember that? Right across in that fabulous beautiful painting that was there.

It is across a footnote of a bunch of preachers from Billy Graham to who's who that are going to meet in about three weeks and pray down in Dallas. Everything has one mark on it. 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people are called by my name, I don't believe that's a secret for revival today.

That puts all the responsibility on the pew. The responsibility for revival in my judgment is this now, because you see 2 Chronicles 7.14 has nothing to do with the preachers. It has no time tag on it.

But when you come to Joel 1.13, Joel 2.13, Joel 3.13 and what do you get? No mention of the pew. It's all on the pulpit. Let the priests weep between the altar and the doorposts.

Let them rend their hearts. Let them call out. Let them howl.

Well where in God's name do you get to talk to howl in prayer? Where do we get to weep like this? This woman is weeping. I'll weep like the apostle Paul. He says in Romans chapter 9 and verse 2, I could wish myself a curse.

You know literally he says, I could be damned if need be. Madame Guillaume says she got to the place where she could, I've never prayed that. Maybe you have, I haven't.

No the secret is not the pew right now brother, the tag, the tag is what? In the last days. Well we're sure living there aren't we? You know I'm so simple that I thought a year ago God was writing the last chapter of history as we know it. And I don't think that anymore.

I don't believe he is writing the last chapter. I believe he's writing the last page. The church had better wake up.

I say I have some wonderful memories of prayer in this fellowship. And I don't know what level you're praying on now, that's not my business, I'm asking no questions. But I'm saying this, that there'll have to be a new birth of revival before there's any new birth in the nation.

And there's a little word I hold on to. It's in the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi. And it says the Lord whom ye seek, well let's wait a minute, are we seeking the Lord? Now when I say that I'm not thinking about Bethany Fellowship, I'm thinking of the church of God generally.

Are we seeking, is the church seeking the Lord tonight? Or is she seeking success? Is she seeking miracles? Is she seeking prosperity? What are we seeking? The scripture says the Lord whom ye seek shall what? Shall suddenly come to his temple. Do you remember it says those shepherds went to watch their sheep? Man as soon as I came into Bethany, I remember when I first came, Brother Moriah, you used to stand up at nights and chase sheep on the back lot. There was 400 sheep round there.

Bethany was wool gathering at that time. 400 sheep and man what a problem. But you know what? Those shepherds went to watch those sheep the same as they gunner the night.

And then the word of God says suddenly there was a sound of a heavenly host. And those poor, tired, weary, disillusioned disciples were up in the upper room. They'd been there 8 days nothing happened, 9 days nothing happened, 10 days and the same word is there again and suddenly there was a sound like a rushing mighty wind.

And I think of one of the great events in history. It was a Wednesday. It was the 13th of August 1727.

The clock was moving up slowly, relentlessly, ticking, ticking, ticking and as soon as the hens got straight up to 11 o'clock suddenly the spirit of God descended on a bunch of people at Hanhut in Germany. Do you know that in one sense is a more wonderful miracle than Pentecost in this sense that do you know how long that prayer meeting lasted? It started at precisely 11 o'clock that Wednesday morning on the 13th of August 1727 and do you know what? It lasted 100 years without stopping. That prayer room was never empty for 100 years.

Little boys and girls 7 and 8 years of age were grown and travelling birth for revival. Down in those areas Brother Heger and his wife have been so often. Down in the, well the Caribbean and further south in the Caribbean, St. Thomas and those islands.

You know how they got to be missionaries? Those fair haired boys that came from Germany stood on the auction block after those coloured boys had been auctioned. You'd see a big boy with curly hair and bronze body and he'd run on the block and the auctioneer would say, what do you want? I want to be a slave. Do you know what it means? Yes sir I know.

Sell me. And somebody come and pat his tummy and look at his toes and open his mouth and yank his ears and test him like he'd test an oxen. He's sound and wind and limb.

What do you offer? They'd start running up there. Golden pieces. 300, 400, 500.

Any further bidder? No, 500. Now who loans them in? Himself. Give him the money.

They put those golden pieces in the hands of that young man and he'd take them to his pastor and say, send them back to Germany to pay the fare for another boy to come and join us. And they had an unwritten law. The unwritten law was when you got there on the field they didn't use oxen to plough, they used men.

They put a belt round their waist, they put an iron collar round their necks and that iron collar would rub until their necks were festering. But it was an unwritten law. They passed it on when they went into the slave camps.

See you get in the middle. You'll have two coloured boys on this side and two on that. Don't let them put it that end because you can't testify to the guy.

Always get in the middle. And they had a badge in the early church, that church. You know what it was? It was an oxen.

And it was standing between a plough and an altar. And under the plough it said, service. And under the altar it said, sacrifice.

And in the middle it said, ready for either. Now I've got boys on the mission field and I know what I'm talking about to a little degree. But you know it's comparatively a recent thing with certain groups.

If you went to the mission field you know what they did? They took every tooth out that was bad, they took your appendix out and everything and gave you a one way ticket. You didn't come back. Pretty tough.

I'm not saying the right way, I'm saying that's what they did. Prayer is almost, not quite, but almost the greatest human privilege that we have. All earthly things with earth will pray the way.

You judge your spiritual temper, I'll tell you how to judge your temperature spiritually. How much do you love to pray? I can remember the time when guys used to get out here at night and go on the back lot and go under trees and go all over the place to pray. Remember that? And they were up early in the morning, up late at night.

Praying patient of Portland, praying high, praying bounds. My old friend that died this year, we could do with somebody to jump in his shoes. Don't go out and say like people say, well I've made up my mind I'm going to pray four hours a day after this.

Why don't you make your mind up you're running the Olympics tomorrow? There isn't much chance. You don't change overnight. We approximate to it, we get our muscles stronger and stronger in the place of prayer.

You get to the place where you'd rather sweat, you'd rather weep in his presence than laugh in anybody else's presence. You'd rather God whisper a secret into your heart that breaks you than somebody give you the prizes that all the world covets. I don't think I ever go to a prayer meeting where I pray one simple prayer amongst others.

And that is Lord teaches to pray. That is all there is of this recording.

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