

Ministry of Intercession

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the vital role of intercession in the Christian faith, highlighting our identity as kings and priests and the responsibility to pray for the lost.

Duration: 29:47

Scripture: Exodus 28:1, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 4:14, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:9-10

Topics: "Intercession"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the power of prayer and the importance of believing in God. He shares a story about a man in Wales who, despite being isolated and out of touch with the world, was awakened to pray during the Dunkirk evacuation. The speaker emphasizes that although there may not be direct proof of the man's prayers leading to the safe return of soldiers, he believes that God can work through those who truly believe in Him. The sermon also highlights the responsibility of believers to intercede for others and the need for revival in the church.

Transcript

Our hearts together in prayer. Our Father, we thank and praise Thee that He is alive. Thou hast raised Him from the dead.

Thou hast set Him at Thine own right hand, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, and made Him to be the head over all things, to the church His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Speak to our hearts now, we pray Thee, concerning this most important of ministries that Thou hast given to us in Christ, the ministry of intercession, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Turn, please, to Revelation chapter 5. Actually, I'm asking you to turn first to Revelation 1, verse 6, and then to chapter 5. We will read there the tenth verse and two preceding it. Chapter 1, verses 5 and 6, And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

And in Revelation chapter 5, verse 9, And they sung a new song. Thou art worthy to take the books, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. Both use that word made.

Made us kings and priests. Did not say, gave us the privilege of being kings and priests. Did not say that we might consider the possibility, under certain circumstances, of being kings or priests.

Very explicit, unto Him who loved us, washed us in His blood, and made us to be kings and priests. There is a foundation to this. We are heirs together with Christ.

Heirs of God together with Christ. The Lord Jesus was a priest, not of the order of Levite, but of the order of Melchizedek. And Melchizedek, as you know from your knowledge of Genesis, was both the king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God.

Combined both offices in one. Now under Moses, the kingship came by way of Judah, priesthood came by way of Levi. So our Lord Jesus, being of the descendant of the tribe of Judah, was through Mary, and incidentally through Joseph as well, though he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, he is the only person in history that ever could have been the Messiah, because of the juxtaposition of both lines and the promises that were made thereto.

So the Lord Jesus Christ became a priest, a king, after the order of Melchizedek. Now we are heirs together, and we share that. We too have been made to be kings and priests.

Today, even though kings are mentioned first, we're talking about the priesthood aspect of our ministry. We're talking about intercession as being one of the privileges that we have, as an heir together of God and a joint heir with Christ. You see, it has to have a foundation.

There has to be a basis for it. And if we are going to have a ministry of intercession, there must be a continuous relationship that supports it. And therefore, when we are made heirs and joint heirs with Christ, and we inherit in Him that which was His, and He is a king and a priest, we, of course, as His heirs, inherit the same title, the same responsibility.

And He's made us, washed in His blood, born of His Spirit, to be kings and to be priests. Now the implications of it are very serious and very important. You see, when God made man, He gave to man the power of choice to choose to do evil or choose to do good.

We have in the two children born of Adam and Eve, Cain who chose to slay his brother Abel. It was a choice that he made. Abel chose to serve God and to offer to God the offering that God had demanded and expected.

Cain, on the other hand, decided that he was quite a man. I think he was a gardener. I think he was the man who first invented the display of vegetables that you see at the county fair when you go in and find polished carrots and big heads of cabbage all in neat diagram rolls.

Maybe they don't do it anymore, but when I was a boy growing up, we'd go to the horticultural display building and there we'd see these various types of county displays with all the vegetables they'd grown. And I think of Cain's offering as being something of that sort. Oh, it was lovely.

The works of his hands, what he had done, offered to the Lord. On the other hand, Abel brought a sheep, just a lamb from the flock, and he killed it and sacrificed it and the result was that it was a bloody sacrifice. But it was in keeping with the type.

It was a picture of Christ and the consequence was that God accepted the offering of Abel and rejected that of Cain. And so we find choice was there. God gave to all of us the power to choose, to choose to live, to choose to die.

As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die? On one occasion, talking to one of our children who had demonstrated a spirit of rebellion and rejection of the truth as it was loved by his parents and taught to him, I had to say this, Son, I love you. You know I love you.

But God gave you the power to choose to go to hell if you wish. And if I could, I wouldn't take it away from you. For if I could, then I would have to make you an automaton, a machine.

And if God wouldn't do that, neither will I. You're going to have to make the decision, be it for life or for death, but you can never blame me for that decision. You can never blame me for it. You must make it.

God gave you the power to make it, and I will not endeavor to take it from you. I will pray for you. I will intercede for you.

I will answer any questions. I'll do anything I can. What I'm pointing out is that God respects the decision of a sinner to go to hell if he so insists.

But, there's another element to it besides the sovereign fiat or decision of the sinner. The Scripture tells us that the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. So we're dealing with two factors.

Not only the power of choice on the part of the sinner, but the action on the part of an ancient foe, a defeated foe, but nonetheless active foe at the time whose effort it is to keep men shrouded in death and keep them thus covered from the penetration of the light of the gospel. Therefore, with the way God has made man, he has said, in effect, something, though it isn't I'm not quoting Scripture, I'm giving the essence of it, something to this effect. I will not interfere with your choice, your decision.

I will not stand in the way of your making the decisions, whether they be for life to life or death to death. I will not do it unless I am asked to do it. Now we're coming to the role of intercession in behalf of the unsaved.

I will not interfere with the act-free moral responsibility of the sinner unless I am asked to interfere, either by the sinner or by the sinner's representative. Now, now I think you're getting pretty close to where we should be beginning, where we should start. Who, what are we? We were as any sinner you will find.

You find the worst one that you know of or have heard about and look well into your own heart and you will discover that in your breast, in your heart, in your mind, in you was the seed of every sin that's ever been committed. The capacity, the capability of it. The only thing it lacked was opportunity and incentive, but capability, it was there.

Now, since that is true and by nature choice we were associated with sinners, we will always be able to identify with them as kinsmen. We are kinsmen to every sinner. There but for the grace of God go I can be our testimony to any sinner we ever meet.

However far they've fallen or however high they may have climbed in their effort to escape from God, we can say there but for the grace of God go I. I am kinsman to every sinner that lives. Therefore, I am able to understand that sinner. I can understand what motivates him.

I can understand what makes him tick. I can understand what he's after. I know him.

Well, how do I know him? Because I once was as he is. And therefore, he's no stranger to me. My memory permits me to go back to understand what he wants and why he wants it.

But you see, God in sweet grace found someone that would intercede for me and someone who witnessed to me and someone who encouraged me as an example of his grace living Christ before me. And because of that, I came to a point of repenting of my sin and receiving Jesus Christ as my Lord, my Savior. And now I find that having loved me, having washed me in his blood, and you can put yourself with me there, having loved us, having washed us in his blood, he has made us to be kings and priests unto God.

Now, what's the privilege of priesthood? Go back to Moses as the illustration. Moses would go from the presence of God. Well, what's first? He went from the presence of sinning, rebellious Israel into the presence of God and he pled with God for Israel.

You remember God said to him something like this, Moses, this is a proper dead loss. This bunch aren't worth the powder to blow them up. I'd like to just wipe them off the face of the earth and I'll start all over again with you and maybe we'll do a better job this time.

And Moses said, if you're going to destroy them, destroy me. I'm not going to go up unless these people go with me. They're the people that you gave me to deliver from Egypt.

They've been 400 years in the making. They're the descendants of Jacob and they're the best you could do. Now you're going to work with them or else if you're not going to work with them, you're not going to take me with them if you're going to destroy them.

Moses was a true intercessor. He was willing to identify with the condemned. Now, if you understand that, then you can put yourself in the place.

You're not dealing with a nation. You're dealing with a person, a neighbor, a friend, a fellow employee in the same firm, someone with whom you go to school, someone that you have reason to know, perhaps a son or a daughter or a husband or whoever it might be, that's lost, that's dead in trespasses and sins, that is, if they die as they are, they'll certainly be forever estranged from God. Now, you have to recognize their right to be lost, but you also have to recognize your responsibility to intercede.

Now, remember the earlier principle? God never interferes with a sinner's actions that are taking him toward hell unless either the sinner asks him to or the sinner's representative asks him to. Now, that's where you as the intercessor come in. So, what do you do? When you go into the presence of God, you do something the same as Moses did.

What did he do? Well, he confessed Israel's sin. He acknowledged their unbelief. He acknowledged their stubbornness.

He acknowledged that they deserved God's wrath. He didn't argue for a moment but what God would be perfectly just in destroying them because they had rebelled against life, they'd rebelled against truth. There wasn't a reason in the world why, so Moses would have said, why God wouldn't have been perfectly just in dealing with them.

The only thing he said was, if you're going to do that to them, do it to me. I stand right there with them. In effect, he said, sure, that's true of them, but they're no worse than I was.

Back in Egypt when I was the prince of the daughter of Pharaoh, there wasn't anything that these people have done that I hadn't done. And if it's your grace that brought me here, it's your grace that brought them here, that spared them, then if you're going to destroy them, destroy me. What's he doing? He's interceding.

He's going between the condemned and God. And he is pleading the part. He's asking for God to intervene.

He's asking for God to be merciful. Now what do you do when you intercede for the lost? You legally represent them before God. You have been appointed by the court of heaven as the attorney.

Attorney that has been appointed because there isn't anyone else that the condemned has. When some people go into, called into court, they've been accused and they can't afford an attorney, there's someone, some beginning lawyer usually, young lawyer, that's appointed to represent them because they are to have representation in court. In that case, you are the sinner's representative.

The court appointed representative. Now if you're charged before the law and the court appoints a lawyer, then he has responsibilities. There are certain things he has to do.

He's responsible to the court to do them for you. And since he has made us to be priests, we have responsibilities. And we'd better do them.

We're going to give an account as to how well we've done them. Now obviously, we can't get into an intercessory legal battle with every sinner that we meet or know. Just impossible.

Just as a lawyer can't represent everyone that's arrested, even in Fairfax County. The court designates this lawyer for that accused. And so God the Holy Spirit will say to you, I want you to legally represent this sinner before the throne.

If you're sensitive, if you're walking in the Spirit, you will find that the Holy Spirit is lifting from the whole garment of sinners someone or more that are your responsibility to legally represent in intercessory ministry. Not all, but some. Some.

And it's extremely important for you to be sensitive enough to know when the Holy Spirit is so appointing you. You're going to be responsible whether you do it or not. You're going to give an account of this before the beam of the judgment seat of Christ.

It's so important for us to be sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to know when He is speaking to us and about whom He is speaking. Then we can perform that ministry effectively. How important is it? Well, I remember one day having lunch with Norman Grubb.

And he said, you know, I'd given him something of my testimony of how God had dealt with me. And he said, you know, Paris, you remind me a great deal of a dear friend of mine in Wales and your experiences have been much the same. I said, who is that? He said, oh, that's Rhys Howells.

Rhys Howells had founded a Bible Institute in Wales. And Norman Grubb had just completed writing a biography of Rhys Howells. It's a very fine book.

Maybe you've seen it or read it. Rhys Howells' Intercessor. But he was telling me how that the beginning of the Second World War, the British soldiers were in France.

And they were being overrun by the blitzkrieg of Hitler. And they'd been pushed down to the shore. You eluded me all morning as to that particular beach from which they'd disembarked.

Some of you know it and can tell me what it was. An hour later. What? Dunkirk, of course.

It was Dunkirk. And Rhys Howells, back in Wales, was prompted at the middle of the night, not having heard any, because it was all done secretly. The radio waves monitored on the mainland weren't carrying it.

And he saw before him that beach. He saw the Allied soldiers coming. He saw the blitzkrieg rolling over him.

And he saw the defense of Britain being obliterated there in a sea of blood. And he began to pray. And he prayed throughout that night.

He prayed all through the next day. He prayed that God, he saw the weather stop. He prayed that God would hold back the weather, that it would become smooth.

After all, the weather in the English Channel can be so severe. When the Spanish Armada came to attack Britain in that particular part of the sea, they were destroyed by the weather, among other strategies. But the weather can be very serious there.

And then he began to pray that they would move boats out. And he saw boats going from every little cove and harbor in Britain, all focusing on Dunkirk. And there were even rowboats that had little makeshift sails and small motorboats.

And they were going over and taking the soldiers back. And they said that the only time in history that the English Channel was like a lake in the highlands of Britain was there at Dunkirk. And what's happening? One man back in Wales, utterly out of touch with everything, except he's been awakened to pray.

And when there's no more, he sees before him, as there's no more, that the beach is empty and that they're being safely brought home, he comes out of the room where he's been and tells him what's been taking place. You say, well, there's no direct relationship that you can prove in a court of law. Oh, I understand that.

But I'm not in a court of law. I'm in a court of heaven. And I'm saying that the world has yet to see what God can do through a man who truly believes Him, who absolutely, completely believes Him.

Another case, and then I close. Father Nash, a preacher, a renegade preacher in New England, had gone into all kinds of sin, but under Finney's ministry, he repented, he returned back to the Lord. And God

moved upon him to spend the rest of his life in intercession.

He said he didn't deserve to stand before people and proclaim Christ, but what he would do was hide in the closet and pray for Finney's ministry. Finney was invited to England. Three months before Finney came, he arrived in England and he asked the pastor of the church where Finney was first to speak who was the most godly and spiritual person or family in his parish.

And he said, oh, Mother So-and-So. She undoubtedly is. So he went to her home and asked if she had a room that he could let to him.

He wanted to spend time in prayer. She said, no. Well, isn't there any space? I want to be under your roof because I want to have the protection of your prayer.

I understand you've been praying. Yes, I've been praying for three years for Mr. Finney to come to England. And so, she finally found out that there was a little basement hole that had been dug.

And he put a cot down there. There was a little ventilation. He didn't have much by way of food.

But for most of three months, he spent there in intercessory prayer. Is it any wonder that when Finney began to preach, the Spirit of God fell down on that community and on that part of England even as he had back in New York State? It's no wonder to me when God-confined people are willing to accept the fact that the privilege of being washed in His blood includes the responsibility of being made kings and priests, then I think we're going to see the lost brought to salvation and church revived and God glorified. There's no easy, cheap road to the blessing of God or the salvation of the lost.

Father in Heaven, we thank Thee that we have this Word unto Him who loved us, who washed us in His blood and who made us to be kings and priests unto God. Father, that some way we may be willing to accept that responsibility, come close enough to Thee that the Holy Spirit can teach us those for whom we should intercede and then to labor diligently as Thou wouldst direct us till the lost cry out in the agony of their spirits to God to be merciful to them as sinners. Grant to us, Father, a baptism of intercession that we may see others brought into the baptism of life.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

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