

Enduring Prayer Warriors

by Paul Hershberger

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being enduring prayer warriors through persistence, humility, and a sincere heart in prayer.

Duration: 58:22

Scripture: Luke 18:1

Topics: "Persistent Prayer", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by reading Revelation 4:8, which describes four beasts with six wings each, full of eyes, continuously praising the Lord God Almighty. The preacher emphasizes the holiness and eternal nature of God, and how we can approach Him in prayer as a loving Father. The sermon then moves on to Luke 18:1, where Jesus tells a parable about a persistent widow seeking justice from an unjust judge. The preacher encourages young people to understand the importance of prayer and to set a standard of seriousness before God. The sermon concludes with a plea to examine our eating habits and consider how much we prioritize satisfying our physical appetites over our spiritual growth.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Our greetings this morning in the name of Jesus, our dear Lord.

Good to be back on a Tuesday morning. Feels like we're into the week and we're going. God bless each one of you that let God clean your heart yesterday.

You will be richly rewarded for it all week long. And if you're here and you're still struggling, maybe you're resisting, I'd encourage you, seek the Lord now and let Him clean your heart. Don't lose any time.

Often it happens, someone battles all week and then finally on Friday night they surrender to Jesus. Then they look back and they say, I missed the whole week. Don't do that.

The papers that are being passed out are still coming off of the copier. We thought we were going to be ready, but we had a few technical difficulties. So, they'll keep coming and the brothers will keep passing them out.

So, you'll be getting one. Bear with us. If you can, please.

I'd like to look at Enduring Prayer Warriors this morning. As we look at setting standards for our life, this is one, if we can learn how to pray, how to seek God's face, have the experience of getting a hold of God in the days of our youth and have that standard for the rest of our life to fall back on, here's what I need to do. The blessings that will bring upon our lives are beyond our imagination.

It's one of the richest things. It's one of those rich memories that I have looking back on my youth, learning to pray, watching God answer prayers. And it helps me much, even this week.

It's helped me. Let's pray before we go further. Lord Jesus, we call on your name this morning and pray that you would have the preeminence here today.

We beg you in Jesus' name that you would come by your Spirit, by the Holy Spirit, and talk to our hearts today. Father, we want to hear from you. Lord, if we can learn this truth in our youth, Lord, we know the effectiveness, or we can imagine it.

We know it's also beyond our imagination, the effectiveness it can make all of our lives. Lord, I beg you this morning in Jesus' name that you would give us a vision of praying, of seeking your face. Lord, God, let the simplest person understand this morning, be able to grasp this truth.

Lord, cause the hard-hearted to perceive it and be able to see it. We beg you, Lord, for your Spirit to come and talk to us. We want to hear from you, Lord, and we plead with you that you would do that.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Enduring Prayer Warriors, there's several scriptures I'd like to turn to, to sort of sum up the title.

One of them is in Luke chapter 18, verse 1 through 8. The other one is in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 1 through 4. Now, those of you that have papers that's on your papers, I'd encourage you if you have thoughts or answers that come to you as we go through it, just write it on your paper. I don't need them back. You can take them home.

And you can make them just as personal as you desire them to be. Luke chapter 18, verse 1, and he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint, saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

And he would not for a while. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her. Lest by her continual coming, she weary me.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says, and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.

And here we have Jesus giving an illustration of a widow. A lowly widow came to a judge. She had an adversary.

She was pleading with this judge that he would help her with her adversary. That he would deliver her from her adversary. She didn't have a husband.

She was a needy lady. And she was begging for this judge to have mercy on her, and help her, and deliver her from her adversary. Just a lowly widow.

Just a lowly widow. And she wouldn't quit. She kept coming continually.

She just kept coming, and she kept coming, and she kept coming, and she kept coming. Finally he said, I'm going to deliver her from her adversary, lest she weary me. Then there's something important.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says, And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry to Him day and night continually? Shall not God avenge His own elect that come to Him and cry to Him day and night continually? They won't quit. They keep coming. And Jesus is telling us, Pray this way.

Pray this way. You know, we might think, Well, I don't want to be a bunch of trouble. Well, I don't want to interfere.

I don't want to be a crybaby. But Jesus said, Throw all that away. Pray this way.

Day and night. Crying continually. And He said, God will avenge such speedily.

God will avenge such speedily. Can we come like a lowly widow to our Father in Heaven? You know, if He said He would hear the cry of a lowly widow, can we be assured if we come with a humble heart to our God and our Father, He will hear us, won't He? He will hear us. As she endured.

The other picture is in 2 Timothy 2. Verse 1. This is Paul writing to Timothy. He says, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses. The same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

Then in verse 3 he says, Thou, Timothy, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier. And I'd like us to picture an enduring soldier here for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And take that together with the lowly widow that endured and would not quit, but kept on pressing and pressing and pressing through. Enduring prayer warriors. Enduring in prayer.

Sometimes when we endure in prayer, it's not all comfortable. Sometimes we need to agonize in prayer. Sometimes we lose sleep praying.

Sometimes we feel all alone with the burden that God is pouring down in and out of heaven upon our hearts. But if we can face that like a soldier with the humility of a lowly widow and strive in there and seek the face of God and entreat God and cry unto Him day and night, my friend, I promise you, God will answer you speedily like He said. But we need to put on the mind of a soldier that is willing to suffer, that is willing to endure hardness.

You know, a soldier ends up out on the field somewhere. He might be in a foxhole one day and it's pouring down rain and it's a muddy mess, but he needs to hold his post. The next day he might be in the scorching heat, just sweating, but he needs to keep on going and he does as he's told.

He does as he's told. If we could put on that mind of a soldier and then come like a lowly widow to Jesus and cry to Him day and night, He will answer us speedily. I'm sure that we all enjoy answered prayer.

It's invigorating! We could stop right here. If you take those two pictures, put them together, and just apply them to your life, your prayer life will flourish, I promise you. But this is the kind of standard that we need to set for ourselves in our youth.

And as we go through life, there'll be the difficulties, there'll be the trials, there'll be the hardships, there'll be times when you feel like quitting, but soldiers don't quit and lowly widows don't either. And God answers them speedily. Oh, beautiful.

Now, I'd like to turn to Matthew 6. And most of the message this morning, we're just simply going to go down through the Lord's Prayer. I don't know if you've ever heard a message on the Lord's Prayer or not. I don't know what you think about the Lord's Prayer.

But there are some very vital truths in this text that can give us direction of how to pray to establish us in our prayer life. Now, there is verses and prayers throughout the New Testament all over. And I would encourage you, look for them and watch for them as you study your Bibles.

Matthew 6. We're going to start reading in verse 5. And the first thing we want to notice here is He addresses the issue of a secret place of prayer. A secret place of prayer. Verse 5, And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which is in secret, shall reward thee openly. Now, looking at this secret place of prayer, He says, don't pray to be seen of men.

But, when you pray, enter into your closet. Now, I believe if you have a closet at home that you can go into and pray. Amen.

God bless you. Do it. But what is He really trying to say? What is the point He's making? Is it not that we need to find a place where we can go and get alone with God and have a secret place where I can touch the throne before the Father at the feet of Jesus, like a lowly widow with the perseverance of a soldier? Go there day after day and get a hold of God.

It might be in my bedroom beside my bed or next to a desk or something. It might be in a study. It could be in the attic.

It could be in the basement. It could be in a shed outside somewhere. It could be in the barn.

It could be behind the barn. It could be the back side of the field or out in the woods. And my friend, when I give you that list this morning, there are memories that go off in my mind that about put chills down my back of youthful days, of getting alone and praying and asking God to come and touch my heart.

And God meets us there. And it's those memories that I look back to to spur me on today. Sweet hours out behind the barn looking into heaven, into the stars and talking to my Father.

We need to find a sweet place, a secret place of prayer where we can touch the heart of God and where God can touch my heart. We need that. We need that.

Just humble. Coming to the Father like a lowly widow, but with the endurance of a soldier. There was an account I read of a village in Africa where there is a group of Christian brothers and their villages are very close and there's not a lot of privacy.

In this particular village, they all went out in the woods and they found their place to get alone with God. And they wore a path to their spot. And they were there to help each other and if someone's path grew grass on it, the other would say, brother, grass grows on your path.

The question is, is there grass growing on our path? It would probably do us some good to live like that. And have to be able to admit to the rest around me how it's going with that secret place of prayer. Yes, it was a secret place, but others could see how it was going.

Is there grass growing in the path? Secondly, I'd like to notice from a simple, sincere heart, but when you pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask Him. Sometimes people say, well, I don't know how to pray.

Please, you don't need to go to school to learn how to pray. What I have seen, and I'm sure there's others here that have seen it, once a heart is free, all of a sudden we can pray. What is praying? Is it not talking to our Father? Is it not talking to our Father? He is not impressed with fancy speeches.

We don't need a whole bunch of fancy words. We need a sincere heart. A sincere heart that loves the Father and wants to connect with Him.

That's all we need. Some of the sweetest prayers come from people that have that sincere heart. They don't have much of a vocabulary, but they touch the throne.

And that's what counts. It doesn't matter how high we jump and how high we shout, how much we cut ourselves. If we're not touching the throne, it'll do nothing.

It'll do nothing. God is not looking for a show, for a fair speech. He's looking for a sincere heart that will come to Him just in simplicity.

Number three. Hallowed be Thy name. Hallowed be Thy name.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. I was so blessed last night.

Heaven be described like it was. Amen. He took a whole message and it wasn't done on what I'm trying to make one point out of this morning and I have to keep moving.

Hallowed be Your name. Our Father. Does your father need a fancy speech, by the way, when you talk to him? You can talk to him just real simple, plain speech, right? Our Father.

My Father. Abba Father. Like a son, like a daughter, coming.

But then it goes to hallowed be Your name. Holy is Your name. What is happening here? I'd like to read you some verses that were read last night.

I'd like to read them again. Revelation chapter 4 verse 8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him and they were full of eyes within and they rest not day and night saying Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord God Almighty which was and is and is to come.

And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne and worship Him that liveth forever and ever. And they cast their crowns before Him saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, to receive honor and power for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. As we enter into prayer and we talk to our Father, we can talk to Him just like a father and yet we are stepping into the presence of a Holy God in the very throne room of the Father in Heaven.

We're stepping into His presence where there's holiness, there's majesty, there's power, there's purity. And where the presence of God is a light and a fire like we heard last night, we are stepping right into His presence hallowed be Your name. Come as a lowly widow with humility to such a father as that but with the endurance of a soldier.

It's an awesome place to be before a God like that. It's an awesome place to be now when we're in His presence and we acknowledge Him as God, the Holy God. Verse 10.

Number 4. Praying God's will. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Here again I was very blessed last night with examples given of how God's will is done in heaven.

God's will in heaven just happens. It just happens. Those cherubims, they moved exactly to the response of God no more and no less.

Right? Here we are in the presence of a Holy God. And we're praying that His will would be done on earth like it is in heaven. We're praying that His will would be done in my life like it is in heaven.

Lord, I want to move in Your will just like those cherubims did. Just like those cherubims do. Lord, I want to exercise Your will and move and step in Your will just like it's performed in heaven.

Young people, if we can learn to do that in our youth, set that as the standard for life, oh, brother and sister, it'll be one of the richest blessings that we can take with us into life to move in the Father's will. In Luke 22, verse 42, Jesus was praying in the garden. He was surrendering Himself to the Father.

And He said, Lord, the Lord is saying, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done. Here was Jesus travailing through something that God was asking Him to do, which was to die for the sins of the whole world, which includes you and Me.

And it was a bitter cup. It was a heavy burden. It was going to cost Him His relationship with His Father in heaven for a period of time.

And He's surrendering, saying, not My will, but Thine be done, Father. There are things in life that we need to pray that way. Lord, I'm surrendered to Your will, whatever You want.

But I'd like to flip that one around for us this morning as well. I believe God would have us to pray according to His will. According to His will.

And the question often comes from young people, how do I know the Father's will? Let me read you another Scripture. 2 Peter 3.9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but at all should come to repentance. Now it's time to pray for a lost soul.

And beg God for their salvation, if it be Your will. Do you think God is pleased when we pray like that? God is saying, I have told you what My will is. I have told you what My will is.

Would you pray in My will? We have stepped into the presence of the Holy God. And we're pleading with Him that His will would be done. And He has made His will very clear on many different things.

When it comes to praying for a lost soul, it's God's will that they should be saved, because He is not willing that any should be lost. And we can pour our hearts into that with everything within us and beg God for that soul. And we don't have to wonder whether we're out of God's will when we're doing it.

But we need to pray like a soldier that endures with the humility of a lowly widow and beg God for His will. Let me read you another one. Ephesians 6, verse 2, Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise.

Lord, help me to honor my parents if it be Your will. We'd like to say that, wouldn't we? God says, My child, I have shared My will with you. It's not if it be Your will.

Lord, I want to honor my parents. Would You show me how I can do it different ways that I can honor them, that I can bless them, and be a positive motivation to them, and inspire them, and grace their lives with a sweet submissive spirit. That's the kind of prayers that need to come out of our hearts.

A one like that. And we can rest assured that we're praying the Father's will. I'd like to recommend the book to you.

The Word of God. Go through it and find the Father's will. It is just loaded.

In fact, I'm restraining myself this morning to not keep bringing out verses that are the Father's will that we can pray for our lives. I'll give you one more. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth all men liberally.

Lord, I'd like to have some wisdom. I don't know how much You'll let me have, but please, I need some wisdom. No, no, no, no.

Lord, I need wisdom. Would You pour it on my life? I need Your wisdom, Lord. Heavenly wisdom.

I don't have the answers, Lord. I need to know Your heart, O God. It's just the Bible telling us.

It's full of them. I encourage you to go find them and pray them. Actually, number five is another one like that.

Lord, feed me. Lord, feed me. Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us this day our daily bread. I don't know what happens in your life, but does the Word of God at times just become very dry? Maybe it is dry right now. Jesus is telling us here that we need to pray that God would this day give us our daily bread like He did the children of Israel when they were going through the wilderness.

The manna would fall out of heaven every day. And it kept falling out of heaven every day. And it was nourishment for their bodies.

We need manna to fall out of heaven every day. Nourishment for our souls. That's what we need every day.

And He is telling us here we need to pray about that. We need to ask God that He would feed us daily. Lord, feed my soul today.

Enduring lowly soldiers, warriors for Jesus, begging the Father for nourishment. Lord, feed my soul today. I need something to inspire my heart.

Let Your grace fall afresh upon my heart. And we open up the Word. And we read.

And it can be just a rich treasure coming out of our lives. Lord, feed me. Give me daily manna.

Number six in verse twelve. Forgiven as I forgive. Forgiven as I forgive.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. There's two things I'd like to look at here. One of them is He is drawing attention to the fact that we need to be forgiven.

Something that often happens is in a meeting like this, we clear our hearts, we get an open heaven, life is clear and our hearts are clean. And, oh, it's so sweet, right? What a sweet place to be! And we say, oh, if I could just live here all the rest of my life, be such a blessing. My friend, Jesus is saying when He teaches us to pray, that we need to come to Him on a regular basis and ask Him to forgive us and keep our hearts clean.

Keep our hearts clean. Keep our hearts pure. I'd like to read you a couple of verses in Ephesians chapter four.

Fairly familiar again. Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

Would you allow me this morning to say, let not the sun go down upon your sin. Let not the sun go down upon your sin. Keep your heart clear is what He's saying.

Let's not go home and start the clutter building up in our hearts and lives again. It will be all mucky after a while. But keep it clean.

Keep it pure. Let Jesus keep scrubbing it. Keep washing it.

The next verse says, neither give place to the devil. When we allow sin to be in our life, when we allow ungodliness and unrighteousness to creep into our lives, we are giving place to the devil. And he loves it.

He says here, don't make any room for the devil. He is our adversary. We don't let him in.

But if there's sin in our life, it's like he has property in our life. Wherever that sin is, make no room for him. Secondly, forgiven as we forgive.

Matthew 6, verse 14 and 15. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We cannot have bitterness, bitterness, anger, envy, judgment towards others, hatred, emulations, evil speaking. We cannot have those kind of things in our hearts and expect to come before God and have Him clean our hearts. He says it doesn't work that way.

If we're holding grudges against somebody else, God says we'll just stop right there. Whenever you're ready to forgive, I'll forgive. That's what He says.

And He said it right here in the Lord's Prayer. And my friend, if you're holding something against someone, bitter, angry and strife and the like, please dump it out to Jesus. Forgive.

And you need to repent of having had it. And heaven will open up. Heaven will open up.

Number seven, I believe is an important one. Deliver me out of temptation. Verse 13 says, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

How many times do we go through life and we learn to live a pure life, a godly life, a holy life, and all of a sudden, before we know it, we've fallen into sin somewhere and got snared and trapped. And now we're back to groaning. Lord! We need to clear our hearts again.

You know, it's amazing what's all in this prayer, but Jesus knew that. And He said, we need to pray regularly that God would deliver us out of temptation. That Jesus would deliver us out of temptation.

He knows they're coming. He can see them. Sometimes they're just sneaky, hidden away traps, no warning signs around, and all of a sudden, right there it is.

We need to pray that He would show us, that He would deliver us out of temptation. Lord, give me discernment. Give me discernment.

Reveal to me those hidden snares. The temptations of the devil that he's bringing to me before I get caught. Show me, Lord.

I don't want to fall. I don't want to fall. A life that is walking with the Lord that can discern temptation before you get caught.

Ah, that's a blessed life. That's a victorious life. And He says, pray this prayer.

It's an important prayer to pray. Alright, number eight. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Lord, You're the eternal, almighty King. Here we are in the presence of the Father.

Hallowed be Your name. And at the end of this prayer, He comes back to the eternal, almighty King in whose presence we are when we pray and connect with Heaven as a lowly widow with the endurance of a soldier. Enduring prayer warriors.

We need to be there in humility. We need to be there as joined heirs in the kingdom do. Joined heirs in the kingdom.

He wants His power to be working in our lives. And if we're touching the very throne of God, if we're touching the very heart of God, and have His Spirit connecting our hearts and flowing into our beings, my young person, there are things that happen in our lives when that happens. When we know that we're connected with God, we become joined heirs with Him, there is something that happens in our hearts and lives.

There is something that happens. There is a deep moving within. There is a strength within that we don't have of ourselves.

And we need that connection as sons of the Fathers, joined heirs with Jesus Christ. And we're joining into His kingdom, into His power and glory forever. Amen.

Now, in light of that, I'd like to take a look at another Scripture here. Number nine. Intercession.

Intercession. And I'm going to pull that out of another Scripture without going into the rest of the other Scripture, which we're going to just need to leave. 1 Timothy 2, verse 1. I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.

Intercession. Here we are before the holy God of Heaven. Here we are in the presence, in the holy presence of God, begging God that His will would be done on earth like it is in Heaven.

Feed me, Lord. Purge me. Cleanse me.

Deliver me out of temptation. Joining in with the power of this kingdom of God. And now here's a burden that God wants to lay on our hearts for a soul that is lost.

And I want to let God, by His Spirit, come right into our being and move within us with deep yearnings and longings and cryings out to God for a soul. Unto tears of crying. The Bible tells us if we sow in tears, we shall come rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us.

And oh, for a burden to consume us to the point that the words just come flowing out of our mouth and we can't even be quiet anymore. And I find it's those kind of prayers that God answers. God answers them.

And if we can be before the throne of God as available vessels, as available vessels for Him to use, He'll take a burden over here that's on His heart that I have not connected with, and He'll take it and drop it right on my heart and say, Brother, would you pray about this one? God will do that if we're available to Him. He's looking for intercessors that will connect with His throne, that are there on a regular basis, that He knows He can communicate with. Then He starts laying those burdens on their hearts.

Young person, there's nothing more fulfilling than praying prayers like that and then watching God answer them. Watching God answer them might have nothing to do with the answer. At times we might.

Other times we'll have nothing to do with the answer. But God needed somebody to stand in the gap. God needed somebody to be the mediator.

God needed somebody to be the go-between. God needed somebody to beg Him for favor for a soul. God is looking for intercessors.

But we need to have a regular, continual prayer life, a secret place, a feeding place, victorious life, free from sin, living in the very presence and power of the Kingdom of God. And you know, it's all available. It's all available.

It's a matter of applying ourselves to it. Number ten. I'd like to look at another one that wasn't in this text.

Fasting. Fasting. You know, often we say, what can I do? Maybe I'm just a lowly widow.

I'd like to read you a few verses in Luke chapter 2, verse 36 through 38. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of... I must be missing someone here.

She was a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instance gave thanks likewise unto the Lord and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Here's another widow that was continuing and enduring and persevering in fastings and prayers.

And when Jesus came to this earth, most of the Jews missed Him. Even in His ministry. But here's an old lady that recognized Him as a baby.

That's a traumatic difference. She recognized Him as a baby. Why? Did she recognize Him as a baby? And others, the supposedly spiritual people, could not even recognize Him when He was in the flower of His ministry.

She served God day and night with fastings and prayer. She was close to the Father. She was in connection with Heaven.

And we can have the same thing. The disciples of John came and asked Jesus, you know, why do we fast and the Pharisees fast and your disciples don't fast? And His answer was, after I'm gone, they will fast. They will fast.

The next question is, do we fast? Do we fast? And young people, I'd like to just, somehow if I could get you to see and comprehend this truth along with prayer. And set that standard in your youth. It will bless the rest of your life.

Endure hardness as a soldier. Do we fast? You know, we have so much food in America. Food's everywhere.

Even here at Bible school. There's so much food around here. Now, none of us is out there just laboring.

But how much do we eat? I'd like to plead with you a little bit this morning. How much do we eat? How serious are we before God? And I'm not here this morning to put you on a guilt trip. I'm not here this morning to get you to look like skin and bones.

But how much do we eat? How much do I like to satisfy my body and its appetites? How much do I like that? Why do we fast? Why do we fast? I'd like to just read several verses in Isaiah 58. And I would encourage you to take a look at the whole chapter. We don't have time to do that this morning.

But you look at the whole chapter. Isaiah 58, verse 6. This then is the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break the heavy yoke. Every yoke.

Is it not to deal bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor, that they are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? It's to break the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens. And it's to take what I have and give it to those that need, and I do without. Sacrifice.

Sacrifice for the benefit of others. Sacrifice for the benefit of others. Verse 8, Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee.

The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Blessing and blessing and blessing. Verse 9, Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer.

Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer. Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am. Oh, what a beautiful place to live.

If thou take away from the midst of thee thy yoke, and the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity. I'd like to read another one. Mark chapter 9, verse 28.

This is at the Mount of Transfiguration, and they're coming back down. And they were trying to cast out this evil spirit, and they couldn't. But Jesus did.

But the disciples couldn't. And afterwards, when He was coming to the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast Him out, this evil spirit? They've cast others out, but this one they couldn't. And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting. And what He's saying here is, when we pray and fast, there's an authority that God puts on our lives that is more effective and more far-reaching. If we're willing to pray and fast, seeking the face of God, God will put an authority, a spiritual authority upon our lives.

Not in Erickson's. Still like the lowly widow. But our adversary the devil will tremble.

There's one that God is using. There's one that God can use. They knew who Paul was.

Remember that? You wonder why? Because he had spiritual authority. And God wants us to have spiritual authority. And young person, if you could spend a life praying and fasting and seeking the face of God, and let that spiritual authority build in your life from the days of your youth, oh, the riches of the blessings that God can pour in your life and use you for His kingdom, which He is looking for and longing for.

There's a spiritual authority in humbly fasting and praying. But often we're too timid. We're too soft.

We're too timid. We're too soft. I'd like to read yet 1 Corinthians 9 25-27 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.

Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible, incorruptible. The word temperate means to exercise self-restraint. Now, if we were going to run a race, and we're going to run a five mile race, and we're all going to run, and we're determined to win, how are we going to prepare for that? Dump down a whole bunch of Mountain Dew, eat a bunch of chips.

I mean, we're just going to really fill her up and then expect to go out there and perform. No. Someone that's going to effectively run restrains themselves.

Restraints themselves. And I'm not against sodas and chips in moderation, but my friend, I will tell you, if you fill up with junk food all the time, we'll live like a junkie. Because it isn't good for us.

It makes us feel blah. And God needs soldiers that are ready to go. They're vigorous.

And they're sensitive to His every word instead of sluggish. Verse 26, I therefore so run, not disuncertainly, but I run. I'm going to run.

I'm pressing into this thing. I'm going to go for it. So fight I. I don't just sit back and become a pushover.

I'm going to fight in the name of Jesus. Like a lowly widow with the heart of a soldier. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that just aimlessly beats at the air, wondering where I'm going.

Paul says, I don't fight that way. I don't fight that way. But I keep under my body.

I keep under my body. I give this body direction, what it's going to do. And when it's time to fast, I'm going to tell this body, no food.

No way. And my friends, if you're struggling with that sin that you can't overcome, I'd encourage you, try fasting and start ordering your body around as to what it will do and won't do. Bring it under subjection.

And it's amazing what happens in the area of overcoming that sin. All of a sudden, this body is getting used to receiving orders. No, you're not doing it.

Yes, you will do this. We need to bring under our body. Body, it's time to pray.

I want to sleep. Body, it's time to pray. We need to bring under our body and bring it into subjection.

We shall not serve the flesh. The flesh is enmity with the Spirit of God. The flesh is the enemy of God.

And it fights against the Spirit. Therefore, we bring our body under and bring it into subjection. And when we're subjected like that to God and to the Spirit of God, God can use us way beyond our imagination.

Shall we pray? Lord Jesus, O Father, cause us to grasp the truth of praying, of walking with you, bringing our body under subjection and seeking your face. Lord, we long to carry those burdens on your heart which are many and be fruitful for you. Would you show us, teach us one step at a time how to effectively do that.

Lord, bless each one of these dear young people and give them grace to take these truths. And make it a part of their lives. Thank you again for the blood and for salvation, Lord.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

God bless you. Turning the time over to Brother Paul.

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