

Prevailing Prayer

by Peter Brandon

Prevailing prayer is a persistent, fervent, and effective prayer that is necessary for spiritual growth and the formation of Christ in the believer.

Duration: 29:02

Scripture: Matthew 26:39, Luke 3:21-22, Luke 4:1-2, Luke 6:12, Luke 23:34, John 17, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:42, Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:12

Topics: "Prevailing Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of prevailing prayer, drawing from Colossians 4:12, where Epaphras is described as fervently laboring in prayer for the believers. He illustrates how Jesus exemplified a life of prayer, from His baptism to His crucifixion, and how the early church was marked by steadfast prayer, leading to divine blessings and spiritual victories. Brandon encourages believers to adopt a consistent and fervent prayer life, likening it to a marathon runner striving for the finish line, and highlights the need for prayer warriors who combat spiritual challenges. He concludes by urging the church to seek a deeper understanding of prayer, as it is through prevailing prayer that God's will is accomplished and blessings flow.

Transcript

I want to give just a little word on prevailing prayer. Not just prayer, but prevailing prayer. And it's just one verse, Colossians chapter 4, verse 12.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant or a slave of Christ, greeteth thee, always laboring fervently for you in prayer, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Can I repeat that? Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant or a born slave of Christ, saluteth you in my verse and greeteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayer, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. I have noticed, brethren, that when I have been among a group of people who prevail in prayer, there's always, always blessing.

When we go back to the Scriptures, we find that the Lord was a perfect example of praying saint. Luke tells us some very interesting things about the Lord Jesus. You remember when He was in the waters of Jordan and the heavens were opened and God said for the first time, this is my beloved Son in whom I find all my delight.

What was He doing? Praying. Praying. Again, when He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness and He confronted not only Satan but all the demons and He utterly defeated them, He was there obviously in prayer and fasting.

Again, you will remember when He was going to appoint the twelve disciples who were going to be apostles. He spent the night in prayer. Then you will remember when He was busy all day healing and preaching and when evening was come, the multitudes went away but He went up into the hillside and He was praying.

Then you will remember again the Lord Jesus when He was in the garden of Gethsemane as He anticipated the whole sin question. Think of that. That's beyond our depth.

When He saw the awfulness of death, when He saw all the powers of evil and Satan himself, He prayed in an agony and what a prayer! Not my will but Thine be done. Again, just before Calvary He gives us the paradox of the great high priestly prayer and what a prayer we find in John 17. When He was on the cross He was praying, Can we ever forget? Father, forgive them.

They know not what they do. And then right at the climax, finished, Into Thy hands I commend my spirit. And back went His own life's force to God.

What a Saviour! And then when you see Him in resurrection power just before He ascended, what was He doing? He was blessing the people and obviously in prayer. But more than that, what has He been doing for almost over 2,000 years? We wouldn't be here apart from the prayers of our great high priest. And constantly He's in prayer for us.

What a ministry! But then when we go through the book of the Acts, what do we find? In Acts 1 they're praying with the women. Acts 2, they are continued steadfastly in prayer. Acts 3, they went up to the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour.

Acts 4, when they had prayed the place was shaken. Not when they had paid the place was taken. But when they had prayed the place was shaken.

What a prayer meeting! And then Acts 5, it's obvious that Ananias and Sapphira were judged in a prayer meeting. Then go through Acts 6. Why did the apostles appoint deacons? That they might continue steadfastly in prayer and the ministry of God's Word. Think of that.

Then when you come to the seventh chapter, Stephen goes into the presence of God praying. And what a prayer! Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And probably that prayer touched the heart of the apostle who was then known as Saul.

Then when you come to the eighth chapter, after that great movement of the Spirit of God, the apostles come down to identify with the movement and they lay their hands upon the people in the attitude of prayer and they receive the Spirit of God. What about Acts 9? What does it say of Paul? Listen. Behold, he prayed.

And he never stopped, did he? He was the only man that could say pray without ceasing. The only time I was in that attitude was with a brother in Ireland that went through the lights twice and he taught me to pray without ceasing. And you know, dear friends, the apostle Paul was constantly praying.

And then when you turn over to the tenth chapter, what do you find? Cornelius is praying. Peter is praying. There's a divine meeting.

And when he preached, notice the difference. As he was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that believe. And then if we take a jump, what about Acts 13? The church at Antioch and those teachers and prophets.

There they were, meeting for prayer and fasting. And the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work that I have called them to do. Now, can you see how vital prayer is? Then if you go through Paul's epistles, especially that great Ephesian epistle, you will see very clearly the whole epistle is built upon two pillars of prayer.

Do you read it? The vital need for prayer. So, let's have a look at this lovely man, Epaphras. One of you, his nativity.

Now, could I say this off the cuff? If you have two or three brethren in your assembly that shut themselves in their little room and they're sanctuary men or women, then you've got three outstanding. Do you know, in my life, there are people that have travelled right the way through me, right from the beginning. They've lost their husbands, but their wives are still praying.

Beautiful. Now, may I exhort my young men to give themselves to prayer. Now, why? If you want to look at the spirituality of any man that comes into your assembly, don't watch his study life.

Watch his prayer life. And if you see a man constantly on his knees, be sure of this, that you're looking at a spiritual man. It's the sanctuary man that God blesses.

Now, look at this man. Epaphras, one of you. Not an outsider, but someone among them.

And probably he established a local church, but he was a man of prayer. Can I encourage you to go in for a sanctuary life? They're the people that God can bless. And our sisters can pray and do wonderful blessing as they're moving in the sanctuary.

Then you will notice his spirituality, a bond slave of Christ. That's lovely. In the time of the Apostle, slavery was common, but it was hated.

People were sold from 30 pieces of silver to 8. And some of them were tortured terribly. Slavery is an awful thing. But this slavery is not enforced.

It's willing. If I may use now the phrase of another, Epaphras had said something like this, I love my wife. I love my children.

I love my master. I will not go out free. And his ear was pierced with an awl.

That's slavery. We love the Lord Jesus. We see his body marked.

We see the Lord Jesus in all his loveliness. We know that constantly he's engaged in prayer for us. And having seen him, we give ourselves to the Lord Jesus voluntary and willingly.

And he becomes our master and we become his slaves. But it's not an enforced slavery. It's a voluntary slavery.

And that's when God can bless us. Men and women who are laid on the altar and they are tied to the horns of the altar until the Lord calls them home. A bond slave of Christ.

Now, he wasn't a slave to a doctrine. He wasn't a slave to his brethren. He was a slave of Christ.

And when we're a slave of Christ, then we have perfect liberty. If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Then I want you to note his consistency.

Always. Can I say it again? Always. You know, when we were children, I'm sure you did the same.

We learnt that little poem. The grand old Duke of York. He had 10,000 men.

He marched them up to the top of the hill and he marched them down again. And when they were up, they were up. And when they were down, they were down.

And when they were only halfway up, they were neither up nor down. Now, some can be like that. We all know it.

But not this man. Always. He was like that bush that burned without being consumed.

You know, the bush that Moses saw. Our God is a consuming fire and we must be like that constant. I know there are times when we're not well.

I know there are times when we're tired. But in spite of that, God wants a consistency. In my evangelical missions, there are some that get on fire and they look lovely.

But after the mission, the fire dies down. Not this man. Always.

Always. Labouring fervently. Now, I'm not a good Greek reader.

So, I have to depend upon a lexicon and I have three or four. And I have to dwell upon a number of the translations. Now, I'm very, very fond of Newberry.

But unfortunately, it's such a big one, I can't bring it with me. And this Bible that I have was the Bible that my father-in-law gave his wife a year before she died. And he was a rascal for the authorised, but it's a New King James.

So, it was hardly touched and I've been using that. But I love my Newberry. And he uses the word striving.

Now, what does that mean? Having looked up the lexicon and the connotation of the word, it comes from the idea of a runner in the marathon. And they're getting near to the end. Another half a mile.

And they're running in the box. Now, you know what I mean if you've done any running. And this particular man moves out of the box and he tells his body to do something that naturally it doesn't want to do.

Run and get it! All his thighs are aching. His chest is thumping. But he tells his body to do something that it doesn't want to do.

And he drives himself ahead and gets the marathon, the garland. And foolishly he's immortalized. Now, that's the word.

This man was striving. What does that mean? He had one objective. We're going to talk about it.

That the saints might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. What an objective! And he was praying through until that objective was seen. And when I read that I thanked Mr. Newbery for that word, striving.

Then I took up the new translation. Now, they call it the diabetes translation but that's not correct. Mr. Wickram, Mr. Kelly they all helped in that translation.

And he uses the word combating. Now, that confused me. When we pray, we acquiesce with God, don't we? What does he mean? Combating.

Then it dawned on me. Paul says, we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Did you know we're under attack now? When you're preaching the gospel, especially now, and when God is about to bless, you find sometimes the devil gluing your lips so you can hardly say a word.

I remember in South Africa when God was moving in mighty power when night after night scores were getting saved. It was a movement of the Spirit. One night, I couldn't preach and at twenty past eight, ten minutes before the time I had to finish.

And I felt totally dejected. But the brethren came and said, don't worry, brother. We're very pleased.

The devil's attacking. We're disturbing him. Come to the back and we'll spend the night in prayer.

What a prayer meeting. About twenty of us on our knees. And those godly men, they bound the power of the devil.

They brought down strongholds. Never forget it. It was new to me.

The next night, it seemed as though heaven had come down to earth. Waves after waves of conviction passed over those feet. Satan had been bound and God was now working in power.

That's combating. How we need that. You know, brothers, in my own country, there are marriages breaking up, assemblies closing.

And it's all the work of Satan. He knows the potential in a New Testament gathering. And he attacks us.

And that's why we need prayer. And those that can pray with combating ability to bring down the power of Satan. Then I took up Dr. Weymouth.

Now I must be careful. He was a liberal. He didn't believe in the deity of Christ.

So he's an apostate. Now you must be very, very careful when you read anyone, whether it's the Scripture in a translation or his books. But he uses the word wrestling.

And immediately I read that, I thought of Jacob. Do you remember? When he was wrestling with that mighty man of God. He touched the hollow of his thigh.

And that man meant it. He says, I will not let thee go except thou blessest. You know, the clock before me can be our biggest enemy.

Sometimes you can be in a prayer meeting and you know you're breaking right through. And then nine o'clock someone gives a hymn out. Don't do it.

There are times when we have to wrestle. Times when the Lord's people will say, we will not let you go except you bless us. I remember at Madison, being in a prayer meeting.

We had preached for a fortnight without seeing a soul saved. And old James Black came forward. He said, I do not know of anything that's wrong in the assembly.

If I knew, I would seek to deal with it. But he says, I believe there's something grieving the spirit. Well, we prayed for an hour and forty minutes.

Praying for all the Macs to be saved. In that particular village, they're all Macdoodle and McCormick and so on. And then a boy got up that had never prayed publicly before.

Clayton Dugan. And he cried to the Lord for forgiveness. The little boy was broke.

Then the man next to him got up and said, it's not the little boy, Lord. It's me. I'm gripped with tobacco and I can't get deliverance.

No one ever mentioned tobacco. But he got deliverance. And then we went into prevailing prayer.

I can't go into all the details. It wouldn't be right. But we left that prayer meeting at half past six in the morning.

And we knew that God had answered prayer. That same night when I preached at twenty past eight, four men stood up and cried with a loud voice for mercy. And they were wonderfully saved.

And then a three weeks mission went on for three months. Spirit of God moved in power. It's wrestling in prayer.

May God lead us on. There's great things to learn in prayer. And there are great power manifested through the prayers of His people.

Then there's another word I noticed. It was agonizing. And I got down Dr. Young.

And I thought, I wonder what he'll say. And he uses the word agony. Now immediately my mind went to the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But then I realized I'm out of my depth. None of us can pray like He prayed. None of us could see the sin of the world and its corresponding judgment like He saw.

But then my mind clicked. Paul prayed for the Galatians, that Christ might be formed in them. And it was a prayer of agony.

But he uses the word birth pangs. Then I went through Romans 8 and it was a wonderful discovery to me because I noticed that all the cries and the groanings there are birth pangs. So what does that mean? God brings into our hearts His very feelings.

They're not the feelings of death. They're the feelings of life. And we pray with birth pangs.

And that's the meaning here. Birth pangs until Christ is formed in them. But don't throw away your authorized laboring fervently.

It literally means stretched out prayer. Well, what does that mean? Well, do you remember Elisha and Elijah in the presence of death? Do you remember what they did? They stretched themselves out upon the child. And that was an oriental custom and a posture to show that they had come completely to the end of themselves.

And when we get right to the end of ourselves the Lord begins. The Lord begins. Can you see what this man was doing? He was pouring out his heart to the Lord that the saints might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Now this is interesting. In the New Testament there's hardly one scripture where we're told to pray for the unsaved. Did you know that? It's all for Christians.

You go through it carefully and you'll see that's right. Now why? Epaphras knew that when the saints were standing complete and matured in all the will of God, when they were seeing their sins forgiven and that they had been crucified with Christ and there was only one life in them and that was the life of the Lord Jesus and he was to relive his life in them. The same with the assembly.

The assembly is Christ and what he wants to do is to form Christ in the assembly. Now this man could see the whole particular thing that Christ might be formed completely in them and he prayed and what a prayer it was. Striving, combating, wrestling, agonising, labouring fervently.

No wonder in the first century they were living in first love and beloved, let's pray that the Lord will teach us how to pray and whenever God's people lay hold upon God in believing prayer, there's always much blessing.

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