



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, help me have an attitude that is determined to win every struggle and fight that I face in life! You have given me spiritual power, spiritual weapons, and the wonderful Word of God. It is a fact that You have equipped me with everything I need to win. Now the victory depends on me and my attitude. Help me maintain the attitude that never gives in, never gives up, and never surrenders to defeat. As I make up my mind to take hold of Your Word, Your spiritual weapons, and Your gift of prayer, Your ways, it is guaranteed that I will push the devil clear out of my life. So please help me to make this decision and to do it each day, in Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

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1 WHEN ALL the nation had fully passed over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 Take twelve men from among the people, one man out of every tribe, 3 And command them, Take twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan from the place where the priests' feet stood firm; carry them over with you and leave them at the place where you lodge tonight. 4 Then Joshua called the twelve men of the Israelites whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. 5 And Joshua said to them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God in the midst of the Jordan, and take up every man of you a stone on his shoulder, as is the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6 That this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, What do these stones mean to you? 7 Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever. 8 And the Israelites did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord told Joshua, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. 9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day. 10 For the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people passed over in haste. 11 When all the people had passed over, the ark of the Lord and the priests went over in the presence of the people. 12 And the sons of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the [other] Israelites, as Moses had bidden them; 13 About 40,000 [of these] prepared for war passed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho for battle. 14 On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life. 15 And the Lord said to Joshua, 16 Order the priests bearing the ark of the Testimony to come up out of the Jordan. 17 So Joshua commanded the priests, Come up out of the Jordan. 18 And when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord had come up out of the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of their feet were lifted up to the dry land, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and flowed over all its banks as they had before. 19 And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and encamped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 And he said to the Israelites, When your children ask their fathers in time to come, What do these stones mean? 22 You shall let your children know, Israel came over this Jordan on dry ground. 23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up for us until we passed over, 24 That all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that you may reverence and fear the Lord your God forever.

Joshua 4:1-24

That this may be a sign among you that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What do you mean by these stones? You shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. And so the children of Israel did as Joshua commanded (Jos 4:6-8),

It is interesting to me that God is desiring that His power, and His truth is transmitted to our children. That they not forget what God has done for us. It is sad and it is tragic that very few revivals ever go into a second generation.

Now I don't know if you know it or not, but we are experiencing here a marvelous revival. What God is doing in our midst is a spiritual phenomena that the whole world is looking at and talking about, because of God's marvelous work in our midst. There is a real move of God's Holy Spirit. God's raising up a whole new element of people, you might say. There are now over a hundred and fifty formal fellowships that have sort of sprung out of Calvary Chapel, plus hundreds of other informal fellowships that are developing.

One sociologist that was studying this whole thing that is happening said, "If the Lord doesn't come in the 1980s", he said, "at the rate things are going I anticipate that there will be ten thousand Calvary Chapels across the United States." God is working in a very beautiful way. We have had the excitement and the thrill of seeing God work. When you consider that we're only fourteen years old, and you look at what God has done. We just stand in amazement and in awe. But unfortunately there have been other moves of the Spirit like this in the history of the church that are marvelous. The people are there, they enjoy it, but rarely do they ever carry into a second generation. Because you see as we grow, it will be necessary to more or less begin to formalize things. To establish sort of codes and rules, and the minute you start putting the fences around it, then you're restricting that work that God wants to do.

When I die some fool will want to raise a memorial to Chuck Smith. We'll have a Chuck Smith gymnasium or something, you know. Oh God forbid. This should remain a memorial to Jesus Christ for what He has done never a memorial to any man. God keep us from that memorial state. Nobody needs to remember me; we need to remember the work that God has done. The monument wasn't built for Joshua, the monument was built so that the children would say, "Hey what's that pile of stones daddy?"

"Those stones were once on the bottom of the Jordan River, and when we walked through, we picked up these stones out of the river. That's because God stopped the river so that we could come through. That's the kind of a God we serve." It was to remind them of the work of God.

Oh, that we will always keep that in the forefront of our minds, that the work that we see is not a work of man nor is it to the credit of any man. The work is to the glory of God. Let's keep our memorials unto the Lord for the work that He has wrought.

Now God seeks, actually, that we would pass on to our children His truths, His glory, His power. His method for doing this is by creating questions in the minds of the children. You ever wonder why a child is so inquisitive? That's been placed there by the Spirit.

The purpose of that inquisitive mind of the child is that he may learn, teach him. Let your memorials be memorials that will allow you the opportunity to share the work of God, and the power of God. It is marvelous that we remember what God has done, but it is also important that we relate to our children who did not have the privilege of seeing that work that we saw, the work that God has wrought by His Holy Spirit.

So these stones were to create questions in the minds of the children, to give them the opportunity to share with their children the glorious power of God.

So Joshua [verse nine] set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood: they're there to this day (Jos 4:9).

Now it'd be fun—They set up two memorials. They took stones and set them in a pile in the Jordan River, and then they also set a pile up on a bank. It'd be fun to get some scuba gear, since they were there to that day, to see if the stones are still there in the Jordan River that Joshua set up.

Now the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, till every one was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak to the people, all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over. And so it came to pass, when the people were clean passed over, the ark of the Lord passed over the priests, in the presence of the people. All the children of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, about forty thousand of those two tribes prepared for war. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. And the Lord spoke unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that they bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. And when they were come up from the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up to the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and overflowed their banks, as they did before. And the people came out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, they encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. [So it is actually just four days prior to the Feast of Passover.] And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, Joshua pitched in Gilgal. And he spoke to the children of Israel, saying, When your children will ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What do these stones mean? Then let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land (Jos 4:10-22).

So the memorial by which they could share with their children the work of God.
(Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

XIV. PRAYER AND THE HOUSE OF GOD

"And dear to me the loud 'Amen,' Which echoes through the blest abode -- Which swells, and sinks, then swells again, Dies on the walls -- but lives with God!"

Prayer stands related to places, times, occasions and circumstances. It has to do with God and with everything which is related to God, and it has an intimate and special relationship to His house. A church is a sacred place, set apart from all unhallowed and secular uses, for the worship of God. As worship is prayer, the house of God is a place set apart for worship. It is no common place; it is where God dwells, where He meets with His people, and He delights in the worship of His saints.

Prayer is always in place in the house of God. When prayer is a stranger there, then it ceases to be God's house at all. Our Lord put peculiar emphasis upon what the Church was when He cast out the buyers and sellers in the Temple, repeating the words from Isaiah, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer." He makes prayer preeminent, that which stands out above all else in the house of God. They, who sidetrack prayer or seek to minify it, and give it a secondary place, pervert the Church of God, and make it something less and other than it is ordained to be.

Prayer is perfectly at home in the house of God. It is no stranger, no mere guest; it belongs there. It has a peculiar affinity for the place, and has, moreover, a Divine right there, being set, therein, by Divine appointment and approval.

The inner chamber is a sacred place for personal worship. The house of God is a holy place for united worship. The prayer-closet is for individual prayer. The house of God is for mutual prayer, concerted prayer, united prayer. Yet even in the house of God, there is the element of private worship, since God's people are to worship Him and pray to Him, personally, even in public worship. The Church is for the united prayer of kindred, yet individual believers.

The life, power and glory of the Church is prayer. The life of its members is dependent on prayer and the presence of God is secured and retained by prayer. The very place is made sacred by its ministry. Without it, the Church is lifeless and powerless. Without it, even the building, itself, is nothing, more or other, than any other structure. Prayer converts even the bricks, and mortar, and lumber, into a sanctuary, a holy of holies, where the Shekinah dwells. It separates it, in spirit and in purpose from all other edifices. Prayer gives a peculiar sacredness to the building, sanctifies it, sets it apart for God, conserves it from all common and mundane affairs.

With prayer, though the house of God might be supposed to lack everything else, it becomes a Divine sanctuary. So the Tabernacle, moving about from place to place, became the holy of holies, because prayer was there. Without prayer the building may be costly, perfect in all its appointments, beautiful for situation and attractive to the eye, but it comes down to the human, with nothing Divine in it, and is on a level with all other buildings.

Without prayer, a church is like a body without spirit; it is a dead, inanimate thing. A church with prayer in it, has God in it. When prayer is set aside, God is outlawed. When prayer becomes an unfamiliar exercise, then God Himself is a stranger there.

As God's house is a house of prayer, the Divine intention is that people should leave their homes and go to meet Him in His own house. The building is set apart for prayer especially, and as God has made special promise to meet His people there, it is their duty to go there, and for that specific end. Prayer should be the chief attraction for all spiritually minded church-goers. While it is conceded that the preaching of the Word has an important place in the house of God, yet prayer is its predominating, distinguishing feature. Not that all other places are sinful, or evil, in themselves or in their uses. But they are secular and human, having no special conception of God in them. The Church is, essentially, religious and Divine. The work belonging to other places is done without special reference to God. He is not specifically recognized, nor called upon. In the Church, however, God is acknowledged, and nothing is done without Him. Prayer is the one distinguishing mark of the house of God. As prayer distinguishes Christian from unchristian people, so prayer distinguishes God's house from all other houses. It is a place where faithful believers meet with their Lord.

As God's house is, preeminently, a house of prayer, prayer should enter into and underlie everything that is undertaken there. Prayer belongs to every sort of work appertaining to the Church of God. As God's house is a house where the business of praying is carried on, so is it a place where the business of making praying people out of prayerless people is done. The house of God is a Divine workshop, and there the work of prayer goes on. Or the house of God is a Divine schoolhouse, in which the lesson of prayer is taught; where men and women learn to pray, and where they are graduated, in the school of prayer.

Any church calling itself the house of God, and failing to magnify prayer; which does not put prayer in the forefront of its activities; which does not teach the great lesson of prayer, should change its teaching to conform to the Divine pattern or change the name of its building to something other than a house of prayer.

On an earlier page, we made reference to the finding of the Book of the Law of the Lord given to Moses. How long that book had been there, we do not know. But when tidings of its discovery were carried to Josiah, he rent his clothes and was greatly disturbed. He lamented the neglect of God's Word and saw, as a natural result, the iniquity which abounded throughout the land.

And then, Josiah thought of God, and commanded Hilkiah, the priest, to go and make inquiry of the Lord. Such neglect of the Word of the Law was too serious a matter to be treated lightly, and God must be enquired of, and repentance shown, by himself, and the nation: "Go enquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book."

But that was not all. Josiah was bent on promoting a revival of religion in his kingdom, so we find him gathering all the elders of Jerusalem and Judah together, for that purpose. When they had come together, the king went into the house of the Lord, and himself read in all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the Lord.

With this righteous king, God's Word was of great importance. He esteemed it at its proper worth, and counted a knowledge of it to be of such grave importance, as to demand his consulting God in prayer about it, and to warrant the gathering together of the notables of his kingdom, so that they, together with himself, should be instructed out of God's Book concerning God's Law.

When Ezra, returned from Babylon, was seeking the reconstruction of his nation, the people, themselves, were alive to the situation, and, on one occasion, the priests, Levites and people assembled themselves together as one man before the water gate.

"And they spake unto Ezra the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."

This was Bible-reading Day in Judah -- a real revival of Scripture-study. The leaders read the law before the people, whose ears were keen to hear what God had to say to them out of the Book of the Law. But it was not only a Bible-reading day. It was a time when real preaching was done, as the following passage indicates: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

Here then is the Scriptural definition of preaching. No better definition can be given. To read the Word of God distinctly -- to read it so that the people could hear and understand the words read; not to mumble out the words, nor read it in an undertone or with indistinctness, but boldly and clearly -- that was the method followed in Jerusalem, on this auspicious day. Moreover: the sense of the words was made clear in the meeting held before the water gate; the people were treated to a high type of expository preaching. That was true preaching -- preaching of a sort which is sorely needed, today, in order that God's Word may have due effect on the hearts of the people. This meeting in Jerusalem surely contains a lesson which all present-day preachers should learn and heed.

No one having any knowledge of the existing facts, will deny the comparative lack of expository preaching in the pulpit effort of today. And none, we should, at least, imagine, will do other than lament the lack. Topical preaching, polemical preaching, historical preaching, and other forms of sermonic output have, one supposes, their rightful and opportune uses. But expository preaching -- the prayerful expounding of the Word of God is preaching that is preaching -- pulpit effort par excellence.

For its successful accomplishment, however, a preacher needs must be a man of prayer. For every hour spent in his study-chair, he will have to spend two upon his knees. For every hour he devotes to wrestling with an obscure passage of Holy Writ, he must have two in the which to be found wrestling with God. Prayer and preaching: preaching and prayer! They cannot be separated. The ancient cry was: "To your tents, O Israel! The modern cry should be: "To your knees, O preachers, to your knees!"

E.M. Bounds; Prayer; "The Necessity Of Prayer" Chapter 12, 13; Public Domain;
Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer.

I. MEN OF PRAYER NEEDED

"Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best three hours in prayer." --Robert Murray McChyne

We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for Christ was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The world's salvation comes out of that cradled Son. When Paul appeals to the personal character of the men who rooted the gospel in the world, he solves the mystery of their success. The glory and efficiency of the gospel is staked on the men who proclaim it. When God declares that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him," he declares the necessity of men and his dependence on them as a channel through which to exert his power upon the world. This vital, urgent truth is one that this age of machinery is apt to forget. The forgetting of it is as baneful on the work of God as would be the striking of the sun from his sphere. Darkness, confusion, and death would ensue.

What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use--men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men--men of prayer.

An eminent historian has said that the accidents of personal character have more to do with the revolutions of nations than either philosophic historians or democratic politicians will allow. This truth has its application in full to the gospel of Christ, the character and conduct of the followers of Christ--Christianize the world, transfigure nations and individuals. Of the preachers of the gospel it is eminently true.

The character as well as the fortunes of the gospel is committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher. God must make the man. The messenger is, if possible, more than the message. The preacher is more than the sermon. The preacher makes the sermon. As the life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is tintured, impregnated by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolor. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

Paul termed it "My gospel;" not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the gospel was put into the heart and lifeblood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul. Paul's sermons--what were they? Where are they? Skeletons, scattered fragments, afloat on the sea of inspiration! But the man Paul, greater than his sermons, lives forever, in full form, feature and stature, with his molding hand on the Church. The preaching is but a voice. The voice in silence dies, the text is forgotten, the sermon fades from memory; the preacher lives.

The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher. Under the Jewish dispensation the high priest had inscribed in jeweled letters on a golden frontlet: "Holiness to the Lord." So every preacher in Christ's ministry must be molded into and mastered by this same holy motto. It is a crying shame for the Christian ministry to fall lower in holiness of character and holiness of aim than the Jewish priesthood. Jonathan Edwards said: "I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness." The gospel of Christ does not move by popular waves. It has no self-propagating power. It moves as

the men who have charge of it move. The preacher must impersonate the gospel. Its divine, most distinctive features must be embodied in him. The constraining power of love must be in the preacher as a projecting, eccentric, an all-commanding, self-oblivious force. The energy of self-denial must be his being, his heart and blood and bones. He must go forth as a man among men, clothed with humility, abiding in meekness, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove; the bonds of a servant with the spirit of a king, a king in high, royal, in dependent bearing, with the simplicity and sweetness of a child. The preacher must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect, self-emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, into his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must be the men who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time servers, place seekers, if they be men pleasers or men fearers, if their faith has a weak hold on God or his Word, if their denial be broken by any phase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church nor the world for God.

The preacher's sharpest and strongest preaching should be to himself. His most difficult, delicate, laborious, and thorough work must be with himself. The training of the twelve was the great, difficult, and enduring work of Christ. Preachers are not sermon makers, but men makers and saint makers, and he only is well-trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint. It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God--men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God.

After this order, the early Christians were formed. Men they were of solid mold, preachers after the heavenly type--heroic, stalwart, soldierly, saintly. Preaching with them meant self-denying, self-crucifying, serious, toilsome, martyr business. They applied themselves to it in a way that told on their generation, and formed in its womb a generation yet unborn for God. The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. An almighty force in itself, it gives life and force to all.

The real sermon is made in the closet. The man--God's man--is made in the closet. His life and his profoundest convictions were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer is with the pulpit too often only official--a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is not to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was in Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to project God's cause in this world.

(Power Through Prayer; EM Bounds; Chapter 1; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer.)

Joshua 4. The Memorial Stones

There were two piles of memorial stones: one where the ark stood on the east bank of the river (4:9), the other on the west side, at Gilgal, where they stayed. The stones were placed there so that generations to come would not forget the enormous miracle that had happened there. (Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 191)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 340-341)

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