



Open Water Ministries

~ 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, I thank You for the life-changing truths I just read. I want to take my place in Your plan for my life—and I want to give 100 percent of my attention and strength to see it come to pass in my life. With all my heart, I tell You that I want to follow You and to do whatever is required to see that vision come to pass in my life. And thank You for calling others to come alongside to help me move this vision along a little faster!

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1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. 2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. 3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. 4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. 6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. 7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? 10 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? 11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. 13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. 14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. 15 And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. 16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: 17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: 18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. 19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. 24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.



Chapter 7

Now in chapter seven we read that,

The children of Israel committed a trespass against the Lord in the [holy thing, or in the] accursed thing: [rather] for Achan took of the accursed thing: [That is he took some of the spoil that they said was to go only to God, and he took it for himself.] and God's anger was kindled against the children of Israel (Jos 7:1).

So Moses sent some men up to look over Bethel and Ai. Now Jordan is down in the plains. Jericho is down in the plains of Jordan. It's quite a climb up the valley from Jericho to Bethel, and Ai. Actually when you're in Jericho you're about twelve hundred feet below sea level. When you get up to Bethel, you're about twenty-eight hundred feet above sea level. There is this valley that goes up, a very beautiful valley, that goes up from Jericho up to Bethel. It was the natural route. So the men went up and they looked and Ai, and they came back to Joshua. They said, "Joshua there's no need of sending the whole army, just give us two or three thousand men, and we'll take Ai."

So Joshua sent a regiment up to take the men of Ai. The men of Ai came out against them and they began to flee, and the men of Ai pursued them and thirty-six of them were slain. They came running back to camp. Joshua fell on his face before the Lord, down in verse seven, and he prayed, tore his clothes, fell to the earth on his face.

And Joshua said, Alas, [That's a term that means, "we've had it", kind of a thing, "Alas",] O Lord, why have you brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and we had stayed on the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turns their backs before their enemies. When the Canaanites hear of this, they shall encircle us, and cut off our name from the earth: and what will you do to your great name? And the Lord said to Joshua, Stand up, why are you lying on your face (Jos 7:7-10)?

I like this. It's like when Moses was lying on his face when they had found themselves trapped between Pihahiroth and Zephon, and the Red sea in front of them, and the Egyptian army had cut off their retreat route. Moses cried out unto the Lord, "We're trapped." The Lord said, "Wherefore thou criest unto me?" "Well who else am I gonna cry to? You're the one that led me down here." The Lord said, "Stretch forth your hand." In other words, "Hey, now's not the time to pray, time to move." There comes a time to move, and there's a time to pray. True. But then there's a time to get up and start moving. "And Moses, this isn't the time to pray, this is the time to move."

Now with Joshua, here he is laying out the whole lament. "Lord, what are You doing to us? What are we gonna do turning our backs to the enemies? Boy, when this word gets around, they're all gonna come down, we're gonna get wiped out. We'd have been better off if we'd stayed on the other side. Lord, what are You doing?" The Lord said, "Stand up. Why are you crying unto me?" Then the Lord revealed to him that there was sin in the camp.

They have transgressed God's covenant for they have taken unto themselves of the treasure from Jericho (Jos 7:11).

Now as we make a spiritual analogy here, and I think it is important that we do it. You see spiritually now we are entering into a new dimension of relationship with God, the life and the walk of the Spirit. Now God hasn't promised that it's gonna be all victory. There are battles. There are giants in the land. Your flesh has been deeply entrenched for a long, long time.

Now they conquered over the first obstacle because they followed the instructions of the Lord implicitly. But having gained the first victory, a danger arose, that was this business of self-confidence. "Lord we don't need Your help with Ai. We now know what the process of victory is. We're flushed with victory. God has just delivered this strong city into our hands. Ai, it isn't nearly as big as Jericho. If we can conquer Jericho then Ai will be nothing. Lord, we don't need You on this one. We can handle this one on our own. Joshua don't send the whole army, just a couple thousand of us. We'll go up and take that thing for you."

How many times, when God has given us a victory over some major issue of our flesh, we get flushed with victory? And with a feeling of confidence, and we think, "Oh my, I've got it, I've arrived. I don't need help anymore. I can handle this little area. This is nothing, Lord, you know. I'll be able to manage this one, no problem God." I go out on my own without first seeking God. God says, "Stand up. Why are you crying unto Me?" Had he prayed first, he wouldn't have been in the predicament he was in.

Now that is often true of our lives. If we had only prayed beforehand, we would have never been in the mess. So many times we are crying unto the Lord saying, "Lord, why?" He says, "Hey, why are you crying unto Me? Where were you before you started the thing? I didn't tell you to go there. I didn't command you to get into that mess. I'm not the one that directed you there. You went there on your own." Self-confidence, I think, "Lord, I can manage this. I can handle this. I don't need Your help." Man, that's when the enemy always just gives me a real trumping. Beware of that kind of self-confidence, and know that you can't conquer the least of the areas of your flesh without divine guidance and help. Sorry about that, but you're just as weak as I am when it comes to dealing with the flesh. We've got to have the help of the Lord in every area of our lives if we are going to know victory over the flesh.

Now the reason why that is so is because God doesn't want you to become a proud fool, and to go around boasting of how you conquered over your appetite. Or you conquered over this, or that, or the other, and start laying heavy trips on us, and becoming sort of pharisaical against us, saying, "Well, I used to have that problem too, but I just did this, and that and the other, and anybody can do it if they really set their mind to it, you know." That kind of bologna, and you start putting down everybody else like "If you were only as good as I am, then you could make it." So God lets us realize how hopelessly and helplessly we are lost without His help. So that when I tried everything, everything to get rid of my temper. You don't know how hard I tried. I hated it. I hated myself whenever I would lose my temper. But one day God took it away. For a long time I was trying to control my temper because that's what my mother told me. "Son, control yourself." I tried, and there were times when I was relatively successful, building up a real head of steam inside, but keeping it capped. But then sometimes that cap didn't work, and then when I blew, I really blew because there was so much pressure inside at that point, that you know, then you really go wild. You just tear everything up. Then you feel miserable and horrible. "Oh no. Why did I do that?" Just going through the whole thing.

One day God took it away. It was no longer a process of controlling my temper. I didn't have a temper. I didn't realize that He had taken it away for several years. One day something happened that would've really triggered me with a tremendous outburst, and there was no outburst. There was no steam, there was no anger, and I realized God had taken that vile, horrible temper away. "Oh praise the Lord."

So I don't have any little formulas of success, on how to control your temper. I tried them all and they didn't work. But I have discovered that what I couldn't do for myself, the Lord was able to do for me when I came to the end of myself. When I despaired of myself, when I knew that I couldn't do it, and I cried out in desperation, "God help me. I can't do it." the victory comes, all I can say is, "Oh thank You, Lord. You did it." Now so often we think that, "Oh, that's the end of the road when I have to call upon God when I can't do it". Oh how tragic that you would get to that point. No. How blessed, because that final cry of despair is often the prelude for the first cry of victory. When God brings you to the absolute end and despairing of yourself, and you know that there is no way you can do it and you give up. Then is when God has the opportunity to step in and begin His work, because He's taking you one point beyond yourself. That's always a great point to be. "God it can't be done unless You do it." So that then when He goes ahead and does it, I then don't play the fool and take the glory as though I did it.

Now God wants the glory for the victories in your life. God gave them a glorious victory at Jericho. They thought, "We got it made. Don't send the whole army, we'll just go up." They got whipped, came running back to Joshua. God said, "Don't cry unto Me there's sin in the camp. If everything was all right within the camp, you would've had the victory. But there's sin in the camp." They had taken of the accursed thing. So they called off the tribes, had the tribes come by, and God chose the tribe of Judah. They had the families of Judah come by, and God chose this particular family out of the tribes of Judah. Then God had the families to pass by, and God then picked out from the family, this fellow by the name of Achan from the family of the Zarhites.

and Zabdi was taken: And he brought out his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken (Jos 7:17-18).

Now if you were Achan, how would you feel if all the tribes passed by, and then they say, "The tribe of Judah", you think, "Oh, I wonder." Then they have all the families of Judah pass by, and they choose this family, the Zarhites. You think, "Uh oh getting closer." Then they have all the families of the Zarhites pass by, and they choose then your own household. Then it comes right down to you.

And Joshua said to Achan, My son, [I love the way that Joshua deals with him in tenderness, course he dealt pretty firmly in a little bit, but gives him a chance to repent at least, "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son,"] give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah the God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what have you done; don't try to hide it from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and I've done this: And when I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, I coveted them, and I took them; behold, they are hid in the earth in the middle of my tent, the silver is under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and all the children of Israel, and they laid them out before the Lord (Jos 7:19-23).

So Achan was guilty of stealing, this belonged to God. It was to be given to the Lord all of the spoil of Jericho. But this man coveted, he saw this beautiful Babylonish garment. He saw this silver and gold, and he coveted these things, and took them and hid them in his tent figuring no one would know, no one would see. But his sin was costly, it cost the lives of thirty-two, thirty-six of the men of Israel, who fell before the men of Ai.

Lot of times a person thinks that he, that his sin only bothers me. "My sin it may hurt me, but it only hurts me", kind of bit. No sir. Your sin has a bad effect on others. So Achan and his family were brought forth, and Achan was stoned for his sin.

(Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

X. PRAYER AND DEVOTION UNITED

"There is a manifest want of spiritual influence on the ministry of the present day. I feel it in my own case and I see it in that of others. I am afraid there is too much of a low, managing, contriving, maneuvering temper of mind among us. We are laying ourselves out more than is expedient to meet one man's taste and another man's prejudices. The ministry is a grand and holy affair, and it should find in us a simple habit of spirit and a holy but humble indifference to all consequences. The leading defect in Christian ministers is want of a devotional habit."--Richard Cecil

Never was there greater need for saintly men and women; more imperative still is the call for saintly, God-devoted preachers. The world moves with gigantic strides. Satan has his hold and rule on the world, and labors to make all its movements subserve his ends. Religion must do its best work, present its most attractive and perfect models. By every means, modern sainthood must be inspired by the loftiest ideals and by the largest possibilities through the Spirit. Paul lived on his knees, that the Ephesian Church might measure the heights, breadths, and depths of an unmeasurable saintliness, and "be filled with all the fullness of God." Epaphras laid himself out with the exhaustive toil and strenuous conflict of fervent prayer, that the Colossian Church might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Everywhere, everything in apostolic times was on the stretch that the people of God might each and "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." No premium was given to dwarfs; no encouragement to an old babyhood. The babies were to grow; the old, instead of feebleness and infirmities, were to bear fruit in old age, and be fat and flourishing. The divinest thing in religion is holy men and holy women.

No amount of money, genius, or culture can move things for God. Holiness energizing the soul, the whole man aflame with love, with desire for more faith, more prayer, more zeal, more consecration--this is the secret of power. These we need and must have, and men must be the incarnation of this God-inflamed devotedness. God's advance has been stayed, his cause crippled: his name dishonored for their lack. Genius (though the loftiest and most gifted), education (though the most learned and refined), position, dignity, place, honored names, high ecclesiastics cannot move this chariot of our God. It is a fiery one, and fiery forces only can move it. The genius of a Milton fails. The imperial strength of a Leo fails. Brainerd's spirit can move it. Brainerd's spirit was on fire for God, on fire for souls. Nothing earthly, worldly, selfish came in to abate in the least the intensity of this all-impelling and all-consuming force and flame.

Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. The spirit of devotion is the spirit of prayer. Prayer and devotion are united as soul and body are united, as life and the heart are united. There is no real prayer without devotion, no devotion without prayer. The preacher must be surrendered to God in the holiest devotion. He is not a professional man, his ministry is not a profession; it is a divine institution, a divine devotion. He is devoted to God. His aim, aspirations, ambition are for God and to God, and to such prayer is as essential as food is to life.

The preacher, above everything else, must be devoted to God. The preacher's relations to God are the insignia and credentials of his ministry. These must be clear, conclusive, unmistakable. No common, surface type of piety must be his. If he does not excel in grace, he does not excel at all. If he does not preach by life, character, conduct, he does not preach at all. If his piety be light, his preaching may be as soft and as sweet as music, as gifted as Apollo, yet its weight will be a feather's weight, visionary, fleeting as the morning cloud or the early dew. Devotion to God--there is no substitute for this in the preacher's character and conduct. Devotion to a Church, to opinions, to an organization, to orthodoxy--these are paltry, misleading, and vain when they become the source of inspiration, the animus of a call. God must be the mainspring of the preacher's effort, the fountain and crown of all his toil. The name and honor of Jesus Christ, the advance of his cause, must be all in all. The preacher must have no inspiration but the name of Jesus Christ, no ambition but to have him glorified, no toil but for him. Then prayer will be a source of his illuminations, the means of perpetual advance, the gauge of his success. The perpetual aim, the only ambition, the preacher can cherish is to have God with him.

Never did the cause of God need perfect illustrations of the possibilities of prayer more than in this age. No age, no person, will be ensamples of the gospel power except the ages or persons of deep and earnest prayer. A prayerless age will have but scant models of divine power. Prayerless hearts will never rise to these Alpine heights. The age may be a better age than the past, but there is an infinite distance between the betterment of an age by the force of an advancing civilization and its betterment by the increase of holiness and Christlikeness by the energy of prayer. The Jews were much better when Christ came than in the ages before. It was the golden age of their Pharisaic religion. Their golden religious age crucified Christ. Never more praying, never less praying; never more sacrifices, never less sacrifice; never less idolatry, never more idolatry; never more of temple worship, never less of God worship; never more of lip service, never less of heart service (God worshiped by lips whose hearts and hands crucified God's Son!); never more of churchgoers, never less of saints.

It is prayer-force which makes saints. Holy characters are formed by the power of real praying. The more of true saints, the more of praying; the more of praying, the more of true saints.

XI. AN EXAMPLE OF DEVOTION

"I urge upon you communion with Christ a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn aside in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in him. I despair that I shall ever win to the far end of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore dig deep, and sweat and labor and take pains for him, and set by as much time in the day for him as you can. We will be won in the labor."-- Samuel Rutherford

God has now, and has had, many of these devoted, prayerful preachers--men in whose lives prayer has been a mighty, controlling, conspicuous force. The world has felt their power, God has felt and honored their power, God's cause has moved mightily and swiftly by their prayers, holiness has shone out in their characters with a divine effulgence.

God found one of the men he was looking for in David Brainerd, whose work and name have gone into history. He was no ordinary man, but was capable of shining in any company, the peer of the wise and gifted ones, eminently suited to fill the most attractive pulpits and to labor among the most refined and the cultured, who were so anxious to secure him for their pastor. President Edwards bears testimony that he was "a young man of distinguished talents, had extraordinary knowledge of men and things, had rare conversational powers, excelled in his knowledge of theology, and was truly, for one so young, an extraordinary divine, and especially in all matters relating to experimental religion. I never knew his equal of his age and standing for clear and accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion. His manner in prayer was almost inimitable, such as I have very rarely known equaled. His learning was very considerable, and he had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit."

No sublimer story has been recorded in earthly annals than that of David Brainerd; no miracle attests with diviner force the truth of Christianity than the life and work of such a man. Alone in the savage wilds of America, struggling day and night with a mortal disease, unschooled in the care of souls, having access to the Indians for a large portion of time only through the bungling medium of a pagan interpreter, with the Word of God in his heart and in his hand, his soul fired with the divine flame, a place and time to pour out his soul to God in prayer, he fully established the worship of God and secured all its gracious results. The Indians were changed with a great change from the lowest besotments of an ignorant and debased heathenism to pure, devout, intelligent Christians; all vice reformed, the external duties of Christianity at once embraced and acted on; family prayer set up; the Sabbath instituted and religiously observed; the internal graces of religion exhibited with growing sweetness and strength. The solution of these results is found in David Brainerd himself, not in the conditions or accidents but in the man Brainerd. He was God's man, for God first and last and all the time. God could flow unhindered through him. The omnipotence of grace was neither arrested nor straightened by the conditions of his heart; the whole channel was broadened and cleaned out for God's fullest and most powerful passage, so that God with all his mighty forces could come down on the hopeless, savage wilderness, and transform it into his blooming and fruitful garden; for nothing is too hard for God to do if he can get the right kind of a man to do it with.

Brainerd lived the life of holiness and prayer. His diary is full and monotonous with the record of his seasons of fasting, meditation, and retirement. The time he spent in private prayer amounted to many hours daily. "When I return home," he said, "and give myself to meditation, prayer, and fasting, my soul longs for mortification, self-denial, humility, and divorcement from all things of the world." "I have nothing to do," he said, "with earth but only to labor in it honestly for God. I do not desire to live one minute for anything which

earth can afford." After this high order did he pray: "Feeling somewhat of the sweetness of communion with God and the constraining force of his love, and how admirably it captivates the soul and makes all the desires and affections to center in God, I set apart this day for secret fasting and prayer, to entreat God to direct and bless me with regard to the great work which I have in view of preaching the gospel, and that the Lord would return to me and show me the light of his countenance. I had little life and power in the forenoon. Near the middle of the afternoon God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for my absent friends, but just at night the Lord visited me marvelously in prayer. I think my soul was never in such agony before. I felt no restraint, for the treasures of divine grace were opened to me. I wrestled for absent friends, for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, and for many that I thought were the children of God, personally, in many distant places. I was in such agony from sun half an hour high till near dark that I was all over wet with sweat, but yet it seemed to me I had done nothing. O, my dear Saviour did sweat blood for poor souls! I longed for more compassion toward them. I felt still in a sweet frame, under a sense of divine love and grace, and went to bed in such a frame, with my heart set on God." It was prayer which gave to his life and ministry their marvelous power.

The men of mighty prayer are men of spiritual might. Prayers never die. Brainerd's whole life was a life of prayer. By day and by night he prayed. Before preaching and after preaching he prayed. Riding through the interminable solitudes of the forests he prayed. On his bed of straw he prayed. Retiring to the dense and lonely forests, he prayed. Hour by hour, day after day, early morn and late at night, he was praying and fasting, pouring out his soul, interceding, communing with God. He was with God mightily in prayer, and God was with him mightily, and by it he being dead yet speaketh and worketh, and will speak and work till the end comes, and among the glorious ones of that glorious day he will be with the first.

Jonathan Edwards says of him: "His life shows the right way to success in the works of the ministry. He sought it as the soldier seeks victory in a siege or battle; or as a man that runs a race for a great prize. Animated with love to Christ and souls, how did he labor? Always fervently. Not only in word and doctrine, in public and in private, but in prayers by day and night, wrestling with God in secret and travailing in birth with unutterable groans and agonies, until Christ was formed in the hearts of the people to whom he was sent. Like a true son of Jacob, he persevered in wrestling through all the darkness of the night, until the breaking of the day!"

(Power Through Prayer; EM Bounds; Chapter 10-11; 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.)

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

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