



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

Survivors-
Matthew West

Strong Enough-
Matthew West

Decision-Josh Garrels

Break Bread-
Josh Garrels

Prayer

Lord, I ask You to help me remain focused on my goals, even when the devil tries to use people to steal my focus and distract me. Knowing that the devil tries to use people, I ask You to help me equip myself spiritually and mentally so I will be able to keep my eyes on the goal You have given for my life. I choose to forgive those whom the devil uses. I will pray for them to change and to repent for their actions; I will keep my heart free of offense; and I will continue to march full-steam ahead to achieve what God has told me to do! Holy Spirit, please help me stay on track and keep my heart free from all strife, in Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

“ Everyone Has A Testimony ” Greg Laurie

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net

Radio Stations

KWVE ...Calvary Chapel

KLOV

Bible Study Sites

Chuck Smith
Through The Bible

Bob Coy/Teachings

Mike MacIntosh

Jon Courson

Biblos.com

Billy Graham

Charles Stanley

David Wilkerson

Greg Laurie

Virtue for Women-
Cathe Laurie

1 NOW SAUL told Jonathan his son and all his servants that they must kill David. 2 But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David, and he told David, Saul my father is seeking to kill you. Now therefore, take heed to yourself in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. 3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are; and I will converse with my father about you and if I learn anything, I will tell you. 4 And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, Let not the king sin against his servant David, for he has not sinned against you, and his deeds have been of good service to you. 5 For he took his life in his hands and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood and kill David without a cause? 6 Saul heeded Jonathan and swore, As the Lord lives, David shall not be slain. 7 So Jonathan called David and told him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past. 8 Then there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and made a great slaughter among them and they fled before him. 9 Then an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing [the lyre] with his hand. 10 Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away, so that Saul struck the spear into the wall. Then David fled and escaped that night. 11 Saul sent messengers that night to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. 12 So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled and escaped. 13 And Michal took the teraph (household good luck image) and laid it in the bed, put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with a bedspread. 14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. 15 Then Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. 16 And when the messengers came in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair at its head. 17 Saul said to Michal, Why have you deceived me so and sent away my enemy so that he has escaped? Michal answered Saul, He said to me, Let me go. Why should I kill you? 18 So David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. 19 And it was told Saul, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. 20 And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied. 21 When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. 22 Then Saul himself went to Ramah and came to a great well that is in Secu; and he asked, Where are Samuel and David? And he was told, They are at Naioth in Ramah. 23 So he went on to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went on he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 He took off his royal robes and prophesied before Samuel and lay down stripped thus all that day and night. So they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

Chapter 19

Now in the nineteenth, we find Saul's third attempt to kill David.

Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, to all of his servants, and he told him that they should kill David. But Jonathan because of his love for David: said to his father, or he said to David, David my dad seeks to kill you: I pray, take heed to yourself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, hide: And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I'll commune with my father of thee; and what I see, I'll tell you. [In other words, "Hide yourself until I can find out really what my dad is thinking."] So Jonathan spoke good of David to Saul his father, and said, Let not the king sin against his servant, and against David; because he hath not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good towards you: For he did put his life in his own hand, and he slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: you saw it, and you did rejoice: why then will you sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a cause? So hearken to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swear, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain (1Sa 19:1-6).

So there was an apparent change of attitude for a moment. Now Saul does manifest almost a schizophrenia. I would imagine if a psychiatrist would read the case history on Saul here, he would probably be classified as a schizophrenic. He would have these periods of great depression. He would have periods of remorse and periods of change. "Oh David, my son. You're like a son to me." And he'd speak great words of love, and then next day try to ram him through with a javelin again. So he was very vacillating. Now Jonathan speaking these kind words to his dad about David, Saul responded and he said, "As the Lord liveth he'll not be slain." So Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all of those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in Saul's presence as in times past. And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand on the harp. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but David slipped out of Saul's presence, and the javelin went into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. So Saul sent out messengers to David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him saying, Now if you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow you're gonna be dead. So Michal let David down through a window: and he fled, and escaped. And then she took the bed and put pillows under the blankets, so it looked like someone was lying there. And so in the morning when the messengers were gonna kill David, she said, Oh he's sick. [They said, "We want to bring him to Saul." They said, He's sick he's in bed. So they went to Saul and they said, "We can't bring him, the guy's sick in bed."] He said, Bring him with the bed and all so we can slay him. So they went back to get David, and then they found out that it was just the pillows under the blankets, [David was gone.] So he got angry with his daughter Michal, he said, What are you doing turning against your own father, your own flesh and blood to protect David? So Michal said to her dad, he said, Let me go or I'm going to kill you. [So she lied her way out of it.] So David fled, and he came to Samuel there in Ramah, and he told him all that Saul had done to him. And Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel stand as appointed over them, the spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they all prophesied (1Sa 19:7-20).

So here is an interesting thing Samuel was there at Naioth, and David was there, and so they sent these guys out to take David in, and God's Spirit just came on them. They just started prophesying.

So he sent out another group of messengers to get David, and as they came near where the spirit of God was working, the spirit of God came on them, they started prophesying. So he sent out a third company of messengers to get David, [and when they came into the scene, and all this going on] they began to prophesy. So Saul came down himself, and the spirit came on Saul, and he took off his clothes, and he lay there naked all night prophesying. So that they began to say, Is Saul among the prophets (1Sa 19:21-24)?

Again that proverb that came out early in Saul's career. (Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

II. PRAYER—FILLS MAN'S POVERTY WITH GOD'S RICHES

"For two hours I struggled on, forsaken of God, and met neither God nor man, all one chilly afternoon. When at last, standing still and looking at Schiehallion clothed in white from top to bottom, this of David shot up into my heart: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow!" In a moment I was with God, or rather God was with me. I walked home with my heart in a flame of fire."—Alexander Whyte, D.D.

We have much fine writing and learned talk about the subjective benefits of prayer; how prayer secures its full measure of results, not by affecting God, but by affecting us, by becoming a training school for those who pray. We are taught by such teachers that the province of prayer is not to get, but to train. Prayer thus becomes a mere performance, a drill-sergeant, a school, in which patience, tranquility and dependence are taught. In this school, denial of prayer is the most valuable teacher. How well all this may look, and how reasonable soever it may seem, there is nothing of it in the Bible. The clear and oft-repeated language of the Bible is that prayer is to be answered by God; that God occupies the relation of a father to us, and that as Father He gives to us when we ask the things for which we ask. The best praying, therefore, is the praying that gets an answer. The possibilities and necessity of prayer are graven in the eternal foundations of the Gospel. The relation that is established between the Father and the Son and the decreed covenant between the two, has prayer as the base of its existence, and the conditions of the advance and success of the Gospel. Prayer is the condition by which all foes are to be overcome and all the inheritance is to be possessed. These are axiomatic truths, though they may be very homely ones. But these are the times when Bible axioms need to be stressed, pressed, iterated and reiterated. The very air is rife with influences, practices and theories which sap foundations, and the most veritable truths and the most self-evident axioms go down by insidious and invisible attacks. More than this: the tendency of these times is to an ostentatious parade of doing, which enfeebles the life and dissipates the spirit of praying. There may be kneeling, and there may be standing in prayerful attitude. There may be much bowing of the head, and yet there may be no serious, real praying. Prayer is real work. Praying is vital work. Prayer has in its keeping the very heart of worship. There may be the exhibit, the circumstance, and the pomp of praying, and yet no real praying. There may be much attitude, gesture, and verbiage, but no praying. Who can approach into God's presence in prayer? Who can come before the great God, Maker of all worlds, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who holds in His hands all good, and who is all powerful and able to do all things? Man's approach to this great God—what lowliness, what truth, what cleanness of hands, and purity of heart is needed and demanded!

Definition of prayer scarcely belongs to Bible range at any point. Everywhere we are impressed that it is more important and urgent that men pray, than that they be skilled in the homiletic didactics of prayer. That is a thing of the heart, not of the schools. It is more of feeling than of words. Praying is the best school in which to learn to pray, prayer the best dictionary to define the art and nature of praying.

We repeat and reiterate. Prayer is not a mere habit, riveted by custom and memory, something which must be gone through with, its value depending upon the decency and perfection of the performance. Prayer is not a duty which must be performed, to ease obligation and to quiet conscience. Prayer is not mere privilege, a sacred indulgence to be taken advantage of, at leisure, at pleasure, at will, and no serious loss attending its omission.

Prayer is a solemn service due to God, an adoration, a worship, an approach to God for some request, the presenting of some desire, the expression of some need to Him, who supplies all need, and who satisfies all desires; who, as a Father, finds His greatest pleasure in relieving the wants and granting the desires of His children. Prayer is the child's request, not to the winds nor to the world, but to the Father. Prayer is the outstretched arms of the child for the Father's help. Prayer is the child's cry calling to the Father's ear, the Father's heart, and to the Father's ability, which the Father is to hear, the Father is to feel, and which the Father is to relieve. Prayer is the seeking of God's great and greatest good, which will not come if we do not pray. Prayer is an ardent and believing cry to God for some specific thing. God's rule is to answer by giving the specific thing asked for. With it may come much of other gifts and graces. Strength, serenity, sweetness, and faith may come as the bearers of the gifts. But even they come because God hears and answers prayer. We do but follow the plain letter and spirit of the Bible when we affirm that God answers prayer, and answers by giving us the very things we desire, and that the withholding of that which we desire and the giving of something else is not the rule, but rare and exceptional. When His children cry for bread He gives them bread. Revelation does not deal in philosophical subtleties, nor verbal niceties and hair-splitting distinctions. It unfolds relationships, declares principles, and enforces duties. The heart must define, the experience must realise. Paul came on the stage too late to define prayer. That which had been so well done by patriarchs and prophets needed no return to dictionaries. Christ is Himself the illustration and definition of prayer. He prayed as man had never prayed. He put prayer on a higher basis, with grander results and simpler being than it had ever known. He taught Paul how to pray by the revelation of Himself, which is the first call to prayer, and the first lesson in praying. Prayer, like love, is too ethereal and too heavenly to be held in the gross arms of chilly definitions. It belongs to Heaven, and to the heart, and not to words and ideas only. Prayer is no petty invention of man, a fancied relief for fancied ills. Prayer is no dreary performance, dead and death-dealing, but is God's enabling act for man, living and life-giving, joy and joy-giving. Prayer is the contact of a living soul with God. In prayer, God stoops

to kiss man, to bless man, and to aid man in everything that God can devise or man can need. Prayer fills man's emptiness with God's fullness. It fills man's poverty with God's riches. It puts away man's weakness with God's strength. It banishes man's littleness with God's greatness. Prayer is God's plan to supply man's great and continuous need with God's great and continuous abundance. What is this prayer to which men are called? It is not a mere form, a child's play. It is serious, difficult work, the manliest, the mightiest work, the divinest work which man can do. Prayer lifts men out of the earthliness and links them with the heavenly. Men are never nearer Heaven, nearer God, never more God-like, never in deeper sympathy and truer partnership with Jesus Christ, than when praying. Love, philanthropy, holy affiances,—all of them helpful and tender for men—are born and perfected by prayer.

Prayer is not merely a question of duty, but of salvation. Are men saved who are not men of prayer? Is not the gift, the inclination, the habit of prayer, one of the elements or characteristics of salvation? Can it be possible to be in affinity with Jesus Christ and not be prayerful? Is it possible to have the Holy Spirit and not have the spirit of prayer? Can one have the new birth and not be born to prayer? Is not the life of the Spirit and the life of prayer coordinate and consistent? Can brotherly love be in the heart which is unschooled in prayer?

We have two kinds of prayer named in the New Testament—prayer and supplication. Prayer denotes prayer in general. Supplication is a more intense and more special form of prayer. These two, supplication and prayer, ought to be combined. Then we would have devotion in its widest and sweetest form, and supplication with its most earnest and personal sense of need.

In Paul's Prayer Directory, found in Ephes. 6, we are taught to be always in prayer, as we are always in the battle. The Holy Spirit is to be sought by intense supplication, and our supplications are to be charged by His vitalising, illuminating and ennobling energy. Watchfulness is to fit us for this intense praying and intense fighting. Perseverance is an essential element in successful praying, as in every other realm of conflict. The saints universal are to be helped on to victory by the aid of our prayers. Apostolic courage, ability and success are to be gained by the prayers of the soldier saints everywhere.

It is only those of deep and true vision who can administer prayer. These "Living Creatures," in Rev. 4:6, are described as "full of eyes before and behind," "full of eyes within." Eyes are for seeing. Clearness, intensity, and perfection of sight are in it. Vigilance and profound insight are in it, the faculty of knowing. It is by prayer that the eyes of our hearts are opened. Clear, profound knowledge of the mysteries of grace is secured by prayer. These "Living Creatures" had eyes "within and without" They were "full of eyes." The highest form of life is intelligent. Ignorance is degrading and low, in the spiritual realm as it is in other realms. Prayer gives us eyes to see God. Prayer is seeing God. The prayer life is knowledge without and within. All vigilance without, all vigilance within. There can be no intelligent prayer without knowledge within. Our inner condition and our inner needs must be felt and known.

It takes prayer to minister. It takes life, the highest form of life, to minister. Prayer is the highest intelligence, the profoundest wisdom, the most vital, the most joyous, the most efficacious, the most powerful of all vocations. It is life, radiant, transporting, eternal life. Away with dry forms, with dead, cold habits of prayer! Away with sterile routine, with senseless performances and petty playthings in prayer! Let us get at the serious work, the chief business of men, that of prayer. Let us work at it skillfully. Let us seek to be adepts in this great work of praying. Let us be master-workmen, in this high art of praying. Let us be so in the habit of prayer, so devoted to prayer, so filled with its rich spices, so ardent by its holy flame, that all Heaven and earth will be perfumed by its aroma, and nations yet in the womb will be blest by our prayers. Heaven will be fuller and brighter in glorious inhabitants, earth will be better prepared for its bridal day, and hell robbed of many of its victims, because we have lived to pray.

There is not only a sad and ruinous neglect of any attempt to pray, but there is an immense waste in the seeming praying which is done, as official praying, state praying, mere habit praying. Men cleave to the form and semblance of a thing after the heart and reality have gone out of it. This finds illustrations in many who seem to pray. Formal praying has a strong hold and a strong following. Hannah's statement to Eli and her defense against his charge of hypocrisy was: "I have poured out my soul before the Lord." God's serious promise to the Jews was, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Let all the present day praying be measured by these standards "Pouring out the soul before God," and "Seeking with all the heart," and how much of it will be found to be mere form, waste, worthless. James says of Elijah that he "prayed with prayer."

In Paul's directions to Timothy about prayer, (1 Tim. 1:8) we have a comprehensive verbal description of prayer in its different departments, or varied manifestations. They are all in the plural form, supplications, prayers and intercessions. They declare the many-sidedness, the endless diversity, and the necessity of going beyond the formal simplicity of a single prayer, and press and add prayer upon prayer, supplication to supplication, intercession over and over again, until the combined force of prayers in their most superlative modes, unite their aggregation and pressure with cumulative power to our praying. The unlimited superlative and the unlimited plural are the only measures of prayer. The one term of "prayer" is the common and comprehensive one for the act, the duty, the spirit, and the service we call prayer. It is the condensed statement of worship. The heavenly worship does not have the element of prayer so conspicuous. Prayer is the conspicuous, all-important essence and the all-colouring ingredient of earthly worship, while praise is the pre-eminent, comprehensive, all-colouring, all-inspiring element of the heavenly worship.

III. PRAYER—THE ALL-IMPORTANT ESSENCE OF EARTHLY WORSHIP

"Where the spiritual consciousness is concerned—the department which asks the question and demands the evidence—no evidence is competent or relevant except such as is spiritual. Only that which is above matter and above logic can be heard, because the very question at issue is the existence and personality of a spiritual and supernatural God. Only the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit. This must be done in a spiritual or supernatural way, or it cannot be done at all."—C.L. Chilton

The Jewish law and the prophets know something of God as a Father. Occasional and imperfect, yet comforting glimpses they had of the great truth of God's Fatherhood, and of our sonship. Christ lays the foundation of prayer deep and strong with this basic principle. The law of prayer, the right to pray, rests on sonship. "Our Father" brings us into the closest relationship to God. Prayer is the child's approach, the child's plea, the child's right. It is the law of prayer that looks up, that lifts up the eye to "Our Father, Who art in Heaven." Our Father's house is our home in Heaven. Heavenly citizenship and heavenly homesickness are in prayer; Prayer is an appeal from the lowness, from the emptiness, from the need of earth, to the highness, the fullness and to the all-sufficiency of Heaven. Prayer turns the eye and the heart heavenward with a child's longings, a child's trust and a child's expectancy. To hallow God's Name, to speak it with bated breath, to hold it sacredly, this also belongs to prayer.

In this connection it might be said that it is requisite to dictate to children the necessity of prayer in order to their salvation. But alas! Unhappily it is thought sufficient to tell them there is a Heaven and a hell; that they must avoid the latter place and seek to reach the former. Yet they are not taught the easiest way to arrive at salvation. The only way to Heaven is by the route of prayer, such prayer of the heart which every one is capable of. It is prayer, not of reasonings which are the fruits of study, or of the exercise of the imagination, which fills the mind with wondering objects, but which fails to settle salvation, but the simple, confidential prayer of the child to his Father in Heaven. Poverty of spirit enters into true praying. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." "The poor" means paupers, beggars, those who live on the bounties of others, who live by begging. Christ's people live by asking. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." It is his affluent inheritance, his daily annuity.

In His own example, Christ illustrates the nature and necessity of prayer. Everywhere He declares that he who is on God's mission in this world will pray. He is an illustrious example of the principle that the more devoted the man is to God, the more prayerful will he be. The diviner the man, the more of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son he has, the more prayerful will he be. And, conversely, it is true that the more prayerful he is, the more of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son will he receive. The great events and crowning periods of the life of Jesus we find Him in prayer—at the beginning of His ministry, at the fords of the Jordan, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; just prior to the transfiguration, and in the garden of Gethsemane. Well do the words of Peter come in here: "Leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." There is an important principle of prayer found in some of the miracles of Christ. It is the progressive nature of the answer to prayer. Not at once does God always give the full answer to prayer, but rather progressively, step by step. Mark 8:22 describes a case which illustrates this important truth, too often overlooked.

"And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him." "And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught." "And he looked up, and said, 'I see men as trees, walking.'" "After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." Alone He has to take us at times, aside from the world, where He can have us all to Himself, and there speak to and deal with us. We have three cures in blindness in the life of our Lord, which illustrate the nature of God's working in answering prayer, and show the exhaustless variety and the omnipotence of His working. In the first case Christ came incidentally on a blind man at Jerusalem, made clay, softened it by spittle, and smeared it on the eyes and then commanded the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The gracious results lay at the end of his action—washing. The failure to go and wash would have been fatal to the cure. No one, not even the blind man, in this instance, requested the cure.

In the second case the parties who bring the blind man, back their bringing with earnest prayer for cure; they beseech Christ to simply touch him, as though their faith would relieve the burden of a heavy operation. But He took the man by the hand and led him out of the town and apart from the people. Alone, and in secret, this work was to be done. He spat on his eyes and put his hands on them. The response was not complete, a dawning of light, a partial recovery; the first gracious communication but gave him a disordered vision, the second stroke perfected the cure. The man's submissive faith in giving himself up to Christ to be led away into privacy and alone, were prominent features of the cure, as also the gradual reception of sight, and the necessity of a second stroke to finish the perfect work.

The third was the case of blind Bartimæus. It was the urgency of faith declaring itself in clamorous utterances, rebuked by those who were following Christ, but intensified and emboldened by opposition. The first case comes on Christ unawares; the second was brought with specific intent to Him; the last goes after Christ with irresistible urgency, met by the resistance of the multitude and the seeming indifference of Christ. The cure, though, was without the interposition of any agent, no taking by the hand, no gentle or severe touch, no spittle, nor clay, nor washing—a word only and his sight, full-orbed, came instantly. Each one had experienced the same divine power, the same blessed results, but with marked diversity in the expression of their faith and the mode of their cure. Suppose, at their meeting, the first had set up the particulars and process of his cure, the spittle, the clay, the washing in Siloam as the only Divine process, as the only genuine credentials of a Divine work, how far from the truth, how narrow and misleading such a standard of decision! Not methods, but results, are the tests of the Divine work. Each one could say: "This one thing I know, whereas I was blind I now see." The results were conscious results; that Christ did the work they knew; faith was the instrument, but its exercise different; the method of Christ's working different; the various steps that brought them to the gracious end on their part and on His part at many points strikingly dissimilar. What are the limitations of prayer? How far do its benefits and possibilities reach? What part of God's dealing with man, and with man's world, is unaffected by prayer? Do the possibilities of prayer cover all temporal and spiritual good? The answers to these questions are of transcendental importance. The answer will gauge the effort and results of our praying. The answer will greatly enhance the value of prayer, or will greatly depress prayer. The answer to these important questions are fully covered by Paul's words on prayer: "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). IV. GOD HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH PRAYER

"Christ is all. We are complete in Him. He is the answer to every need, the perfect Savior. He needs no decoration to heighten His beauty, no prop to increase His stability, no girding to perfect His strength. Who can gild refined gold, whiten the snow, perfume the rose or arm brought salvation. He is enough. He is the comfort, the strength, the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification of all man."—C. L. Chilton. Prayer is God's business to which men can attend. Prayer is God's necessary business, which men only can do, and that men must

heighten the colors of the summer sunset? Who will prop the mountains or help the great deep? It is not Christ and philosophy, nor Christ and money, nor civilization, nor diplomacy, nor science, nor organisation. It is Christ alone. He trod the winepress alone. His own rose or arm brought salvation. He is enough. He is the comfort, the strength, the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification of all man."—C. L. Chilton. Prayer is God's business to which men can attend. Prayer is God's necessary business, which men only can do, and that men must

loyalty to God. Non-praying is to reject Christ and to abandon Heaven. A life of prayer is the only life which Heaven counts. God is vitally concerned that men should pray. Men are bettered by prayer, and the world is bettered by praying. God does His best work for the world through prayer. God's greatest glory and man's highest good are secured by prayer. Prayer forms the godliest men and makes the godliest world. God's promises lie like giant corpses without life, only for decay and dust unless men appropriate and vivify these promises by earnest and prevailing prayer. Promise is like the unsown seed, the germ of life in it, but the soil and culture of prayer are necessary to germinate and culture the seed. Prayer is God's life-giving breath. God's purposes move along the pathway made by prayer to their glorious designs. God's purposes are always moving to their high and benignant ends, but the movement is along the way marked by unceasing prayer. The breath of prayer in man is from God. God has everything to do with prayer, as well as everything to do with the one who prays. To him who prays, and as he prays, the hour is sacred because it is God's hour. The occasion is sacred because it is the occasion of the soul's approach to God, and of dealing with God. No hour is more hallowed because it is the occasion of the soul's mightiest approach to God, and of the fullest revelation from God. Men are Godlike and men are blessed, just as the hour of prayer has the most of God in it. Prayer makes and measures the approach of God. He knows not God who knows not how to pray. He has never seen God whose eye has not been couched for God in the closet. God's vision place is the closet. His dwelling place is in secret. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

He has never studied God who has not had his intellect broadened, strengthened, clarified and uplifted by prayer. Almighty God commands prayer, God waits on prayer to order His ways, and God delights in prayer. To God, prayer is what the incense was to the Jewish Temple. It impregnates everything, perfumes everything and sweetens everything. The possibilities of prayer cover the whole purposes of God through Christ. God conditions all gifts in all dispensations to His Son on prayer: "Ask of me," saith God the Father to the Son, as that Son was moving earthward on the stupendous enterprise for a world's salvation, "and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Hinging on prayer were all the means and results and successes of that wonderful and Divine movement for man's salvation. Broad and profound, mysterious and wonderful was the scheme. The answer to prayer is assured not only by the promises of God, but by God's relation to us as a Father. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Again, we have these words: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" God encourages us to pray, not only by the certainty of the answer, but by the munificence of the promise, and the bounty of the Giver. How princely the promise! "All things whatsoever." And when we superadd to that "whatsoever" the promise which covers all things and everything, without qualification, exception or limitation, "anything," this is to expand and make minute and specific the promise. The challenge of God to us is "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great arid mighty things which thou knowest not." This includes, like the answer to Solomon's prayer, that which was specifically prayed for, but embraces vastly more of great value and of great necessity.

Almighty God seems to fear we will hesitate to ask largely, apprehensive that we will strain His ability. He declares that He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." He almost paralyses us by giving us a carte blanche, "Ask of me things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me." How He charges, commands and urges us to pray! He goes beyond promise and says: "Behold my Son! I have given Him to you." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" God gave us all things in prayer by promise because He had given us all things in His Son. Amazing gift—His Son! Prayer is as illimitable as His own Blessed Son. There is nothing on earth nor in Heaven, for time or eternity, that God's Son did not secure for us. By prayer God gives us the vast and matchless inheritance which is ours by virtue of His Son. God charges us to "come boldly to the throne of grace." God is glorified and Christ is honoured by large asking. That which is true of the promises of God is equally true of the purposes of God. We might say that God does nothing without prayer. His most gracious purposes are conditioned on prayer. His marvelous promises in Ezekiel 36 are subject to this qualification and condition: "Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." In the second Psalm the purposes of God to His enthroned Christ are decreed on prayer, as has been previously quoted. That decree which promises to Him the heathen for His inheritance relies on prayer for its fulfillment: "Ask of me." We see how sadly the decree has failed in its operation, not because of the weakness of God's purpose, but by the weakness of man's praying. It takes God's mighty decree and man's mighty praying to bring to pass these glorious results. In the seventy-second Psalm, we have an insight into the mighty potencies of prayer as the force which God moves on the conquest of Christ: "Prayer shall be made for him continually." In this statement Christ's movements are put into the hands of prayer. When Christ, with a sad and sympathising heart, looked upon the ripened fields of humanity, and saw the great need of labourers, His purposes were for more labourers, and so He charged them, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." In Ephes. 3, Paul reminds those believers of the eternal purposes of God, and how he was bowing his knees to God in order that that eternal purpose might be accomplished, and also that they "might be filled with all the fullness of God." We see in Job how God conditioned His purposes for Job's three friends on Job's praying, and God's purposes in regard to Job were brought about by the same means. In the first part of Rev. 8 the relation and necessity of saintly prayers to God's plans and operations in executing the salvation of men is set forth in rich, expressive symbol, wherein the angels have to do with the prayers of the saints. Prayer gives efficiency and utility to the promises. The mighty ongoing of God's purposes rests on prayer. The representatives of the Church in Heaven and of all creation before the throne of God "have every one of them golden vials of odours which are the prayers of the saints." We have said before, and repeat it, that prayer is based not simply upon a promise, but on a relationship. The returning penitent sinner prays on a promise.

The Child of God prays on the relation of a child. What the father has belongs to the child for present and prospective uses. The child asks, the father gives. The relationship is one of asking and answering, of giving and receiving. The child is dependent upon the father, must look to the father, must ask of the father, and must receive of the father. We know how with earthly parents asking and giving belong to this relation, and how in the very act of asking and giving, the relationship of parent and child is cemented, sweetened and enriched. The parent finds his wealth of pleasure and satisfaction in giving to an obedient child, and the child finds his wealth in the father's loving and continuous giving.

Prayer affects God more powerfully than His own purposes. God's will, words and purposes are all subject to review when the mighty potencies of prayer come in. How mighty prayer is with God may be seen as he readily sets aside His own fixed and declared purposes in answer to prayer. The whole plan of salvation had been blocked had Jesus Christ prayed for the twelve legions of angels to carry dismay and ruin to His enemies. The fasting and prayers of the Ninevites changed God's purposes to destroy that wicked city. After Jonah had gone there and cried unto the people, "Yet forty days and Ninevah shall be destroyed." Almighty God is concerned in our praying. He wills it, He commands it, He inspires it. Jesus Christ in Heaven is ever praying. Prayer is His law and His life. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray. He prays for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered." All these show the deep concern of God in prayer. It discloses very dearly how vital it is to His work in this world, and how far-reaching are its possibilities. Prayer forms the very center of the heart and will of God concerning men. "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Prayer is the pole star around which rejoicing and thanksgiving revolve. Prayer is the heart sending its full and happy pulsations up to God through the glad currents of joy and thanksgiving.

By prayer God's Name is hallowed. By prayer God's kingdom comes. By prayer is His kingdom established in power and made to move with conquering force swifter than the light. By prayer God's will is done till earth rivals Heaven in harmony and beauty. By prayer daily toil is sanctified and enriched, and pardon is secured, and Satan is defeated. Prayer concerns God, and concerns man in every way. God has nothing too good to give in answer to prayer. There is no vengeance pronounced by God so dire which does not yield to prayer. There is no justice so flaming that is not quenched by prayer. Take the record and attitude of Heaven against Saul of Tarsus. That attitude is changed and that record is erased when the astonishing condition is announced, "Behold he prayeth." The recreant Jonah is alive, and on dry ground, with scarce the taste of the sea or the smell of its weeds about him, as he prays. "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardst my voice."

"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head." "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God." "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple." "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." Prayer has all the force of God in it. Prayer can get anything which God has. Thus prayer has all of its plea and its claim in the name of Jesus Christ, and there is nothing too good or great for God to give that name. It must be borne in mind that there is no test surer than this thing of prayer of our being in the family of God. God's children pray. They repose in Him for all things. They ask Him for all things—for everything. The faith of the child in the father is evinced by the child's asking. It is the answer to prayer which convinces men not only that there is a God, but that He is a God who concerns Himself about men, and about the affairs of this world. Answered prayer brings God nigh, and assures men of His being. Answered prayer is the credentials of our relation to and our representative of Him. Men cannot represent God who do not get answers to prayer from Him. The possibilities of prayer are found in the illimitable promise, the willingness and the power of God to answer prayer, to answer all prayer, to answer every prayer, and to supply fully the illimitable need of man. None are so needy as man, none are so able and anxious to supply every need and any need as God. Preaching should no more fully declare and fulfill the will of God for the salvation of all men, than should the prayers of God's saints declare the same great truth' as they wrestle in their closet for this sublime end. God's heart is set on the salvation of all men. This concerns God. He has declared this in the death of His Son by an unspeakable voice, and every movement on earth for this end pleases God. And so He declares that our prayers for the salvation of all men are well pleasing in His sight. The sublime and holy inspiration of pleasing God should ever move us to prayer for all men. God eyes the closet, and nothing we can do pleases Him better than our large-hearted, ardent praying for all men. It is the embodiment and test of our devotion to God's will and of our sympathetic loyalty to God. In 1 Tim. 2:13 the apostle Paul does not descend to a low plane, but presses the necessity of prayer by the most forceful facts. Jesus Christ, a man, the God-man, the highest illustration of manhood, is the Mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ, this Divine man, died for all men. His life is but an intercession for all men. His death is but a prayer for all men. On earth, Jesus Christ knew no higher law, no holier business, no diviner life, than to plead for men. In Heaven He knows no more royal estate, no higher theme, than to intercede for men. On earth He lived and prayed and died for men. His life, His death and His exaltation in Heaven all plead for men. Is there any work, higher work for the disciple to do than His Lord did? Is there any loftier employment, more honourable, more divine, than to pray for men? To take their woes, their sins, and their perils before God; to be one with Christ? To break the thrall which binds them, the hell which holds them and lift them to immortality and eternal life?

("The Reality Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 2-4 ; 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. Public Domain)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 424-426)

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