

Chapel Flock



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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Vol. 29 Issue 549

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Worship Music

[What Love Is This-
Kari Jobe](#)

[Steady My Heart-
Kari Jobe](#)

[Healer-Kari Jobe](#)

Prayer

Lord, I want to be strong enough to overcome any situation I'll ever face in life. Forgive me for sitting around and wasting valuable time that I could have used to train and prepare myself to be spiritually fit. I'm sorry I've allowed myself to be lazy at times, and today I am making the decision to throw myself into spiritual preparation. I have decided to strive for the masteries and make my life count! Holy Spirit, please help me become everything Jesus intends for me to be and to make the changes in my mental outlook that are required for me to become a winner in life, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

" Choosing Rather To Suffer "

Leonard Ravenhill

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

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Through The Bible](#)

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[Virtue for Women-
Cathe Laurie](#)

1 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon? 2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. 5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. 6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? 10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them. 13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them: 14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? 15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster. 17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. 18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand? 19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods. 20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. 21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. 22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. 23 The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed. 24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. 25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Let's turn in our Bibles to first Samuel, twenty-six, and let's begin our study of these final five chapters, six chapters.

The wilderness of Ziph actually lies between Hebron and the area of the Dead Sea, a very vast, barren area.

And the Ziphites came to Saul to Gibeah, and they said, David is hiding himself there in the wilderness of Ziph. So Saul went down with three thousand of his men seeking David. And Saul pitched there his tents, or his camp. David was staying in the wilderness, and he saw how Saul came to him. And David sent out his spies, and learned that Saul indeed had come. And so David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: [Now that wilderness area is such that there's just a lot of places where you can hide, and a lot of places where you can observe the movements of others without being seen yourself.] and David saw the place where Saul was lying, and Abner the captain of his host nearby: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people were pitched around about him. And David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Who wants to go with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with you (1Sa 26:1-6).

Now again as I have said so often, I admire David, I admire the courage of this guy, I admire the daring. Here is Saul out to get him, and so David is looking over the camp, he sees where Saul is lying down. He's so daring he's gonna sneak down into the camp of Saul at night. Rather than just running the other direction and making as much distance as he can between him and Saul, he's just got that adventuresome spirit, and he says, "Who wants to go with me down to the camp here tonight?" Abishai says, "I'll go with you."

So David and Abishai came down into the camp: and [they were all sound asleep,] Saul was lying there, and his spear was stuck in the ground beside him: And Abishai said to David, [All right David, look at that. Lying there on the ground,] let me take this spear and run him through, I won't even hit him the second time. God's delivered your enemies into your hands. And David said, Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless (1Sa 26:7-9)?

Now I have to have great respect for David's respect for the anointed of God, even though the anointing of God had, for all practical purposes, been lifted from Saul. Still David had such a high regard, and respect for the fact that God's anointing had been upon his life, that David refused to touch him. Because God had said in the law, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm"(1Chronicles 16:22).

Now God places a protection really, around His anointed servants. That's just one of the fringe benefits of the ministry. There's a lot of hardships in the ministry. It isn't all glamour and excitement, and drama and thrilling experiences. There's a lot of heartaches in the

ministry, there's a lot of hard experiences in the ministry. Dealing with people isn't always the easiest thing in the world. There are a lot of situations in which there seems to be absolutely no way out, and you just don't know what to do, what to say, you're at a loss. You're not infallible; you can make a lot of mistakes. The Lord knows I've made my share of them. But one of the fringe benefits is that He stands with you. As I stand here to minister the word of God, I don't stand alone, the Lord stands with me. It's wonderful to know that protective power of God upon your life, and surrounding your life.

Now there are a lot of people who feel they know much better how to run the church than I do. Now let me confess, I don't know how to run the church, and I don't pretend to know how to run the church. I do my best to get my orders from the Lord. But there are some people who feel that they are like the Lord. That they can give me the orders, and they seek to conform me into their image.

Now my wife tried to do that for years. Obviously we're not on the radio tonight, I don't think. Finally one day I said, "Honey you're not God, I'm not to be conformed into your image of what you think a husband should be. I want to be conformed into His image. I'm not so sure that you and He are lined up in what I ought to be." So my wife finally gave up trying to conform me into her image.

But there are people who write and try to tell me how the services ought to be conducted, what we ought to be doing. And it's sort of sad because I see that when a person once gets their mind bent towards criticism that it grows, and grows, and grows and it becomes like a cancer. It soon overwhelms them and they become so critical of everything. We have people that come and say, "Well, why don't you do this in your services? Why don't you do that, this?" and all these ideas of what we ought to be doing. In reality, nearby there are churches that are doing those very things, why don't they go to those churches where they are doing those things if that's what they want the church to do? You see I must follow the Lord, and the leading of the Lord, and if you want a lot of shouting, and a lot of demonstration, there are churches that have these kinds of things, I suggest you find one.

I got a letter from a lady awhile back that said, "I've been looking for years for a church where the Word of God was being taught. We came to your church, and we were just so thrilled because the Word was being taught. But then the usher told us that we couldn't bring our little two-year old baby into the services with us. If my baby isn't welcome, then I don't feel welcome." She began to lay a trip on me because her baby wasn't allowed in the church, you know, and so disappointed.

Well, I wrote her back and told her that we have some hundred and eighty babies, to two hundred and twenty, two-year olds and under that are here on an average Sunday morning. And that if all of those babies were in the service, no one would be able to hear the teaching of the Word of God. So I told her that I was praying that the Lord would help her to find a church where the Word of God is being taught, where her baby would be welcome. But I also just hope that if her baby was welcome, that she'd be able to hear the service and the teaching of the Word in that particular church that she might find.

Now there is a reason why we don't have children in the services. It's so that we can minister to people on an adult level, with a high level of attention so that there aren't the distractions of children going in and out, children going through song books, babies crying and so forth. That's the way the Lord has led us to do it, and if you want to go to a church where you can sit and have your baby on your lap, crying through the whole service, there are churches that will let you get by with that, and you're welcome. Go find one.

It's interesting to me to in the New Testament Jesus said how that the people were getting around the law that said you're to honor your father and mother, you're not to curse them, and if you curse your parents you're to die. So they had developed that, it's like the fellows in Israel tell me, he said, "I'll talk to the Rabbi, they can always figure a way around it, you know." So on the Sabbath day you're not to spend any money, but you can use credit cards now on the Sabbath day because that's not money. They always figure a way around.

So they said, "If you tell your mother and father before you curse them, say, "This is just for your benefit, this is for your good. I want you to know that you're a lousy creep," and then you can tell them anything you want. As long as you say, "This is a gift for you, this is for your benefit and your good," and then say whatever you want. So circumventing the law completely. Someone writes me notes and signs "agape." Well, because they sign "agape" they think they can say all kinds of mean, critical things in their note, because after all, they signed it "agape." There's no agape there at all; it's hypocritical.

Touching the anointed of God should never be considered as something that should be, should be light, or David had a high respect, he wouldn't touch Saul. He said, "Look, God is gonna take care of him." That's the proper attitude. If he is God's servant, God is gonna take care of him. Paul said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Before his own master either stands or falls, and God is able to make him to stand."

Now if I were serving you then I should be taking orders from you, but I'm serving the Lord, and my responsibility is to the Lord. Someday I'm gonna stand before Him and give an account of myself, and of my ministry to Him. Therefore, I've got to listen to Him, because I'm gonna be accountable and answerable to Him one day.

So David said, "God's gonna take care of him some way or other. God is gonna smite him, he's gonna fall in battle, God'll take care of him. I don't want my hand to be against the anointed of God. I don't want to be guilty of that."

The Lord forbid [he said,] that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let's get out of here. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they got away, no man saw it, or knew it, neither did they wake up: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill that is far off; a great space being between them: David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said,

Who art thou that criest to the king (1Sa 26:11-14).

Now David got a great way off and called. There's an interesting thing about that country, and that is that there is a tremendous acoustics of some kind that you can hear for miles. I was pointing it out to the people when we were up on the Herodian. There were children that were at least three quarters of a mile away that were playing out there. I said, "Listen to those kids." You could hear them; you could hear them as they were playing. You could hear them calling to each other and all. When they had gone up to the top of the Herodian, as we were going up the hill, I saw some caves about half way up the hill. I was curious what might be in those caves. So I, rather than walking up the road to the top of the Herodian, walked around the side of the Herodian to explore these caves which I found to be big cisterns there in the side of the Herodian, and some interesting ruins of the walls. But the people were up on the top, and I could hear them just talking to each other in their conversations, though I was half way down the mountain. So I started talking to them, and we could converse back and forth over an area of four hundred feet in normal voice, without yelling, or lifting our voices, we could converse at a distance of over four hundred feet very clearly. There's something about the atmosphere or whatever, but sound really is conducted very easily over there. You can actually hear for miles.

So David went over to the other mountain, just a great way off, and they cried back. You could hear him, you could actually—sound transfers so well in the atmosphere or whatever that it's really amazing. People wonder how in the world could Jesus ever talk to five thousand people, but the way the acoustics are there, there isn't any really problem at all to address large multitudes of people without public address systems. It's really something that is quite unique and interesting. I've always found it extremely interesting. So David went over to this mountain and he called back, "Abner." Abner said, "Who is it that's crying unto the king?"

And David cried to the people and to Abner, saying, Don't you answer Abner? And David said to Abner, Are you not a valiant man? and who is like unto you in Israel? and why have you not kept the lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. It's not good what you have done. As the Lord liveth, you ought to be put to death, because you have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now look where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was there at his bolster (1Sa 26:14-16).

So David is sort of chiding Abner the chief general of Saul, saying, "Hey you know your job is to guard the king, and you aren't doing a good job. You ought to be put to death. Someone came in to destroy the king, and you were just sound asleep. Look where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water."

Saul [of course waking out of his sleep] said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It's my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Why does my lord pursue after his servant? what have I done? for what evil is in my hand (1Sa 26:17-18)?

Now David, I think one of the phrases of David all the way through was, "What have I done?" Always saying, "What have I done?" He seemed to always be getting in trouble, you know, and always really for not very much, but, "What have I done?" So when he went down to the camp where his brothers were fighting against the Philistines, and Goliath came out, and David began to say, "Hey, why you guys hiding? Why doesn't one of you fight him?" His brother started getting on his case, and he said, "Hey, what have I done? I only asked a few questions." And here with Saul, "What have I done that you would pursue me like this?"

Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord has stirred you up against me, then let the Lord receive an offering: ["Let's offer a sacrifice and let's get it over with.] but if it's the children of men, that has stirred you up against me then let them be cursed; for they have driven me out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, and as a partridge you've chased me in these mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly (1Sa 26:19-21).

Now here is a confession of Saul, and Saul, if David's phrase was "What have I done?" Saul's phrase was, "I have sinned." But he never repented. He only declared a fact. This is sort of tragic. So many people do that today. They say, "Oh, I have sinned." but they don't change. It's more than just the confession of guilt that is necessary. It's the turning from the sin, which is important. "Except thou repent," Jesus said, "you're gonna perish." Repent means to turn. So it isn't just saying, "Oh, I have sinned." It's turning from your sin, which is so important to the Lord.

Here is Saul again, and many times on many occasions whenever he was faced by Samuel the prophet, he'd say, "Oh, I have sinned." But there wasn't any sign of repentance. "I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly." This is Saul's confession. Of course it's a very tragic confession. It's the truth, he did play the fool all through his life he played the fool. He was a man who was endowed by God with many natural talents and abilities. He was a man who was given every opportunity by God, but yet a man who blew his opportunities of really being a servant of God. He is a man who failed to do the work of God, though he had all that he needed to be a marvelous king over Israel, he became exalted and lifted up with pride, and played the fool, and erred exceedingly. So his autobiography, "I have sinned, I've played the fool, I've erred exceedingly."

So David answered and said, Behold the king's spear. let one of your young men come over and get it. And the Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set this day in my eyes, so let my life be much set by [in your eyes, or] in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulations. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and thou shalt still prevail (1Sa 26:22-25).

Saul underneath knew that someday David was gonna take the throne. He was trying to protect the throne and to pass it onto his

own children. But yet in his heart, he knew that God had anointed David, and that David was God's anointed king. "Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and still prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place (1Sa 26:25).
(Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

VI. PRAYING MEN AT A PREMIUM

"Our Redeemer was in the Garden of Gethsemane. His hour was come. He felt as if He would be strengthened somewhat, if He had two or three disciples near Him. His three chosen disciples were within a stone's cast of the scene of His agony; but they were all asleep that the Scripture might be fulfilled—'I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me.' The eight, in the distance, were good and true disciples; but they were only ordinary men, or men with a commonplace call."—Alexander Whyte.

No insistence in the Bible is more pressing than the injunction it lays upon men to pray. No exhortation contained therein is more hearty, more solemn, and more stirring. No principle is more strongly inculcated than that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." In view of this enjoinder it is pertinent to inquire as to whether Christian people are praying men and women in anything like body and bulk? Is prayer a fixed course in the schools of the Church? In the Sunday school, the home, the colleges, have we any graduates in the school of prayer? Is the Church producing those who have diplomas from the great university of prayer? This is what God requires, what He commands, and it is those who possess such qualifications that He must have to accomplish His purposes and to carry out the work of His Kingdom on earth.

And it is earnest praying that had need to be done. Languid praying, without heart or strength, with neither fire nor tenacity, defeats its own avowed purpose. The prophet of olden times laments that in a day which needed strenuous praying there was no one who "stirred up himself to take hold of God." Christ charges us "not to faint" in our praying. Laxity and indifference are great hindrances to prayer, both to the practice of praying and the process of receiving; it requires a brave, strong, fearless and insistent spirit to engage in successful prayer. Diffuseness, too, interferes with effectiveness. Too many petitions break tension and unity, and breed neglect. Prayers should be specific and urgent. Too many words, like too much width, breeds shallows and sand-bars. A single objective which absorbs the whole being and inflames the entire man, is the properly constraining force in prayer.

It is easy to see how prayer was a decreed factor in the dispensations preceding the coming of Jesus, and how that their leaders had to be men of prayer; how that God's mightiest revelation of Himself was a revelation made through prayer. And, finally, how that Jesus Christ, in His personal ministry, and in His relation to God, was great and constant in prayer. His labours and dispensation overflowed with fullness in proportion to His prayers. The possibilities of His praying were unlimited and the possibilities of His ministry were in keeping. The necessity of His praying was equaled only by the constancy with which He practiced it during His early life.

The dispensation of the Holy Spirit is a dispensation of prayer, in a preeminent sense. Here prayer has an essential and vital relation. Without depreciating the possibilities and necessities of prayer in all the preceding dispensations of God in the world it must be declared that it is in this latter dispensation that the engagements and demands of prayer are given their greatest authority, their possibilities rendered unlimited and their necessity insuperable.

These days of ours have sore need of a generation of praying men, a band of men and women through whom God can bring His great and His greatest movements more fully into the world. The Lord our God is not straitened within Himself, but He is straitened in us, by reason of our little faith and weak praying. A breed of Christian is greatly needed who will seek tirelessly after God,—who will give Him no rest, day and night, until He hearken to their cry. The times demand praying men who are all athirst for God's glory, who are broad and unselfish in their desires, quenchless for God, who seek Him late and early, and who will give themselves no rest until the whole earth be filled with His glory.

Men and women are needed whose prayers will give to the world the utmost power of God; who will make His promises to blossom with rich and full results. God is waiting to hear us and challenges us to bring Him to do this thing by our praying. He is asking us, today, as He did His ancient Israel, to "prove Him now herewith." Behind God's Word is God Himself, and we read: "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, his Maker: Ask of me of things to come and concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my bands, command ye me." As though God places Himself in the hands and at the disposal of His people who pray—as indeed He does.

The dominant element of all praying is faith, that is conspicuous, cardinal and emphatic. Without such faith it is impossible to please God, and equally impossible to pray.

There is a current conception of spiritual duties which tends to separate the pulpit and the pew, as though the pulpit bore the entire burden of spiritual concerns, and while the pew was concerned only with duties that relate to the lower sphere of the secular and worldly. Such a view needs drastic correction. God's cause, its obligations, efforts and successes, lie with equal pressure on pulpit and pew.

But the man in the pew is not taxed with the burden of prayer as he ought to be, and as he must be, ere any new visitation of power come to the Church. The Church never will be wholly for God until the pews are filled with praying men. The Church cannot be what God wants it to be until those of its members who are leaders in business, politics, law, and society, are leaders in prayer.

God began His early movements in the world with men of prayer. He chose such a man to be the father of that race who became His chosen people in the world for hundreds of years, to whom He committed His oracles, and from whom sprang the Promised Messiah. Abraham, a leader of God's cause, was preeminently a praying man. When we consider his conduct and character, we readily see how prayer ruled and swayed this great leader of God's people in the wilderness. "Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God," and it is an outstanding fact that wherever he pitched his tent and camped for a season, with his household, there he erected the altar of sacrifice and of prayer. His was a personal and a family religion, in which prayer was a prominent and abiding factor.

Prayer is the medium of divine revelation. It is through prayer that God reveals Himself to the spiritual soul today, just as in the Old Testament days He made His revelations to the men who prayed. God shows Himself to the man who prays. "God is with thee in all that thou doest." This was the clear conviction of those who would fain make a covenant with Abraham, and the reason for this tribute was the belief commonly held concerning the patriarch that, not only was he a man of prayer, but a man whose prayers God would answer. This is the summary and secret of divine rule in the Church. In all ages God has ruled the Church by prayerful men. When prayer fails, the divine rulership falls. As we have seen, Abraham, the father of the faithful, was a prince and a priest in prayer. He had remarkable influence with God. God stays His vengeance while Abraham prays. His mercy is suspended and conditioned on Abraham's praying. His visitations of wrath are removed by the praying of this ruler in Israel. The movements of God are influenced by the prayers of Abraham, the friend of God. Abraham's righteous prayerfulness permits him to share the secrets of God's counsels, while the knowledge of these secrets draws out and intensifies his praying. With Abraham, the altar of sacrifice is hard by the altar of prayer. With him the altar of prayer sanctifies the altar of sacrifice. To Abimelech God said, "Abraham is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live."

Christian people must pray for men. On one occasion, Samuel said unto the people, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Fortunate for these sinful people who had rejected God, and desired a human king, that they had in Israel a man of prayer. The royal way to enlarge personal grace is to pray for others. Intercessory prayer is a means of grace to those who exercise it. We enter the richest fields of spiritual growth and gather its priceless riches in the avenues of intercessory prayer. To pray for men is of divine nomination, and represents the highest form of Christian service.

Men must pray, and men must be prayed for. The Christian must pray for all things, of course, but prayers for men are infinitely more important, just as men are infinitely more important than things. So also prayers for men are far more important than prayers for things because men more deeply concern God's will and the work of Jesus Christ than things. Men are to be cared for, sympathized with and prayed for, because sympathy, pity, compassion and care accompany and precede prayer for men, when they are not called out for things.

All this makes praying a real business, not child's play, not a secondary affair, nor a trivial matter but a serious business. The men who have made a success of praying have made a business of praying. It is a process demanding the time, thought, energy and hearts of mankind. Prayer is business for time, business for eternity. It is a man's business to pray, transcending all other business and taking precedence over all other vocations, professions or occupations. Our praying concerns ourselves, all men, their greatest interests, even the salvation of their immortal souls. Praying is a business which takes hold of eternity and the things beyond the grave. It is a business which involves earth and heaven. All worlds are touched and worlds are influenced by prayer. It has to do with God and men, angels and devils.

Jesus was preeminently a leader in prayer, and His praying is an incentive to prayer. How prominently prayer stands out in His life! The leading events of His earthly career are distinctly marked by prayer. The wonderful experience and glory of the Transfiguration was preceded by prayer, and was the result of the praying of our Lord. What words He used as He prayed we know not, nor do we know for what He prayed. But doubtless it was night, and long into its hours the Master prayed. It was while He prayed the darkness fled, and His form was lit with unearthly splendour. Moses and Elijah came to yield to Him not only the palm of law and prophecy, but the palm of praying. None other prayed as did Jesus nor had any such a glorious manifestation of the divine presence or heard so clearly the revealing voice of the Father, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." Happy disciples to be with Christ in the school of prayer!

How many of us have failed to come to this glorious Mount of Transfiguration because we were unacquainted with the transfiguring power of prayer! It is the going apart to pray, the long, intense seasons of prayer, in which we engage which makes the face to shine, transfigures the character, makes even dull, earthly garments to glisten with heavenly splendour. But more than this: it is real praying which makes eternal things real, close and tangible, and which brings the glorified visitors and the heavenly visions. Transfigured lives would not be so rare if there were more of this transfigured praying. These heavenly visits would not be so few if there was more of this transfigured praying. How difficult it appears to be for the Church to understand that the whole scheme of redemption depends upon men of prayer! The work of our Lord, while here on the earth, as well of the Apostle Paul was, by teaching and example, to develop men of prayer, to whom the future of the Church should be committed. How strange that instead of learning this simple and all important lesson, the modern Church has largely overlooked it! We have need to turn afresh to that wondrous Leader of spiritual Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ, who by example and precept enjoins us to prayer and to the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who by virtue of his praying habits and prayer lessons is a model and an example to God's people in every age and time.

VII. THE MINISTRY AND PRAYER

"Of course the preacher is above all others distinguished as a man of prayer. He prays as an ordinary Christian, else he were a hypocrite. He prays more than ordinary Christians else he were disqualified for the office he has undertaken. If you as ministers are not very prayerful you are to be pitied. If you become lax in sacred devotion, not only will you need to be pitied but your people also, and the day cometh in which you will be ashamed and confounded. Our seasons of fastings and prayer at the Tabernacle have been high days indeed; never has heaven's gate stood wider; never have our hearts been nearer the central glory."—Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

Preachers are God's leaders. They are divinely called to their holy office and high purpose and, primarily, are responsible for the condition of the Church. Just as Moses was called of God to lead Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness into the Promised Land, so, also, does God call His ministers to lead His spiritual Israel through this world unto the heavenly land. They are divinely commissioned to leadership, and are by precept and example to teach God's people what God would have them be. Paul's counsel to the young preacher Timothy is in point: "Let no man despise thy youth," he says, "but be thou an example of the believers, in word, conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

God's ministers shape the Church's character, and give tone and direction to its life. The prefacing sentence of the letter to each of the seven churches in Asia reads, "To the angel of the Church," seeming to indicate that the angel—the minister—was in the same state of mind and condition of life as the membership and that these "angels" or ministers were largely responsible for the spiritual condition of things existing in each Church. The "angel" in each case was the preacher, teacher, or leader. The first Christians knew full well and felt this responsibility. In their helplessness, consciously felt, they cried out, "And who is sufficient for things?" as the tremendous responsibility pressed upon their hearts and heads. The only reply to such a question was, "God only." So they were necessarily compelled to look beyond themselves for help and throw themselves on prayer to secure God. More and more as they prayed, did they feel their responsibility, and more and more by prayer did they get God's help. They realized that their sufficiency was of God. Prayer belongs in a very high and important sense to the ministry. It takes vigour and elevation of character to administer the prayer-office. Praying prophets have frequently been at a premium in the history of God's people. In every age the demand has been for leaders in Israel who pray. God's watchmen must always and everywhere be men of prayer.

It ought to be no surprise for ministers to be often found on their knees seeking divine help under the responsibility of their call. These are the true prophets of the Lord, and these are they who stand as mouthpieces of God to a generation of wicked and worldly-minded men and women. Prayer preachers are boldest, the truest and the swiftest ministers of God. They mount up highest and are nearest to Him who has called them. They advance more rapidly and in Christian living are most like God. In reading the record of the four evangelists, we cannot but be impressed by the supreme effort made by our Lord to rightly instruct the twelve Apostles in the things which would properly qualify them for the tremendous tasks which would be theirs after He had gone back to the bosom of the Father. His solicitude was for the Church that she should have men, holy in life and in heart, and who would know full well from whence came their strength and power in the work of the ministry. A large part of Christ's teaching was addressed to these chosen Apostles, and the training of the twelve occupied much of His thought and consumed much of His time. In all that training, prayer was laid down as a basic principle. We find the same thing to be true in the life and work of the Apostle Paul. While he addressed himself to the edification of the churches to whom he ministered and wrote, it was in his mind and purpose to rightly instruct and prepare ministers to whom would be committed the interests of God's people. The two epistles to Timothy were addressed to a young preacher, while that to Titus was also written to a young minister. And Paul's design appears to have been to give to each of them such instruction as would be needed rightly to do the work of the ministry to which they had been called by the Spirit of God. Underlying these instructions was the foundation-stone of prayer, since by no means would they be able to "show themselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," unless they were men of prayer.

The highest welfare of the Church of God on earth depends largely upon the ministry, and so Almighty God has always been jealous of His watchmen—His preachers. His concern has been for the character of the men who minister at His altars in holy things. They must be men who lean upon Him, who look to Him, and who continually seek Him for wisdom, help and power effectively to do the work of the ministry. And so He has designed men of prayer for the holy office, and has relied upon them successively to perform the tasks He has assigned them. God's great works are to be done as Christ did them; are to be done, indeed, with increased power received from the ascended and exalted Christ. These works are to be done by prayer. Men must do God's work in God's way, and to God's glory, and prayer is a necessity to its successful accomplishment. The thing far above all other things in the equipment of the preacher is prayer. Before everything else, he must be a man who makes a specialty of prayer. A prayerless preacher is a misnomer. He has either missed his calling, or has grievously failed God who called him into the ministry. God wants men who are not ignoramuses, who "study to show themselves approved." Preaching the Word is essential; social qualities are not to be underestimated, and education is good; but under and above all else, prayer must be the main plank in the platform of the man who goes forth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a lost and hungry world. The one weak spot in our Church institutions lies just here. Prayer is not regarded as being the primary factor in church life and activity, and other things, good in their places, are made primary. First things need to be put first, and the first thing in the equipment of a minister is prayer.

Our Lord is the pattern for all preachers, and, with Him, prayer was the law of life. By it He lived. It was the inspiration of His toil, the source of His strength, the spring of His joy. With our Lord prayer was no sentimental episode, nor an afterthought, nor a pleasing, diverting prelude, nor an interlude, nor a parade or form. For Jesus, prayer was exacting, all-absorbing, paramount. It was the call of a sweet duty to Him, the satisfying of a restless yearning, the preparation for heavy responsibilities, and the meeting of a vigorous need. This being so, the disciple must be as his Lord, the servant as his Master. As was the Lord Himself, so also must be those whom He has called to be His disciples. Our Lord Jesus Christ chose His twelve Apostles only after He had spent a night in praying; and we may rest assured that He sets the same high value on those He calls to His ministry, in this our own day and time.

No feeble or secondary place was given to prayer in the ministry of Jesus. It comes first—emphatic, conspicuous, controlling. Of prayerful habits, of a prayerful spirit, given to long solitary communion with God, Jesus was above all else, a man of prayer. The crux of His earthly history, in New Testament terminology, is condensed to a single statement, to be found in Hebrews 5:7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." As was their Lord and Master, whose they are and whom they serve, so let His ministers be. Let Him be their pattern, their example, their leader and teacher. Much reference is made in some quarters about "following Christ," but it is confined to the following of Him in modes and ordinances, as if salvation were wrapped up in the specific way of doing a thing.

"The path of prayer Thyself hath trod," is the path along which we are to follow Him, and in no other. Jesus was given as a leader to the people of God, and no leader ever exemplified more the worth and necessity of prayer. Equal in glory with the Father, anointed and sent on His special mission by the Holy Spirit, His incarnate birth, His high commission, His royal anointing—all these were His but they did not relieve Him from the exacting claims of prayer. Rather did they tend to impose these claims upon Him with greater authority. He did not ask to be excused from the burden of prayer; He gladly accepted it, acknowledged its claims and voluntarily subjected Himself to its demands. His leadership was preeminent, and His praying was preeminent. Had it not been, His leadership had been neither preeminent nor divine. If, in true leadership, prayer had been dispensable, then certainly Jesus could have dispensed with it. But He did not, nor can any of His followers who desire effectiveness in Christian activity do other than follow their Lord. While Jesus Christ practiced praying Himself, being personally under the law of prayer, and while His parables and miracles were but exponents of prayer, He laboured directly to teach His disciples the specific art of praying. He said little or nothing about how to preach or what to preach. But He spent His strength and time in teaching men how to speak to God, how to commune with Him, and how to be with Him. He knew full well that he who has learned the craft of talking to God, will be well versed in talking to men. We may turn aside for a moment to observe that this was the secret of the wonderful success of the early Methodist preachers, who were far from being learned men. But with all their limitations, they were men of prayer, and they did great things for God.

All ability to talk to men is measured by the ability with which a preacher can talk to God for men. He "who ploughs not in his closet, will never reap in his pulpit." The fact must ever be kept in the forefront and emphasized that Jesus Christ trained His disciples to pray. This is the real meaning of that saying, "The Training of the Twelve." It must be kept in mind that Christ taught the world's preachers more about praying than He did about preaching. Prayer was the great factor in the spreading of His Gospel. Prayer conserved and made efficient all other factors. Yet He did not discount preaching when He stressed praying, but rather taught the utter dependence of preaching on prayer. "The Christian's trade is praying," declared Martin Luther. Every Jewish boy had to learn a trade. Jesus Christ learned two, the trade of a carpenter, and that of praying. The one trade subserved earthly uses; the other served His divine and higher purposes. Jewish custom committed Jesus when a boy to the trade of a carpenter; the law of God bound Him to praying from His earliest years, and remained with Him to the end. Christ is the Christian's example, and every Christian must pattern after Him. Every preacher must be like his Lord and Master, and must learn the trade of praying. He who learns well the trade of praying masters the secret of the Christian art, and becomes a skilled workman in God's workshop, one who needeth not to be ashamed, a worker together with his Lord and Master. "Pray without ceasing," is the trumpet call to the preachers of our time. If the preachers will get their thoughts clothed with the atmosphere of prayer, if they will prepare their sermons on their knees, a gracious outpouring of God's Spirit will come upon the earth. The one indispensable qualification for preaching is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and it was for the bestowal of this indispensable gift that the disciples were charged to tarry in Jerusalem. The absolute necessity there is for receiving this gift if success is to attend the efforts of the ministry, is found in the command the first disciples had to stay in Jerusalem till they received it, and also with the instant and earnest prayerfulness with which they sought it. In obedience to their Lord's command to tarry in that city till they were endued with power from on high, they immediately, after He left them for heaven, entered on securing it by continued and earnest prayer. "These all with one accord, continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren." To this same thing John refers in his First Epistle. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," he says. It is this divine unction that preachers of the present day should sincerely desire, pray for, remaining unsatisfied till the blessed gift be richly bestowed. Another allusion to this same important procedure is made by our Lord shortly after His resurrection, when He said to His disciples: "And ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." At the same time Jesus directed the attention of His disciples to the statement of John the Baptist concerning the Spirit, the identical thing for which He had commanded them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem—"power from on high." Alluding to John the Baptist's words Jesus said, "For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Peter at a later date said of our Lord: "God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power."

These are the divine statements of the mission and ministry of the Holy Spirit to preachers of that day and the same divine statements apply with equal force to the preachers of this day. God's ideal minister is a God-called, divinely anointed, Spirit-touched man, separated unto God's work, set apart from secularities and questionable affairs, baptized from above, marked, sealed and owned by the Spirit, devoted to his Master and His ministry. These are the divinely-appointed requisites for a preacher of the Word; without them, he is inadequate, and inevitably unfruitful.

Today, there is no dearth of preachers who deliver eloquent sermons on the need and nature of revival, and advance elaborate plans for the spread of the kingdom of God, but the praying preachers are far more rare and the greatest benefactor this age can have is a man who will bring the preachers, the Church and the people back to the practice of real praying. The reformer needed just now is the praying reformer. The leader Israel requires is one who, with clarion voice, will call the ministry back to their knees. There is considerable talk of the coming revival in the air, but we need to have the vision to see that the revival we need and the only one that can be worth having is one that is born of the Holy Spirit, which brings deep conviction for sin, and regeneration for those who seek God's face. Such a revival comes at the end of a season of real praying, and it is utter folly to talk about or expect a revival without the Holy Spirit operating in His peculiar office, conditioned on much earnest praying. Such a revival will begin in pulpit and pew alike, will be promoted by both preacher and lay-man working in harmony with God. The heart is the lexicon of prayer; the life the best commentary on prayer, and the outward bearing its fullest expression.

The character is made by prayer; the life is perfected by prayer. And this the ministry needs to learn as thoroughly as the laymen. There is but one rule for both. So averse was the general body of Christ's disciples to prayer, having so little taste for it, and having so little sympathy with Him in the deep things of prayer, and its mightier struggles, that the Master had to select a circle of three more apt scholars—Peter, James and John—who had more of sympathy, and relish for this divine work, and take them aside that they might learn the lesson of prayer. These men were nearer to Jesus, fuller of sympathy, and more helpful to Him because they were more prayerful. So averse was the general body of Christ's disciples to prayer, having so little taste for it, and having so little sympathy with Him in the deep things of prayer, and its mightier struggles, that the Master had to select a circle of three more apt scholars—Peter, James and John—who had more of sympathy, and relish for this divine work, and take them aside that they might learn the lesson of prayer. These men were nearer to Jesus, fuller of sympathy, and more helpful to Him because they were more prayerful.

Blessed, indeed, are those disciples whom Jesus Christ, in this day, calls into a more intimate fellowship with Him, and who, readily responding to the call, are found much on their knees before Him. Distressing, indeed, is the condition of those servants of Jesus who, in their hearts, are averse to the exercise of the ministry of prayer. All the great eras of our Lord, historical and spiritual, were made or fashioned by His praying. In like manner His plans and great achievements were born in prayer and impregnated by the spirit thereof. As was the Master, so also must His servant be; as his Lord did in the great eras of His life, so should the disciple do when faced by important crises. "To your knees, O Israel!" should be the clarion-call to the ministry of this generation. The highest form of religious life is attained by prayer. The richest revelations of God—Father, Son, and Spirit—are made, not to the learned, the great or the "noble" of earth, but men of prayer. "For ye see your calling, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," to whom God makes known the deep things of God, and reveals the higher things of His character, but to the lowly, inquiring, praying ones. And again must it be said, his is as true of preachers as of laymen. It is the spiritual man who prays, and to praying ones God makes His revelations through the Holy Spirit. Praying preachers have always brought the greater glory to God, have moved His Gospel onward with its greatest, speediest rate and power. A non-praying preacher and a non-praying Church may flourish outwardly and advance in many aspects of their life. Both preacher and church may become synonyms for success, but unless it rest on a praying basis all success will eventually crumble into deadened life and ultimate decay. "Ye have not because ye ask not," is the solution of all spiritual weakness both in the personal life and in the pulpit. Either that or it is, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss." Real praying lies at the foundation of all real success of the ministry in the things of God. The stability, energy and facility with which God's kingdom is established in this world are dependent upon prayer. God has made it so, and so God is anxious for men to pray. Especially is He concerned that His chosen ministers shall be men of prayer, and so gives that wonderful statement in order to encourage His ministers to pray, which is found in Matthew 6:9: "But I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Thus both command and direct promise give accent to His concern that they shall pray. Pause and think on these familiar words. "Ask, and it shall be given you." That itself would seem to be enough to set us all, laymen and preachers, to praying, so direct, simple and unlimited. These words open all the treasures of heaven to us, simply by asking for them. If we have not studied the prayers of Paul, primarily a preacher to the Gentiles, we can have but a feeble view of the great necessity for prayer, and how much it is worth in the life and the work of a minister of the Gospel. Furthermore, we shall have but a very limited view of the possibilities of the Gospel to enrich and make strong and perfect Christian character, as well as to equip preachers for their high and holy task. Oh, when will we learn the simple yet all important lesson that the one great thing needed in the life of a preacher to help him in his personal life, to keep his soul alive to God, and to give efficacy to the Word preached by him, is real, constant prayer! Paul with prayer uppermost in his mind, assures the Colossians that "Epaphras is always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand complete and perfect in all the will of God." To this high state of grace, "complete in all the will of God," he prays they may come. So prayer was the force which was to bring them to that elevated, vigorous and stable state of heart. This is in line with Paul's teaching to the Ephesians, "And he gave some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," where it is evidently affirmed that the whole work of the ministry is not merely to induce sinners to repent, but it is also the "perfecting of the saints." And so Epaphras "laboured fervently in prayers" for this thing. Certainly he was himself a praying man, in thus so earnestly praying for these early Christians. The Apostles put out their force in order that Christians should honour God by the purity and consistency of their outward lives. They were to reproduce the character of Jesus Christ. They were to perfect His image in themselves, imbibe His temper and reflect His carriage in all their tempers and conduct. They were to be imitators of God as dear children, to be holy as He was holy. Thus even laymen were to preach by their conduct and character, just as the ministry preached with their mouths. To elevate the followers of Christ to these exalted heights of Christian experience, they were in every way true in the ministry of God's Word, in the ministry of prayer, in holy consuming zeal, in burning exhortation, in rebuke and reproof. Added to all these, sanctifying all these, invigorating all these, and making all of them salutary, they centered and exercised constantly the force of mightiest praying. "Night and day praying exceedingly," that is, praying out of measure, with intense earnestness, superabundantly, beyond measure, exceeding abundantly. "Night and day praying exceeding abundantly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It was after this fashion that these Apostles—the first preachers in the early Church—laboured in prayer. And only those who labour after the same fashion are the true successors of these Apostles. This is the true, the Scriptural "apostolical succession," the succession of simple faith, earnest desire for holiness of heart and life, and zealous praying. These are the things today which make the ministry strong, faithful and efficient, "workmen who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Jesus Christ, God's Leader and Commander of His people, lived and suffered under this law of prayer. All His personal conquests in His life on earth were won by obedience to this law, while the conquests which have been won by His representatives since He ascended to heaven, were gained only when this condition of prayer was heartily and fully met. Christ was under this one prayer condition. His Apostles were under the same prayer condition. His saints are under it, and even His angels are under it. By every token, therefore, preachers are under the same prayer law. Not for one moment are they relieved or excused from obedience to the law of prayer. It is their very life, the source of their power, the secret of their religious experience and communion with God. Christ could do nothing without prayer. Christ could do all things by prayer. The Apostles were helpless without prayer—and were absolutely dependent upon it for success in defeating their spiritual foes. They could do all things by prayer. ("The Weapons Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 6-7 ; 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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