



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

[www.chapel-flock.com](http://www.chapel-flock.com)



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Nov. 26, 2012

## Worship Music

[Christmas Time-  
Phil Wickham](#)

[The First Noel-  
Phil Wickham](#)

[O Holy Night-  
Phil Wickham](#)

## Prayer

Lord, help me to always keep in mind that eternity lies before me. Too often I get so consumed in the affairs of this life that I forget to think about my eternal existence. I don't want to be so focused on making myself comfortable in this life that I forget to do what I must to make myself comfortable in the next life, to store up treasure in heaven where it will not rust and cease. Help me lay up a good foundation for the eternity that lies in my future. Holy Spirit, I ask You to teach me not only how to be a wise steward of what You have given me to take of, but I also ask that You expand my boundries; in ministry and my personal life, in Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

### “ Choosing”

Leonard Ravenhill

We would like to invite you to join with us November 25-28, 2012 for A Call to Prayer & Fasting, as we connect with hundreds of churches and communities throughout the world, united in purpose as supplications, prayers, intercessions, and the giving of thanks are made (2 Timothy 2:1).

For four nights, we will be broadcasting live prayer and worship services from cities across the United States. We are giving churches the opportunity to participate each night by becoming host sites of prayer gatherings, logging onto [www.prayandfast.org](http://www.prayandfast.org) and streaming the live webcast to their congregations. Our hope is to have thousands of groups praying in unity as we simply seek the Lord for revival in our families, churches, communities, and the world. 7:00pm (Eastern & Pacific Times)

Mike MacIntosh @ Horizon

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](mailto:chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)

## Radio Stations

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## Bible Study Sites

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[Virtue for Women-  
Cathe Laurie](#)

1 IN THOSE days the Philistines gathered their forces for war against Israel. Achish said to David, Understand that you and your men shall go with me to battle. 2 David said to Achish, All right, you shall know what your servant can do. Achish said to David, Therefore I will make you my bodyguard always. 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the wizards out of the land. 4 And the Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the Philistine host, he was afraid; his heart trembled greatly. 6 When Saul inquired of the Lord, He refused to answer him, either by dreams or by Urim [a symbol worn by the priest when seeking the will of God for Israel] or by the prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman who is a medium [between the living and the dead], that I may go and inquire of her. His servants said, Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at Endor. 8 So Saul disguised himself, put on other raiment, and he and two men with him went and came to the woman at night. He said to her, Perceive for me by the familiar spirit and bring up for me the dead person whom I shall name to you. 9 The woman said, See here, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who are mediums and wizards out of the land. Why then do you lay a trap for my life to cause my death? 10 And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord lives, there shall no punishment come to you for this. 11 The woman said, Whom shall I bring up for you? He said, Bring up Samuel for me. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she screamed and she said to Saul, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul! 13 The king said to her, Be not afraid; what do you see? The woman said to Saul, I see a god [terrifying superhuman being] coming up out of the earth! 14 He said to her, In what form is he? And she said, An old man comes up, covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and made obeisance. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me to bring me up? Saul answered, I am bitterly distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do. 16 Samuel said, Why then do you ask me, seeing that the Lord has turned from you and has become your enemy? 17 The Lord has done to you as He said through me He would do; for [He] has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to your neighbor David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord or execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover, the Lord will also give Israel with you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me [among the dead]. The Lord also will give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines. 20 Then immediately Saul fell full length upon the earth floor [of the medium's house], and was exceedingly afraid because of Samuel's words. There was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. 21 The woman came to Saul, and seeing that he was greatly troubled, she said to him, Behold, your handmaid has obeyed you, and I have put my life in my hands and have listened to what you said to me. 22 So now, I pray you, listen also to the voice of your handmaid and let me set a morsel of food before you, and eat, so you may have strength when you go on your way. 23 But he said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he heeded their words. So he arose from the ground and sat upon the bed. 24 The woman had a fat calf in the house; she hurried and killed it, and took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. 25 Then she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose up and went away that night.

## Chapter 28

So it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, Know assuredly, that you shall go out to battle with me, you and your men. So David said to Achish, And you shall know what your servant can do. Achish said to David, Therefore I will make you the keeper of my head for ever. [In other words, sort of putting David over as his personal bodyguard and all.] Now Samuel was dead, and Israel had lamented for him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa (1Sa 28:1-4).

Now Gilboa is up in the area just south of the Sea of Galilee. So the Philistines had really moved a long way against the Israelites. Gilboa is clear over—actually the one side of Gilboa goes down to the Jordan River. So the Philistines had really taken a lot of the territories at this point. Saul was being boxed in to just a very small area. There he was encamped in Gilboa.

And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And Saul inquired of the Lord, but there was no answer either by dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by the prophets (1Sa 28:5-6).

Now God speaks to us in many different ways. God can speak to us by dreams. Now I don't believe that I personally have ever had a dream that had any spiritual significance to it. But now that I'm getting to the age, as the scripture said, "Your old men shall dream dreams," maybe I'm going to someday start getting dreams with spiritual significance. Let me say this, though to my own belief I've never had a dream with any spiritual significance, it doesn't stop me from realizing that I may someday have a dream that has spiritual significance, and I'm open to it. Just because I never had it, I don't say, "Well, God doesn't speak to men through dreams anymore." I believe that God can still speak to people through dreams, and I'm open to dreaming if God wants to speak to me in a dream, I'm open to it. I'd be thrilled and delighted to have God speak to me in a dream.

God also speaks to people through visions. Now I have had visions in which God did speak to me. God speaks to people through the prophets, and I have had God's word come to me through anointed brothers and sisters in Christ, that I recognize as God's word to me.

In the Old Testament God also spoke through the Urim and the Thummin, which were a part of the priest's garments. They were a little sort of a pouch that he wore, and they say that there was a black stone, and a white stone, and that the black stone was a no answer, and the white stone was yes. Whether or not that is actually so, I don't know, but somehow God spoke through the Urim

and the Thummin. Now the words actually mean "lights and perfections," and it could be rather than stones, which have become sort of a traditional kind of a thing, it could be that this thing would light up that the priest wore. When God would say yes, that this thing would light up. But God was not answering Saul's prayers by any of these methods by which they were accustomed to God speaking to them.

Now I'm interested in God speaking to me, however. God spoke to some of them through angels. But God has spoken, and God continues to speak to me constantly through His Word. This, I think, is the place where you learn to start knowing to hear the voice of God, getting into the Word. It's so important that you're in the Word, and God has that opportunity to speak to you through His Word.

So God wasn't answering the prayers of Saul,

So Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there's a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, with two men, and they came to the woman at night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I will name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, you know what Saul hath done, he has cut off all of those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land: why are you laying a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul swore to her by Jehovah, saying, As Jehovah lives, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing (1Sa 28:7-10).

Now there of course is that weird mixture in Saul. Here he is talking to a witch, and swearing by the Lord that no evil will come to her if she goes ahead and practices her witchcraft and brings forth a spirit that he is desiring. "As Jehovah lives," swearing by the Lord.

There are a lot of people who are really mixed up in the whole spiritual life, just a total confusion in spiritual things, using spiritual phraseology. You know, it's like planning to rob a bank, and then having a prayer meeting, "Now Lord, help us to pull off this job successfully." It's just really confusion. Here he is engaged in this woman who is possessed by a demon. Actually that's what it means, "a familiar spirit," a demon-possessed woman. Going to her for counsel and advice, bringing back a spirit.

And then the woman said, Whom shall I bring up to thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she screamed: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? for you are Saul. And the king said unto her, Don't be afraid: what did you see? And the woman said, I saw the gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form was he? And she said, He was like an old man covered up; and his coverings with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and he answers me no more, neither by the prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I've called thee, that you may make known to me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Why do you ask me, seeing the Lord is departed from you, and is become your enemy? And the Lord hath done to him, as he spoke by me: for the Lord has taken the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbour, even to David: And because you obeyed not the voice of the Lord, nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me: [Oh, that would be a heavy thing to lay upon somebody wouldn't it?] and he'll deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines (1Sa 28:11-19).

Now did Samuel really come back? Did this witch actually bring back a spirit from the dead? I would like to say I see no reason at all for not believing the story just as it is written. I always feel that the obvious interpretation is the correct interpretation. If you try to force another interpretation into the text, that actually the very fact that you're trying to force something, means that it doesn't fit. I do not understand this whole issue. But I am convinced that even as it is written, so it happened, and that somehow Samuel did come back. That it was indeed Samuel that talked with Saul. The spirit of Samuel was brought back, and that it was a genuine experience of dealing with spirits that have departed and are in the other world.

It would seem that the witch herself was shocked because of what happened. She screamed when she saw Samuel. It could be that she had been using, as these spirit mediums all, often do, just a particular demon spirit that gives them information.

Now there is a reality to the spirit world, there is a reality in spiritism, but you are warned by the Bible to stay away from that kind of stuff. That is, isn't something that you should be dabbling with. But it is possible to contact spirit entities. But as a general rule what a person is contacting is a demon that can disguise himself as different persons.

Now these demons having lived in the various ages, and being in the spirit realm, able to observe many things, are naturally able to tell you facts about your life, and about the past that nobody else ever knew. Usually people are drawn into these kinds of things because the person is able to tell them names, and to tell them experiences that they had as a child, or that they had sometime during their life that is sort of locked up in their own heart. They've never told anybody else, and now this spirit has told me and revealed these things to me, and you get all excited and you think, "Oh, I'm actually contacting the spirit of my mother, because that was something that only my mother and I knew." Not so. Demons knew it too. Thus they are able to rehearse for you conversations that you had, experiences that you had, things that took place. Lying spirits disguising themselves as one of your dead loved ones. There is a reality to the demon spirits and all, and this woman having a familiar spirit, or a demon spirit, was able to consult the demon spirit.

Now there are people who dabble into this realm of spiritism and some of them get spirit guides, and they direct their writing, or they direct their arts, and people get into all kinds of things, using spirit guides. But they are demon spirits who disguise themselves as say the spirit of a writer of the past, or something of this nature.

There is a real world of spirits. There is a real world of demon spirits, as there is the real world of the angelic spirits that are still obedient to God. But it is the world that we are warned not to dabble with, not to get involved with. The fact that they can hypnotize a person and put them in age regression, take them back before their birth, and then supposedly go back to previous lives, and get the names of Annie Murphy and the street she lived on, and all this kind of stuff, doesn't prove reincarnation at all. It only proves demons have been around for a long time, and they can use all kinds of guises in order to deceive people, and draw people into their deceptions.

Now I personally believe that this woman was shocked and surprised when Samuel came back. She expected to have a little conversation with her demon guide, and her demon spirit, and from him to get the information that Saul was seeking. But to her amazement this spirit actually came out of the earth, and she shrieked when she saw it. All of a sudden she realized the truth, "That's Saul." Samuel began to talk to Saul, and God allowed this to happen, a special dispensation of God that surely it isn't a criteria for us to seek to contact the spirits of those that have departed to be with the Lord.

Now Samuel came up out of the earth, prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, every one who died went into Sheol which is in the lower parts of the earth, or in the heart of the earth. Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Sheol was divided into two separate compartments as is taught by Jesus in Luke's gospel chapter sixteen. There was one compartment where Abraham was encouraging, and comforting those who died in faith. There was another part where the sinners were being in a state of torment. Jesus speaks about it very clearly and plainly in Luke's gospel. After the ascension of Jesus Christ or at the ascension of Jesus Christ, those who were being comforted by Abraham, and in that part of Sheol were resurrected with Christ, and went on into the heavenly scene.

For Paul tells us in Ephesians, the fourth chapter, "He who has ascended is the same One who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth, and when He ascended, he led the captives from their captivity." Fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah sixty-one that declared, "He would loose the bonds, and set at liberty those that were captives." So He set at liberty those that were being held captive by death. In Matthew twenty-seven we read, "And the graves of many of the saints were opened, and they were seen walking through the streets of Jerusalem after His resurrection from the dead."

So Samuel coming up out of the earth, spoke to Saul telling him that God had departed from him. What a horrible thing. But you see, what could you expect? He was a man who had departed first from God. "Because you disobeyed the voice of God, God has departed from you. Because you have rejected God, God has rejected you. And tomorrow you and your sons are gonna be here with me."

Saul fell on the ground, he was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: there were no strength left in him; for he had not eaten all that day, nor that evening. The woman came to Saul, and she saw that he was [afraid,] troubled, she said, Behold, your handmaid has obeyed your voice, I've put my life in my hand, I've hearkened unto your words which you spoke unto me. Now I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before you; that you may eat, and have strength, that you may go your way. And he refused, and he said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, pressed upon him until he ate; and so the woman fixed dinner for him (1Sa 28:20-25). (Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

#### X. THE PREACHER'S CRY—PRAY FOR US!

"That the true apostolic preacher must have the prayers of others—good people to give to his ministry its full quota of success, Paul is a preeminent example. He asks, he covets, he pleads in an impassionate way for the help of all God's saints, He knew that in the spiritual realm as elsewhere, in union there is strength; that the consecration and aggregation of faith, desire, and prayer increased the volume of spiritual force until it became overwhelming and irresistible in its power. Units of prayer combined, like drops of water, make an ocean that defies resistance"—E. M. B.

How far does praying for the preacher help preaching? It helps him personally and officially. It helps him to maintain a righteous life, it helps him in preparing his message, and it helps the Word preached by him to run to its appointed goal, unhindered and unhampered.

A praying church creates a spiritual atmosphere most favourable to preaching. What preacher knowing anything of the real work of preaching doubts the veracity of this statement? The spirit of prayer in a congregation begets an atmosphere surcharged with the Spirit of the Highest, removes obstacles and gives the Word of the Lord right of way. The very attitude of such a congregation constitutes an environment most encouraging and favorable to preaching. It renders preaching an easy task; it enables the Word to run quickly and without friction, helped on by the warmth of souls engaged in prayer.

Men in the pew given to praying for the preacher, are like the poles which hold up the wires along which the electric current runs. They are not the power, neither are they the specific agents in making the Word of the Lord effective. But they hold up the wires, along which the divine power runs to the hearts of men. They give liberty to the preacher, exemption from being straitened, and keep him from "getting in the brush." They make conditions favorable for the preaching of the Gospel. Preachers, not a few, who know God, have had large experience and are aware of the truth of these statements. Yet how hard have they found it to preach in some places! This was because they had no "door of utterance," and were hampered in their delivery, there appearing no response whatever to their appeals. On the other hand, at other times, thought flowed easily, words came freely, and there was no failure in utterance. The preacher "had liberty," as the old men used to declare.

The preaching of the Word to a prayerless congregation falls at the very feet of the preacher. It has no traveling force; it stops because the atmosphere is cold, unsympathetic, unfavorable to its running to the hearts of men and women. Nothing is there to help it along. Just as some prayers never go above the head of him who prays, so the preaching of some preachers goes no farther than the front of the

pulpit from which it is delivered. It takes prayer in the pulpit and prayer in the pew to make preaching arresting, life-giving and soul-saving.

The Word of God is inseparably linked with prayer. The two are conjoined, twins from birth, and twins by life. The Apostles found themselves absorbed by the sacred and pressing duty of distributing the alms of the Church, till time was not left for them to pray. They directed that other men should be appointed to discharge this task, that they might be the better able to give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

So it might likewise be said that prayer for the preacher by the church is also inseparably joined to preaching. A praying church is an invaluable help to the faithful preacher. The Word of the Lord runs in such a church, "and is glorified" in the saving of sinners in the reclamation of back-sliders, and in the sanctifying of believers. Paul connects the Word of God closely in prayer in writing to Timothy:

"For every creature of God is good," he says, "and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

And so the Word of the Lord is dependent for its rapid spread and for its full, and most glorious success in prayer.

Paul indicates that prayer transmutes the ills which come to the preacher: "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." It was "through their prayer" he declares these benefits would come to him. And so it is "through the prayer of a church" that the pastor will be the beneficiary of large spiritual things.

In the latter part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have Paul's request for prayer for himself addressed to the Hebrew Christians, basing his request on the grave and eternal responsibilities of the office of a preacher:

"Obey them that have the rule over you," he says, "and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience in all things willing to live honestly."

How little does the Church understand the fearful responsibility attaching to the office and work of the ministry! "For they watch for your souls as they that must give account." God's appointed watchmen, to warn when danger is nigh; God's messengers sent to rebuke, reprove and exhort with all long-suffering; ordained as shepherds to protect the sheep against devouring wolves. How responsible is their position! And they are to give account to God for their work, and are to face a day of reckoning. How much do such men need the prayers of those to whom they minister! And who should be more ready to do this praying than God's people, His own Church, those presumably who are in heart sympathy with the minister and his all-important work, divine in its origin.

Among the last messages of Jesus to His disciples are those found in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel. In the fourteenth, as well as in the others, are some very specific teachings about prayer, designed for their help and encouragement in their future work. We must never lose sight of the fact that these last discourses of Jesus Christ were given to disciples alone, away from the busy crowds, and seem primarily intended for them in their public ministry. In reality, they were words spoken to preachers, for these eleven men were to be the first preachers of the new dispensation.

With this thought in mind, we are able to see the tremendous importance given to prayer by our Lord, and the high place He gave it in the life-work of preachers, both in this day and in that day.

First our Lord proposes that He will pray for these disciples, that the Father might send them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world could not receive. He preceded this statement by a direct command to them to pray, to pray for anything, with the assurance that they would receive what they asked for.

If, therefore, there was value in their own praying, and it was of great worth that our Lord should intercede for them, then of course it would be worth while that the people to whom they would minister should also pray for them. It is no wonder then that the Apostle Paul should take the key from our Lord, and several times break out with the urgent exhortation, "Pray for us."

True praying done by the laymen helps in many ways, but in one particular way. It helps very materially the preacher to be brave and true. Read Paul's request to the Ephesians:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication," he says, "in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel; for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak as I ought to speak."

How much of the boldness and loyalty of Paul was dependent upon the prayers of the Church, or rather how much he was helped at these two points, we may not know. But unquestionably there must have come to him through the prayers of the Christians at Ephesus, Colossæ and Thessalonica, much aid in preaching the Word, of which he would have been deprived had these churches not have prayed for him. And in like manner, in modern times, has the gift of ready and effective utterance in the preacher been bestowed upon a preacher through the prayers of a praying church. And Joshua, too, the successor of Moses, and a man seemingly courageous, must needs be fortified by God against fear, lest he shrink from duty, and be reduced to discouragement and timidity. "Be strong and of good courage," God commanded him. "Have I not commanded

thee? Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

As good and true a man as Jeremiah was sorely tempted to fear and had to be warned and strengthened lest he prove false to his charge. When God ordained him a prophet unto the nations, Jeremiah began to excuse himself on the ground that he could not speak, being but a child in that regard. So the Lord had to safeguard him from the temptation of fear, that he might not prove faithless: "Thou therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them," God said to His servant, "all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them."

Since these great men of old time were so beset with this temptation, and disposed to shrink from duty we need not be surprised that preachers of our own day are to be found in similar case. The devil is the same in all ages; nor has human nature undergone any change. How needful, then, that we pray for the leaders of our Israel especially that they may receive the gift of boldness, and speak the Word of God with courage.

This was one reason why Paul insisted so vigorously that the brethren pray for him, so that a door of utterance might be given him, and that he might be delivered from the fear of man, and blessed with holy boldness in preaching the Word.

The challenge and demand of the world in our own day is that Christianity be made practical; that its precepts be expressed in practice, and brought down from the realm of the ideal to the levels of every-day life. This can be done only by praying men, who being much in sympathy with their ministers will not cease to bear them up in their prayers before God.

A preacher of the Gospel cannot meet the demands made upon him, alone, any more than the vine can bear grapes without branches. The men who sit in the pews are to be the fruit-bearing ones. They are to translate the "ideal" of the pulpit into the "real" of daily life and action. But they will not do it, they cannot do it, if they be not devoted to God and much given to prayer. Devotion to God and devotion to prayer are one and the same thing.

#### XI. MODERN EXAMPLES OF PRAYER

"When the dragon-fly rends his husk and harnesses himself, in a clean plate of sapphire mail, his is a pilgrimage of one or two sunny days over the fields and pastures wet with dew, yet nothing can exceed the marvelous beauty in which he is decked. No flowers on earth have a richer blue than the pure colour of his cuirass. So is it in the high spiritual sphere. The most complete spiritual loveliness may be obtained in the shortest time, and the stripling may die a hundred years old, in character and grace."—History Of David Brainerd

God has not confined Himself to Bible days in showing what can be done through prayer. In modern times, also, He is seen to be the same prayer-hearing God as aforetime. Even in these latter days He has not left Himself without witness. Religious biography and Church history, alike, furnish us with many noble examples and striking illustrations of prayer, its necessity, its worth and its fruits, all tending to the encouragement of the faith of God's saints and all urging them on to more and better praying. God has not confined Himself to Old and New Testament times in employing praying men as His agents in furthering His cause on earth, and He has placed Himself under obligation to answer their prayers just as much as He did the saints of old. A selection from these praying saints of modern times will show us how they valued prayer, what it meant to them, and what it meant to God.

Take for example, the instance of Samuel Rutherford, the Scottish preacher, exiled to the north of Scotland, forbidden to preach, and banished from his home and pastoral charge. Rutherford lived between 1600 and 1661. He was a member of the Westminster Assembly, Principal of New College, and Rector of St. Andrews' University. He is said to have been one of the most moving and affectionate preachers of his time, or, perhaps, in any age of the Church. Men said of him, "He is always praying," and concerning his and his wife's praying, one wrote: "He who had heard either pray or speak, might have learned to bemoan his ignorance. Oh, how many times have I been convinced by observing them of the evil of insincerity before God and unsavouriness in discourse! He so prayed for his people that he himself says, 'There I wrestled with the Angel and prevailed.'"

He was ordered to appear before Parliament to answer the charge of high treason, although a man of scholarly attainments and rare genius. At times he was depressed and gloomy; especially was this the case when he was first banished and silenced from preaching, for there were many murmurings and charges against him. But his losses and crosses were so sanctified that Christ became more and more to him. Marvelous are the statements of his estimate of Christ. This devoted man of prayer wrote many letters during his exile to preachers, to state officers, to lords temporal and spiritual, to honourable and holy men, to honourable and holy women, all breathing an intense devotion to Christ, and all born of a life of great devotion to prayer.

Ardour and panting after God have been characteristics of great souls in all ages of the Church and Samuel Rutherford was a striking example of this fact. He was a living example of the truth that he who prays always, will be enveloped in devotion and joined to Christ in bonds of holy union.

Then there was Henry Martyn, scholar, saint, missionary, and apostle to India. Martyn was born February 18, 1781, and sailed for India August 31, 1805. He died at Tokal, Persia, October 16, 1812. Here is part of what he said about himself while a missionary:

"What a knowledge of man and acquaintance with the Scriptures, and what communion with God and study of my own heart ought to prepare me for the awful work of a messenger from God on business of the soul."

Said one of this consecrated missionary:

"Oh, to be able to emulate his excellencies, his elevation of piety, his diligence, his superiority to the world, his love for souls, his anxiety to improve all occasions to do souls good, his insight into the mystery of Christ, and his heavenly temper! These are the secrets of the wonderful impression he made in India."

It is interesting and profitable to note some of the things which Martyn records in his diary. Here is an example:

"The ways of wisdom appear more sweet and reasonable than ever," he says, "and the world more insipid and vexatious. The chief thing I mourn over is my want of power, and lack of fervour in secret prayer, especially when attempting to plead for the heathen. Warmth does not increase within me in proportion to my light."

If Henry Martyn, so devoted, ardent and prayerful, lamented his lack of power and want of fervour in prayer, how ought our cold and feeble praying abase us in the very dust? Alas, how rare are such praying men in the Church of our own day!

Again we quote a record from his diary. He had been quite ill, but had recovered and was filled with thankfulness because it had pleased God to restore him to life and health again.

"Not that I have yet recovered my former strength," he says, "but I consider myself sufficiently restored to prosecute my journey. My daily prayer is that my late chastisement may have its intended effect, and make me, all the rest of my days, more humble and less self-confident."

"Self-confidence has often led me down fearful lengths, and would, without God's gracious interference, prove my endless perdition. I seem to be made to feel this evil of my heart more than any other at this time. In prayer, or when I write or converse on the subject, Christ appears to me my life and my strength; but at other times I am thoughtless and bold, as if I had all life and strength in myself. Such neglects on our part are a diminution of our joys."

Among the last entries in this consecrated missionary's journal we find the following:

"I sat in the orchard and thought, with sweet comfort and peace, of my God, in solitude, my Company, my Friend, my Comforter. Oh, when shall time give place to eternity!"

Note the words, "in solitude,"—away from the busy haunts of men, in a lonely place, like his Lord, he went out to meditate and pray.

Brief as this summary is, it suffices to show how fully and faithfully Henry Martyn exercised his ministry of prayer. The following may well serve to end our portrayal of him:

"By daily weighing the Scriptures, with prayer, he waxed riper and riper in his ministry. Prayer and the Holy Scriptures were those wells of salvation out of which he drew daily the living water for his thirsty immortal soul. Truly may it be said of him, he prayed always with all prayer and supplication, in the Spirit, and watched thereunto with all perseverance."

David Brainerd, the missionary to the Indians, is a remarkable example of a praying man of God. Robert Hale thus speaks of him:

"Such invincible patience and self-denial; such profound humility, exquisite prudence, indefatigable industry; such devotedness to God, or rather such absorption of the whole soul in zeal for the divine glory and the salvation of men, is scarcely to be paralleled since the age of the Apostles. Such was the intense ardour of his mind that it seems to have diffused the spirit of a martyr over the common incidents of his life."

Dr. A. J. Gordon speaks thus of Brainerd:

"In passing through Northampton, Mass., I went into the old cemetery, swept off the snow that lay on the top of the slab, and I read these simple words:

"Sacred to the memory of David Brainerd, the faithful and devoted missionary to the Susquehanna, Delaware and Stockbridge Indians of America, who died in this town, October 8th, 1717.'

"That was all there was on the slab. Now that great man did his greatest work by prayer. He was in the depths of those forests alone, unable to speak the language of the Indians, but he spent whole days literally in prayer. What was he praying for? He knew he could not reach these savages, for he did not understand their language. If he wanted to speak at all, he must find somebody who could vaguely interpret his thought. Therefore he knew that anything he could do must be absolutely dependent upon God. So he spent whole days in praying, simply that the power of the Holy Ghost might come upon him so unmistakably that these people would not be able to stand before him.

"What was his answer? Once he preached through a drunken interpreter, a man so intoxicated that he could hardly stand up. This was the best he could do. Yet scores were converted through that sermon. We can account for it only that it was the tremendous power of God behind him.

"Now this man prayed in secret in the forest. A little while afterward, William Carey read his life, and by its impulse he went to India. Payson read it as a young man, over twenty years old, and he said that he had never been so impressed by anything in his life as by the

story of Brainerd. Murray McCheyne read it, and he likewise was impressed by it.

"But all I care is simply to enforce this thought, that the hidden life, a life whose days are spent in communion with God, in trying to reach the source of power, is the life that moves the world. Those living such lives may be soon forgotten. There may be no one to speak a eulogy over them when they are dead. The great world may take no account of them. But by and by, the great moving current of their lives will begin to tell, as in the case of this young man, who died at about thirty years of age. The missionary spirit of this nineteenth century is more due to the prayers and consecration of this one man than to any other one.

"So I say. And yet that most remarkable thing is that Jonathan Edwards, who watched over him all those months while he was slowly dying of consumption, should also say: 'I praise God that it was in His Providence that he should die in my house, that I might hear his prayers, and that I might witness his consecration, and that I might be inspired by his example.'

"When Jonathan Edwards wrote that great appeal to Christendom to unite in prayer for the conversion of the world, which has been the trumpet call of modern missions, undoubtedly it was inspired by this dying missionary."

To David Brainerd's spirit, John Wesley bore this testimony: "I preached and afterward made a collection for the Indian schools in America. A large sum of money is now collected. But will money convert heathens? Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit, and nothing can stand before them. But without this, what will gold or silver do? No more than lead or iron."

Some selections from Brainerd's diary will be of value as showing what manner of man he was:

"My soul felt a pleasing yet painful concern," he writes, "lest I should spend some moments without God. Oh, may I always live to God! In the evening I was visited by some friends, and spent the time in prayer, and such conversation as tended to edification. It was a comfortable season to my soul. I felt an ardent desire to spend every moment with God. God is unspeakably gracious to me continually. In time past, He has given me inexpressible sweetness in the performance of duty. Frequently my soul has enjoyed much of God, but has been ready to say, 'Lord, it is good to be here;' and so indulge sloth while I have lived on the sweetness of my feelings. But of late God has been pleased to keep my soul hungry almost continually, so that I have been filled with a kind of pleasing pain. When I really enjoy God, I feel my desires of Him the more insatiable, and my thirstings after holiness the more unquenchable.

"Oh, that I may feel this continual hunger, and not be retarded, but rather animated by every duster from Canaan, to reach forward in the narrow way, for the full enjoyment and possession of the heavenly inheritance! Oh, may I never loiter in my heavenly journey!

"It seems as if such an unholy wretch as I never could arrive at that blessedness, to be holy as God is holy. At noon I longed for sanctification and conformity to God. Oh, that is the one thing, the all!

"Toward night enjoyed much sweetness in secret prayer, so that my soul longed for an arrival in the heavenly country, the blessed paradise of God."

If inquiry be made as to the secret of David Brainerd's heavenly spirit, his deep consecration and exalted spiritual state, the answer will be found in the last sentence quoted above. He was given to much secret prayer, and was so close to God in his life and spirit that prayer brought forth much sweetness to his inner soul.

We have cited the foregoing cases as illustrative of the great fundamental fact that God's great servants are men devoted to the ministry of prayer; that they are God's agents on earth who serve Him in this way, and who carry on His work by this holy means.

Louis Harms was born in Hanover, in 1809, and then came a time when he was powerfully convicted of sin. Said he, "I have never known what fear was. But when I came to the knowledge of my sins, I quaked before the wrath of God, so that my limbs trembled." He was mightily converted to God by reading the Bible. Rationalism, a dead orthodoxy, and worldliness, held the multitudes round Hermansburgh, his native town. His father, a Lutheran minister, dying, he became his successor.

He began with all the energy of his soul to work for Christ, and to develop a church of a pure, strong type. The fruit was soon evident. There was a quickening on every hand, attendance at public services increased, reverence for the Bible grew, conversation on sacred things revived, while infidelity, worldliness and dead orthodoxy vanished like a passing cloud. Harms proclaimed a conscious and present Christ, the Comforter, in the full energy of His mission, the revival of apostolic piety and power. The entire neighbourhood became regular attendants at church, the Sabbath was restored to its sanctity, and hallowed with strict devotion, family altars were erected in the homes, and when the noon bell sounded, every head was bowed in prayer. In a very short time the whole aspect of the country was entirely changed. The revival in Hermansburgh was essentially a prayer revival, brought about by prayer and yielding fruits of prayer in a rich and an abundant ingathering.

William Carvosso, an old-time Methodist class-leader, was one of the best examples which modern times has afforded of what was probably the religious life of Christians in the apostolic age. He was a prayer-leader, a class-leader, a steward and a trustee, but never aspired to be a preacher. Yet a preacher he was of the very first quality, and a master in the art and science of soul-saving. He was a singular instance of a man learning the simplest rudiments late in life. He had up to the age of sixty-five years never written a single sentence, yet he wrote letters which would make volumes, and a book which was regarded as a spiritual classic in the great world-wide Methodist Church.

Not a page nor a letter, it is believed, was ever written by him on any other subject but religion. Here are some of his brief utterances which give us an insight into his religious character. "I want to be more like Jesus." "My soul thirsteth for Thee, O God." "I see nothing will do, O God, but being continually filled with Thy presence and glory."



This was the continual out-crying of his inner soul, and this was the strong inward impulse which moved the outward man. At one time we hear him exclaiming, "Glory to God! This is a morning without a cloud." Cloudless days were native to his sunny religion and his gladsome spirit. Continual prayer and turning all conversation toward Christ in every company and in every home, was the inexorable law he followed, until he was gathered home. On the anniversary of his spiritual birth when he was born again, in great joyousness of spirit he calls it to mind, and breaks forth: "Blessed be Thy name, O God! The last has been the best of the whole. I may say with Bunyan, 'I have got into that land where the sun shines night and day.' I thank Thee, O my God, for this heaven, this element of love and joy, in which my soul now lives."

Here is a sample of Carvosso's spiritual experiences, of which he had many: "I have sometimes had seasons of remarkable visitation from the presence of the Lord," he says. "I well remember one night when in bed being so filled, so over-powered with the glory of God, that had there been a thousand suns shining at noonday, the brightness of that divine glory would have eclipsed the whole. I was constrained to shout aloud for joy. It was the overwhelming power of saving grace. Now it was that I again received the impress of the seal and the earnest of the Spirit in my heart. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord I was changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Language fails in giving but a faint description of what I there experienced. I can never forget it in time nor to all eternity. "Man years before I was sealed by the Spirit in a somewhat similar manner. While walking out one day, I was drawn to turn aside on the public road, and under the canopy of the skies, I was moved to kneel down to pray. I had not long been praying with God before I was so visited from Him that I was overpowered by the divine glory, and I shouted till I could be heard at a distance. It was a weight of glory that I seemed incapable of bearing in the body, and therefore I cried out, perhaps unwisely, Lord, stay Thy hand. In this glorious baptism these words came to my heart with indescribable power: 'I have sealed thee unto the day of redemption.' "Oh, I long to be filled more with God! Lord, stir me up more in earnest. I want to be more like Jesus. I see that nothing will do but being continually filled with the divine presence and glory. I know all that Thou hast is mine, but I want to feel a close union. Lord, increase my faith." Such was William Carvosso—a man whose life was impregnated with the spirit of prayer, who lived on his knees, so to speak, and who belonged to that company of praying saints which has blessed the earth.

Jonathan Edwards must be placed among the praying saints—one whom God mightily used through the instrumentality of prayer. As in the instance of the great New Englander, purity of heart should be ingrained in the very foundation areas of every man who is a true leader of his fellows and a minister of the Gospel of Christ and a constant practicer in the holy office of prayer. A sample of the utterances of this mighty man of God is here given in the shape of a resolution which he formed, and wrote down: "Resolved," he says, "to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz., with the greatest openness to declare my ways to God, and to lay my soul open to God—all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and everything and every circumstance." We are not surprised, therefore, that the result of such fervid and honest praying was to lead him to record in his diary: "It was my continual strife day and night, and my constant inquiry how I should be more holy, and live more holily. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness. I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ." The character and work of Jonathan Edwards were exemplifications of the great truth that the ministry of prayer is the efficient agency in every truly God-ordered work and life. He himself gives some particulars about his life when a boy. He might well be called the "Isaiah of the Christian dispensation." There was united in him great mental powers, ardent piety, and devotion to study, unequaled save by his devotion to God. Here is what he says about himself: "When a boy I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious conversation with other boys. I used to meet with them to pray together. So it is God's will through His wonderful grace, that the prayers of His saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. Pray much for the ministers and the Church of God." The great powers of Edwards' mind and heart were exercised to procure an agreed union in extraordinary prayer of God's people everywhere. His life, efforts and his character are an exemplification of his statement. "The heaven I desire," he says, "is a heaven spent with God; an eternity spent in the presence of divine love, and in holy communion with Christ." At another time he said: "The soul of a true Christian appears like a little white flower in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory, rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrance, standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers." Again he writes: "Once as I rode out in the woods for my health, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner has been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God as Mediator between God and man, and of His wonderful, great, full, pure, and sweet grace and love, and His meek and gentle condescension. This grace that seemed so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour. It kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust; to be full of Christ alone, to love Him with my whole heart." As it was with Jonathan Edwards, so it is with all great intercessors. They come into that holy and elect condition of mind and heart by a thorough self-dedication to God, by periods of God's revelation to them, making distinct marked eras in their spiritual history, eras never to be forgotten, in which faith mounts up with wings as eagles, and has given it a new and fuller vision of God, a stronger grasp of faith, a sweeter, clearer vision of all things heavenly, and eternal, and a blessed intimacy with, and access to, God.

("The Weapons Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 10-11 ; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer. Public Domain)

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

Chapel Flock ♦ PO Box 161102 ♦ Wichita, KS ♦ 67216 ♦ (316) 243-1438

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