



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, I want to be moved with compassion toward my spouse. Help me to truly feel compassion for what my spouse is going through, and teach me how to let mercy flow from my spirit to strengthen him (or her). I know that my spirit is filled with everything my spouse needs in moments of difficulty, so I want to know how to release those good things from my spirit to strengthen and edify him (or her). Holy Spirit, please help me be moved with compassion toward my spouse. Teach me how to esteem and to treat him (or her) as more important than myself, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

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[On My Knee's-
Jaci Velasquez](#)

[Flower In The Rain-
Jaci Velasquez](#)

[I Will Rest In You-
Jaci Velasquez](#)

[Sweet Surrender-
Jaci Velasquez](#)

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[" Every Knee Shall Bow" Chuck Smith](#)

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Cathe Laurie](#)

1 THEN BOAZ went up to the city's gate and sat down there, and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken came by. He said to him, Ho! Turn aside and sit down here. So he turned aside and sat down. 2 And Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city and said, Sit down here. And they sat down. 3 And he said to the kinsman, Naomi, who has returned from the country of Moab, has sold the parcel of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to let you hear of it, saying, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then say so, that I may know; for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I am [next of kin] after you. And he said, I will redeem it. 5 Then Boaz said, The day you buy the field of Naomi, you must buy also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead man, to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance. 6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest [by marrying a Moabitess] I endanger my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it. 7 Now formerly in Israel this was the custom concerning redeeming and exchanging. To confirm a transaction, a man pulled off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the way of attesting in Israel. 8 Therefore, when the kinsman said to Boaz, Buy it for yourself, he pulled off his sandal. 9 And Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from the hand of Naomi. 10 Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his birthplace. You are witnesses this day. 11 And all the people at the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the household of Israel. May you do worthily and get wealth (power) in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 And let your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman. 13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord caused her to conceive, and she bore a son. 14 And the women said to Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, Who has not left you this day without a close kinsman, and may his name be famous in Israel. 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher and supporter in your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him. 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom and became his nurse. 17 And her neighbor women gave him a name, saying, A son is born to Naomi. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David [the ancestor of Jesus Christ]. 18 Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, 19 Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, 20 Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, 21 Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, 22 Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David [the ancestor of Jesus Christ].

Chapter 4

So when Boaz rose up he went to the gate of the city, he sat down there: and, behold, the kinsman of which he was speaking came by, and he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And so he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit down here. And so they sat down. And he said to the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, is selling a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: And I thought to let you know, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and the elders of the people. And if you will redeem it, redeem it: but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it besides thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it (Rth 4:1-4).

Now another Jewish law declared that whenever you sold a parcel of land there was always a reversionary clause where you had the right to buy the land back again within a specified period of time. Usually they would write up the deed in a scroll, and then they would seal the scroll. In that specified period of time, when the right of redemption had come, or the reversionary clause, then you could bring the title deed, and you could break the seals and you could, with the elders of the city there present, and you will show that you have the right and the ability to buy the field back. You could always buy back your property. The revision clause was in every sale. The right of buying it back. Now under the Jewish law if you were not able because you were too poor, to buy the land back when the time of redemption had come, then one of your family members could step in and buy it in order that it remained in the family, because God wanted to preserve the family inheritances in Israel. So the next of kin could come in and take your part, or your place in the purchasing, or the repurchasing of the land.

So when Naomi and Elimelech had moved to Moab they had sold their parcel, and according to the reversionary clause, the time was up, and now it was again coming on the block, the time to redeem it. So he said, "You know Naomi is getting ready to sell this parcel, she can't redeem it. The right of redemption is yours and if you're gonna redeem it, then redeem it. If not, there's no one except me after you, and so what do you want to do?" The fellow says, "Well, I'll redeem it." And so Boaz said unto him, In the day that you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance (Rth 4:5). In other words, "You're gonna have to take Ruth a wife and have a son in order that the name of the inheritance might continue. The fellow said, "Oh man that would mess up my own inheritance." Cause he's already married, and he already had children lined up for the inheritance. He said, "Man, my wife wouldn't go for that. We can't handle that one." He said to Boaz, "Why don't you redeem it?" So Boaz was very happy about that turn of events. And so the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for my self, lest I mess up my own inheritance: you redeem it take the right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it (Rth 4:6).

Now there was a custom in the former times. Now this custom died out, however it is interesting, there was a lady recently in Israel who tried to get her brother-in-law to enact this old law because her husband died. So she tried to get him to marry her and all to fulfill the ancient law. He refused to do it, and so she insisted that he take off, she sued the poor thing, and take off the shoe so she could spit in his face and all. So they did go through this ceremony of recent vintage in Israel, but actually it was a custom that died out in time. But it is saying in the older days they did have this custom. So the book of Ruth was written at some later date. And so he's recording, Now this was the manner in the former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man had to take off his shoe, and give it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. [So the fellow took off his shoe and handed it to Boaz.] Therefore the kinsman said to Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said to the elders, and to all the people, You are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's

and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead is not cut off from among his brethren, and the gate of his place: you are witnesses this day (Rth 4:7-10). So, "I have purchased the whole thing, all that belonged to Naomi, and to Elimelech, and to Mahlon, and Chilion, and I have purchased Ruth to be my wife.

Now here is an interesting case. Where because of his love for Ruth, he bought the field in order that he might obtain the bride. His primary interest was not the field at all. He was a very mighty man of wealth. He didn't need any more fields. But he bought the field in order to obtain the bride. In that he becomes a very beautiful picture of Jesus Christ, who bought the world in order that He might purchase His bride, the church, out of the world. Not interested necessarily in the planet earth as such, but interested, and in love with His bride. Jesus purchased the world in order to take His treasure.

So in the kingdom parables, "The kingdom is like unto a man going through a field, discovering a treasure, who for the joy thereof immediately goes out and sells all that he had in order that he might buy the field, and obtain the treasure"(Matthew 13:44). So Jesus seeing the treasure, His church, His bride, within the world, bought the whole world in order to take His bride out of it. Beautiful, beautiful sort of a parallel here with Boaz and Ruth, and Jesus and the church.

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are the witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem: And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman (Rth 4:11-12).

Now it is interesting that they speak of Judah and Tamar and Pharez, because here is where this whole thing, this particular law I mentioned earlier, that one of Judah's sons married Tamar, he died without having any children. Judah gave the other son; he died without having any children. Judah then was reluctant to give his third son, "Wait until he grows up; he's too young." After a period of waiting and all, Judah hadn't come through with the third son. So as I said, Tamar took things into her own hands. What she did is she put on the clothes of a prostitute, and she went out and sat there at a place in the path where Judah was walking by. Judah—she was all veiled, had the garb of a prostitute on. He thought she was a prostitute. He propositioned her.

And she said, "Well, what will you pay me?" He said, "Well, I'll give you a little goat out of the flock." She said, "Well, how do I know you'll come through with it?" He said, "Well, I'll give you my ring as a pledge." So he came in unto Tamar, had relations with her, and gave her his ring as a pledge that he would send back a goat to her. That was what he propositioned for. So Tamar took off the clothes of a prostitute, went back home, and was pregnant. Judah sent his servant back to get his ring back with a young little goat. The guy came and he looked and there was no prostitute sitting there in this area where Judah said she was. So he said to the guys around there, "Where's the prostitute that usually hangs out here?" They said, "There is no prostitute that hangs out here." So he came back to Judah and said, "Hey, I couldn't find any, and the fellows said there isn't any prostitute that hangs out there." So Judah said, "Oh well let it go." Then word came to Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is pregnant." He said, "Bring her forth, we'll stone her!" So she came forth, and she held out the ring, and she said, "By the man who owns this ring am I pregnant."

Now you see it was the obligation of a kinsman to raise up a child for the dead son. Judah was trapped by the young gal into doing it. He acknowledged that she was, "You're more righteous than I am. I was really withholding. You're more righteous than I am." The son that was born was called Pharez. He became a part of the line of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. So he was also of the line of Elimelech, coming on down, he was one of the ancestors of Elimelech.

So the people said, here's a similar situation, an older man fulfilling the kinsman part, raising up a son, "And may the Lord bless you, and may she be like Tamar who bore Pharez. May you have a son and may there be a progeny that comes forth, a blessed progeny that comes forth from this relationship." So the people in their congratulations to him go back into his own ancestry to a somewhat similar situation, at least the situation where the kinsman raised up the family name for those who had died. So, "Let your house be like the house of Pharez whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman." So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said to Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, which has not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loves thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him (Rth 4:13-15).

So Naomi who said, "Call me bitter" is now experiencing really the blessings and the joy of a grandson knowing now that the family name is not gonna die. They're saying, "May he be a blessing unto you," and so forth, "and a nourisher of your old age." And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became a nurse unto it. [Actually she wet-nursed then her little grandson which was a very common thing in those days.] And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed [Which means "worshiper."] and he is the father of Jesse, who is the father of David (Rth 4:16-17). So the grandfather of David, who became king of Israel, this is the parentage and all. Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, Amminadab begat Nahshon, Nahshon begat Salmon, Salmon begat Boaz, Boaz begat Obed, Obed begat Jesse, Jesse begat David (Rth 4:18-22). So ten generations are listed from Pharez unto David. So we have the background of the genealogy of David, which also becomes the background of the genealogy of the background of Jesus Christ, for Christ came through the genealogy of David, which came through the genealogy of Pharez, who was born of Tamar, by Judah in this unsavory kind of a situation. Here you have a Moabitess who were cursed by God, as far as the children of Israel were concerned, who could not come into the house of God till the tenth generation and here happens to be ten generations listed to David. So you, you have the line of Christ, so that no matter what your background, you can always identify with Him. You say, "Well, my relatives weren't the nicest

people in the block." Well, neither were His. Thus each man can identify with Jesus Christ in a unique and special way. Even as Boaz was the kinsman redeemer, fulfilled the law, redeemed the property in order to get the bride, so Jesus Christ is our kinsman redeemer. He became a man in order that He might be next of kin to man, in order that He could redeem man. It was necessary for Him in order to be the kinsman redeemer, the goel, to become a man. That was an essential. That is why the incarnation, so that as a man He could be a kinsman redeemer to redeem man, because the earth had been sold by Adam to Satan.

Now the whole deal has been wrapped up in a scroll and it's sealed with seven seals. Satan now rules the world: it's his. It belongs to him. He took it from Adam, or Adam actually sold out to Satan. Jesus came to redeem the world back to God, to pay the price of the redemption, which was His own blood, His death. Now in Hebrews it says, "God has put all things into subjection unto Him, Jesus Christ" (Hebrews 2:8), but we do not yet see all things in subjection to Him. We don't see the whole thing established as it's going to be, the Kingdom age. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels in order that He might suffer death. Crowned with glory and honor, waiting really for that day in which the earth is to be redeemed back to God.

Now there is a period of time in the history of Israel when Saul was king over Israel. Because of his disobedience to God, God said to Samuel, "Go down to the house of Jesse and anoint one of his sons to be the king." So Samuel came down to the house of Jesse, and the first son—Iliad came in, good looking, big strong guy. And Samuel said, "Wow what a good looking, surely this is the one God wants."

God said, "Hey no, no. You look on the outward appearance, but I look on the heart." So one by one Jesse paraded his sons through, and the Lord didn't bear witness to any of them. Finally Samuel said, "Is that all the boys you've got? "I've got one more but he's just a kid. He's out there watching the sheep. I didn't figure he was gonna count." "Well bring him in." He went out and whistled. David came running in sweaty and dirty. The Lord said to Samuel, "That's the one." Samuel took this cruise of oil and poured it over David's head, and this little kid's standing there with oil running down him, and he didn't know what was going on, you know. But God anointed him king over Israel. Now what happened? Did Saul suddenly advocate the throne, and David's sitting on it? Oh no, no, no. Saul now began to try to destroy David. He attempted to kill him, he attempted to drive him, ultimately drove him out of the country. For Saul was trying to hang on to that which was no longer rightfully his. He was doing his best by force to hold on to that which didn't belong to him anymore.

Now we have a sequel to that. The world technically belongs to Jesus. He redeemed it, He paid the price. Yet, we do not yet see all things into subjection unto Him. Satan is still hanging on doing his best by force to drive Jesus out. To hang on to that which is no longer rightfully his, to hold by force that which is no longer rightfully his. But the day is coming as is according to the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation when this scroll with the seven seals will be brought forth.

The angel will declare, "Who is worthy to take this scroll, and to loose the seals?" And Jesus will step forth as the Lamb that hath been slain. He'll take this scroll out of the right hand of God as the church sings his praises, "Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll, and to loose the seals, for He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood." This word redemption again. "He's redeemed us by His blood out of all of the nations, tribes, tongues, and people, and hath made us unto our God, kings, and priests and we shall reign with Him upon the earth."

Then as you go through the book of Revelation, you see Him beginning to break the seals. In the tenth chapter He comes back upon the earth, sets one foot upon the earth, one upon the sea, holds up the scroll that is now open, the title deed showing His right as they declare, "The kingdoms of this world have now become the kingdoms of our Lord." He begins His reign, there shall be no longer delay, and He begins His reign over the earth. He takes that which is rightfully His, lays claim to it, and establishes God's kingdom upon the earth.

So here you have in the history of Israel, actually in the history of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, a little foreshadowing of the future when Jesus comes as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, to take that which is rightfully His. But the whole transaction as Boaz had the elders of the city there, and they went through this whole thing, so the twenty-four elders gathered in heaven around the throne as this legal transaction takes place. Of course, we will be gathered there too, because we've got to sing this song, because only we can sing it. As this whole thing is consummated there in heaven. Oh, I can hardly wait.

You know Satan has had his day. You look at the world today, and you see the results of rebellion against God. "Oh Lord Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Shall we pray.

Father, we thank You for the hope of Thy soon coming kingdom, Thy return for Your church and our being gathered together with Thee around the throne of God. When You take that authority and dominion that is rightfully Yours because You died. Your blood was shed for our redemption. Lord, give us that strength that we need, that guidance that we need, that wisdom that we need in the meantime, as we Lord, seek to represent You and Your kingdom in this foreign territory. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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

VIII. PRAYERLESSNESS IN THE PULPIT

"Henry Martyn laments that 'want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer through incessant sermon-making had produced much strangeness between God and his soul.' He judges that he had dedicated too much time to public ministrations and too little to private communion with God. He was much impressed with the need of setting apart times for fasting and to devote times to for solemn prayer. Resulting from this he records 'Was assisted this morning to pray for two hours.'"—E. M. B.

All God's saints came to their sainthood by the way of prayer. The saints could do nothing without prayer. We can go further and say that the angels in heaven can do nothing without prayer, but can do all things by praying. These messengers of the Highest are largely dependent on the prayers of the saints for the sphere and power of their usefulness, which open avenues for angelic usefulness and create missions for them on the earth. And as it is with all the Apostles, saints and angels in heaven, so is it of preachers. "The angels of the churches" can do nothing without prayer which opens doors of usefulness and gives power and point to their words.

How can a preacher preach effectively, make impressions on hearts and minds, and have fruits to his ministry, who does not get his message first-hand from God? How can he deliver a rightful message without having his faith quickened, his vision cleared, and his heart warmed by his closeting with God?

It would be well for all of us, in this connection, to read again Isaiah's vision recorded in the seventh chapter of his prophecy when, as he waited, and confessed and prayed before the throne, the angel touched his lips with a live coal from God's altar:

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me," he says, "having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged."

Oh, the need there is for present-day preachers to have their lips touched with a live coal from the altar of God! This fire is brought to the mouths of those prophets who are of a prayerful spirit, and who wait in the secret place for the appointed angel to bring the living flame. Preachers of the same temper as Isaiah received visits from the angel who brings live coals to touch their lips. Prayer always brings the living flame to unloose tongues, to open doors of utterance, and to open great and effectual doors of doing good. This, above all else, is the great need of the prophets of God. As far as the abiding interests of religion are concerned, a pulpit without a closet will always be a barren thing. Blessed is the preacher whose pulpit and closet are hard by each other, and who goes from the one into the other. To consecrate no place to prayer, is to make a beggarly showing, not only in praying, but in holy living, for secret prayer and holy living are so closely joined that they can never be dis severed. A preacher or a Christian may live a decent, religious life, without secret prayer, but decency and holiness are two widely different things. And the former is attained only by secret prayer. A preacher may preach in an official, entertaining and learned way, without prayer, but between this kind of preaching and the sowing of God's precious

seed there is distance not easily covered. We cannot declare too often or too strongly that prayer, involving all of its elements, is the one prime condition of the success of Christ's kingdom, and that all else is secondary and incidental. Prayerful preachers, prayerful men and prayerful women only can press this Gospel with aggressive power. They only can put in it conquering forces. Preachers may be sent out by the thousand, their equipments be ever so complete, but unless they be men skilled in the trade of prayer, trained to its martial and exhaustive exercise, their going will be lacking in power and effectiveness. Moreover, except the men and women who are behind these preachers, who furnish their equipment, are men and women in whose characters prayer has become to be serious labour, their outlay will be a vain and bootless effort.

Prayer should be the inseparable accompaniment of all missionary effort, and must be the one equipment of the missionaries as they go out to their fields of labour, and enter upon their delicate and responsible tasks. Prayer and missions go hand in hand. A prayerless missionary is a failure before he goes out, while he is out, and when he returns to his native land. A prayerless board of missions, too, needs to learn the lesson of the necessity of prayer.

Prayer enthrones God as sovereign and elevates Jesus Christ to sit with Him, and had Christian preachers used to its full the power of prayer, long ere this the "kingdoms of this world would have become the kingdom of God and of his Christ." Added to all the missionary addresses, the money raised for missions, to the scores being sent out to needy fields, is prayer. Missions have their root in prayer, must have prayer in all of its plans, and prayer must precede, go with and follow all of its missionaries and labourers.

In the face of all difficulties which face the Church in its great work on earth, and the almost superhuman and complex obstacles in the way of evangelizing the world, God encourages us by His strongest promises: "Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show great and mighty things which thou knowest not." The revelations of God to him who is of a prayerful spirit go far beyond the limits of the praying. God commits Himself to answer the specific prayer, but He does not stop there. He says, "Ask of me things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me." Think over that remarkable engagement of God to those who pray, "Command ye me," He actually places Himself at the command of praying preachers and a praying Church. And this is a sufficient answer to all doubts, fears and unbelief, and a wonderful inspiration to do God's work in His own way, which means by the way of prayer.

And as if to still fortify the faith of His ministry and of His Church, to hedge about and fortify against any temptation to doubt or discouragement, He declares by the mouth of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that ye can ask or think." It is unquestionably taught that preachers in going forward with their God-appointed tasks, in their prayers, can command God, which is to command His ability, His presence and His power. "Certainly I will be with thee," is the reply to every sincere inquiring minister of God. All of God's called men in the ministry are privileged to stretch their prayers into regions where neither words nor thought can go, and are permitted to expect from Him beyond their praying, and for their praying, God Himself, and then in addition,

"great and mighty things which thou knowest not." Real heart-praying, live-praying, praying by the power of the Spirit, direct, specific, ardent, simple praying—this is the kind of praying which legitimately belongs to the pulpit. This is the kind demanded just now by the men who stand in the pulpit. There is no school in which to learn to pray in public but in the closet. Preachers who have learned to pray in the closet, have mastered the secret of pulpit praying. It is but a short step from secret praying to effectual, live, pulpit praying. Good pulpit praying follows from good secret praying. A closed closet with the preacher makes for cold, spiritless, formal praying in the pulpit. Study how to pray, O preacher, but not by studying the forms of prayer, but by attending the school of prayer on your knees before God. Here is where we learn not only to pray before God, but learn also how to pray in the presence of men. He who has learned the way to the closet has discovered the way to pray when he enters the pulpit. How easily we become professional and mechanical in the most sacred undertakings! Henry Martyn learned the lesson so hard to learn, that the cultivation and perfection of personal righteousness was the great and prime factor in the preacher's true success. So likewise he that learns the lesson so hard to learn, that live, spiritual, effective pulpit praying is the outgrowth of regular secret praying, has learned his lesson well. More-over: his work, as a preacher, will depend upon his praying.

The great need of the hour is for good pray-ers in the pulpit as well as good preachers. Just as live, spiritual preaching is the kind which impresses and moves men, so the same kind of pulpit praying moves and impresses God. Not only is the preacher called to preach well, but also he must be called to pray well. Not that he is called to pray after the fashion of the Pharisees, who love to stand in public and pray that they may be seen and heard of men. The right sort of pulpit praying is far removed from Pharisaical praying, as far distant as light is from darkness, as great as heat is from cold, as life is from death. Where are we? What are we doing? Preaching is the very loftiest work possible for a man to do. And praying goes hand-in-hand with preaching. It is a mighty, a lofty work. Preaching is a life-giving work sowing the seeds of eternal life. Oh, may we do it well, do it after God's order, do it successfully! May we do it divinely well, so that when the end comes, the solemn close of earthly probation, we may hear from the Great Judge of all the earth, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

When we consider this great question of preaching, we are led to exclaim, "With what reverence, simplicity and sincerity ought it to be done!" What truth in the inward parts is demanded in order that it be done acceptably to God and with profit to men! How real, true and loyal those who practise it ought to be! How great the need to pray as Christ prayed, with strong cryings, and tears, with godly fear! Oh, may we as preachers do the real thing of preaching, with no sham, with no mere form of words, with no dull, cold, professional utterances, but give ourselves to prayerful preaching and prayerful praying! Preaching which gives life is born of praying which gives life. Preaching and praying always go together, like Siamese twins, and can never be separated without death to one or the other, or death to both. This is not the time for kid-glove methods nor sugar-coated preaching. This is no time for playing the gentleman as a preacher nor for putting on the garb of the scholar in the pulpit, if we propose to disciple all nations, destroy idolatry, crush the rugged and defiant forces of Mohammedanism, and overcome and destroy the tremendous forces of evil now opposing the kingdom of God in this world. Brave men, true men, praying men—afraid of nothing but God, are the kind needed just now. There will be no smiting the forces of evil which now hold the world in thrall, no lifting of the degraded hordes of paganism, to light and eternal life, by any but praying men. All others are merely playing at religion, make-believe soldiers, with no armour and no ammunition, who are absolutely helpless in the face of a wicked and gainsaying world. None but soldiers and bond servants of Jesus Christ can possibly do this tremendous work.

"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," cries the great Apostle. This is no time to think of self, to consult with dignity, to confer with flesh and blood, to think of ease, or to shrink from hardship, grief and loss. This is the time for toil, suffering, and self-denial. We must lose all for Christ in order to gain all for Christ. Men are needed in the pulpit, as well as in the pew, who are "bold to take up, firm to sustain, the consecrated cross." Here is the sort of preachers God wants. And this sort are born of much praying. For no man is sufficient for these things who is a prayerless preacher. Praying preachers alone can meet the demand and will be equal to the emergency. The Gospel of Jesus has neither relish nor life in it when spoken by prayerless lips or handled by prayerless hands. Without prayer the doctrines of Christ degenerate into dead orthodoxy. Preaching them without the aid of the Spirit of God, who comes into the preacher's messages only by prayer, is nothing more than mere lecturing, with no life, no grip, no force in the preaching. It amounts to nothing more than live rationalism or sickly sentimentalism. "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word," was the settled and declared purpose of the apostolic ministry. The kingdom of God waits on prayer, and prayer puts wings on the Gospel and power into it. By prayer it moves forward with conquering force and rapid advance.

If prayer be left out of account, the preacher rises to no higher level than the lecturer, the politician or the secular teacher. That which distinguishes him from all other public speakers is the fact of prayer. And as prayer deals with God, this means that the preacher has God with him, while other speakers do not need God with them to make their public messages effective. The preacher above everything else is a spiritual man, a man of the Spirit, who deals with spiritual things. And this implies that he has to do with God in His pulpit work in a high and holy sense. This can be said of no other public speaker. And so prayer must necessarily go with the preacher and his preaching. Pure intellectuality is the only qualification for other public speakers. Spirituality which is born of prayer belongs to the preacher.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ often speaks of prayer. It stands out prominently in His utterances on that occasion. The lesson of prayer which He taught was one of hallowing God's name, of pushing God's kingdom. We are to long for the coming of the kingdom of God. It is to be longed for, and must be first in our intercourse with God. God's will must have its royal way in the hearts and wills of those who pray. The point of urgency is made by our Lord that men are to pray in earnest, by asking, seeking, knocking, in order to hallow God's name, bring His will to pass, and to forward His kingdom among men.

And let it be kept in mind that while this prayer-lesson has to do with all men, it has a peculiar application to the ministry, for it was the twelve would-be preachers who made the request of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." So

that primarily these words were spoken first to twelve men just entering upon their work as ministers. Jesus was talking as Luke records it, to preachers. So He speaks to the preachers of this day. How He pressed these twelve men into the ministry of prayer! The present-day ministry needs the same lesson to be taught them, and needs the same urgency pressing them to prayer as their habit of life.

Notwithstanding all he may claim for himself, nor how many good things may be put down to his credit, a prayerless preacher will never learn well God's truth, which He is called upon to declare with all fidelity and plainness of speech. Blind and blinding still will he be if he lives a prayerless life. A prayerless ministry cannot know God's truth, and not knowing it, cannot teach it to ignorant men. He who teaches us the path of prayer, must first of all walk in the same path. A preacher cannot teach what he does not know. A blind leader of the blind will be the preacher who is a stranger to prayer. Prayer opens the preacher's eyes, and keeps them open to the evil of sin, the peril of it, and the penalty it incurs. A blind leader leading the blind will be the vocation of him who is prayerless in his own life.

The best and the greatest offering which the Church and the ministry can make to God is an offering of prayer. If the preachers of the twentieth century will learn well the lesson of prayer, and use it fully in all its exhaustless efficiency, the millennium will come to its noon ere the century closes. The Bible preacher prays. He is filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with God's Word, and is filled with faith. He has faith in God, faith in God's only begotten Son, his personal Saviour, and he has implicit faith in God's Word. He cannot do otherwise than pray. He cannot be other than a man of prayer. The breadth of his life and the pulsations of his heart are prayer. The Bible preacher lives by prayer, loves by prayer, and preaches by prayer. His bended knees in the place of secret prayer advertise what kind of preacher he is.

Preachers may lose faith in God, in Jesus Christ as their personal and present Saviour, become devoid of the peace of God and let the joy of salvation go out of their hearts, and yet be unconscious of it. How needful for the preacher to be continually examining himself, and inquiring into his personal relations to God and into his religious state! The preachers, like the philosophers of old, may defer to a system; and earnestly contend for it after they have lost all faith in its great facts. Men may in the pulpit with hearts of unbelief, minister at the altars of the Church, while alien to the most sacred and vital principles of the Gospel.

It is a comparatively easy task for preachers to become so absorbed in the material and external affairs of the Church as to lose sight of their own souls, forget the necessity of prayer so needful to keep their own souls alive to God, and lose the inward sweetness of a Christian experience.

The prayer which makes much of our preaching must itself be made much of. The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching. Serious praying will give serious weight to preaching. Prayer makes preaching strong, gives it unction and makes it stick. In every ministry, weighty for good, prayer has always been a serious business prophetic of good.

It cannot be said with too much emphasis, the preacher must be preeminently a man of prayer.

He must learn to pray, and he must have such an estimate of prayer and its great worth that he feels he cannot afford to omit it from the catalogue of his private duties. His heart must be attuned to prayer, while he himself touches the highest note of prayer. In the school of prayer only can the heart learn to preach. No gifts, no learning, no brain-force, can atone for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no amount of social service, will supply its lack. Talking to men for God may be a great thing, and may be very commendable. But talking to God for men, is far more valuable and commendable.

The power of Bible preaching lies not simply or solely in superlative devotion to God's Word, and jealous passion for God's truth. All these are essential, valuable, helpful. But above all these things, there must be the sense of the divine presence, and the consciousness of the divine power of God's Spirit on the preacher and in him. He must have an anointing, an empowering, a sealing of the Holy Spirit, for the great work of preaching, making him akin to God's voice, and giving him the energy of God's right hand, so that this Bible preacher can say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. For I am called by thy name, O Lord of hosts."

("The Weapon Of Prayer" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 8 ; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer.)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 398-399)

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