

The Blessing That Lies in Prayer

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Now, we're dealing with the book of John. And tonight, begins the first two sermons on prayer from the book of John. And I'm going to read the passages. The deal, I've skipped them up to now in the 14th chapter and in the 15th. And we'll run ahead to the 16th. And read three verses, two verses. John 14:13 and 14, whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Then, 15:7, if ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Then 16:23 and 24. And in that day, ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Now, ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. Now, that's what our Lord said in these three chapters about prayer. I don't think it is in need of any great amount of exegesis or interpretation, it's simply here. It is waiting for faith to lay hold of it, that's all. So, tonight and next Sunday night, I want to talk about the blessing that lies in prayer.

Now, there are two concepts of prayer that seem to be mutually exclusive of each other. One is what we call the objective concept. And the other, the subjective. Now, I know you know what that means, but if there's anything I don't like to hear a preacher uses technical terms that he doesn't explain, and then he goes soaring off and he's lost connection with his audience. He's having a good time, and they're not coming. So, for the sake of the half dozen who might not know what I mean, when I say subjective and objective; subjective means having to do with the subject and objective having to do with the object. It is very simple, and some people, some people, when they talked about prayer, bear down on the subjective element, I, the subject am praying and all the good that prayer does, is what it does to the subject, namely me. It soothes me and calms me and rests me and inspires me, and maybe illuminates me in some major. Thus, it's subjectively valuable to me.

That's about all you hear about prayer in the day in which we live. If you are an avid reader of the Reader's Digest, which God save the mark, I hope you're not. That there is nothing wrong with it. That's its trouble. You know, what they say about the Reader's Digest? Oh, how terrible. Oh, how wonderful. Oh, and that's the Reader's Digest, those three sentences. But anyhow, if you're an avid reader of the Reader's Digest, you will get a lot of talks on prayer in that little book. But they're all subjective. It's what prayer didn't do to me, what prayer did to soothe me, what prayer did to relax me, what it did to arrest me. It is the subjective element that is prayed up, played up in, in most of the modern articles and sermons on prayer.

Then, there is what we call the objective element. That is, what prayer does for you and to change things. Those who believe in the objective power of prayer have a motto on their wall "Prayer

Changes Things." And that hasn't anything to do with the subject. Prayer to such people is a kind of lever which you can use over a fulcrum to raise the world. It's a kind of an Aladdin's lamp which you can rub and get what you want. It's a fairy godmother you can call to your fingertips and brief her, and she'll come back within a few hours giving you exactly what you want.

So, we have these two ideas of prayer. Prayer that doesn't have any objective meaning, anything outside of you, you can't make the sun stand still, and you can't get anybody delivered from disease, you can't open a field that isn't open. You can't do anything actually objectively; it's only what it does for you. And the other, neglect what it does for you and talks about being able to do just any old thing in answer to prayer. Well, which are we going to adopt and which does the Bible teach?

Well, I'm very happy to tell you tonight that those two views are not mutually exclusive. One does not cancel the other out and you're not forced to take one position and reject the other one. Both of these are true. It is both true that prayer has a subjective power over me. It is also true that prayer offered in the name of Jesus Christ can actually get out into nature and change the face of the world.

Now, let me give you two Old Testament illustrations of this. There was the man Elijah once. He was up on a mountain and was surrounded by 400 prophets of Baal. He was in trouble and they were going to tear him to bits. He had already whipped them up until they were so angry that they'd have killed him certainly if God hadn't come to his rescue. And here at the close of the day, at the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed a little prayer just about that long, about I guess, five lines long in an Arab column and asked God Almighty to come and prove there was a God in Israel. And immediately fire came down on the altar and consumed not only the sacrifice but the altar itself and the stones and the water and the dust. And everybody cried, great is Jehovah, He is the Lord.

Now, that's the objective element in prayer. You could go through your Bible and find time after time when men called on God and God did things outside of them. But on the other hand, there was a man one time who was deeply convicted of his sin and his name was David. And he dropped to his knees and said, have mercy upon me, O God according to Thy loving kindness, and according to the magnitude of thy tender mercies. Blot out my sin. Renew a right spirit within me and purge me with hysop and I shall be clean, and restore unto me the joy of my salvation. And all of that was happening inside of David. And it all did happen inside of David. You could have stood on the outside and never seen any of those prayers answered. They were subjectively answered. They were wrought on the subject, not on the object on the outside, but on the subject, the man himself.

So, the Bible teaches both. The Bible teaches that prayer has an amazing influence and power over the individual. And it also teaches that prayer properly made in the will of God, can bring answers that can change the face of the world, where it is the will of God that it should be so.

Now, lest you should get a wrong notion about prayer, I'd like to say this most disillusioning thing and I think also discouraging thing. Nobody likes to have his toys taken away from him, nobody. We're all grown up children, and we all like to rattle a toy. I play with my grandchildren's toys to this day, as old as I am, and we all like toys. And I don't like to take away from you any little crutch that you might have leaned on, but the nicest man in the world is the man who will kick a crutch out from under you after you outgrown your need of the crutch. If your leg is healed and you don't need the crutch, you may get a fixation there and become a slave to that crutch. And somebody comes along and kicks it out from under you and you'll whimper for a while and then find you can walk without it. So, you're delivered from that bondage.

Now, what I mean is that prayer, in itself, is exactly nothing at all. There are those who make prayer to be something. And I'll talk about it tonight and I will say prayer does this and prayer does that, and you should pray and prayer does this, and yet I want you to understand me to begin with that prayer in itself isn't anything at all. For the glory of prayer lies in this, that it engages God. The wonder of prayer is that it engages God and brings the human soul into contact with the everlasting God. And prayer itself isn't anything. Men can pray to the Virgin. Men can pray to Buddha. They can pray to an idol on a hilltop. They can pray to Zeus up on the top of the mount. They can pray to Jupiter. They can pray to the God of the ocean or Aeolis, the God of the winds, and they've done it down the years. Mohamidans get down five times a day on their knees and pray to Allah.

So, prayer in itself isn't anything. Prayer is simply addressing an instrument. And if the instrument is working, why, prayer is communication and it will get you through. But, if it isn't working, it's talking into a dead telephone. And a great deal of prayer is simply talking into a dead telephone; there's nobody on the other end, and if they were, they couldn't hear because the phone is dead. It's been pulled out from the wall. If we had all the time taken up in something useful that people have spent talking into a dead telephone in the name of God over the past centuries, I think we could make the world better. Now, if we're not geared into God, and if we haven't engaged God, and if our souls are not clean so God will hear us, and if we're not in the will of God, then prayer means nothing at all. You can pray until you're white-faced. You can pray all night.

And I have no idea but what some people substitute prayer for obedience. For instance, you've wronged somebody, you've done some evil thing. I don't know how far I'll get tonight. I've missed a track here. Don't tell these young preachers down here, but I have jumped over my outline, away from my outline. But, my brethren, it is perfectly impossible to pray as a substitute for obedience to God's will. A man has wronged somebody, he's done some evil thing, or he said an unkind,

cutting, unfriendly, unpleasant, cruel thing. And yet, instead of ever going back and confessing that and apologizing and getting that straightened out, they'll attend 50 prayer meetings rather than go back and say, I'm sorry. There'll be there if you announce a half night of prayer, say we're going to pray until the cock crows, they will be right there on their knees, but they won't obey God. So, prayer may be substituted for obedience. And that kind of prayer is nothing, nothing whatsoever.

There was a man one time who stole a golden wedge and a goodly Babylonish garment. And the power of God left Israel and Israel was driven in disgrace and humiliation before her enemies. Joshua, the man of prayer lay on his face crying unto Jehovah, oh, my God, why did you desert Israel and allow Israel to flee before her enemies? And God said to Joshua, get up off your face, what are you down there praying for? Get up off your your knees. There's an accursed thing in Israel. Get rid of that cursed thing and you can cut down on your overhead. You won't have to pray so much if you'll get right. So, Joshua called them all before him, and he said there's an accursed thing somewhere and they went through the ritual they did finding out, how to find out who was which, and they cast lots and pretty soon Achan was found. And they just led Achan out into the valley and stoned him to death and piled rocks on him. And then they went and won the victory. Prayer could have been a substitute for getting rid of the Christian thing that was in their midst.

So, my dear friend, there may be times when prayer is offensive to God Almighty. Read the first chapter of Isaiah and see if it's not true. Prayer is offensive to God Almighty when it is made in disobedience. It is offensive to God Almighty when there is no intention to obey. When we're not clean and we don't intend to be clean. And over top of our pollution we go to God and pray the Lord's Prayer and all the other prayers we know, read the Psalms of David and make up prayers of our own and talk to God by the hour, and still we're not living right.

Now Brother, prayer can be a snare and a delusion and exactly mean nothing at all to the soul. So, when I talk about prayer and the power of prayer tonight, I don't want to be understood to mean that I can simply, by mumbling a lot of prayers, move God or influence my own soul in any degree. You know over in Tibet, they have Tibetan prayer wheels. I've seen those Tibetan prayer wheels. They write prayers down on them, and then everybody walks by. There are long affairs, rollers, sort of, big rollers and those prayers are on them and they spin them. They've set on rollers so they spin nicely. And everybody that goes along spins them. They just keep them spinning all day. And you know, I thought of a way for a modern mechanized Tibetan to really pray himself some prayers. You know, if I were, if I were a Tibetan worshiper and I wanted to really spin the prayer wheel, you know what I do? I take the fan belt, or the fan on my automobile to a shop somewhere and have a prayer engraved on it. And then after that, it would be just as easy as could be. Let the whirling of the engine spin your wheel and you'd certainly pile up merit. But after all, what would that mean? It would mean absolutely nothing at all.

And all of the prayers that ascend to God, all the moldings and mumblings that ascend to God, unless they go up in purity and faith and obedience and righteousness, it's so much wasted wind. But, granted that the subject has met the conditions. Granted, the blood of Jesus Christ has made him clean. Granted, that he is in the will of God, so far as he knows. Granted that he's a student of the word and is open to see what God would have him do. Grant that. Grant that the man's motive is right, and that he's praying in the will of God. Here are some of the benefits of prayer, subjective benefits of prayer. Next week, I'm going to talk about the objective benefits of prayer what God will do on the outside from an unanswered prayer. But tonight, with possibly overlapping here and there, I only want to run over hastily, what prayer means to the individual?

Well, I think that it's only a religious cliché to repeat that prayer is the greatest privilege ever granted man, that the Ancient of Days, high and lifted up, should so stoop down and condescend to listen to the prayers of such worms as you and I, sinners by nature, and for a while by choice. Little men and women with breath in our nostrils, with our tiny hearts beating away, ready to stop one of these days, and let us collapse, hopeless chunks of clay and animated dust that we are. And then that the great God Almighty, who made the sun and rolled it around in his hand and flung it against the darkness, and Who made the stars and studded the skies with them, and who cut out the rivers and pushed up the mountains and girded the world, and made man upon it, and gave him food to eat and air to breathe and water to drink, that that great God, Who holds the world in the hollow of his hand, that He should come down from His immensity and should bend His ear, and like a mother bending over a sick child, trying to catch the faintest whisper meant to catch the ear of love. That I say, is the greatest privilege in all the world.

Therefore, prayer should be the most sacred thing in the world, and it should be made with the greatest sense of thanksgiving and gratitude. Not only is prayer the highest honor that can be granted to any being, but it's the most profitable investment in all the world.

Now, I've had this experience and I suppose some of you have. I've had the experience of having the whole world on my back. Talk about a monkey on your back. Talk about an ape on your shoulders. Talk about the old man in the woods with his legs locked around your neck, choking you to death. Talk about Atlas carrying the world on his shoulder. And you felt as if you were all of these things and a whole lot of things man hadn't thought of yet.

And you drop to your knees with your open Bible and got still and quiet, read the Word and looked up to God and didn't ask for much. But looked up to God and got calm, and got orientated and adjusted to God in your own soul. And pretty soon, the world began to roll off of Atlas' back. The old man in the woods began to unlock his bony knees from around your neck. And the burden began to roll off from your shoulders and all those apes got off your back. And you stood up rested and good, then you felt as if you'd been three weeks in Florida.

Now, I've had that experience happened to me. When if I had just gone just five minutes longer, I would have quit the ministry, resigned my church, and maybe run off from home. But, by the grace of God, there's such a thing as making a profitable investment in prayer just for its subjective value, just for what it'll do for you inside of you, just for the tuning up of your instrument and for the harmonizing of your soul within you.

And yet, while it is certainly the greatest honor and the most profitable thing, it is also the hardest thing in the world for Christians to do. I have no doubt that much of the squirrel cage activity in religious circles today is a substitute for prayer. Prayer is the hardest thing in all the world and you know why? Because you have to be right to pray. You can be superstitious. You can write chain letters. I got a chain letter lying up here on my, my desk, read Matthew 15, 16 and 17 and then copy all this out and send it to four other people. If you don't do it, you'll have bad luck. What kind of witch doctors have we got in this country anyhow? What kind of hopeless pagans and heathens out of the woods and pagans out of the jungle? What kind of chicken killing, dog killing, idol makers do we have in these days sending out chain letters. Brother, sister, if you get a chain letter saying, praise God from whom all blessings flow and tear it into 999 bits and throw it away. Let the winds of God blow through your home and blow out that trace of superstition, that vile residue of heathen iniquity that men have made in the chain letters, offering your good luck if you copy them and threatening bad luck if you don't. My God's name isn't luck, it's Jesus. And Jesus Christ never put me in the hand of good luck. He never made the postman to be my keeper. Well, prayer changes things alright and the greatest thing in the world is when it changes you inside. And yet it's hard, because it means obedience. It means a mood.

Some years ago, I recommended a book, a great mystic classic, and it was sold so widely that I don't know whether they had to do it, but Harper's came out with another edition almost immediately. And it was bought everywhere and people got it and yet some people said is this all? Is this all? They couldn't read the thing. It was The Letters and Counsels of Fenelon. They couldn't read it.

When somebody told me, that when a head and a book come together and there's a hollow sound, you don't allow need to blame the book. And when we read deeply spiritual things and they mean nothing to us, it can only be the proof of one thing, that we're not in a spiritual mood to understand that book. If I can read Fenelon and not get anything out of it, it's because I have a heart that is carnivorous. It feeds on flesh and enjoys munching on the ragged, bloody bones of this world, and it's not been prepared by the Holy Ghost to read anything as rarefied and lofty as the writings of that man of God and others like him.

So, it's the hardest thing in the world--praying. Saying the Lord's prayer isn't anything. That's nothing. Anybody can say the Lord's Prayer. All you need is time. Just have time to memorize it and away you go. But really getting in gear, getting your heart right with God and being in a

position so that the Lord's Prayer means anything to you. That's very, very hard. And it's so hard that people would rather do anything at all. They'd rather join something, organize something, travel somewhere, fly someplace, write something, say something, do something, paint something, spade up something. God's people will just do anything to keep from praying. And yet prayer is the most profitable investment you can make and the most highly honored activity that you can take part in.

Now, prayer has run the church for 2,000 years and nothing else. We imagine other things around the church. We imagined money does it. And you'd think to hear us preachers, that money was absolutely indispensable. I tell them in New York that the treasurer's office is the least important part of the Alliance. And I'd like to have you know, and I say this at the risk of some of you taking me literally and staying away from the paymaster booth back there. But I'll tell you this, that if you haven't got anything but money, you're not helping this church any brother, not a bit. If that's all you've got, oh, give it. We can use it for God's glory around the world. I don't say withhold it, but I just say this, that if you haven't anything but money, you still don't have much of anything. It isn't money that runs the church and it isn't brains that runs the church. I like a well-witted brain. And I get with somebody that's got a sharp mind, I like to get around him and whet a little of the rust off my mind on the mind of some bright fellow. I like to read books that are sharp and that demand attention. But I realize that brains haven't run the church for 2000 years any more than money. Neither have gifts and personality.

These are the days when personality is supposed to run the church. We want personality, but personality never ran anything yet except to show the church of Jesus Christ doesn't run on personality. If you met some of the people that have written the great hymns, you'd shrug and turn away. I've seen the pictures of some of the great hymnists. Some of the weirdest looking fellows you ever saw that would make McAfee and me look good by comparison, really! But that is, funny looking little fellows. What was this fellow's name you and I talked about Ray? William Walsham How. Isn't that a name to conjure with William Walsham How. What a man that was. He must have been and yet, I've seen his picture and I don't even look that bad. He had no more personality, no more personality than a fried egg, and yet, we try to make personality to be everything.

And we teach young people to part their hair in a certain way and wear argyle socks parted on one side and come down the aisle in a certain manner and do things in a certain way We teach them just where to put their hands and all the rest. And when it's all over, we've got the sweetest cage full of trained monkeys you ever saw in all your life. Personality never saved anybody and personality was never used of God particularly down to this day. Neither brains, your money and your personality nor pull, prestige and pull.

People would like to have pull and prestige. And the average preacher if he can get his picture taken with a governor or a senator, even if he's only on the back seat, 19th roll back on the far end,

behind the post, he'll sell it or to send it around to his friends. I was on that platform when Governor big dome had his picture taken. Brethren, how carnal can we get and still claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. There was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him. And He was so common looking that Judas had to kiss Him so everybody know who He was. If He'd been nine feet high and a basketball player, or if His shoulders had been 14 feet across with pads on and he'd been a great end for Notre Dame, they'd have known Him easily. They'd have said, that great big good-looking hunk of a fella back there. Go get Him and you've got Jesus. That Jesus was so plain looking that Judas had to go up and kiss Him on the cheek so they would know it wasn't Peter or somebody else.

No, my brethren, prayer has run the church for 2000 years. And after all the big domes have been laid in their quiet beds, and after all the great physiques have withered away little tired, old men, and after all the money has been devaluated until it isn't worth as much as even it is now, the church of Jesus Christ will still march along driven by the winds of prayer, driven by the mighty gales of prayer from the hearts of men and women who are in touch with Deity.

Prayer again over leaps time and place. Peter couldn't wait for the correct time. Peter was sinking in those waves. And if Peter had to consult a calendar to know whether it was time to pray or not, he'd have been 40 feet down before he could have got to the right day. But, Peter said, Lord, help me, and those three words had power in them all right, and God got him out. And there was Jonah. Jonah couldn't even go to church and sit among the boys. He couldn't do it. He couldn't listen to a choir. He couldn't hear an exposition of the eighth chapter Romans. He couldn't do it. Jonah was in the belly of the whale. And so, he cried out to God out of the belly of the whale and made up his own prayers; he went along and blew bubbles and slime and prayed. And God, from his prayer, made the whale so sick that God helped Jonah out of the belly of the whale and he went off preaching, what he should have done in the first place.

So, prayer overleaps, time and place. I'd hate to think that I could only pray in one place and in one position. And I'd hate to think I had to go to a certain locality to pray. Now I got to prod up to the church here three blocks, turn right one block, and then run up a corridor and get into a certain position before I can pray. Wouldn't that be a terrible thing when the fellow is in a fix. That'd be awful, but it's not so my brethren. Prayer overleaps time and place. You can pray up in an airplane. You can pray down in a submarine. You can pray on a hospital bed. You can pray in a school room. You can pray in a kitchen. You can pray anywhere. And you don't have to do this. These little pictures we see, you know, the ones we have around on our bulletins, two little old reared up hands doing this. You don't have to do that brother. Some people do their most powerful praying when they couldn't get their hands together. A fellow fell down a well, he said, head first. And he said the greatest prayer he ever made in his life was standing on his head down there in that well. God heard him all right and got him out.

I heard of another man. I know that old brother. He was first converted and then he was filled with the Holy Ghost in the cab of a fast passenger train down in Georgia. That is dear old Fant, the ambassador on rails. Old Brother Fant, God bless him. He's getting old but he's still able to write me a letter occasionally telling me how he enjoys the Alliance Weekly and he wants me to know he's for me, amen. Well, he believed in the coming of Christ, Brother Fant did, and he told the people down in a certain little town that he did and they believed the Lord was coming. And he said one of these days the Lord's going to come and when He does, the dead in Christ will arise first and everybody living will be changed and be caught up with the Lord in the air. And he said, maybe I'll even be taken out of my cab.

There was a little town down there where he used to preach sometimes off hours. And when Brother Dave would be coming into that town, he'd blow them a long salute. It wasn't in the rule book, a long salute. In other words, praise the Lord friends, here goes Fant and his train would roar on through the little town. And one day the train roared through and it didn't whistle. And the people of that little Georgia town got all excited and ran and out the back door across the yard to other people's houses. They said, we wonder if it's happened. I wonder if it's happened. Maybe it's happened. Brother Dave didn't blow his whistle today. I wonder if the Lord's taken him out of that cab? Well, that was Dave Fant. That was the man who could pray in a cab. And he didn't do this. He had to keep his hand on the throttle so it wouldn't wreck.

Now, I think I'll have to close before I'm done, but say that prayer is a great leveler of men. The most illiterate person in the world can pray. And the most cultured person in the world can't do any more than that. No matter how cultured you are friend, your clipped Oxford accent done in the best Shakespeare won't make your prayers any dearer to God. And the most uncultured fellow in the world can pray just as well as the most learned. And there is no man alive, I don't care if it's the Queen of England, she being a woman, or the President of the United States, he being a man, I don't care what human there is in the world, how high their exalted state, there is no man that can do a greater act than pray an effective prayer. The men whose names and pictures are on the front pages, are the great men of the world. The great men, Jesus said of the Gentiles, but, they cannot do a greater thing than pray. And the old man beside the track in Alabama, who gets his old battered Bible out and reads out loud and marks it with his fingers as he goes along painfully reading, for he only had a year or two in school. And then gets on his knees and looks up through the cracks of his poor shack and talks to God, he's doing a greater deed than a prayerless president can do. He's doing a greater act than a prayerless prime minister can do. And there isn't a prayerless king in the world who is as great in the kingdom of God as that old man in the shack in Alabama.

Prayer is the great leveler Brother. In the presence of prayer there are no popes and bishops and pastors and doctors. In the presence of God there are no little men. In the presence of God there are no big man. In the presence of God there are only redeemed men! So, prayer is the greatest leveler in all the world. And when two men kneel down together, they're all the same.

Down at the University of Illinois last year, year before last now, I had the happy experience of kneeling in prayer with different sorts of men. And I lost track of how great they were. When they were introduced to speak or lead in prayer, they gave them a build-up that long. And yet, I prayed with those men. I knelt down here, there was an old Alliance preacher and over here would be a Quaker missionary from Borneo and over here would be a Baptist missionary from Ecuador, and over here would be a president of a college and over there would be somebody else, but we didn't know. Everybody was just everybody else. And the funny part about it was, you couldn't tell when a man prayed whether he was a college president or just a little fellow like me. We all sounded alike in the presence of God.

But there's more. Prayer is not only the greatest force in the universe, but that force is available to the children of God. Prayer makes old people young, and it makes young people wise beyond their years. I would rather trust to the wisdom of a praying man 25 years old than I would to the wisdom of a man 75 years old who didn't pray. For I don't think we ever ought to listen to any man that doesn't first listen to God.

And the praying young man will have greater wisdom than the prayerless old man. But the praying old man will have the happy usefulness of a young man. I said to Brother Ray here the other day, it suddenly struck me for the first time, I said why is it that everywhere I go I mingle with young man. Why is it? Hardly an old fellow ever singles me out except to reminisce, and when he finds that I don't go back quite as far as he thinks I do by looking at me, he gets disappointed and walks off. But in young fellows I have the time of my life. I wonder why. Could it be they are praying men, and really young men inside and you don't know it? That a praying man stays young, and a praying young man gets old in experience and knowledge? I believe so.

And prayer robs adversity of its power and makes poor men rich and smooths the dying pillow. You know, one of these days you're going to die. Isn't that awful for a preacher to tell you that? Nobody talks like that in public. We all have a conspiracy of silence about this matter of death. Nobody wants to believe he's going to die. But everybody's going to die. You're all going to stretch out and die. Some of you sooner than you'd ever dreamed. Do you know how well you're going to die? I'll tell you. You're going to die just as well as you've prayed. No better, no worse, just as well as you've prayed. You're smoothing your dying bed now. You're making up your bed now Brother. My God, how awful it must be for those who live carelessly and pray little, and live out of prayer and then come to die and then have to try in the last frantic hour or hour and a half to pack into those few precious minutes what should have been a lifetime.

When Hayne rose and spoke for state rights back before the Civil War and in favor of the dissolution of the Union, he was a Southern orator. Daniel Webster was there and heard him. Daniel Webster said, tomorrow, I'll answer him. And they said to him, Mr. Webster, do you think

you can answer him tomorrow? Answer him, he said, I'll grind him to bits. So, the next day he delivered that amazing, unbelievably wonderful and powerful oration called Webster's reply to Hayne. And when he went in triumph out of the Senate chamber, somebody ran up and said, Mr. Webster, how in God's world did you prepare an oration like that in 24 hours? He said, young man, that oration cost me 40 years. He could only rise in the hour of crisis to where he had been in the hours when there were no crises. And you can only rise in God as high in the hour of crises as you've lived in God when there was no crisis on. And if you want to have your dying pillow smooth, you'd better smooth it now while you can.

Now, I repeat again what dear old brother Tom told me at Beulah Beach. Here, he and I, I felt young in His presence and small, for Tommy tends to get a little round if he doesn't watch it. And he'd had too many friends and they'd fed him too well, and he really was just a wee little bit pudgy. And I put my arm around his fat old Irish shoulders and he around my waist and we walked over the green sward together. He said, well, Brother Tozer, I'm leaving for Ireland on the 13th of September. He said, I'm going to take six months off. I've been talking too much. I've been talking too much. He said I've been talking more than I've been praying and it's not doing me any good. He said, I'm going back home and I'm going to call a moratorium on talk. And I'm going to spend six months waiting on God. He said, you know why I am going to do it? I said, no, Tom, tell me. He said, I'm going to create a miniature mercy seat, a judgment seat of Christ, right here and now. And then he said this, Tom rarely talks but what he comes through with one of his penetrating jewels. And this was what he said. Brother, I want to know the worst about myself. He said, I want to know the worst about myself now while I can do something about it. We parted. I haven't seen Tom. God will take him to heaven one of these days. He'll walk off the end of a prayer plank and off into glory. But he wants to know the worst now. And prayer will do that for you. Prayer will gear you in. So, dying will be passing out of God's left hand into God's right hand. Praying, will be crossing the river from one side to the other side. The old lady said, God owns the land on both sides of the river. She doesn't care which side she's on.

And then, prayer keeps the dead saints alive and keeps them speaking. Old Milton wrote about the flowers that were born to blush unseen and waste their fragrance on the desert air. He talked about the jewels that the deep depths of ocean bear. But I think even the mighty Puritan was wrong. I don't think there's any child of God that ever needs to be a flower that's born unseen, to waste its fragrance on the desert air. The praying saint doesn't die. The praying saint lives on in his prayers. And the power of God comes to this place and that place long after a man is gone.

Listen to me friends, do you think God Almighty is blessing America today because we have a Republican administration? Do you think He'll bless her more if we turn out the Republicans and put in the Democrats? No. God isn't blessing America today because of anybody that's in the White House or in Senate. God is blessing America today because, unseen by mortal eyes, but seen plainly by the eyes of God, there are little spirals and incense raising to the right hand of God from

the holy graves were lie men and women who once thought and prayed and loved and sacrificed and suffered and died. Names unknown to fame and to fortune. They're only a statistic, but they prayed and God put their prayers in his bottle. And they embalmed them and laid them away in the dark tombs and still, their prayers are rising to God.

Several years ago in a limited cemetery in West Virginia, I walked out in a cemetery where I think nobody has been buried for years. And there were the headstones, the old chipped headstones, you know the kind that flake off and they're red and brown, they flake off and there was one lying there. And it said, Reverend, so and so, a preacher of the gospel in the Methodist society dating back a couple of hundred years. And I took off my hat and stood on that grave and raised my hand to God and prayed that something of the fire and power that was on the heart of that Methodist preacher might come on me. For back there, Methodist preachers were preachers, brethren. They were a man whose voices rang like trumpets all out over our blessed land. And they thought nothing of praying all night through. They thought nothing of spending whole days with God without a bite to eat. They thought nothing of gathering into little groups and praying for hours and days on end. They thought nothing of it in those days. They have died and their old tabernacles have fallen into dust. But the power of those prayers still hangs like a benediction over America. That's why we can have juvenile delinquency and divorce and wickedness of every kind and politicians that can be bought and paid for and carried home in a sack. That's why we can have the wickedness we're having in this country now and still not fall apart yet. Not because of good men at the helm necessarily, though, I think we have good men. And I'd just like to say lest you misunderstand that I think Mr. Eisenhower's one of them.

But good men at the helm is not what's doing it only. It's the unseen spirals of holy prayer rising to God like sweet incense from an altar. The world doesn't see it as they flash by 85 miles an hour on their torsion level drive. They don't know that lying there, the smoldering dust of men who spend hours and days and years with God. And God is blessing America from Atlantic to Pacific because once she was the repository of holy men and women who spake in prayer as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Prayer lets you live after you're dead. Prayer lets your power continue when you being dead, yet speak.

And lastly, prayer gives you heaven at last. The old David Livingston over there in the heart of Africa, they found him kneeling in prayer. Oh, what a dramatic and beautiful end to an equally beautiful life. They found him kneeling in prayer. He had given his life for Africa, this medical doctor and the natives with a wisdom greater than we might suppose, tenderly laid the old tired body out. They went in with all of the gentleness of a mother, and took out his great silent heart, literally out of his bosom and sewed him up. And they buried his heart under a baobab tree. And then they carried his body through hostile tribes to the shores of Africa and shipped him to Westminster Abbey where everything lies but his heart. Wasn't there poetic justice there. Wasn't

there a beautiful wisdom beyond their, their abilities that they buried his heart out there. And the heart of Livingston still prays, and the spirit of Livingston is with his Savior.

Now, I asked you three questions and I'm through. One is, do you pray? A man came in here this morning. God bless him, maybe he's here tonight. He won't mind by mentioning it. He said he heard me on the radio and I invited him to church so he thought he'd come. He said, I'm an Italian Jew. but I'm a believer in Jesus. I said, what's your first name? He said, my first name is Abraham, but everybody calls me Eddie. I don't know how they get Eddie for Abraham. So I said, alright, Eddie, I'll remember you. God bless Eddie. He was a praying man. The reason I mentioned this, it comes to my mind, because he called me on the phone. And he said, Mr. Tozer, I've been a believer in Jesus for a long time, but I've never gone to church. I've been disappointed in what I have seen. And I said, will you come over to our church, will you? So, he came. God, you pray for Eddie will you, an Italian Jew, who prays at home and loves Jesus. I hope we won't disappoint him here.

Well, do you pray? Do you pray as much as you used to? And, do you pray as much as you know you should. With those three questions I leave you