

Prayer for the Glory of God II

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer
November 17, 1957 Evening Service

I have again tonight three texts. This one: the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And this one: ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Then this one: He spake a parable unto them teaching this, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

Those are the three texts, and they say that prayer has a tremendous potency: it availeth much. They say that sometimes, we don't have because we have failed to ask--that's prayerlessness. Or, again, we have not failed to ask. We have asked, but we have asked amiss, secretly and maybe even unconsciously, we want to consume it upon our own selves. But that nevertheless, we ought always to pray, and not let any difficulties get in the way. Now, that's what our Lord says in these three texts.

And I said this morning that our prayers and our desires and our work and our expectation should go along with each other and should go hand in hand. And I said that they should aim toward two things. And after I have said this, then I'll go over under new ground. That those two things should be the return of the glory of God again: the elevating of the concept of God in His church. And the restoration of that church from her Babylonian captivity, back to New Testament pattern again. But you know, we can have those two requests and those two aims, but still ask amiss because we haven't, we were not asking it for His glory so much as for our own. I'll explain as I go along.

Now, there is a serpent in the garden still. He wasn't killed. After Adam and Eve fell, nobody came with a hoe and slew him. The serpent is still in the garden, and it twines itself around the loveliest trees thereof and destroys the fruit. And self is the serpent that destroys our prayers so that we may pray and pray and pray and continue to pray. We may even fast and pray, rise in the night and pray, and still, they are not pure prayers, for we're using religion to get something else. Whenever religion becomes a means to something else and not an end in itself, it is not pure. Whenever the worship of God becomes a means toward something else, it is no longer the worship of God. Whenever prayer and our relationship to God is held and had for an ulterior reason, it is no longer pure.

Now I say that there is much prayer going on today and people are forming prayer bands and groups everywhere and trying to get people to pray. But my friends, I am afraid that if it cannot be said, ye have not because ye asked not, it can be said, ye have not because ye ask amiss that you might consume it upon your own desire.

Now I want to point out to you how self entwines itself in our desires; crawls its sinuous way through the garden of prayer and spoils even our prayers for us. For instance, we want the glory of God revealed again to this generation. And cheerfully we say, yes, God. We want men once more to know how great Thou art. And we want Thy sovereign perfections to be displayed throughout all the world; true, the sun and the moon and the stars. And when the evening shades prevail, the moon takes up the wondrous tale, forever singing and forever shining and forever crying along with the stars and the planets the hand that made it is divine. But how many people look at the stars. More people have looked up to the heavens to see the Sputnik in the last month than they ever had looked at stars in the last 1000 years, the average man and woman. We take God's stars for granted.

So the stars are singing to the heart of the Christian, but they're saying nothing much to the fellow who's either unsaved or is a carnal Christian. We want the glory of God revealed to His church again. But here's the catch, we want to be the one He uses to reveal it. And there is where the serpent crawls and entwines itself through the rose bushes and fruit trees of the garden. We want the glory of God revealed, but we want to be the one to reveal it. We want the veil taken away from the face of God, but we want to be the one that can dramatically go up and pull the veil aside.

Now, I don't say that all of us do at all. I don't say that all of you do. But I have pointed out here what's wrong with our prayers and why God hasn't been able to answer them up to now. Some of us who see it may secretly want to be the one that pulls the veil away and shows the glory of God. Well, whose glory are we wanting to be revealed then? We're wanting God to reveal His glory and ours. And God says, no man shall ever share my glory. God will not give His glory to any other. And therefore, we ask and receive not because we want to consume it upon our lusts. And we want the church to return to the New Testament standard as I said this morning.

You remember, I said that there were two things that the glory of God should be revealed, and the church should be restored. It's my conviction now. I won't have mobs hearing me say this, but there are key and strategic people all over the world that are hearing me say it, and surely, surely God will be finally bringing us together. But remember this, that that church is in Babylonish captivity, and even the evangelical church is. And the result, we pray, O God, deliver Thy church, but we want to be the one to deliver it.

Now, that's how self destroys our prayers. Our motives are carnal, and God has no respect to them because they are carnal. And we can call a prayer meeting for all night or all day and pray an hour at a time all day and still only want to do get a bit of glory in order that we may share it or that God may share it with us. We want the church to be brought back but we want to be the one to lead it back.

But dear friends, we're going to have to learn this and I'm going to have to learn it. And I speak of the two-edged sword tonight, and the one edge slashes, you remember, the other edge slashes me. And I want to have an understanding.

I thought the other day that I would write God a letter. You know, I can pray and talk to the Lord, but sometimes our prayers, we're talking to ourselves. But if you put it down in print and say now, God take this, this is what I mean. However, I might chatter, this is what I mean. Take this God, is what I mean to say. And I'd like to write God a letter and tell him this. Now God, I want Thee to understand something here, that I want Thy glory to be revealed. And I don't insist that I be the one to reveal it. That if Thou wilt send who now was sent; if Thou wilt raise up whom Thou wilt raise up. If Thou wilt send a chariot and take one away and raise up another to reveal Thy glory. If Thou wilt push one man aside as He pushed aside Evan Robertson and He pushed aside certain others and we'll not name because they're still living and not using them much. Not because they backslide, but because God had done His work with them.

All right, I want God to know that, that I want the glory of God to be revealed again to the world, but I don't insist upon being the one to reveal it. I want the church to be brought back from her Babylonian captivity, but I don't insist upon being the one to bring her back.

Well then, we want the walls of Jericho, or the walls are Jerusalem. The walls of Jericho fell, but the walls of Jerusalem rotted away and tumbled down and the foxes ran on those walls. And we'd like to see the walls of Jerusalem again brought back. I'd like to see a church so purified all over, not this church only. That would be a small thing.

But I'd like to see the church of Christ so purified, so visited again with the gifts of the Spirit, so filled with the Spirit, so lofty in her spiritual standards, so pure and so spiritually cultured, that she would recognize a racketeer when she saw him. And she wouldn't listen to the "come on," what did somebody say to somebody. There wouldn't be any of that stuff possible. There wouldn't be any of this stuff possible. The saying of putting in the newspaper, this man is a wonderful man of God and preaches in power and come and hear so and so. There wouldn't be any of that possible, for the church would instantly boycott the whole thing. The church of Christ was as pure and as open-eyed and is full of vision, they should boycott all that instantly. And as the Methodists used to do; the man who wasn't spiritual couldn't get a hearing.

But you know, I've got to be willing that God should build the walls of Jerusalem and not use me for a Nehemiah. I've got to be perfectly willing that God should take somebody else and let him be the one to build the walls. We study the book of Nehemiah and say, wouldn't it be wonderful to build the walls of Jerusalem again? Yes, but suppose that God said, Nehemiah, I'm going to build the walls of Jerusalem in answer to your prayer, but I'm not going to use you. You stay back of the things and pray. I don't know what Nehemiah would have said, but I suspect that Nehemiah would

have said, be it unto Thy servant even as Thou wilt. And if he hadn't, his prayer would have gone for nothing. God will not answer the prayer of any man, not even to build the walls of Jerusalem, if he insists on building them.

And then I think that also that we want the prophets of Baal defeated. Jehovah's Witnesses are just around the corner here now. They've got a Kingdom Hall which is a storefront church though they won't call it that. And we've got them all up and down the country, this boom of religion which is incidentally, let me open my mouth and say something wise to you Brother. Just let me say something to you that's wise. Here it is. Religion is running on financial inflation.

And the reason we're booming is we have the money to boom. And when financially we bust religion, we'll bust along with it. You bet you boy, if it doesn't bring in shekels, and the legal tender doesn't come in so easy when you're working for \$26 a week, or 16 as they were in the Depression. It killed a whole of depression in 1929, killed as by a pistol shot. I could name evangelists that it killed dead, and they couldn't turn a wheel because the legal tender wasn't forthcoming and the do-ray-me in the E Pluribus Unum wasn't available. And the result was that they died overnight. And it'll be the same, you watch it.

We're booming. We're not only booming In Christianity, were booming in all the cults and booming in all the religions that deny the truth our fathers died to promote. And it's possible because there's money, lots of money, lots of money. You can wipe your shoes off with \$10 bills now all over our country. I mean it we've got more money than is good for us and religion is booming, and the devil is using the fact that there's an inflation on.

Well, I don't know how I got over on that, but I thought I wanted to say that to you. It wasn't a part of my outline. I say we want the prophets of Baal defeated, these prophets of Baal. And God knows how many there are. Every once in a while, in our religious news service, in the Alliance Weekly we take the RNS, the Religious News Service, and they keep feeding news constantly in from all parts of the world to us. And we got it into our office here. And it's strained out and a bit of it put in the Alliance Weekly. But remember that the cults are claiming millions now.

And this cult, they'll suddenly announce, we're now, we have 1 million memberships. Another cult will announce, we have \$27 million this last year to promote our work. And the cults, the prophets of Baal are still moving up and down under the sponsorship of that evil woman Jezebel. And we'd like to see the prophets of Baal set back on their haunches and the altar of Jehovah blaze again with the glory of God that would make these theological rodents run back into the ash cans and hide.

But you know, the trouble is when we pray, we've got to sneak and hope the Lord will use us to chase them out. We want to be the one to get the stick and start driving out the theological

rodents. We want everybody to say, ah hah, that man. Isn't he wonderful? He's God's Elijah. We would like to be Elijah. And there's just the sad thing my brother. If you insist on being Elijah, you will never call down fire from heaven. Elijah did that because God told him to. But if Elijah had wanted to do it and had insisted upon doing it so that he might look around and bring up his publicity rating, he'd never have done it. They would have pull him apart and tore him limb for limb and thrown him off the top of Mount Carmel. They wouldn't have found a piece to bury. But Elijah was God's servant, devoted to the glory of God alone, and he didn't care about Elijah. And the result was, God did use the man.

And we want Israel brought back from Babylon all right. And this is my cry. I tell you; this is my cry. We want Israel brought back from Babylon. But we want to be Israel and say now, I'd like to be the one Israel. We want to be like Israel.

Well, my brother and sister, it just won't do. The only kind of praying God will hear will be, O God, bring Israel back from Babylon by whom Thou wilt bring Israel back from Babylon. And we humble ourselves and take the lowly place and say, Father, use me if you will. I'm before Thee. I'm like a sword lying here on the table, Lord. Pick me up or let me lie there and rust. Use me or ignore me. But for Thy glory, Father, bring back Israel from Babylon. Build again the walls of Jerusalem. Bring Israel out of Egypt and let somebody else be Moses.

And we want a reformation without a doubt. We want a reformation. God knows how desperately bad we need a reformation. You know what they're doing now in evangelical churches, and we've slid into it? And they wouldn't listen. They won't listen to you. We have become kitchen orientated. Do you know what I mean by that? I mean that instead of the cross of Jesus being at the center and all of us gathered around the cross of Jesus and it's said of us, we've ministered unto the Lord and prayed and fasted. Instead of that, we minister unto the stomachs of the multitudes.

I have come almost to the place where I don't know whether I'll ever attend another banquet or not. We occasionally have one in this church, one or two years, because we don't need them; we get along without them. And if we never had one, we wouldn't lose one soul. And the having of them has never yet won one soul. And we've never had two more people that I've ever discovered ever attend our Sunday school or church as a result of any of our gatherings. So that we haven't, because we don't need them. But if we needed them, it would be a sin to have them. Whenever you have to gather around the smorgasbord in order to keep spiritual, you're not spiritual any longer, your God is your belly and you glory is your shame.

Israel returns from Babylon, and I pray that she may. And God knows how far, far we are and how desperately we're in need of a reformation to orientate the church around the person of Jesus instead of around the kitchen and around the table. We're sliding into that more and more. We're sliding into days and seasons and weeks and Mother's days and Father's days and Kiddies days,

Poppy days and all the rest of the days. And we're listening to the world. And Martin Luther almost lost his life, and many people did, to bring back again the pure Christianity to the world. And we've took that holy legacy stained with sacred blood, and now we're letting it get away from us. And back we are going again to days and seasons and years; back to the celebration of this and that and the other and forgetting that a true church is a group of people separated from the world to Jesus Christ.

Well, there's a dozen or whether there is 1200, it's all the same. And we need a reformation, and we need it desperately bad. But when we pray for it, let's watch out for that serpent. For the serpent will crawl in and hiss in our ears, wouldn't it be wonderful if God would send that reformation and let you be Luther? Ah, Brother Martin Luther is gone, and I don't know. I still think that the great reformations and the great openings up of areas weren't done by the men who we thought did it. I still believe that Martin Luther wasn't the important figure that the world thought he was.

When we get to glory, we're very likely to find some anonymous saint who prayed Martin Luther through. He was the warhead in the nose of the missile. And God Almighty used that tough German to do what the weak pastor couldn't do. The weak pastor, he couldn't have done it. He wouldn't have had the fortitude. He had no nose on him, but Luther had. So, God used the man with a hard nose and brought about the Reformation. But I still believe that if there hadn't been some people, unknown and unheralded and unknown to this hour praying him through, there wouldn't have been any Reformation.

So, I believe with Dr. Jaffrey. Dr. Jaffrey opened sections of South China. He opened Indochina and he opened Borneo and what they used to call the Netherland East Indies. But Dr. Jaffrey was a busy man and a man hurrying about. Somebody was back of him, or some persons, for there might have been easily more than one. And I believe that that tough customer, that Canadian who didn't know how to retire and couldn't retire. And when they offered to retire him, he said, sure, I'll retire. Retire means to put on a new set of tires. So, he said, I'll do it. And he went right on and opened another country for Christ and then died in a prison camp.

But who was backing him? We have his name, and I wrote his life and it's all very well. But who was backing him? Somewhere, there was somebody that didn't insist on being Elijah. Somewhere there were humble men and women praying who were willing that somebody else could take the spotlight. They worked back of the stage and operated the machinery. And when the solo was sung and the multitudes cried bravo, they weren't even known to be back there, hiding away, sitting on the barrelhead, somewhere waiting for it to get over with, doing their part backstage.

But as old Meister Eckhart said in a burst of grief and anger; he said, who is there that's found that will even open the house door of the house of God for nothing? Well, there were some and he

overstated it, but there weren't many. And we want the army of the Lord to win, and I do. I belong to the army of Lord.

Brethren, I'll tell you something. But if the army of the Lord doesn't win, I'm going to be one, the first one the enemy hunts up to liquidate. I'll tell you that now. God had better win if I'm going to escape liquidation because I've made myself an unholy pest to the devil. And I intend to continue to do it till I die. And if there's any place in heaven, where God hears prayers. I don't know whether we can pray up there or not as we can down here, but if it's permitted, I still want to pray against what our dear old brother William Nicholson called that dirty pig, the devil. I still want to pray against him.

Well, we want the army of the Lord to win, but you know when we dream about the host of Israel rushing out and holding their banners high and driving out the Philistines and coming back conquering, we'd like to think we're riding up ahead in an open car like Mac Arthur and the mobs lined the streets to see us.

Well, battles aren't won by Mac Arthurs. They're won by dog faces and navy boys and marines and kids that only have to shave two or three times a week. They're won by kids that lie out there; now some of them buried row on row like the seats here in this church that ought to be filled. Row on row. There lies Junior. There lies Bobby. There lies young Chuck. There lies John. There lies Ed. There lies the boys that used to drive the old junk cars around and work on all Saturday afternoon, come in dirty and grimy to suffer. They won the wars. And when the next war comes, if it comes, they'll win it. They're not heard of. And when they come back crippled and disabled, hard to find a job, they're forgotten. And a half dozen generals get the credit.

And a general, not a one of them ever smelled powder. They've got to be there. I believe in them. And if it hadn't been for them to head it up, there would have been no winning. I admit that. But not one of them ever smelled powder. The boys had walked out there and took it. They get enough. Get a Purple Heart if they cut themselves shaving somebody said, they give you a Purple Heart. They can tear you to pieces, and if you don't bleed, you don't get it. Kids come back home; they've lost three, four years out of their lives. They've been disillusioned and embittered. And their faith in God shocked by what they've seen. And they go back to a job someplace, America's unheralded heroes. And the generals ride in the big car.

We all want to be the generals. But the battles of God are not won by the generals. They are won by the privates and corporals. They're won by those who don't expect anything but hard work and mud holes and bullet pierced planes, a wing and a prayer if they ever do get back.

So, in the kingdom of God, my brother, we want the army of the Lord to win, but we want to ride up front. And we want our church to triumph over its enemies here. I'm searching my heart these

days about our church. We want our church to triumph over its enemies. But the temptation is to pray and work toward that end but do it with a selfish motive. Do it to prove that we're right. Do it to show that we're a better-class Christian than those others. Just as soon as that enters, prayer dies. You can pray all night and fast and miss two meals a week, your prayer is dead. It never rises above the ceiling.

Prayer, said old Molina, let me give it to you again. Prayer is an ascent or elevation of the mind to God. That that prayer never ascends or elevates itself to the presence of God if there's a desire that isn't pure, selfish motives. We want our church to grow, but then we want it to grow because we've got a vested interest in it. Do we pray just as much?

Some years ago, I was in a campaign with some other preachers and God was blessing us quite tremendously. And God made me pray for the others as much as for myself. And He made me have an understanding with Him, that if the Lord wanted to bless these other preachers in that campaign more than me and just let me come along and be ignored, I would agree to it. I wanted God to know that. And I think God knows I mean it.

Now, I know all about our hearts being desperately wicked and all the rest, but I also know that there are times when you know where you stand, Brother. There are sometimes when you could write God a letter and sign it and say, now God, however I feel, however my emotions may float around like clouds, remember, this is what I want. And I want Thee to bless this campaign. And if You can, bless me and bless the other brethren. And whenever you want any other part of the church that you're not particularly in, whenever you want that blessed as much as the part you're pushing, then your prayers are likely to be pure. But if you've got anything that centers around you and your prayers are for the success of that, it's not likely to be pure.

Now, we must elevate our hearts and pray. And here's the kind of praying we've got to do. We've got to pray, O God, honor Thyself in this fellowship during this week ahead and all the days ahead and months and years. But particularly God, honor Thyself in this fellowship. Honor Thyself through me, or ignore me, and honor Thyself through others. Honor Thyself apart from me if it please Thee, O God, but honor Thyself. Restore Thy glory to the church but do it in Thine own way. And if that means passing me by, Lord, all right.

I wonder tonight how many young men there are in Bible schools and Christian seminaries burning the midnight oil, working to pay expenses, losing weight, and getting jumpy in their nervous eagerness to get through. And secretly in back of it all is a hope that someday they can be as popular as Billy Graham; that someday they can be leaders of great Christian movements. No, it won't work, Junior. It won't work. God will never elevate you until you humble yourself.

But we've got to pray, O God, do it, but do it through me or apart from me. Ignore me or use me. It makes little difference, God, but just so you do it. O God, reform this church. Reform this church but use Thine own way of doing it. For there might be another that God delights to honor. You remember Haman who wanted the honor, and you remember how they twisted it around and finally the Jew got the honor and Haman got the noose. And there may be another that God delights to honor, and He may ignore you and overlook you. If you had to take a lowly place among the shadows and your name, not be bandied about at all or heard, would you pray just as earnestly for these two things I've set before you, that God's name might be glorified once more among men and that the church of Christ might be restored again from her Babylonian captivity?

Well, if you can pray like that, O God, at any cost, let it cost me. Let it cost me, Father. Not give me something, but let it take something out of me, Lord. Then your prayer is pure. But you can pray all night and not be heard if there's any sneaking idea that you're going to share in the glory?

Now, can you pray, O God, we want Thy glory to be revealed by whomsoever Thou revealest? We want the church to be restored to New Testament pattern by whomsoever Thou wilt restore it. We want the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt by whomsoever Thou wilt rebuild it. We want the prophets of Baal, the cultists to be defeated, and we want them defeated by whomsoever Thou wilt defeat them. We do not insist upon being Elijah. We want Israel brought back from Babylon, but we'll go along as a red cap to carry his suitcase. We want a Reformation, O God, but we will not insist upon being Luther, Lord. But let it cost us something and let us be not heard of.

We want an army of the Lord to win, but we'll stay on the ground and, and re-service the planes and let the generals have the credit. And Lord we'll live our humble lives, but you'll hear from us God. And our prayer is going to be that you'll do these things. But we don't insist upon having any glory out of it nor any credit and nor getting known. You know, the awful thing about it is, my friends, that when you take this place before God, you do get known. And just as soon as you take this place before God, the chances are very strong, the percentage is very high, that you will be. And if nothing else, you'll become known as a prayer warrior. And when you get to be known as a prayer warrior, then you pray in order to stay in character with your saga, with the story they tell about you.

And you get a myth grows up around you, being a great praying soul, and that's dangerous too. And yet, the Bible says men ought always to pray. And it says that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And then it gives us illustrations by the dozen from the Bible of prayer that brought down hailstones that closed the heavens, that made it rain, that made the sun and moon stand still. God answered the prayers of the people and you and I have got to pray. And the difficulties in prayer that I've placed before you tonight are not difficulties. They should challenge you. They should not stop you but challenge you. You should purify your praying.

And we should purify our praying as a company of people. And I want to lead a good company of people starting Tuesday night, every night at seven o'clock in prayer. But I want a people who are unselfish, who want two things above all, that we should have again the name of God brought up before the world and before the church so that men might tremble at His presence and that the church might be restored again from her captivity. And as this church as a part of that church we might triumph in holiness. We want this, but we don't want anybody to get any credit except our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, can you pray like that? And do you want God to do anything bad enough to insist that He do it at whatever costs, even if it costs you something? Jesus wanted the world redeemed. He wanted the world redeemed. The Father said, I'll answer your prayer and redeem the world. But you know what it'll cost you? And He replied, I lay down My life of Myself. He was willing. He redeemed the world and answered His own prayer by giving His life for others. Do you want to be a useful Christian? Are you willing to let your usefulness cost you anything that He chooses in order that His glory should be revealed.

My dear friends, I think I might have a reputation of being a bit critical, and that's an understatement. But I'll tell you this much. When I see the glory of God moving, I want in it. I want to be there. I want to go along with that. And even though I'm just an office boy and go along and help and file cards, anything that would bring the church of God back again to the Holy Land and build up the walls of Jerusalem. And my criticism is not of those who are seeking to glorify God and restore his church. But I recognize merchants when I see them in the temple. I want to pick them up by the scruff of the neck and throw them out. I have good precedence for that. Great God, hear us and enable us to pray.

I wonder how many tonight there are here who would say, I agree with you, Brother Tozer. I believe these two things that are so desperately needed, that the name of God might be exalted and that hallowed, His name should be hallowed above all else, and that a new concept of God might be brought back to the church again, the concept our Baptist and Presbyterian and Methodist fathers had. The concept of God, the opinions, the notion concerning God, the idea of God in the hearts of the reformers.

We want this back again to a church whose God is too small. And we want the church restored again to New Testament pattern. And we want it so bad that we will pray and work and labor, even if it means loss to us. And even if it means that we are overlooked and neglected, and God gets all the glory and all we get is the blame. Are you ready for that? Are you ready? Is there anybody here that can write God a letter tonight and sign it and fold it and put it where you can get to it and say, now, God, here's what I want to say to Thee. I want to say that I want Thy church restored and I want Thy name hallowed and I want this fellowship blessed for Thy glory only. And I don't ask a thing but the privilege of seeing it happen.

Could you do that? Come down here to the place of prayer--right now. Is that real with you, Brother? Sister? When you get down here start to pray. Don't let's wait on each other. Let's call on God tonight. Kneel in the seats. Kneel along the platform here as an altar. Lead right out. Somebody lead us right out.

I want you to pray that God will bless our fellowship and give us success here in a mighty tough situation, for this changing population and people moving away over the last two years. We've suffered, but we're a long way from this. The God of our fathers is with us. But we don't want anybody to get any credit out of this. Don't anybody say, Tozer won. Tozer never won anything but sin. Will you pray? Somebody, lead us out. Who else wants to come. Anybody else want to come and join us? Come on. Come and join us. I think there ought to be others here. You want to get down on your knees. Have you ever had anybody go after you and penetrate through to you the Holy Ghost maybe has done. Come on down and join us we pray. Amen. Amen. Now somebody lead us out. I see you here, you lead, and we'll join you then, one after the other.