



# EXPERIENCE THE LIFE- CHANGING POWER OF PRAYER

*“14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

- Ephesians 3:14-21

## **Experience the Life-Changing Power of Prayer**

If you're in a crisis and God has not moved and you're operating by faith, all that means is the delay is tied to a bigger point that God wants to accomplish for His glory, the amplification of the name of His Son and the advancement of His Kingdom. So, you keep praying for a crisis. If you've not heard no, then you keep praying.

If you want intervention in history, then Jesus Christ, you must be willing to be identified with Him. People ought to know that you're a Christian and you ought to be found guilty of all charges. To call on His name in the day of trouble means you have publicly confessed Him before men.

Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, He says, if you confess with your mouth, that is open declaration that I am a committed Christian, I belong to Jesus Christ, open declaration, not hidden. He says, those who call on me, who have confessed, He says, will be delivered. Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do.

So that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. In other words, anything that's going to make me and my daddy look good, I'm going to do.

Glorified. If you're going to make me look good by your prayer request, that's why I want to give you a secret, give you a secret. This is a secret.

When you go to God and you've been fully, you're fully surrendered and you go to Him in the name of Jesus, don't tell nobody I told you this, but here's what I want you to do. I want you to tell God if He answers your request, what He'll get out of it. Because God loves to hear His glory on display.

He loves to know He'll be glorified in the process. His name will be great. First John says this in chapter 5. John says in verse 13, these things I've written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you might know, keep the word know in mind, that you have eternal life.

So, when you place faith alone in Christ alone, He gives you an inner confidence of your salvation, a conviction that you're His child. But now notice what He says right after that. Verse 14.

This is the confidence which we have before Him. So the word confidence, the word know. If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the request that we have asked from Him. Ooh. You see how many times I've said the word know? That is inner persuasion or confidence.

Anybody been waiting for something for a while? Okay. Well, the first question is, are you praying in His name? Okay. Are you surrendered? Okay.

But given that, when there is a gap of time between a legitimate prayer in Jesus' name, the knowing that He's going to answer, but the lapse in time between the answer, it is for one reason and one reason alone, preparation. Either God is preparing it for you, or He's preparing you for it, or He's preparing the two for each other. It is for preparation.

God will use whatever time is needed for the preparation to occur for the request to be answered and you to be qualified to receive the request when it comes. Now, that's the good news. The bad news is you can delay the time because you can delay the preparation.

You can decide, I'm not going to be surrendered. You can decide, I'm not going to obey. You can decide, and you can just spend that time on.

So, God may have decided, it's going to take one year, and you may be at 25 years because He never got the surrender, so you never got the preparation, so He could never answer. It should have taken Israel about a month, a month and a half to leave Egypt and get to the promised land. They are walking around in circles for 40 years because they never accepted the preparation that the wilderness was designed to give.

He says there is a knowing that occurs when we are in framework with God. It's powerful for watching this, physical and spiritual healing. James chapter 5 verses 13 to 15.

He says, if you pray in the name of the Lord, the prayer will heal the sick, okay, and address the sin. The prayer will heal the sick and address the sin. Now, all sickness is not due to sin, but a lot of sickness is.

He says the prayer of faith, he says in the name of the Lord, so he brings the name in, will heal the sick, and it will deal with the sin. What God is saying is, if I could ever get to the spiritual, we could do a lot better with the physical. See, most of our prayers, we want God to change stuff in the physical.

Give me more money, give me better health, give me a new car, give me a new house, give me nice clothes, give me, you know, we want God to do something in the physical, and that's not, there's nothing wrong with that, but we often want him to do stuff in the physical without touching the spiritual. Don't touch my sin but give me my blessing. Don't touch my rebellion but give me my blessing.

No, he doesn't mind changing physical, but he wants to address the spiritual. And that brings in monster authority, kingdom authority. You want to know kingdom authority? Here's the monster.

The name of Jesus gives you power over the devil, because much of what we deal with has come from him or through him or by him. In Luke chapter 10 verses 17 to 19, he told his disciples, here he's having a conversation with his disciples, and he says, you have authority over the devil in my name. You tread among the demons; you tread on top of the demons.

Instead of the devil and the demons walking on you, you are walking on them. Tread means walking on. When's the last time you walked on the devil? Just, just walked on, oh devil, let me walk on you, rather than walking over you.

He says, "I give you authority." He used the word authority to tread on the devil and his demonic scorpions. Why? Because many of the issues we have are demonically exacerbated.

See, we think the problem in the divorce was our personalities. That wasn't the problem. The problem is the devil got a hold of your personality.

And when the demons got hold of your personalities, your personalities got amped up. In chapter 19 of Acts, I love this, verse 13 to 17, okay, Paul is casting out demons in Jesus' name. He's just getting rid of demons in Jesus' name.

He's just, just the sick is being healed, the supernatural is occurring regularly in Jesus' name. Well, some dudes see this and they say, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. Paul using his name Jesus and stuff happening.

Why don't we do that? Because they concluded there's magic in his name. It's a magical name here. Paul doing all this stuff in Jesus' name.

So, they came to this demon-possessed person, the sons of Sceva. They came to this person, and they used the name of Jesus. They do like Christians do, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, in the name of Jesus, Jesus.

They went Jesus on them, just Jesus all over the place. Just Jesus, come out demon. Then Acts 19 says the demon spoke up.

The demon spoke up and the demon says, Jesus, we know. Paul, we know. We don't know who you folks are.

It says the demon jumped out of the man and jumped onto the folk who was using the name of Jesus, stripped them of their clothes, and it says, and they ran out naked. Why? Because when you don't know how to use the name and you still use the name, you just invite the devil to jump all over you and make things worse on you while you are calling Jesus' name. So, Jesus' name is not a name to be played with, nor is it dice, is it magic you just throw out there.

This is a person behind the name, and if you don't know the person, submit it to the person, intimate with the person, following the person, yielding to the person, submit it to the person, don't expect the power. The power comes from a person. It's okay to be honest in your prayers.

Neither sister is condemned because they express disappointment with God, God's son. After she expresses her disappointment, she goes on to say in verse 22, even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give to you. Whoa, I don't want you to miss this.

Jesus, verse 21, I'm hurting because I needed you and you didn't come. But, however, in spite of my pain, I know my bliss. And if you call on the father now, as bad as this situation is, he will still honor your request.

So, she marries, watch this, she marries her emotions with her theology. So you want to always have a theological and doctrinal foundation when you are emoting over your circumstances. She is emoting about her pain but retreating to her theology.

That's why you need to learn doctrine. She says, look, right now I'm disappointed, but I know what I believe. And I'm going to appeal to what I believe in spite of how I feel right now.

So, you need to learn some theology and doctrine, because that will ground you when the emotions are doing this. And when you're in a crisis, that's what emotions do, as you'll see here in a second. Jesus says to her, your brother will rise again.

She says to Jesus, yeah, I know, I learned theology, went to eschatology class, on the last day he going to rise. I know, I know about that. Then Jesus hits her with another theology.

Can I talk some theology here? Because I want to ground you, I want to root you. He says, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even if he dies.

Doctrine is critical, but doctrine is always to lead to a person. If all you get is doctrine, you may be heavy in the head with information, but light on the experience. You may know about the resurrection, but never experience one.

Because he says the resurrection that's doctrinal is tied to a person. So, here's his point. The written Word must always lead you to the living Word.

If you see we have two extremes. Some are so orthodox with the written Word that they can quote the Bible, quote the theology, quote the doctrine, but never have the experience,

because they are tethered to the written Word alone. This other side wants to fall in love with Jesus with no doctrine.

So, they live on the emotion of the experience without the underpinning of theology. You need the doctrine to know what to believe. You need the person to make it experiential in your belief.

If you read the Bible, but you don't see Jesus, your eyes stay closed even though your heart burns at the Bible study. He told the Pharisees, he says, you search the Scriptures, you read your Bible, but you still don't experience me. So, the goal of this church, the goal of your life is through the written Word to come into an experience of the living Word.

He says at the end of verse 26, do you believe this? This is going to be critical. This is going to be — this will change your life. Do you believe this? She says, yes, I believe.

You are the Christ, the Son of God who comes into the world. Now, it's Mary's turn. Mary not coming to Jesus, she's too disappointed.

And let's tell the truth, sometimes you're so disappointed with Jesus you don't want to talk to him. Can anybody raise your hand and tell, you don't want to pray no more, okay? Because he's not moving, he came too late, should have been here yesterday, okay? That kind of thing. So, she doesn't want to talk to him.

So, Jesus calls her. He says, “Mary, come on, come on, come talk to me now.” He bids us to come.

She gets up quickly because he invited her, and then she tells him, verse 32, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died. Now, in verse 33, everybody's crying. We've got weeping time because when you're in pain, you're going to cry if it hurts bad enough.

When you have a crisis, it will bring you to tears if it hurts bad enough in your particular situation. But I feel much better in verse 35, the shortest verse in the Bible, when I read Jesus' wept. He wasn't too big to cry, and he's the Son of God.

Jesus cried. Why? Because Hebrews chapter 4, verses 14 to 16, says that he sympathizes with our infirmities. He hurts with our pain.

I have good news. When tears are coming down your eyes, they're coming down his eyes. Because the Bible says he feels your pain.

He feels what you feel when you're in a crisis. So now, Jesus raises the question, where have you laid him? Where is he buried? So, they come to take Jesus to where he was buried, and he stirred up, verse 38 says, he's deeply moved within. He's moved at the sin and the pain that the world offers that create sickness in the first place.

Without sin, there would be no sickness. Not personal sin necessarily, but atmospheric sin. The germs, the viruses, the bacterias that infiltrate our body, the toxins, all of that are the environmental repercussions of sin.

And he was stirred up at the crisis that they were in and the reasons for it. And so, he says, stay with me here, verse 39, Martha, remove the stone. Martha's response, Martha said to him, Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.

You remember that delay? By this time, he stinks. Jesus said, move the stone. She says, let me give you a lesson in mortuary science.

He'd been dead four days. Ricker mortis has set in, which means the cells have collapsed. When Ricker mortis sets in and the cells collapse, it releases a green substance.

When this green substance is released because Ricker mortis has set in, because the cells has collapsed, that produces a stench because of the decay. He said, remove the stone. And what did he tell her? He said, did not I say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God? In other words, here it is, faith must always precede sight.

Once you put sight in front of faith, you've negated faith. Faith is based on what you do not see. If you got to see it first, you won't see it.



No. And how would she demonstrate faith? Not by feeling, but by removing the stone. Because faith is not a feeling, it's an action.

As you've heard me say many times, faith is acting like God is telling the truth. It is acting like it is so, even when it's not so, in order that it might be so, simply because God said so. So, you move in faith even when you don't feel it.

Sometimes you're going to feel faithish. Got faith all over you. You're just feeling it.

Sometimes you won't ever feel faithish, but you can know you're operating in faith because you move in the stone. So, some of us have situations that have not changed because we still have conversations and have not touched the stone. The thing that God told us to do that we refuse to do, which keeps the stone there, which means there's no faith no matter how much church you have.

Then, Jesus raised his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. Oh, oh, oh, there's theology there. You're praying through a crisis.

You're talking to God, but here's what you want. You want Jesus talking to God for you. See, you got to talk to him first, but what you want is Jesus to ditto the request.

Then, not until it was an act of faith, Jesus says to his Father, I thank you that you have heard me. Oh, oh, oh, don't, don't. See, you can't miss, Jesus does not waste words.

Not only does he not waste words, but he does also not waste tenses of words. He didn't say, I thank you for hearing me. Thank you that you heard me, which means we've already discussed this crisis that Lazarus is in.

When they prayed for the first time at the beginning of chapter 11, you and our Father had a conversation. So, now Jesus prays, I thank you you've heard me. I know that you always hear me, but because of the people standing around, I said it so that they might believe that you sent me.

Ah, now we have a clue. Jesus holds off on answering the prayer because he wants to use the crisis to bring a lot of people to salvation. Oh, so now there is a spiritual reason for a crisis delay in spite of prayer being prayed because there's a bigger kingdom purpose at work than just the healing of Lazarus.

If you're in a crisis and God has not moved, and you're operating by faith, all that means is the delay is tied to a bigger point that God wants to accomplish for his glory, the amplification of the name of his Son, and the advancement of his kingdom. So, you keep praying to a crisis. If you've not heard no, then you keep praying.

Let me tell you something about God. He's emotional. Now, we don't talk a lot about the emotions of God, but we see it all in Scripture.

We see where God gets angry. The Bible says the joy of the Lord, so he can get joyful. The Bible talks about God being pleased, or being pleased, loving the feeling.

There are all kinds of statements about God's feelings. You don't just want to reach God's ears, you want to touch God's heart, because he's a feeling kind of God. And he says, I've heard your words, but I've also felt your pain.

What the Bible says about Jesus is he came to sympathize with our hurts. That's a feeling. That's why when we want to just throw stuff up to God without trying to connect with God, we want him to hear our words, but not feel our hearts.

You know how it is with people when they talk to us, but they aren't feeling us. We're not connecting on this point. And they can repeat what you said, but they don't feel why you said it.

We have that in human reactions and dynamics all the time. God just doesn't want to hear you; he wants to feel you. And nothing enhances a relationship like when what is said is also what is felt, because when the words touch the heart, you have got a thing going on then.

He said, "I've heard your words, and I've seen your tears." I feel you. What happened? He says, "I will heal you."

On the third day, you're going to go up to the house of the Lord, meaning you're going to get your praise on. You cry in the day, but I'm going to give you a reason to shout three days from now. I'm going to heal you.

Wait a minute. But it was just a couple of verses ago, and by the time Isaiah got halfway out in the courtyard, God—watch this now—changed his mind. Did you hear that? God changed his mind.

Now, this puts us in a theological conundrum. We talked about this a little bit last week but let me just go a little further today. The Bible declares that God does not change.

God says, I am the Lord that changeth not. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God cannot change.

He says that over and over and over again in Scripture. But we just saw God change. He said, you will die, thus saith the Lord.

A couple of minutes later, you will not die, thus saith the Lord. So, we went from a terminal situation to a 15-year reprieve, and I was only in the center of a couple of minutes, because Isaiah just walked through the middle of the courtyard. And the only thing that happened between what God said the first time and what God said the second time was a prayer full of emotion.

That's the only thing that's happened. How can a changeless God, his immutability, change? God's characteristics—mercy, grace, truth, love, holiness, righteousness, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, veracity—God has character qualities. Those character qualities are unchangeable.

He will always be what he has always been. You and I go through changes. We're not the same today as we used to be.

We don't look the same. We don't act the same. We don't smell the same.

There are changes that occur in our life over time. God cannot change his essential nature, but he changed. While God cannot change his nature, he can and does change his action.

Let me say that again. God's nature cannot change, but his actions may change. How then does God change his action without changing his nature since his nature cannot change, but his action, as in this case, does change? So, God changes his mind, and he says, you are going to live.

You are not going to die. He leveraged influence with God. So then, please notice something else.

I'm going to deliver to you, verse 6. I'm going to give you 15 years, and when I give you 15 years and deliver you, I will deliver this city from the hand of the king of Assyria and defend the city for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David. Okay, watch this. When you're in a terminal situation, and God changes his mind and reverses something and gives you a new lease on life, whatever that terminal scenario is, it's not just for you.

See, it's not just for you. He says, when I give you these 15 years, it's not just so you can go out and party. I'm giving you this 15 years because I want to use you to deliver my people from the attack of the Assyrians.

In other words, the only reason I'm turning this around is not only to give you life, because I know that's what you're praying for, but I also want to give you purpose, and I want to give you a new opportunity to do something for me. See, most of the time when we're in a terminal situation, it's only about me, myself, and I, and I want God to do something for me that is in my best interest. And that's okay, but it can't be limited to you.

When God gives you a new opportunity, He wants you to be a blessing, not just be blessed. And that's the problem with a lot of this blessing stuff out here today. I want to be blessed.

I want to be rich. I want to have this. I want to have that, which in itself is not a problem unless it's by itself, unless it only involves you.

See, the prayer you need to pray is, God, I'm in a terminal situation. I need to affect another part of your character. I need you to reverse this situation so that not only can my situation be changed, but so that I can be a conduit to change somebody else's.