

## **Prayer is Many Things**

When I held my newborn grandson in my arms, I cried out, "O God!"  
As I watched the collapse of the World Trade Center, I cried out, "O God!"  
When I saw the Milky Way Galaxy for the very first time, I cried out, "O God!"

### **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

***We gather together as the family of God,  
and sing in sweet harmony:***

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.*

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.*

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.

Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.*

words & music by Carl G. Boberg and R.J. Hughes

### **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

### ***Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom***

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” <sup>6</sup> And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. <sup>7</sup> And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. <sup>9</sup> Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

### ***Solomon's Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple***

<sup>22</sup> Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven <sup>23</sup> and said:

“Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. <sup>24</sup> You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

<sup>25</sup> “Now Lord, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ <sup>26</sup> And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

<sup>27</sup> “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!<sup>28</sup> Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. <sup>29</sup> May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.<sup>30</sup> Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, **forgive**.

## **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

Have someone pray to open

Have someone else pray

Have someone else pray

If prayer is many things, than not only are many prayers *permissible*, they may also be *necessary*.

When we study God's word, we don't just read it — we read it purposefully.

When we pray, we likewise want to pray purposefully. It's not about the **words**, but about the **needs** that cause us to reach out and lay hold of God. This is where our passion rises up.

*Wrestling in prayer*: what does that mean? How do we wrestle. What do we expect for the outcome? What was the desired outcome for Jacob?

He wouldn't let go until he had the blessing – his OWN blessing – not the blessing given to his father or grandfather. He wanted his own *relationship*, his own **covenant**, with God – even though the content of that covenant was the same for *all* of them, and for *all of us, in them*. It was so intense that it put his hip out of joint – it altered his walk for the rest of his life.

Why? He encountered God-in-the-flesh, and he would never be the same.

Wrestling in prayer, not knowing what the outcome will be – only what we *want* from God – we begin to order our hearts and our minds according to God's *word*, and His *promises* – to seek God's will for us, *whatever* it is.

That means our prayers vary according to our needs *at the moment*. That's why we have different **TYPES** of prayers. They're for different types of circumstances, at any given moment.

Then there are those prayers, often at the **deepest levels** of our heart, that will not change over time. They are persistent prayers, like our prayer for the salvation of a loved one; our prayer for justice for the oppressed. We're like the woman at the baker's door, or at the judge's door. We keep knocking on God's door in the middle of the night: I need the bread of life for my friend; I need your justice to reign in an unjust world and I need it **now**.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Mat 7:7 <sup>NKJ</sup>)

## Week 3 - Recap

This course is not about prayer, it's about praying. It's part of our discipling series, so that one course builds on another. It's **not** to teach you *how* to pray. It's to get you to think deeply about praying – *the who, what, where, when, and why* of it.

So far we've discovered that prayer is many things: adoration, thanksgiving, confession, desperation, even venting. But at its core, it's asking from God, *because* of what Christ has done. And therefore we pray *in Jesus' name*, **by** his authority, and **with** his rights.

Prayer is having a conversation with God. It's two-way. We speak to God about our needs and desires, *seeing Him as He is*. And the Spirit reminds us of what God has said to us about those things, *in His word*. Therefore, we rely on the **promises** of God *as* we pray.

We pray **to** the Father, **through** the Son, **by** the Holy Spirit. It's TRINITARIAN. And as we pray, we pray confidently *because* of Christ, knowing that we're united to him. We're **clothed** in him. In Christ, we're perfectly acceptable to God. We're His beloved child.

Prayer is therefore **purposeful**, just as Bible study is purposeful. We go to it with **intent**. It doesn't have to be fancy; but it does have to be **sincere**. We need to remember Who we're talking to as we pray. We're laying hold of God, and we're **desperate** for Him.

We pray silently or vocally. We pray privately or publicly. We pray spontaneously, or we can craft a prayer with great care, as Solomon did when the temple was dedicated. We pray alone, or we pray in a group, where AMEN signifies our *affirmation* of what has been prayed, and it's also how we **join** in it. It's a "ditto."

The **form** of a prayer is not as important as the WHAT, WHEN, and WHY of it.

That's because prayer is not an end in itself. It's a **means** to an end.

*Prayer is one of God's ordained means to effect his will in the world.* That's not to **discourage** us, but to **encourage** us.

*Prayer is conditional in nature.* We must pray in the Spirit, and according to God's will. That's not to **restrict** us, but to **empower** us.

If we don't know what our true needs are, then THAT must be our prayer: to *know* them. If we know our needs, we're better able to honor God as the One who will meet them.

**PRAYER IS A CRAFT.** That means over time it can become stronger and more powerful, as we hone our skills, and practice our craft, and deepen our understanding of God in Christ.

Now, let's talk about ATTITUDES OF PRAYER. What should our **MINDSET** be when we pray?

*From the War Room*  
**The Final Prayer**

*Analyze the parts of this prayer. What makes it powerful? Why does it thrill us?*

“You’ve done it again, Lord. You’ve done it again. You are good, and You are mighty, and You are merciful. You keep taking care of me when I don’t deserve it. Praise You, Jesus! You are Lord.

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“Give me another one, Lord. Guide me to who You want me to help. Raise up more that will call upon Your name. Raise up those who love You and seek You and trust You. Raise them up, Lord. Raise them up.

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“Lord, we need a generation of believers who are not ashamed of the gospel. We need an army of believers that hate to be lukewarm and will stand on Your word above all else. Raise them up, Lord. Raise them up.

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“I pray for unity among those that love You. I pray that You open their eyes that they can see Your truth, Lord. I pray for Your hand of protection and guidance.

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“Raise up a generation, Lord, that would take light into this world, that will not compromise when under pressure, that will not cower, Lord, when others fall away. Raise them up, Lord, that they would proclaim that there is salvation in the name of Jesus Christ.

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Raise them warriors, Lord, who will fight on their knees, who will worship You with their whole hearts, Lord. Lord, call us to battle that we may proclaim King of kings and Lord of lords.

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“I pray these things with all my heart. Raise them up, Lord, raise them up.”

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# The Parts of Your Armor

Eph 6.10-18

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Whose strength and armor is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you need it? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Where is your enemy? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.<sup>1</sup>

What's the goal? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, *having fastened* on the belt of truth,

How does truth "gird" you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and *having put on* the breastplate of righteousness,

Where did your preparation begin? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, *having put on* the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

What made you "ready"? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

How does faith protect you from accusations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation,

How does *salvation* protect your head (or mind)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

What is your weapon? \_\_\_\_\_

Where does its power come from? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

When you pray, where is its power? \_\_\_\_\_

*To that end* keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

What end? (v. 18) \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you pray for? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you one? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> OT - Ex 14:13; 2Ch 20:17; Isa 46:8; Da 11:32; NT - 1Co 16:13; 2Co 1:24; Ga 5:1; Eph 6:13; Php 4:1; 2Th 2:15; 1Pe 5:12;

## **The Valley of Vision**

Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, You have brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths, but see You in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin, I behold Your glory. Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown, that to give is to receive, that the valley is the place of vision. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter Your stars shine; let me find Your light in my darkness, Your life in my death, Your joy in my sorrow, Your grace in my sin, Your riches in my poverty, Your glory in my valley.

## **Man a Nothing**

I am a shell full of dust, but animated with an invisible rational soul, and made anew by an unseen power of grace; Yet I am no rare object of valuable price, but one that has nothing and is nothing — although chosen by you from eternity, given to Christ, and born again; I am deeply convinced of the evil and misery of a sinful state, of the vanity of creatures; but also of the sufficiency of Christ.

When you would guide me, I control myself; when you would be sovereign, I rule myself. When you would take care of me, I suffice myself. When I should depend on your providing, I supply myself; when I should submit to your providence, I follow my will; when I should study, love, honour, and trust you, I serve myself.

I fault and correct your laws to suit myself; instead of you, I look to a man's approbation, and I am by nature an idolater. Lord, it is my chief design to bring my heart back to you. Convince me that I cannot be my own God, or make myself happy, nor be my own Christ to restore my joy, nor my own Spirit to teach, guide, and rule me.

Help me to see that grace does this by providential affliction; for when my credit is good, you cast me lower, when riches are my idol, you wing them away; when pleasure is my all, you turn it into bitterness. Take away my roving eye, curious ear, greedy appetite, lustful heart; show me that none of these things can heal a wounded conscience, or support a tottering frame, or uphold a departing spirit. Then take me to the cross and leave me there.

## **Calvary's Anthem**

HEAVENLY FATHER, You have led me singing to the cross where I fling down all my burdens and see them vanish, where my mountains of guilt are leveled to a plain, where my sins disappear, though they are the greatest that exist, and are more in number than the grains of fine sand. For there is power in the blood of Calvary to destroy sins, more than can be counted even by one from the choir of heaven.

You have given me a hill-side spring that washes clear and white; and I go as a sinner to its waters, bathing without hindrance in its crystal streams. At the cross there is free forgiveness for poor and meek ones, and ample blessings that last forever. The blood of the Lamb is like a great river of infinite grace with never any diminishing of its fullness, as thirsty ones without number drink of it.

O Lord, forever will your free forgiveness live that was gained on the mount of blood. In the midst of a world of pain, it is a subject for praise in every place, a song on earth, an anthem in heaven, its love and virtue knowing no end. I have a longing for the world above where multitudes sing the great song; for my soul was never created to love the dust of earth.

Though here my spiritual state is frail and poor, I shall go on singing Calvary's anthem. May I always know that a clean heart, full of goodness, is more beautiful than the lily; that only a clean heart can sing by night and by day; that such a heart is mine when I abide at Calvary.

### **The Lord's Day**

O Lord my Lord, This is your day, the heavenly ordinance of rest, the open door of worship, the record of Jesus' resurrection, the seal of the Sabbath to come, the day when saints militant and triumphant unite in endless song. I bless you for the throne of grace, that here free favour reigns; that open access to it is through the blood of Jesus; that the veil is torn aside, and I can enter the holiest and find you ready to hear, waiting to be gracious, inviting me to pore out my needs, encouraging my desires, promising to give more than I ask or think.

But while I bless you, shame and confusion are mine: I remember my past misuse of sacred things, my irreverent worship, my base ingratitude, my cold, dull praise. Sprinkle all my past Sabbaths with the cleansing blood of Jesus, and may this day witness deep improvement in me. Give me in rich abundance the blessings the Lord's Day was designed to impart;

May my heart be fast bound against worldly thoughts or cares. Flood my mind with peace beyond understanding. May my meditations be sweet, my acts of worship be life, liberty, and joy; may my drink be the streams that flow from your throne, my food the precious Word, my defence the shield of faith, and may my heart be more knit to Jesus.

### **A Disciple's Renewal**

O MY SAVIOUR, Help me. I am so slow to learn, so prone to forget, so weak to climb. I am in the foothills when I should on the heights. I am pained by my graceless heart, my prayerless days, my poverty of love, my sloth in the heavenly race, my sullied conscience, my wasted hours, my unspent opportunities.

I am blind while light shines around me: take the scales from my eyes, grind to dust the evil heart of unbelief. Make it my greatest joy to study you, meditate on you, gaze on you, sit like Mary at your feet, lean like John on your breast, appeal like Peter to your love, count like Paul all things dung.

Give me increase and progress in grace so that there may be more decision in my character, more vigour in my purposes, more elevation in my life, more fervor in my devotion, and more constancy in my zeal.

As I have a position in the world, keep me from making the world my position. May I never seek in the creature what can be found only in the Creator. Let not my faith cease from seeking you, until it vanishes into sight. Ride forth in me, you King of kings and Lord of lords, that I may live victoriously, and in victory attain my end.