

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

October 2, 2022

SPEAKER

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SERIES

God In Us

PART

5

TITLE

Praying In The Spirit

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:5-8, 26-27



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Well, Providence family, it's good to see you. And if you are a guest with us, we're really glad that you've joined us. If you're in the room or at home online, well, it's really good to see you and it's really good to imagine those of you who are at home. So if you have a Bible with you turn with me to Romans 8, if you don't, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. And if you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift. It was roughly about 15 years ago that I remember praying to the Lord and I basically said these words, "Father, I want to pray but I don't like to. I don't enjoy prayer. I don't feel like I experience what I read in the Bible. It seems like people in the Bible, their prayer had more power and more effect. And there was more pleasure in the hearts of those who were doing it than seemingly what I experience."

And that was not a complaint, it was a confession. And that confession was met with a request and basically I'd say, "God, would you please over the course of my life, help me to learn how to pray in a way where I see power, effect and enjoyment." If you are here and you don't enjoy prayer, I can sympathize. But I want you to know that there is more that is available than what you're currently experiencing. We all know that without power and effect, inspiration turns to frustration. If you look at your life and you say, I really want to lose some weight. And so you go out of your way for, let's just say it's a month and you eat broccoli instead of burritos and you exercise. And you go back whether it's to a scale or a doctor, whatever, and there's really no change whatsoever, all that inspiration that generates all that energy it tends to be frustrating.

Some of us are in broken relationships and we think, you know what? I don't want that relationship to be perpetually broken. Maybe it's a marriage that's just not as sweet as it could be. And so you're like, this is what we're going to do, over the next several months let's go to a counselor or let's go to a marriage conference. Let's read a book. Let's do something. And the fact is, if you invest all that energy because of inspiration and it's not met with power or effect or result, that inspiration turns to frustration. And so it is with the spiritual life. Jesus looked at us after He rose from the dead and He said, "If you believe in me, I'm commissioning you to go and make disciples." And one of the most beautiful things that I've had the privilege to see here at Providence over the last several years, is this recommitment in the hearts of people to be willing to extend themselves to the point of discomfort in order to bless people, so that they can share the gospel with people on the hope that we would make disciples of people.

And yet all that inspiration, if it's not met with spiritual power and effect it will turn into frustration. And this is why Jesus told his disciples after he rose from the dead, you stay in Jerusalem and you pray instead of going out and preaching. God knows that his mission requires power. And God gives power to those who pray, but not any kind of praying will do. We're in a series on the Holy Spirit called God in Us, this morning what I want to look at is what does it mean to pray in the spirit? To pray in the spirit, before we read and before I pray, let me say for those of you who do not have a relationship with Christ, you imagine that the height of your spiritual existence is religion, I want you to know you're missing out on everything that He has available for you. Your life only makes sense if you are in a relationship with your creator.

And He has made every provision necessary to not only reconcile to him after we sin against him, but He

gives us everything we need to sustain that relationship. That's what this is all about. So let's pray to him now. Father in heaven, we come before you our maker. And Jesus we thank you for coming to this earth and giving your life to rescue us from our sin. Thank you for rising from the dead to give us eternal life. And spirit of God, we thank you for opening our eyes to see that Jesus is everything. And now I pray that you would speak through our weakness and liberate our prayers. Would you cause us to experience a fresh awakening of spiritual power and enjoyable praying as a congregation. And so would you help us in ways that I can't even imagine all the ways that we need it. And we pray this in Jesus name, amen.

Romans chapter eight starting in verse five he says, for those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the spirit, set their minds in the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's laws, indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Now in between that verse and verse 26, there are a number of different explanations of how the Holy Spirit, when we set our mind on the things of the Spirit, how he activates our life and our faith and our relational capacity with him and with others. And so there is this amazing chapter, this whole chapter is about life in the spirit what does it look like? But in the matter, for the interest of time, I want to skip to what he talks about prayer and it's verse 26.

He says, likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray as we ought, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. So this passage in Romans 8, describes what Paul in other places and other writings prescribes. In other words, he tells us that we're supposed to be doing something. That we're supposed to be praying in a certain way, which means it's possible to pray in a different way. Here he describes it, but let me show you two places where he prescribes it for us. One is in Ephesians 6 where he tells us that we need to suit up for the Christian life. He says, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Now, I circled the words put on, that is an imperative verb. It's what we're supposed to do. In the very next he says, and take up the armor of God. And then later he says, stand in the armor of God. All three of those are imperatives, but then there's something else that he gives us... And I know this is going to be painful for those of you who failed English. There's a thing called a participle, okay? You're like, I came to church not English, a participle though is... I don't care if you like it or not, it doesn't matter. A participle helps you get the verb done. In other words, if he didn't tell us how to suit up with the armor of God, how would you try going about doing it? There's not a like helmet of salvation that you... Like you're not wearing helmets. He tells us that there's the shield and there's a belt and there's shoes of peace, and so how are we supposed to armor up?

And it gets to the part where he goes this is how, praying at all times in the spirit, that's how you activate the shield of faith. That's how you activate the belt of truth. It's praying in the spirit, it's how you activate the helmet of salvation. Jude only has one chapter, but in verse 20 and 21 of that one chapter he says this, those of

you who don't like participles he gives us three of them. Building yourself up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourself in the love of God waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Participles have the ing. So there's one thing he wants you to do, and that's to keep yourself in the love of God. Now, some of us are like, wait a minute, can I do something that where He doesn't love me anymore? No, but you can do something and live in a particular way where you do not experience the benefits and blessings of His love.

I've used this illustration too many times but it is just the best one I can come up with you. Most of us we got to shower hopefully recently, probably this morning, yesterday, this weekend, sometime, you turned the water on and all the properties of the water they were flowing out just like the love of God. But until you stand underneath that water, you do not receive any of its benefits. It doesn't cleanse you, it doesn't refresh you, it just goes down the drain. And so he tells us, keep yourself in the love of God. Position yourself in your life to where His love is falling so that you can experience all of its benefits. You're like, how do I do that? He tells us, you build yourself up in the most holy faith, and you wait for the mercy of God, and you pray in the Holy Spirit. And so what I want to do is give you just two points. You're like, two? That's like refreshing. They're like so long though, you're going to only need two.

Two points, the first one what I wanted to do is simply contrast what it looks like to pray in the Spirit versus to pray in the flesh. Sometimes by simply seeing the contrast of what praying in the spirit isn't, it helps us see what it is. So the first point if you want take notes, is praying in the spirit keeps us from praying in the flesh. Romans 8, Paul begins by describing what Jesus did to change our standing before God when the Holy Spirit led us to believe in Him. And so he begins in verse one, he says, there's no condemnation. Why is there no condemnation? He says, because of what the law couldn't do, the law of God it could not make us righteous because we have a flesh. We have a nature, an old nature that resists God and sins against what He says. And so what he says could not provide us a right standing. So what the law couldn't do, God did by sending His son.

Jesus came, he lived without sin. He died on cross for our sin. He rose from the dead and He says, If you will believe in me, I will take your sin and I will give you my righteousness so that all the righteous requirements of the law... Is what it says in verse four, are fulfilled in you. Therefore, there's no condemnation over those who are in Christ. But not only does he do that, when the Holy Spirit comes and lives within our heart, he allows us to draw from a power source, a motivation source other than our flesh. For those who have never put their faith and trust in Christ, there is one well in which you can draw your energy, desire, and motivation and it's the flesh. But when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, there's another well from which we can draw and this is what verse five seeks to describe. He says, those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. That means if you think about sin all day long, you'll sin.

But those who live according to the spirit set their minds and the things of the spirit. You say, well, is there anything at stake? Does it really matter in how I live my life if I draw from the flesh as opposed to the spirit?

Verse six answers that question. It says to set the mind on the flesh is death. You draw from the flesh, you know what it does? Is it kills your joy, it kills your peace, it kills your relationships, it can kill your marriage, it can kill your family. It's death. He says, but we have another opportunity. There's another well and we can set our mind on the spirit and it's life and peace. He gives life to our joy. He gives life to our homes, to our relationships. And so each one of us we draw from one of two wells, all of us. We draw our desires and motivations from one of two wells.

And this is why for those of us in Christ, we can say at one point in the day, I want to be pure and maybe even five minutes later, I really want to be impure right now. We can say and mean it, I want to be a peacemaker. And like two minutes later we're like, I really want to insult him. It's because there's two different desires and whichever is seen as epic is what we act on. And so we have to ask the question, well, what is this spirit and flesh? Well, the flesh is our old nature and it's very specific. And these are important that you get these three because I'm going to build off of these three. This is what the flesh does, the flesh does not love Jesus. The flesh loves things that Jesus died for, takes pleasure in that which hurts Jesus and it relies upon itself. The spirit is the new nature that the Holy Spirit gives us that does the opposite, loves Jesus, relies on Jesus and prefers righteousness.

And let me tell you something about both of these nature, they'll both pray. Even the flesh that it's hostile to God, we're told in verse seven will pray. And the reason is because even the flesh wants to resource itself. And so we have to ask the question, well, then what does it look like if I'm praying in the flesh? Now, we can all imagine the most obvious ways like that guy's praying in the flesh right now. If you prayed that a tree fell on your neighbor because your neighbor irritates you over the weekend, that would be praying in the flesh. We're like, okay, I see that one. If you're praying for a promotion and a raise at work in order to resource your sin, you're praying in the flesh. So we're like, okay, I see what you're talking about. But those are the more obvious ways, there are other more subtle ways in which we pray in the flesh.

And what I want to show you is the three subtle ways that we do so and they're built on the back of what the flesh does. It doesn't love Christ, it loves sin and it relies on self. So let's examine prayer underneath that lens. What does it mean to pray in the flesh? Well, the first thing is it's praying without regard for Christ. It's praying without regard or love, affection for Jesus. Now, why is this so important? Well, Ephesians 2:18 really tells us something remarkable and so I put it down here at the bottom, through Him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. And this is what he's saying... The we both, what he's talking about there is Jews and Gentiles and the Him here is Christ, it's Jesus. So this is what he's saying, through Him, Jews and Gentiles, all peoples have access in one spirit to the Father. And so, if you could imagine through this lens what's happening at the spiritual realm when we pray, we are entering into the throne room of God Almighty, God the Father in order to call upon Him.

It's in this one spirit, which means that the Holy Spirit is pushing us from the back. He's like, come on, I got the power. I'm going to bring you in there. But there's a gate. Someone had to give us access. And Jesus who is

there in heaven and has eternally the perpetual marks, the holes in His hands and feet that give us the access to come into the presence, it's through Him that we have access. So just imagine praying and what it looks like to pour out all kinds of words upon the throne and give no regard or affection to the one who has holes in His hands and feet who's standing there, whose sacrifice made it possible for us even to come. We pray for selfish intent without a heart for Jesus, and in that moment maybe we don't even know it but we're praying in the flesh. Or to come and in that space where we see the glory of God, to not see the glory of God instead not to be overwhelmed with what Jesus taught us about prayer.

But instead to say, God, would you hallow my name, would you cause my kingdom, my business to come, my will to be done, is to pray in the flesh. And in these prayers there's no power, there's no effect. But the same would also be true then if its counterpoint is to pray and the spirit is to come and to say, spirit, thank you for helping me see Jesus. And Jesus I admire you. I'm going to talk to your father, but I admire you. It is your sacrifice. I am thankful and I am going to salt and pepper my entire prayer with the words that I have read that have come out of your mouth not only about how to live but how to pray, to regard Christ. The second characteristic of praying in the flesh is praying without remorse for sin. To come into the space, to the throne room of God and to make requests while sheltering unconfessed sin is essentially to come into his space and say, I'll tell you what, let's make a deal. I'll ignore your holiness, you ignore my sin.

To come into that place and to have unconfessed sin that we are harboring and protecting, and have no desire to leave and yet we want something from him is to pray in the flesh. But to pray in the spirit is to come into that space and say, this is who I am and this is my sin and it's real. And I'm asking that you would forgive me. I renounce it. Psalm 86 says, if I regard an iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. The third characteristic of praying in the flesh is relying on our effort to merit favor. You see, prayer does involve effort. And please know that every morning like you have to make a decision, am I going to pray or not? And that takes effort. It takes a little discipline to even get praying because you could do other things. It takes effort. However, when we get into that space and we suddenly find ourself relying in order to merit favor with God so that he is going to answer, we're going to rely on creating eloquent sentences.

And we're going to try to stack up as many words as possible. And we're going to come with all kinds of pretense. And we're going to follow these arbitrary rules that God didn't give us, like you know what I was told that we're supposed to pray through ACTS, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. This is literally what I want, but I can't ask you until I try to find some energy to adore you. And then I got to confess and then I got to thank you. And then I get to ask you. What child comes to their parents and says, you know what dad? I really want a popsicle. But before I do that, hallowed be your name. You're awesome. You're super amazing. I accidentally kicked the dog, but I thank you for my bedroom. Hey, can I have a popsicle? No, they just talk.

And so anytime that we would stack up any kind of religious rules about how to pray or stack up eloquent words and sentences in the hope that that eloquence is going to attract His attention, that it's going to merit

His favor and power, we're praying in reliance of the flesh. There's no power in that. If there's one illustration or one thing that you could perhaps imagine to where I personally know when a prayer when it even feels like it's being prayed in the flesh, and all of a sudden when God just transforms the whole thing that's this is where we're going to move us, how does he do this, into where it's like, oh, okay, things just changed. Now I'm clearly praying in the spirit. This is what it feels like, it's the difference between you trying to push a rope... You've ever tried to push a rope? It's really frustrating. To push a rope up a hill and then suddenly what happens when you start praying in the Holy Spirit, is he starts pulling the rope and you're simply holding on for the ride.

That is prayer that is life giving and energizing. So how does that happen? And that's the second point. Praying in the spirit looks to the spirit to lead our prayers forward. We're looking to the Holy Spirit to say, okay, pull this prayer along. I simply want to come along for the ride. You see the Holy Spirit and God knows that prayer is hard. We have three enemies the Bible says, the world, the flesh and the devil. The world wants to defile us, the devil wants to destroy us, and it says that the flesh is hostile to God. None of these three want us praying that's why it's hard to pray. It's hard to pray. And so God sends his spirit as our helper, to do what? Verse 26, to help us in our weakness. Now, how does he help us to pray? He invites us on a lifelong walk. That's how he helps us to pray.

We studied this a few weeks ago back in Galatians 5, if we live by the spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit. To walk with the spirit. We all know that when we walk with a friend, that changes the walk, right? Do you know why walking with a friend changes the walk? The main reason is because they help us talk. When you walk alone, you're on a hike alone and you got 10 miles to walk through the mountains, it's really long. But isn't it amazing you have a friend by your side who helps you talk, and you can forget your walking because you're so caught up in talking. To walk by the Spirit is not different than praying in the spirit. Praying in the Spirit is what happens when we're walking with him. A friend who sticks closer than a brother. I wonder if you know what it feels like, if you know what it is that he changes, how does he change? Let me just walk through a few of these.

What does it look like to pray in the spirit and to have the spirit lead our prayers forward? First thing it does is this, looking to the spirit to activate our desire. When the Holy spirit comes into our heart, he plants desires in our heart, and one of those desires is to pray. The Holy Spirit literally comes in and he puts a desire, he plants a desire that's going to grow and it's the desire to pray. Well, how do we know that? Well, Romans 8:15 says this, you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. What he is saying here is this, is that when you put your faith in trust in Jesus Christ, he didn't give you a spirit of fear or slavery that made you afraid of talking to God the Father. Instead, what did he do? No, we received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba Father. In other words, one of the desires that the Holy Spirit plants within our lives when we trust in him is an inclination to look up and say, Dad. It's an inclination to pray.

And what you find is as you continue with this walk... And what we looked at of how do you walk with the



spirit? You acknowledge his presence, you're responsive to his promptings, you're reliant upon his power. And what happens is these little seeds, this little inclination, this little desire to pray, what happens is it gets bigger. It's like watering it and it adds sunlight, and suddenly the stalk it gets thicker and boulder. And suddenly the desire to pray in our life becomes all the stronger, which is why isn't it true it's pretty easy to pray when you want to. Some of us we read these stories, these autobiographies of saints in the past like, man, they prayed two hours every morning. How did they do it? Let me tell you how they did it, they wanted to. What looks like self-control, wow, just imagine the discipline, just imagine how much self control that person have, self-control doesn't feel like self-control when you want to. It's just doing what you most want. When we walk with the Holy Spirit, talking to the Father is what we want to do.

A second characteristic of praying in the spirit is this, looking to the spirit to energize our mind and body. You remember what Jesus said to his disciples when He found them all asleep instead of praying, he says, guys, the spirit is willing but the flesh is so weak. So what does the Holy Spirit do? Look at verse 11, he says, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your moral bodies through a spirit who dwells in you. He gives life. In other words, those desires within our heart that he activates, he then energizes our body, our mind to want to pray, to put it on the calendar or to make the decision to say, I'm going to go into this room right now and I'm going to pray. I'm going to go on a walk and I'm going to pray. Who gives us the desires? Who energizes us? It's the Holy Spirit. When we walk with him, he gives us the desire to pray and the activation or the animation of our body and mind to begin praying. And then he tells us here he does one other thing.

And that is praying in the spirit is looking to the spirit to transform our request. We have transformers all over the city, some of them were probably hit over the weekend, where these boxes they receive unbelievable amounts of voltage and power and then that transfers it into manageable amounts that's healthy for each household so that our toasters don't blow up. The Holy Spirit takes our prayers, transfers the prayers so that it's like we're praying for what we would've prayed for if we knew everything he knows. That's what he says in verse 26, the spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Now, there are different interpretations of what this verse means, to intercede for us with groanings too deep for words. Some people believe on the basis when it says, likewise the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray, that word likewise draws us back if you just...

We're not going to take the time to do it, but right before that passage on prayer he talks about the fact that the world is so busted up that we groan inwardly longing for our bodies to be redeemed. We know that we have been saved. We know that we've been forgiven. And yet we live in a busted up world and we get cancer and sickness and colds and sick and all kinds of stuff. And we're like, God, I just want to be whole. I want to go to heaven. And all of a sudden he... And he uses the word we groan, but then he says down here and he intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. In other words, some people believe what it means is you get to that place and sometimes you just cannot formulate a sentence because what's on your mind is simply too heavy. Words are like trucks. They're employed to carry an emotion or a thought or a desire.



And sometimes the thought or the desire is simply too big for any truck to carry. And so the only thing you can do is just, oh God, I... If you ever prayed and just simply sounded like you couldn't talk, the Holy Spirit can work with those groanings. Other people believe that much like Jesus in the garden who perhaps had so much strain under Him, that He was groaning in addition to praying specific words, is that the Holy Spirit himself sees the agony of our own heart and he groans for us. The reality is the very next verse tells us precisely what he does, which is why it should be so encouraging to us. In verse 27 he says, He who searches hearts, that's God, the Father, knows what is the mind of the spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And what you find is that when the Holy Spirit begins taking and transferring your prayer into what we would be praying for if we knew His will, then what happens? Is there is power and effect.

Now, I'm going to finish here in just a moment, we're going to take the Lord Supper. But the next question I want to try to answer quickly is, but how do we do it? All right, you're like, okay, that all sounds really good but how do I pray in the spirit? How do I go about doing this? Before I give you a few suggestions of things that I simply do on the basis of what I've sought to teach you, that has made the prayer time over the years sweeter and sweeter and more powerful I believe as the days have gone by, I want to tell you where we're going next as a congregation to encourage you to participate with me. Next week we're going to start a new series, it's called For This Reason I Pray. And for those of you who are bummed that we're going to leave the series on the Holy Spirit, actually it's simply a continuation. Where what we're going to do is we're going to look at four different prayers that the Apostle Paul prayed in the spirit. And we're going to practice.

You see, I believe that praying in the spirit... I'm not saying that the other messages haven't been important, but this is what I believe, Jesus Christ said, this is the mission I gave you and don't do it without praying in the spirit for power. And so it becomes critically important that we learn how to do that as a church family. And so we're going to spend five weeks today and four more weeks looking at what it means to pray in the spirit. But in addition to participating and coming and learning and studying about how do we do that, I want to ask you to participate in a special way by praying for 21 days with me. Starting on October the 10th, that's not tomorrow it's the next Monday after the first prayer that we pray, we put together a little book, they're free and they're all gone today. Okay, so they'll be available next Sunday in the lobby. But they're also on the website, you can just go and you can find everything there.

And for 21 days we want to practice praying. And the reason is because we're not very good at it. We struggle to do it. And our hope over 21 days is the practice of praying will create a habit over those 21 days. And so I want to encourage you to consider doing this with me. On the Wednesdays during those three weeks, we're going to have an actual prayer time for those who can come here to the building during the lunch hour. And then on October 30th, on the final night, the final day of this guide, what we're going to do is we're going to have a family meal. And then we're going to have a prayer and worship night where we continue to call upon the Lord for power, and thank him for the waves of the last three weeks that we've seen him poured out upon us.

Now, I urge you to participate with us. But in addition to that, as we get ready to take the Lord Supper, what would I encourage you to consider? A couple applications. First, let me encourage you to try to learn how to practice the Spirit's presence, that means we're acknowledging his presence. It's like a friend who's standing next to us. You acknowledge a friend when the friend is near. That means for me, I wake up in the morning as I'm literally getting out of bed I say, Lord, good morning. Thank you for the privilege to live in your world today. Thank you for giving me this pathway to come into your presence, Jesus, because you died for me. And then I say, Spirit, I need you to help. I need you to take this prayer over. I get dressed and I go downstairs. This is just what I do.

And I know for many of you, your world is a little different. Some of you got littles and you're running around, you're like, how am I supposed to do that with kids? I don't know. It may not happen when I do it and how I do it, but I just know that you need it. You need to find a time. I say to the Spirit, I need your help. I want to be conscious of you today. I want to be responsive to you today. I want to be reliant upon you today. I get downstairs and when I get down to my office, the next thing I do is I say, God, I need your help. And it's to admit your weakness. There's so much at stake... This is what I pray, there's so much at stake, in some way I pray my old flesh has desires that will bring death, and today they're going to look attractive. And I'm asking you to protect me. Without your help I won't walk in a straight line. I won't pray in a straight line.

I'll pray in the flesh and I'll forfeit all the blessing and power that you have available for me. And then I open up the Bible. That's the third thing, populate your prayers with God's word. I say, spirit, I'm about to read the book that you inspired to be written. You know what it means. You know what it's supposed to mean and I want it to mean that in my own head. I read it and I say, God, is this what you meant? I read it again. And it's amazing how the Holy Spirit sometimes will refine my understanding. And then I'm asking God, how do I apply it? What in my life needs to change for this to become more of a reality in my own life? And so I'm populating my prayers with this word. And then the last thing is to pray until he is pulling the rope that you were pushing.

Now, some of us we stop short of this because of time. And I don't do this every day. I wish I did. I don't. But I do it frequently. For me, I get jittery and so I have a really hard time praying for a long period of time sitting down. And so I go for a walk. I walk to the neighborhood almost every single day and I use that time to pray. And it just helps me when I'm moving. And what I do is I go out and I say, Spirit, I don't want to waste this time, so would you lead me, direct me, show me what to pray about. If there's a deep burden in my heart, I pray about it first because it's going to keep popping its head up every time I try to pray about something else until I do. So I'm like, God, I'm just going to go ahead and just, this is the one. This is big. I just want to give it to you, this is what's going on. And then I start to pray through the Lord's Prayer, hallowed be your name.

I start imagining his glory. I start imagining his character. I'm like, God, I want your name to be hallowed. That means to be seen as holy. I want my heart to see you as holy. And then I start praying for my wife, and for my boys, and for my extended family, and then for my church family. God, help us to see, help people right

now in their workplaces, as they're driving to work, to see you as holy. Praying for His kingdom to come. God, all of the values and virtues of heaven, the things that I can't wait for, bring some of those to this earth right now. Brings them to my heart, and to my family, and to my church family, to our city. And I'm praying for his will to be done. And I'm saying, God, I need daily bread today. But not only me, I know that person in our church family needs daily bread today.

They need strength and they need this and they need this. And suddenly what happens is as I'm praying through suddenly the Holy Spirit, I was pushing the rope and suddenly now I'm simply holding on for dear life. And there's more names and there's more people that come to mind. And so I'm just praying, God, would you forgive me and help me to forgive that person. And God would you protect us and provide for us. And what happens over a period of time, it doesn't happen every time, but suddenly there is this unusual amount of boldness not to claim it or to demand anything but to say, let my request be made known to God and on the behalf of others for your glory. Suddenly my faith grows. My body is activated, energized, and all the desires to pray are now literally flowing. It's available to you. It doesn't have to be for somebody else. If you are in Christ, praying in the spirit well, you see effect and power is your birthright because you're born again.

But I'm convinced that there's a handful of people in this room who've experienced this on a consistent basis. Most of the time for most of us, prayer does not feel like we are being charged. It feels just the opposite. That is not a condemnation because I also am beset with that same weakness and I feel sometimes those same empty prayers. But I promise you there is more to be had. We're going to take the Lord's supper now and as we do, He tells us not to take it first if we have never trusted Christ for to take it is to confess that we believe in Christ. But he also tells those of us who do believe in Christ never to take it unless we first confessed our sin. So let me pray, get us praying, while we're praying the worship team is going to sing a short song over us. So let me pray.

Father in heaven, we're asking that you would help us to appreciate what you've made available to us. And we're asking according to your grace and your kindness that you would give us hope this morning, hope of a better day. It's made available because Jesus died on a cross. And so would you search our hearts now and help us to confess before you.



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