

# Praying for a Move of God

February 14, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

This past week we wrapped up the 40 Days of Prayer. (recap)

Today I want to look at a very familiar passages but then break it down into a couple prayer sessions. I know that praying out loud is not something everyone is comfortable with, and no one should be compelled to do so. However, I don't need to pray out loud to join my heart in saying "Amen" to someone else's prayer. In agreeing with someone else as they lead me and others in prayer before God.

So we're going to do that today. Because corporate prayer is such a strong expression of the local church in the New Testament, I want us to grow in this.

So turn with me to Matthew 9. If you don't have a Bible, you can download the church app and you will see a Bible actually there on the app itself. And by the way, as you turn there, we have decided to just keep going with the 6:30 prayer times even though we wrapped up the 40 days of prayer on Thursday of this past week. I continue to invite you to join that—see the link in your digital bulletin and church app.

Let's read: Matthew 9:35-38

*<sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

In Matthew 9:35 I believe we see a beautiful snapshot of the ministry of Jesus. It says He was teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel, and healing every disease and sickness.

I mention this because I believe that this is still to be the ministry of the church today. I believe the Church ideally is still to be a place where there is strong biblical teaching of God's Word, preaching the Gospel to the unbeliever, and a place where we regularly see God moving in miraculous power for healing as a sign and wonder for the unbeliever to help them turn from their sins, repent, and come to full faith in Jesus Christ.

I say this because when Jesus sent His disciples out, He commissioned them to do the same things as He did. Then, at the end of His ministry, Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you." And the church that was born a few weeks later on Pentecost was a church that followed in her Master's footsteps through the leadership of the apostles. There was strong teaching—the church was devoted to the apostles teaching. There was strong preaching of the Gospel. And not only from the apostles. In Acts 8:1, it says that because of persecution, the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria and they preached the Gospel as they went. And there was a healing ministry through the hands of the apostles. But not only the apostles. In his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul mentions those who have been given the spiritual gift of healing, thus indicating

that this was a gift that was intended beyond the 12. Why? Because healing is often that sign and a wonder that helps move an unbeliever across the line of faith, moving them from unbelief to belief.

*<sup>35</sup>Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.*

When I look at our church, I think we are strong in the area of Biblical teaching. Not just from the pulpit, but in many times and spaces throughout the week.

I think we continue to be weak in the areas of preaching the Gospel and healing. I don't mean that I don't preach the Gospel from this pulpit, I do. I mean the preaching or sharing of the Gospel *out there*. Jesus *taught* in the synagogues. But He *preached* or *proclaimed* out in the streets. On the hillside. In one-on-one meetings with people like the Samaritan woman, or Nicodemus, or the home of Matthew the tax collector. Why? Because that's where the lost people were. They weren't coming to the synagogue, many of them. They would have been stopped at the door.

You're a tax collector? You're a prostitute? You're a sinner? You're not welcome here. This would have been the message, verbally or non-verbally, that they would have received if they had come through the doors of the local synagogue.

So... Jesus went to them.

You know I was talking to a young adult who recently moved out on their own and they are checking out some local churches, and she said, "It is crazy how hard it is to go to a new church. I don't know how any unbeliever would ever be comfortable enough to even try." She went on to say, "I know the routine. I've been in church my whole life. I know the songs. I know how to find the Scripture that's being preached. I am used to church culture. And I was still so incredibly uncomfortable. All I wanted to do was run after the service. I don't know any unbeliever would come on their own."

Here's the truth. They're not. Right? Very, very rarely will God so move on the hearts of an unbeliever that they will on their own initiative come walking through these doors. No. That's why Jesus said, "Go". And make disciples. You must move toward them.

When asked why He was spending so much time in the homes of tax collectors and sinners and prostitutes, Jesus' simple answer was this: *Because it's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.*

So when I say that we are still weak in evangelism, I am not saying we don't preach an accurate Gospel from the pulpit here, because I believe we do. What I mean is that I don't think we are yet regularly, passionately pursuing the lost, sharing the Gospel, inviting them to come hear more about Christ, etc. Don't misunderstand my heart this please. I have seen real growth in this and for that I am truly thankful.

I am just saying that I believe it is still a weakness in the overall ministry that Jesus gave to His Church. And I really want to grow in this—both personally and as a church family.

Not only that, but the ministry of healing. Experientially, I don't see many—hardly any—churches that are solid theologically that are regularly moving in healing ministry. But biblically, I simply see no reason that we should not be regularly seeing people healed, except that often miraculous healings took place *as the Gospel was being preached OUT THERE*. I believe healing is one of the signs and wonder gifts to

help authenticate the message and the messenger. That is, to help demonstrate with power to the unbeliever that the Gospel is really true. So perhaps this may be why we do not see miraculous healing taking place on a regular basis.

But hear this again: <sup>35</sup> *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.*

Church, I believe this is to be the ministry model, if you will, of the Church. Why? Because we are His body. We are to be as if Jesus was still on the earth ministering through us. So there are many other things we may do. But these three we must do.

And to the extent that we are not doing them, is the extent that we must repent. Confessing our need for Him, our desire to be like Him, our desire to be faithful to that which He has called us to, and then determining with His help to actually step out in faith and obedience.

Teaching. Preaching. Healing.

#### **Prayer Focus #1**

Pray that God would revive our hearts with a zeal to continue His ministry in the earth through:

1. Solid teaching of His Word
2. Bold and passionate preaching of the Gospel in which we actually pursue lost people
3. Witness many miraculously healed leading them to faith in Jesus.

Verse 36:

<sup>36</sup> *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

It says in this passage that when Jesus saw the crowds He was moved with compassion.

Compassion. What is compassion? Compassion is more than pity. It's moved than empathy. It's more than simply being burdened. It's more than simply feeling sorry for a situation.

You do feel all those things. But compassion is when you feel so moved in your heart that you must do something about it. That you must say something. That you must do something. That you must move toward the situation.

The word in the Greek hints at the idea that you feel this in your most inward parts. At the gut level. *This is a gut-level hurt that moves you to action.*

Why? What did He see that caused this gut-level pain that moved Him to action?

<sup>36</sup> *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Mondays are my day off, and so I sometimes get to watch my son Nathanael's school. And in a recent class they were showing before and after pictures of someone who has spent the last years on drugs. And it was just horrific really. So incredibly sad to watch how harassed and helpless these individuals are. Totally trapped in their addiction. And it moved me. But it did not move me to action.

I had a conversation with a group this week about this passage and someone mentioned that he has a heart for the de-transitioning community. I didn't even know what that was so I had to ask him to clarify. And he said, "This is that group of people who, because of the lies that our society has fed them since they were young, decided to have sex change, but now years later, so regret it that they are seeking to transition back to the way God had designed them to be."

And my heart broke at that. Truly how helpless and harassed that must feel. But again, will it move me to action?

Now, I want to clarify, that we cannot be moved to action for *everything*. That would just not be physically or emotionally possible. But if I am not moved to action for *anything*, that is a problem.

Church, there is SO MUCH brokenness all around us. So many people all around us who are harassed and helpless. It's not that they are not there. They're there. They're all around me. The problem is that I don't see them.

<sup>36</sup> *When he SAW the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

I was meditating on this passage earlier this week and it struck me again. It says that Jesus SAW the crowds. And I thought, "I think that's half my problem. I don't often SEE the crowds."

And I don't think I am alone in this. And I think it's probably for two reasons.

First, I think that for many of us, we are just not around lost people very much. This is not a critical statement in the slightest, but for many of us, we work from home, we homeschool, we are retired and pretty much stay home or hang out with family or friends that are all saved already. We are simply not physically around lost people very much.

For me, I work here, then go home, then work here, and go home, then go to a small group, etc.

And so, one of the reasons we don't SEE the crowd is because we're just not around them. And if that is your scenario, you may need to think strategically HOW to get out and actually be in the midst of unsaved people.

### ***What could that look like for you?***

In your groups that you have been praying with, I want you to brainstorm right now together, *What are some ways that we can do that?*

[Group Discussion]

The second reason that I think we don't SEE the crowds, is not because we are not around them. We are. But the eyes of heart are not open.

Sometimes I truly SEE the crowds, I just see a line at the grocery store, and I just want to get home. I don't SEE the crowds, I see a bunch liberal quacks on the news. I don't SEE the crowds as actually harassed and helpless, I am actually drawn to join with them. It looks fun.

But Jesus, when He looked at the crowd hurt in his gut. And this was *a gut-level pain that moved Him to action.*

So may I ask you? Where is your compassion level for the lost right now? Just take a moment and ask the Lord to speak to you on this matter.

I'm not asking are you witnessing, or how comfortable are you with witnessing, or do you have a "one", that is one person that you are committed to praying for and working toward their salvation.

I'm asking you, even as I am asking myself, "Where is your compassion level for the lost?" And remember this isn't just a vague concern for them. Again, *this is a gut-level hurt that moves you to action.*

### **Story about D.L. Moody**

When Dwight L. Moody was in London during one of his famous evangelistic tours, several British clergymen visited him. They wanted to know how and why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning throngs of people to Christ. Moody took the three men to the window of his hotel room and asked each in turn what he saw. One by one, the men described the people in the park below. Then Moody looked out the window with tears rolling down his cheeks. "What do you see, Mr. Moody?" asked one of the men.

"I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior."

Obviously, D. L. Moody saw people differently than the average observer does. And because he saw eternal souls where others saw only people strolling in a park, Moody approached life with a different agenda.

This is not normal. We need a supernatural touch from the Holy Spirit.

Story about the Nepalese family.

### **Acts 1:8**

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

#### **Prayer Focus #2**

Pray that the Lord will grant His compassion to our hearts. Receive by faith a fresh outpouring of His Holy Spirit, anointing us to be His witnesses in the earth, granting us boldness and urgency.

Verse 37-38:

*<sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

Comments

**Prayer Focus #3**

Pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up workers from THIS church to send into His harvest field—not only in our community, but to the ends of the earth. That He will cause our church to be FULL of people who are praying hard and working hard for the salvation of others.

**CONCLUSION**