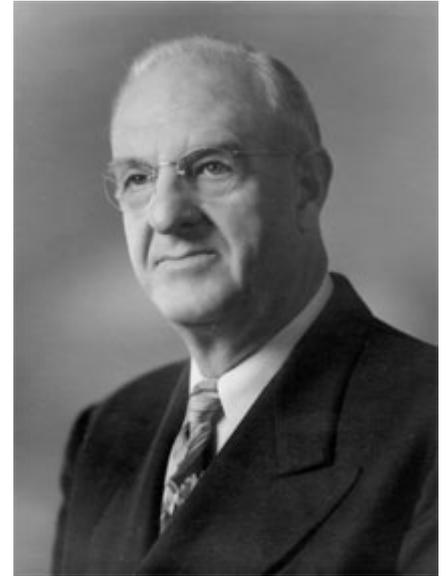


# More Time for Prayer

By  
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**W**E can well say that it pays to pray when we consider an incident in the life of Jacob.

**"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.**

**"And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.**

**"And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.**

**"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.**

**"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32:24-28).**

I believe it was Spurgeon who said that prayer pulls the cord which rings the bell in the ears of God. "But," he says, "so many pull the cord in a weak way, some just occasionally; while others continue with all their might to pull that cord and ring the bells of promise in the ears of God, and glorious victory is theirs."

If our hearts could grasp the full import of prayer and what it means to the Christian, there would be many more prevailers in the ranks of Christianity. Prayer can turn the ways of the wicked upside down. Prayer can stop the oncoming march of overwhelming hordes of enemies of darkness and destruction. Prayer can put a shine on the face of the soul who wears a countenance of gloom continually. Prayer can put joy into the heart where sorrow, grief, and darkness seem to prevail. Prayer can bring forth prosperity in times of adversity. Prayer can sweep away depressions — spiritual depressions, financial depressions, physical depressions. And so, if that is true, why not more prayer?

The records of God's Book, the testimonies of all God's people **of** all times which are recorded in history, sacred and secular, testify to what prayer can do. It was the cruel Queen of Scots who said she feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of ten thousand men.

Oh, that God might put into our hearts more of a spirit of prayer, that we might take hold of the promises of God as Jacob took hold of that Man with whom he wrestled until the break of day!

## Holy Persistence

We see something here in Jacob's prayer which is not always recognized as essential to effective praying. That is holy persistence with determination. God honors determination in the seeking of His blessings, which may be the reason so many fail to receive the blessings that God has in store for them. The reward is always there for the man or woman who shows holy persistence and a deep determination to get what God has for him.

The attitude of some people is: "Well, God will be glad to give it to me when He sees fit," as though we were doing God a great favor by condescending to seek His blessing. God does not pour His blessings out upon people with such an attitude. All that God gives is good, whether it is prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, affliction or triumph over afflictions. These blessings are in the hand of God; and if God gives them, they are good. Too many have a one-sided view of the blessings of God. Too many desire the overflowing cup of God's blessings, and fail to recognize that the dregs in the bottom of the cup are God's blessings also. **Let us drink the cup to the bottom!**

The angel said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." That was determination, that was persistence. That is what God desires to see in the heart of every seeker after His best. Some are satisfied with the second best, just like the people in the world who are content

with inferior quality in almost anything they deal in. Anything is good enough! They do not want the best nor do they give their best.

God is not pleased with such an attitude, and I think that is the reason there is so much inferior quality of so-called Christianity in the world today among many who profess a high standard of grace. They are satisfied to render a mediocre service to God. They do not want to be their best nor do they seem to care to obtain the best. They jog along in a sort of fatigued way in the service of the Lord, and fail to receive what God has for them.

God, speaking through Isaiah to the people, said: "Let him take hold of my strength!" That is what God wants people to do. That is what Jacob did. That is what every prevailer does—takes hold of God's strength. And then the Word says, "He shall make peace with me."

Oh, what a strong God we have! We have a mighty God! We have a God whose arm is omnipotent, all-powerful. And if prayer can take hold of that Arm and move it in our behalf or in the behalf of God's cause, let us take hold of that Arm and hold on like Jacob did.

The Syrophenician woman was another one who took hold, held on, and persisted. She came to the Savior with a petition. Seemingly, the Savior did not even give her any encouragement. He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." But she would not be turned away by that denial. She said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." He marveled at her faith and said, "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matthew 15:26-28). What made her faith great? It was purpose, determination, holy persistence. God wants that in us. He looks for it among His people.

I believe God looks longingly many times on the poor, puny, weak prayers we make in a snapshot way. We take hold of the bell rope and give it a pull in an indolent way, and we do not get an answer. Probably we do not affect the bell sufficiently for the clapper to strike the rim, and we wonder why we receive no answer; we wonder why our prayer is ineffective and why we do not hear from Heaven. That is the reason — we are not persistent, not determined; we are not like the Syrophenician woman. Even though the suggestion came that she was unworthy to receive of God, her heart cried: I know I am unworthy — "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

May God give us determination! We may recognize our unworthiness, and our smallness; but if we have the purpose and determination, we can get an answer as this woman did, and as Jacob did

### **Keep Holding On**

When we pray, let us show God that we mean it. Let us pray in such a way that the voice of our prayer will be heard in Heaven will go higher than our head — and reach the Throne of God. Hold on with determination, and see what answer may come forth.

An attorney in the city of Portland told me that when he first started his practice he was somewhat timid, and never having taken a case before the Supreme Court, he wondered how to handle such a case. While in the woods fishing one time he met one of the Justices of the Supreme Court, and talked with him. He knew the legal heads would know all the angles of the law and all the arguments. They could analyze the cases, and after the briefs had been presented and they had gone through it all, they probably had their minds all fixed as to what the decision would be before they ever heard the arguments.

The attorney asked, "Justice, how should a man present his case to the Supreme Court?" The Justice replied, "Just like you would present it to the jury. Put your life into it; present it from every angle; be determined; be sincere; be earnest; and don't leave a stone unturned." That is the way God wants us to present our petition in the spiritual courts Above. Of course God knows all about us. He knows every angle of our case. He knew all about the Syrophenician woman and everyone else who came with determination of heart for a specific blessing. God likes that determination, persistence, earnestness, honesty, obedience, and frankness on the part of every petitioner.

When Jesus met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, He was not known by them; and as He walked and talked with them, they came to the city at eventide. He made as though He would have gone on, but they said, "Master, abide with us." There is a little clause there that grips my soul: "And they constrained Him." That is what God wants us to do. God wants to know that we are so in earnest to receive the blessing we are seeking from Him that we will absolutely constrain Him.

### **Be in Earnest**

In the Old Testament, God, speaking to the people said, "Command ye me!" Think of that! And when we stop

to think of what some of the worthies of old — the patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings — did to move the hand of God in their behalf, we can recognize what God expects of His people. He wants to know just how much we desire His blessing and just how earnestly we are seeking after what we desire of Him.

Prayer can and prayer will move the hand of God. But it will be earnest prayer — sincere prayer, enthusiastic prayer.

People say, "You are too enthusiastic over religion." Well, the evils, as someone has said, resulting from religious enthusiasm are not half so enormous as those which result from spiritual insensibility. God has power — mighty power, potential power, that can raise the dead, that can stir the living, that can move men and women into channels of effective service for Him.

The blessings that come from God do not always come for the mere asking. When you see men and women seeking God in a cold, lifeless, insincere manner, and you ask them what they are seeking, and they come back with an expression like this, "I am waiting on the Lord," you think they will be waiting for a long time. God does not want us always to wait on Him. He wants us to present our cause, show sincerity and determination, and then God will answer. The heavens will give ear to our cry, the skies above will crack wide open, and down will fall the blessing.

### **"Prevailing Prayer"**

Some years ago when I first began in the Gospel work I wanted a song on prayer. I was spending a little vacation with an old Greek scholar and doctor of philosophy, south of San Francisco. He was writing many, many hymns I said, "Doctor, I wish you would write me a song on prayer." Well, he wrote a song but it did not seem to appeal to me as being what I wanted.

I had never written a line of poetry in my life. I said, "Lord, I want to write a song on prayer." So I sat down and wrote "Prevailing Prayer," and it seemed to express the desire of my heart. As I came to the closing verse, I seemed to just pour out my soul in these words:

"The Savior now looks for prevailers  
Who will pray with a confidence bold.  
Will you join this band of availers,  
And pray till the heavens unfold?"

If this world ever needed anything, it needs men and women of prayer who can put their life and their heart into their praying and receive more of God, and move the Arm that moves the universe. God will honor; God will bless.

Prayer and power are of the same caste, the same society. They are in the same category. Prayer precedes power; and power always follows prayer. If we could only get hold of God as Jacob did! He heard God speaking to him, saying: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel," which means a prince! One who is knighted by the Lord has a position of exaltation far above any crown prince of earth. "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

As we enter into the Lord's house, let us pledge our faithfulness to God in prayer and supplication. Let us cast off that cloak of false modesty and pride. The devil has used that thing for a scarecrow for two thousand years to frighten people off their knees. They fear someone might think they are weak if they kneel at an altar of prayer. God help us! The strongest person on the face of the earth is he who can pray a prayer that will reach the Throne of Grace and move the Hand of God in his behalf.

May God put a consecration within us to pray — pray — PRAY! God will honor it. God will bless it. Let us throw our life into the breach, fill up the gap, make up the hedge, and be faithful warriors in the service of God! This is no dress parade. This is a time of real warfare, and God wants real soldiers. Will you be a soldier for the Lord? Will you be what God wants you to be?

### **Pray and Keep Awake**

We used to sing, "Never be found sleeping on guard." If anyone is guilty of high treason and deserves punishment, it is the sentinel who has been found sleeping on guard! May the Lord put the Spirit in our hearts that will keep us awake, and keep the blessing of God upon our souls! It is a dangerous thing to fall asleep in the service of God.

You know how serious a thing it is to fall asleep at the wheel of an automobile speeding down the highway

at fifty, sixty, or seventy miles an hour. Calamity awaits us if we sleep at the wheel of the Gospel when our duty is to throw out the Lifeline to all who will heed. May God keep us awake. May God stir our hearts and help us to watch and pray. We can't pray if we don't watch. We can't pray in our sleep. And if we pray, we will watch.

May we pledge ourselves anew to service for the Lord — to faithfulness in prayer, faithfulness in any capacity to which God may have called us or to which God will call us.