

**WHAT SHALL WE DO?  
PRAY!**  
(Topical Sermon)

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MIN 301 Homiletics I  
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2/16/2021

Have you ever asked the question, "What am I supposed to do here?" "what am I supposed to do in all this, Lord?" "I just want to do Your will, follow You, and do whatever You want me to do." What do You want me to do?" "I just want to give all glory, honor and praise to You, Lord Jesus!" "I'm not seeking my own thing, Lord!" "Please tell me Lord what You want me to do!" With all sincerity, and a longing to please God, and you are hopefully at a place where you are grieved in heart for the lost, you see the needs all around you, you know that we as a community and as a nation, and throughout the world, **we need God more than ever**, yet it seems as though obstacle after obstacle has risen up before you, and others. You may feel at times helpless and unsure of where to even start and with each new occasion you repeat the question, "what do You want me to do here, my Lord, my God, my Father, my Savior?"

So what is all that? Well, it is prayer. Just talking to God is prayer. There are prayers of petition and supplication-which is the asking for things or the humble asking of God, prayers of intercession-which is praying for others, prayers of contrition or repentance-which is asking God's forgiveness, yet anytime we are talking to God it is prayer.

After we accept Christ as our Savior and have received His Spirit in us, He continues to lead us and teach us in His will and in His ways. He continues to call us to abide in Him, to find our rest in Him, to learn from Him as He guides us in His truth, and He works in us so that we will bear much fruit. Those questions that we ask of Him such as "what do do You want me to do?" are His leading us to seek Him and His Way and for His Truth. Jesus said to not even concern yourself about what you will wear and eat tomorrow but to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Our Father tells us to continue to seek **His kingdom and His righteousness**, but is that just for ourselves? What we will look at today is how we are not alone in our journey towards the kingdom of heaven, and **WE MUST PRAY!** Yes, a place to start is to ask, "what do You want me to do, Lord?" But yes, **WE MUST PRAY!**

In the second chapter of Acts, from every nation under heaven men had gathered together in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost and, the men outside of the building that the disciples were in, asked why they were hearing others speak in their native languages of the "**wonderful works of God**". Peter then gave a powerful sermon explaining the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised, of which those men were presently witnessing. Those men then asked, "what shall we do?" They were then told to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and they would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We're not going to be focusing on all the acts of the apostles in the book of Acts but first in what precipitated that event that was just mentioned.

It was after Jesus' crucifixion, on the third day after Jesus' death, on the day of Passover, He was raised from the dead and was then seen by the apostles for forty days and then Jesus rose up to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father. Since Pentecost was 50 days from the Passover, the disciples waited for the promise of the Holy Spirit, which was about a week. While they waited, **they prayed together** and in Acts 2:1 it says at the time of Pentecost they were all with one accord in one place. What happened next was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit!

That day it is said that around 3000 souls were saved after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The bringing forth of the "**wonderful works of God**" was not just for those on that day of Pentecost, though, some 2000 years ago. The rest of the book of Acts tells of many examples of the "**wonderful works of God**" being manifested after that day of Pentecost. Throughout the book of Acts also we find that prayer is constantly mentioned:

**Acts 2:42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**Acts 3:1** Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

**Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

**Acts 6:4** but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

**Acts 10:4** So he said to him[an angel speaking to Cornelius], "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

-This brought salvation and the Holy Spirit upon all in his household who heard Peter's preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ

**Acts 12:5** Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

-Peter was then freed from prison

**Acts 13:2-3** As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

**Acts 16:25** But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

-This led to the jailer and his family being saved

"What am I supposed to do here" you ask? If you don't know-PRAY! Even if you do know-PRAY! **WE NEED TO PRAY!**

While Jesus conquered the grave when He rose from the dead on the third day, to give eternal life to all those who believe, and we can know we are more than conquerors in Christ who gives us strength, **WE NEED TO PRAY!** And even though you may be sure of putting on the whole armor of God that Paul talked about in Ephesians chapter 6, with Truth, Righteousness, the Gospel of Peace, Faith, Salvation, the Word of God, Paul said after all that be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." This message is to ALL OF US! As the Apostle Paul would likely have phrased it, "I beseech you brothers and sisters, **PRAY!**"

Just as James , the brother of Jesus said in **James 5:16** "Confess your trespasses to one another, and **pray for one another**, that you may be healed. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man [or woman] avails much.**

I'd like to share a a few short stories with you of how the power of prayer can still, way beyond the days of the apostles on that Day of Pentecost, bring about the "**wonderful works of God!**"

There were two sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith, Peggy was blind and Christine was crippled with arthritis. They were the prayer warriors for Duncan Campell who preached in the Hebrides [Heb-ri-dez] revival of 1949-1952. This is of a group of islands off the west coast of Scotland. The whole island was said to be engulfed by the "mighty manifestation of His power." Two seemingly helpless women prayed forth the "mighty manifestation of His power!"

During what is now called the "Second Great Awakening", there was a praying man by the name of Daniel Nash. It's likely that he has as unfamiliar a name today as the Smith sisters but he also was behind the fruitful efforts of another great revival preacher. That preacher's name was Charles Finney. Nash was completely devoted to praying for Charles Finney from 1795-1835. That's 40 years! Before Charles Finney would speak in a town, Nash would go and prepare the way through prayer. He would rent out a cheap place to stay, sometimes in dingy basement cellars and then he would be in constant prayer. It is said that four months after Nash's death, Finney got out of the evangelism ministry and settled down to pastor a church.

Our third example of the power of prayer is from a man named George Mueller. He founded the Scripture Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad that sent millions of Bibles and Christian literature around the world, supported 189 missionaries, and started numerous orphanages all by unsolicited donations and without government funding. There are numerous stories of God answering the Mueller's prayers. One is how they and the children were sitting at the dinner table thanking the Lord for their meal (that they presently didn't have) when a knock on the door brought in bread from the local baker

and right after that the milk truck broke down right outside their home. He and his wife had just **"PRAYED ABOUT IT!"**

Our main Scripture for this message is in the book of I Corinthians 12:26-31. You may notice that no form of the word pray is in this passage of Scripture, but if you hold on I'll get to that.

### **READ I Corinthians 12:26-31**

Notice Paul says that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, as we are to operate as the body of Christ? Notice also that Paul said in the last verse to earnestly seek the best gifts and that, if we were to read further through chapter 13, the greatest gift is love. Now let us look at what Jesus said about love. In John 15:13, Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Each part of the body of Christ plays an essential role in the body of Christ and in God's purpose of building His kingdom, and when Paul said the greatest gift is love and Jesus said there's no greater love than laying down one's life for his/her friends, Jesus also said that the greatest commandment of God is to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves!

Now let's go back to those gifts listed in verse 28. Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administrations, and tongues. Of all those grand and glorious ministries is the somewhat seemingly insignificant word **helps**. It's easy enough to ignore that one after seeing all those other gifts that seem to be so much more important than the others. It kind of looks at first glance like the name of a catch-all gift for the people that don't really have much gifting at all. Like the person you'd have dust off the plants in the lobby, or the one who kept an eye on the exit signs to make sure they're still working. Before we send those people to the nursery to make sure there's no dirty diapers in the wastebasket let's look at that word helps means.

It comes from the Greek word "antilepsis". Strong's Concordance says the word signifies a "laying hold of" where the anti means "in exchange of" or a "being in front of". This word then can mean a getting in front of and holding up the weak, in keeping them from falling. In today's medical language lepsis is a seizure or attack So an anti-lepsis can be a keeping of a seizure or attack. Know where I'm going with this? The gift of helps can be one who holds others up, lifts them up, helps them when they are struggling. Of course helps can mean something as simple as one who licks the envelopes for the mail, but if all you can offer then to God is your tongue, well then may God bless your efforts, but it seems to show an even more important role. (And yes, they can Pray!) We can go back to verse 26 that says that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with

it. How important is now is that gift of helps and the greatest gift of love? This brings us back to the time of Pentecost where the gospel began to spread throughout the world, all starting with a group in prayer. This speaks of all the examples in the Book of Acts where prayer brought forth the "**wonderful works of God!**" This also includes all those stories of those who prayed behind the scenes to also manifest the "**wonderful works of God!**" Finally this testifies to the greatest gift of all which is love and that there's no greater love than to lay one's life down for his friends.

Now, where do we find that love? God is love and therefore a fruit of the Spirit is love, so we know that we must go to the source, our God and Father, our Lord and Savior in prayer. "But I've already been saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit" you may say. Yet even the Apostles themselves knew that they had to continue in prayer to bring forth the "**wonderful works of God!**" Otherwise Paul wouldn't have said "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." He would have said something like, "If you've been saved, sanctified, and filled with the Spirit, just go get 'em tiger, and don't look back! You got this!"

Even Jesus Christ, the Son of God had to pray. As we know from Scripture, even at the creation of all things Jesus had fellowship with the Father. Yes they are but one God, but Jesus prayed to the Father. If it was necessary for the apostles, and the great saints throughout the Bible, if it was necessary for the Lord Jesus Himself to pray, then **WE MUST PRAY!** Not just for ourselves but for the body of Christ. If one part suffers the whole body suffers. Now is not the time to rest back and just wait things out until Jesus returns.

**PRAY, saints of God! PRAY!**