

GREAT REASONS TO PRAY

Sermon by Wes Daughenbaugh

INTRODUCTION: (This message was preached over twenty years ago when I pastored in Omaha, Nebraska. Recently, I listened to this message again. *It seems to me that our only hope is to live a life of effective prayer.* The anointing on this message is strong, the illustrations are powerful, and so let's go back in time and hear something that is even more relevant for the hour we live in than it was twenty years ago.)

Prayer has got to be important because Jesus spent a lot of time praying. If Jesus, as the Son of God, spent a lot of time praying, if he needed to pray, then it must be important for us. We must need to spend a lot of time in prayer. Most people are not spending much time in prayer, and that's one of the reasons we're having so much difficulty in our lives, families, marriages and in all kinds of ways—even our health. Jesus would often get up a great while before daylight and go off somewhere and pray. The scripture records that sometimes he'd pray all day and continue to pray all night. He'd do that before making major decisions, like choosing his twelve apostles. If Jesus needed to pray that much, then we must need to greatly increase our own prayers.

The apostles delegated the job of feeding the church widows to deacons. They said, **“It's not right for us to minister the feeding program. We must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word”** (Acts 6:2-4, my paraphrase). Let's repeat that, “We must devote ourselves to--- and the ministry of the word.”

When Christ drove the moneychangers out of the temple he said, **“It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations but you've made it a den of robbers”** (Mark 11:17). If you've accepted Christ into your heart, then you've become the temple of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you have not yet done that. Briefly, the way you become a Christian is not to just come to church. If you slept in the garage at night you would not become a car. Each person needs to say, “Dear Lord Jesus, come into my life and take over. Put your Spirit within me. I want to be born again. Do a work of Holy Spirit regeneration inside of me. Take away the old sinful nature and put a new nature inside me. I receive you.” That's our starting place. Once you've prayed that prayer, you become the temple of God's Spirit. As his “house” you are to be called a “house of prayer.” You *are* the house of prayer. *Our very identity, as Christians, should relate to prayer.*

Jesus said, **“But you have made it something else.”** If your identity is not as a “house of prayer” perhaps you've made your life a house of business, a house of strife or a house of too much television. What might Jesus say? You are called to be a house of prayer. If you've made your life anything else, then adjust your life. It will take a major adjustment, but what amazing results will come when we prioritize our lives around prayer. *The lives of most American Christians have NOT been prioritized around prayer.* (But in 2016, as America devolves into increasing terrorism, chaos, and social instability, we simply MUST prioritize prayer. It is our only hope.)

In Korea every Christian prays at least one hour a day, and the preachers pray three hours a day. Their nation has gone from being a Buddhist nation to being over 50% Christian with most of those being Spirit filled believers. They are sending missionaries to America now. The largest church in the world is in Seoul, Korea.

I want to give you really great reasons to pray, because if you don't understand WHY you should pray you simple WON'T pray very much.

1. PRAYER LEGALLY ALLOWS GOD TO DO HIS WILL HERE ON EARTH.

Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, not how to preach, or how to heal the sick, or how to cast out demons. They were so impressed with the way he prayed and it put them in awe. He

said, **“When you pray, say, ‘Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name’** (Matthew 6:9). Get into praise first. **“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”** *This is an outline. It’s not meant to be prayed over and over like a lucky formula or religious tradition.* We need to say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But dear Lord, *what is it that you want done down here?* Reveal it to me so I can ask for it and then have it happen.” Let’s get specific about the will of God.

Let’s not just say, “Well, God, do whatever you want to do.” That’s a lazy way to pray. It’s all right to surrender to the will of God with those words. But if you are trying to pray God’s will into effect then you need to know what God’s will is to begin with. You need to show up for prayer like a person showing up for work—to get a job done. We want to pray God’s will down from heaven and into our families, our cities, our nation and into our world.

When you do that, you give God a legal right to do his will in the earth. You might ask, “Doesn’t he already have all the legal rights he needs to do that?” Well, if God could just do it all, then Jesus would have never said to pray, **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** God’s will is not being done down here on earth very often. That’s why there’s all the murder, drugs, divorce, abuse and sadness of every kind. All of those sorrows come because God’s will is not being done and God has ordained that when we pray he gets to step in and intervene in the affairs of men. But if we don’t pray, God can’t intervene as fully as he wants to.

You see, God gave man dominion over the earth. When man had dominion of the earth he gave it to the devil when Adam and Eve disobeyed. Finally, Jesus came, obeyed perfectly, died on the cross and won the dominion back. When he got the dominion back, Jesus gave it to the church through the great commission. Now we have the dominion, and it’s a great responsibility. We’ve been put in charge down here.

**** Let’s suppose you gave your child a huge box of Tinker Toys and the boy was having fun playing with them. You might say, “Son, if you’d like some help from an old engineer, just ask me for help and I’ll help you make the most amazing things out of those Tinker Toys.” Suppose the boy said, “No Dad, I’m doing okay on my own.” Would the dad force himself into that situation? No, of course not. He would just stand back and not be involved. What if the child says, “Okay, Dad, come and show me your stuff!” Then the dad could get down on the floor beside the child and together they could make some ingenious inventions from those Tinker Toys.

When God has given you this dominion on earth God just kind of steps back and says, “Do you want my help? I’d love to help, but you’ve got to ask.” That’s the greatest reason that I know of to pray, and there are many great reasons to pray. When we don’t pray there are many things that God wants to build and do, ingenious things, wonderful things, great things, but they don’t get done even though God wants them to get done, all because we didn’t pray. We truly have a great responsibility to pray and a great opportunity.

**** Another example is that of Elijah. There was a famine during his life. James wrote that Elijah was a man just like us who prayed fervently that it would not rain and it didn’t rain for three and a half years. Then he prayed fervently that it would rain, and it did, ending the famine. (See James 5:17). But now let’s go back to 1 Kings. Elijah didn’t go to God and say, “Hey, God, I think because of all the wickedness that’s going on and the wickedness of the King and Queen that you should send a famine for three years, so I ask you to send a famine. Don’t let it rain.” That’s not the way it went. The Holy Spirit came to Elijah and said, “Elijah, it’s my will that it won’t rain for three and a half years. I’m counting on you to pray fervently that my desire will be done on the earth.” So Elijah prayed and it didn’t rain. Then after more than three years, the Lord said to Elijah, **“Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land”** (1 Kings 18:1).

Then came the duel of the prophets, where Elijah called fire down from heaven and then commanded that all the prophets of Baal be killed. Then Elijah said to King Ahab, **“Go eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain”** (1 Kings 18:41). He could hear in the Spirit that the rain was coming. But then why did he have to go to the top of Mount Carmel, crouch down in an oriental birthing

position and fervently pray for rain? He had his servant go look toward the ocean and look for a cloud, seven different times. Why didn't Elijah just say, "God wants it to rain. He will make it rain. Everything is okay." He could have said, "I'm going to go eat and drink with the King." It wouldn't have happened even though God had revealed his will and said, "I'm going to send rain." It still had to be prayed for. Listen, God reveals his will through the prophets but it comes to pass through the prayers of the intercessors!

When we don't understand the dominion issue we act like, "If God wants to do it, then he'll do it." That's one of the gravest mistakes we could ever make. We might think, "Well, if God wants someone to be President, he's going to be President." No he isn't, not when people don't pray. "If God wants it to work out, it will work out." No it won't. Not if people don't pray. "If God wants me to live a long time, I'll just live a long time." Maybe you won't if you and others don't pray. A whole lot of things happen that should not happen when people do not pray. A whole lot of things that should happen do not happen when people do not fervently pray, "**Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**"

We ought to know what the will of God is. The Bible says, "**Find out what pleases the Lord,**" (Ephesians 5:10). Again it says, "**Find out what pleases the Lord.**" Find what God's will is, and then pray for it. When I go to a prayer meeting, I'm going in there with the knowledge that I can open a door for God to intervene in the affairs of man. I realize that if I want to bring God great and massive glory it will have to come through prayer. You and I can open doors for God so that he can intervene all over the world—intervene in families, intervene locally, intervene in our government and keep America from destruction. He can solve the great problems that no man can solve—if we pray. Isn't that a great reason to pray? That's the first thing Jesus wanted the disciples to know, that when you are praying you are getting God's will done on earth as it is in heaven. Until you become convinced of this, you never will amount to much in prayer. You never will pray very much. You'll just think, "Whatever will be will be." That's not Biblical. WILL YOU PRAY for the will of God to be done? Will you find out what God's will is and then pray it into effect?

2. PRAYER ALLOWS US TO EXERCISE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR JESUS CHRIST ON

HIS BEHALF HERE ON THE EARTH.

**** Before I explain the scriptures where Jesus gave the church power of attorney I want to explain what power of attorney is. I heard Pastor Paul Paino describe power of attorney. He said, "I want to explain what Jesus meant when he said, '**Ask me for anything in my name and I will do it**'" (John 14:14). He said, "I was given power of attorney for an elderly lady who really couldn't take care of herself much anymore. She had a lot of money in the bank. When I signed my name I could have withdrawn all of her money from the bank. I had the legal right to do that. But I didn't have the legal right to go buy myself cars, swimming pools and new houses. *When I withdrew her money it all had to be spent on her behalf.* Then I had to appear before a judge about every six months and give a detailed account of how I was spending her money." That's power of attorney.

Power of attorney doesn't mean that you can just get the name of Jesus and say, "Wow, I'm going to pray for all the selfish things I've ever wanted, pray my own will into effect, and get rich quick. He said to ask anything and he'll do it." Well, remember, you are going to stand before the JUDGE and give an account to how you are using Jesus' name. You need to use it for his benefit. That's why we should say, "Lord, what do you want done in this situation?" God wants a lot of good things, kind things and wonderful things to be done. You certainly won't be short changed when you pray his will into effect. You'll only be short changed if you pray that your own selfish will is done in the earth. Our will messes everything up.

John 14:13 **I am going to the Father and I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.**"

The prayers that we pray should bring glory to the Father. If we pray selfish, mean, ornery prayers they will not bring glory to the Father, and those kinds of prayers aren't really prayed in Jesus' name because they aren't for his benefit.

“I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you've not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete” (John 16:23-24). *Remember, we are to use the name of Jesus to pray for things he would want done.*

**** Suppose a wealthy businessman was going to go to Europe and he said, “Frank, I'm giving you power of attorney. I have a million dollars in the bank, an aged mother in a nursing home and I'll need you to pay the bills for her. I have my dog at home. I need you to make sure that my dog gets fed. Use my money to feed my dog and also feed the goldfish and the cat. Keep the lawn maintained. I also have a daughter in college. Keep paying the tuition for me. Now Frank, If you don't do that, if you don't go to my bank and use my money for these things and act on my behalf, then my daughter will get kicked out of college. My mother will get kicked out of the nursing home. My dog will starve to death. My car and my goldfish will die! Frank, I'm counting on you to act on my behalf with the use of my name. Do you understand the responsibility, Frank? I'm going to be gone to another country. I'm out of here and you're going to act on my behalf.”

Let's say that Frank understands that completely. He says, “Wow. What a big responsibility. I've got to take care of his mother. I've got to take care of his daughter. I've got to take care of his dog. I've got to take care of his cat and goldfish. Wow!” Let's say that everyday Frank was faithful to withdraw just the right amount of money to take care of all those needs.

**** But suppose someone else had been given that responsibility and they just thought, “It really doesn't make any difference. I don't want to think about it today. I don't want to exercise power of attorney today.” Then the dog wouldn't get fed, the goldfish wouldn't get fed, the bills wouldn't get paid, and everything would get all fouled up. Everything gets all fouled up when we don't understand that we have been given the power of attorney and Jesus has gone off to heaven. He's left us here to access his BIG account with his name so that the things he wants done get done. But when you don't pray, families do not come back together, teenagers don't get right with God, bodies don't get healed, minds do not get set free from oppression of the enemy. All kinds things God wants done do not get done. Certain people do not get elected to office. Wrong people become judges. Wrong laws get voted in. Casinos come in and take over. How many things are going undone because the Body of Christ has not understood that in prayer we act on Jesus' behalf, using his name?

**** Perhaps you think, “I'm not worthy to act on Jesus' behalf.” That's a big lie from the devil. Stop believing that lie! Jesus made you worthy. He gave you his name. What if Frank said, “Well, I just don't feel worthy to feed the goldfish today. I just don't feel worthy to go to Wal-Mart and buy a sack of dog food to feed that dog today. I just don't feel worthy.” *Well, whether you feel worthy or not you were given the responsibility to do it and you were given the power of attorney to do it. You've GOT TO DO IT!*

3. WE CAN MOVE HEAVY BURDENS TOGETHER IN PRAYER.

The Bible says, **“Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ,”** (Galatians 6:2).

**** If twenty people each had a piano to move, and one person said, “I just don't want to bother anyone. My friends all have their own pianos to move. I won't bother them to ask them to help me move my piano. They are all busy. They have their own piano's to move.” If you did that, and tried to move it all by yourself, you'd probably get a rupture and end up in the hospital. There in the hospital would be all your friends! Each one had tried to move their own piano all by themselves. So all failed, and all were injured in the process.

The devil likes to say, “Well, just don't tell anyone about this now. You are a Christian. You can just pray about this alone. You just bear this burden alone. Don't trouble anybody. They all have their own problems.” Yes, they all have their own problems, but their problems are too heavy for

them to move or carry alone! Your problems are so heavy that you can't move them alone either! That's why we come together to pray. We come together because the burdens in life are too heavy for one of us to move all by our lonesome. But when a group of people get together in prayer THINGS MOVE! We can bear one another's burdens and not get all broken up. After you help them move their burden they can come over and help you move your burden. Jesus said, "**Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven**" (Matthew 18:19).

I am so glad I have prayer partners! I love my prayer partners. When I have big burdens I send out the call to come help me move my piano! Stop and think a minute. How big are your burdens right now? If you tried to pick up a piano and it fell on you—well, that's the way a lot of people are feeling. Their heavy burden has not been moved—it's fallen on them! They are like a guy working underneath a car and it falls off the jack and pins him.

Won't you just ask someone to pray for you and with you? You say, "Brother Wes, I don't trust anybody." That's your problem! The Holy Spirit will tell you who you can trust. He'll tell you who you cannot trust. If you just decide, "I don't dare trust anybody," you are hurtin' for certain. If you just trust everybody, you are hurtin' for certain as well. Just say, "Holy Spirit, who shall I trust? Who will pray with me?" The Holy Spirit will say, "Ask so and so. Ask that group there. They are trustworthy people. They'll pray for you." Then you get them praying for and with you and together you'll move that heavy burden.

WHAT A GREAT REASON TO PRAY! PRAISE THE LORD!

4. PRAYER CHANGES PEOPLE'S CHARACTER

It changes our character when we pray. It changes the people that we pray for. I don't know if you believe this, but a lot of your problems are people and their lack of godly character. In fact, if you started to measure your problems, to see which ones are really big, and which ones are little I'll guarantee you that the really big ones will involve people and their lack of godly character. Just because the water heater has a leak and has flooded the bathroom, that's not too big of a problem. That doesn't involve anybody's character. However, when the husband doesn't love you, or he beats the kids, that type of thing, that's a real heavy burden.

The Bible tells us that we can pray things into peoples' lives. We need to believe that prayer not only changes things, but prayer also changes people. We've all heard that prayer changes things, but what we really need to believe is that prayer changes people! The good news is that prayer *really does* change people, and that's a great reason to pray. In Ephesians 1:9, Philippians 1:9 and Colossians 1:9 Paul is praying virtues into people. "**This is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight**" (Philippians 1:9). In Colossians 1:9, "**I've not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.**" In Ephesians he writes, "**I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power in your inner being.**" There are a lot of people who are weary and weak. They don't know how they are going to make it another day and they need someone to pray, "God, I ask you to strengthen them with power in their inner being so that they will be blameless and holy." It makes a difference.

I love this prayer where Paul said, "**Our prayer is for your perfection**" (2 Corinthians 13:9). I think we should all make it our goal to be people perfectors instead of flaw inspectors. In my meetings I like to have people greet one another by saying, "I know you aren't perfect, but quit worrying about it. I'm praying for you!"

You know how Simon Peter was saying to Jesus, "**I'll go with you, even to death**" (Luke 22:33). Jesus looked at him and said, "**Before the rooster crows twice you are going to deny me three times**" (Luke 22:34)

Jesus had said to him, "**Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brethren**" (Luke 22:31). What would have happened to Peter if Jesus had not prayed? He would have

been sifted! He would have been out of there! He would have never become an apostle. He would have never preached on the day of Pentecost. He would have lost out with God. Your prayers often make the difference as to whether a person keeps going or whether they give up, because the devil has asked to sift a *lot* of people. They are under a great attack. They feel like their whole life is going down the drain. Right at that time, do you know what often happens? The Body of Christ starts talking about them instead of praying for them. I think I know something about that. In a few great trials I'm sure more people talked about me than prayed for me. The ones who *did* pray for me kept me in the ball game. Thank you! I need your prayers. I always need them and I appreciate your prayers so much.

Did you ever think that your prayers could make the difference? Many times we are thinking, "Well, if they are really a Christian, if they are really dedicated to God they'll hang on, read their Bible and come through it. They'll pull through it." Who says? Peter would not have. But Jesus said, "Simon, I know you've got a big problem in your life. But I am praying for you. I know what Satan wants to do to you and his plans have already been set in motion. The attack is coming. You are going to go through it. But you are going to *get* through it, because I am determined that you will. I am praying for you. Not only are you going to get through it, you are going to have a big turnaround. You are going to come back and strengthen your brothers." It's a good thing that Jesus told him that before Peter's heart breaking disappointment of failing the Lord.

Too many of us act like the accuser of the brethren and say, "I knew it. I knew they were cornballs, goofballs. I knew they were goofy. I knew they were going to do something like that. I knew it. I knew they were not true Christians." That's a terrible thing to do. Prayer changes people.

5. PRAYER IS THE OPPOSITE OF GIVING UP.

Every time you feel like giving up you have to make a decision to either give up or do something else. Many times the decision that is made is to say, "I'll just keep going. I'll just put one foot ahead of the other. I'll just keep on truckin'." You think, "I'm not giving up because I'm putting one foot ahead of the other and I'm still truckin'." That's not the opposite of giving up. There are a great many people who are still trucking but really, they've already given up. There are a great many people who are still putting one foot ahead of the other but they've already given up! Jesus taught his disciples to *pray* and never give up. Prayer is the opposite of giving up, because when you don't pray you've given up! You can keep trucking, you can keep going through the motions, you can keep faking people out, you can keep that outward veneer of Christianity and on the inside be crushed, broken and feel like it's all over. And it may be all over, because if you don't pray, you've given up.

The devil says, "I've got you now." You say, "Oh no you don't because I've decided to pray." The devil said to King Jehoshaphat, "I've got three giant armies coming against you, three great big nations. You think you've got a big army, you haven't seen nothing yet, kid. I'm sending three giant armies against you. You don't have any power to stand against them, and you know it." Jehoshaphat admitted it. But he didn't give up. He called a solemn assembly and said, "Folks, we've got to pray."

They prayed until God spoke and said, "Send the choir out. I'm going to set ambushes against the enemy." Those three armies ended up slaughtering each other when God's people marched and sang, "**Great is the Lord. Great is his mercy. His love endures forever,**" (See 2 Chronicles Chapter 20).

Almost all of you are facing some situation where you are thinking, "Maybe I just ought to give up." Then you think, "No, I cannot give up. Somehow, I've got to keep going." *Watch out for that idea, "I've got to just keep going" bit.* That's not the opposite of giving up. Jesus didn't say, "I want my disciples to always keep going and never give up." NO. He said, "**I want you to PRAY and never give up,**" (Luke 18:1).

Jesus then told the story of a little widow who needed justice from a judge and he wouldn't give her justice so she began to bug him everyday, she was incessant in her requesting. Finally, he said, "**Though I do not fear God and I do not fear man, this little lady is about to drive me nuts. I'm going to grant her petition.**"

God is *not* the unjust judge and we aren't trying to wear him down with prayer, but the devil is the hinderer. Amen? He's trying to hinder things. You just keep right on praying. That's how you don't give up. You've got to decide to pray.

CLOSING: As I close this message, I believe that our nation could have a great turn around or it could be destroyed by fire in a few years. It's going to depend upon whether we pray or whether we don't pray. The Republicans aren't going to solve anything if no one prays for the Republicans. The Democrats aren't going to solve anything if no one prays for the Democrats. It doesn't matter who gets elected if they don't have prayer backing. But it's a whole lot better to be praying for someone who is the right person to begin with.

We need to diligently pray. One of the great reasons to pray that I haven't spoken about today is that it brings great glory to God. It lets God do all these great things that he wants to do. I have this burning desire in my heart to bring massive glory to God and I've finally become convinced that the only way I'll ever achieve that is through massive prayer. I've decided that I will base my life around prayer. I'm getting up so that I can pray from 4:30AM to 6:30AM. That means that I have to take a nap during the day. I'm like the little boy that said, "NO NAP!" Okay? That's the way I'm geared. I don't want a nap. But if I prioritize my life around prayer and I get up that early then I better go to bed early or take a nap. My point is, you will never be a great person of prayer unless you make prayer your number one priority and move everything else around to enable yourselves to pray.

You can't stick prayer in there. You have to start with prayer and then you add the other things in. That's one of the reasons that we don't pray. We usually are trying to add prayer in and we're too busy. Just start with prayer.

It's dangerous to get exhausted. We need some sleep or we'll be hard to live with and exhaustion leads to sin because you aren't as strong to resist the enemy. So after I go home at 6:30AM to get the kids to school other people are starting to come from 6:30AM to 8:30AM. I would like to ask you who attend this church to devote yourselves to prayer. I think we could have a national revival. But if we don't then the things that I see in the newspaper—like Communist China wanting to take over Taiwan, which could provoke a war, or the rebuilding of the Soviet Empire—only prayer can stop that. A rebuilt Soviet Empire will be like wounded bear that has lost a lot of dignity but still has their entire nuclear arsenal. There are so many things to pray about. But prayer changes people and prayer changes things. **However, the will of God won't get done if we neglect to pray. Instead, the will of the devil could get done in this nation.**

My strong intention then, is to devote myself first to prayer and the ministry of the Word. I like to get your prayer requests. The Bible says, "**Pray continually**" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). You can have a continuous attitude of prayer, but you can't be actually praying continually. Once you get to working you have to get your mind on your work and you can't really be praying. You can have a prayerful attitude and have your spiritual antennas up, so that you're listening for heaven's broadcasts. You can have "listening prayer." But you can't be talking to God constantly. You can't really even pray very well when you are reading your Bible.

In order to pray continually it takes a GROUP OF PEOPLE who devote themselves to prayer and they take different times. I believe Paul said to the whole church, "**Pray continually**," (1 Thessalonians 5:17). I believe the more we pray the more we'll see the sovereign moving of the Holy Spirit, the beautiful moving of the Holy Spirit in our midst. I would like to ask you, would you take the time to come to your church and pray? When we pray alone, we tend to just pray about our own problems, or perhaps even go to sleep. But when we pray with someone the corporate anointing is there. Jesus said, "**If two of you agree as touching anything on earth, it will be done for you. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst,**" (Matthew 18:19). When Jesus is "in the midst" it's easier to stay awake and it's easier to think of all the things that need prayer. When one person prays it stimulates us to remember what else needs prayer. The prayers hook together like boxcars to make a big train, a beautiful train of prayer.

When you are alone you just don't pray as good. There are times that you need to pray alone about your own personal problems, especially prayers of repentance. Prayers of repentance are often very private. But when it comes to moving burdens, we need other people to help us in prayer. When it comes to changing the nation, we need to pray together.

Please make some decisions in your heart. Make a decision to welcome Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior. Make a decision that you'll follow him and become obedient to his commands. If you haven't been baptized in water, you need to do that. That is the public confession of your faith. It is a first step of obedience. It shows the whole world that you've opened your heart to Christ. If you aren't willing to be baptized, something is drastically wrong.

You need to make a decision to tithe. If you aren't tithing and you are just saying, "I can't afford to," something is drastically wrong. We tithe, not because the church needs the money; we tithe because it's the right thing to do. We ought to be committed to do it. And we need to make a decision to stop making excuses for not praying and make prayer our top priority. If Jesus made prayer his top priority, if the apostles made prayer their top priority then we ought to make prayer our top priority. Let's make these decisions in our hearts right now.

What are we going to do with this message? Do you want to bring God MASSIVE glory? Do you want to have America saved from destruction and have your children grow up and have grandchildren for you? That's going to take prayer or this nation will be involved in a nuclear war. This nation is sick, sinful and perverted. There isn't enough righteousness to prevent this nation from experiencing national destruction at this point. We might have enough righteousness to be barely hanging by a thread. We need a national turnaround. I want my children to be able to grow up and not be killed in some war or die of some plague. I know that God cannot keep blessing a nation that gives itself over to sexual immorality and perversion. We need a turn around in our public schools. We need a turn around in all kinds of areas. It could happen if we pray. There's not a chance that it will happen if we don't pray.

If you have strayed from Christ, come back to him. He'll receive you with open arms today. Make a very firm decision to abide in Christ. Say, "Jesus, here I come." Ask the Lord to forgive you for whatever made you stray away.

A PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus. We turn from our sin. There's nothing there for us. It's just death and futility. It's a big mess. I want out. I want into the Kingdom of your dear Son. I want to live in peace and joy and life so I'm coming to you, Jesus because you are the source. You are the Son of God. You died for my sin. You rose from the dead. You are soon to come again and establish your kingdom. I turn to you. Come into my heart. Live in me. Cleanse me from every sin. Take over my life. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Reveal yourself to me, and teach me to pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.