



# *SPRING 2018 DEVOTIONAL*

## *“Prayer of Surrender”*

*WEEK 5: June 11<sup>th</sup> – June 15<sup>th</sup>*



PUTTING PRAYER  
IN PRACTICE

THE SERIES

**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church**  
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**Monday, June 11, 2018**

## **Right Worship**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

**Romans 12:1 (ESV)**

Every aspect of our lives is part of our worship. We worship from the moment our eyes open in the morning to the second they close at night. Worship is magnifying someone or something by our actions, thoughts or words. It is setting anything, be it God or otherwise, into the place of high prominence and authority in our lives. The understanding of worship is slipping from Christian belief and practice. Worship today is generally thought of as a genre of music or a thirty minute period in which we sing songs to God.

At the opening of Romans 12, Paul strongly advises and encourages believers in Christ, by the mercies of God—His love and compassions toward us—to offer a sacrifice to God. That sacrifice is the presentation of our bodies to God. In the Old Testament, the priest brought offering and faced it toward the Most Holy Place, in this way it was brought before the Lord. Animal sacrifices are no longer required, but what God wants is for us to sacrifice our bodies.

A sacrifice involves giving up something that is valuable and important to you, for somebody or something that you consider to be of more value or importance. In other words, a sacrifice is surrendering to or giving up something that we would rather not give up, but because of that which we are giving it up for is more important than what we are giving up,

we make a sacrifice. We are asked to offer, surrender, and give up our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. If the sacrifice has to be living and not dead, then our bodies are all we have to offer to God.

To be holy and acceptable, we have to present our bodies to God as living sacrifices each and every day, completely surrendering to Him our desires, so that they are holy and acceptable to Him. Christians are servants of God, and daily our question for God should be, “How can I serve you today?” When we present our bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable to God, it becomes our spiritual service of worship.

In this particular passage, worship refers to any act done for God. Anything you can think of, if it is done for God, it is a service of worship. It is also a spiritual service, spiritual used here can also mean “reasonable”. So, to present our bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable to God is the only reasonable way to respond to His mercy. When we think about all God has done for us, and His great sacrifice that was made for us, the least we can do is surrender our lives to Him.

Only through the giving and submitting of our entire lives, can we rightly worship God and fulfill our purpose and mission on earth.

**A living sacrifice is a life lived for God.**

– Min. Shad Comeaux

**Tuesday, June 12, 2018**

## **Your Heart, Christ's Home**

*<sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

### **Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV)**

When we encounter trials and tribulations in life and we often find ourselves in a place where we just can't bear the weight of it all, ergo we are at our "wits end." The apostle Paul presents us with the writings to the Ephesians which is one of the grandest mountain ranges of Scripture not unlike mount Everest, and in that range these verses are one of the highest peaks. We come to the very heart and soul, the very center, and core of what the Christian life is all about.

Paul tells us that we can rest assured that our faith, no matter what trial or tribulation we encounter that brings us to our "wits end," is strengthened when we allow Christ to dwell on our heart. Secondly simply make the necessary preparations daily by ***"Learning How To Pray and then Putting Your Prayers Into Practice"***. When a guest is coming to our house, there is always a great flurry of cleaning and straightening and provision. And the provision must be in accordance with the nature of the

guest. You might set out flowers for one person, but not if you knew he suffered from hay fever. Yet some of us maintain conditions in our hearts, which must be a great grief and sorrow to our heavenly Guest. There are rooms filled with the dust and smoke of sin: envy, bitterness, pride, selfishness, disobedience, lust. There are rooms locked away, off limits all of which will inevitably cause us to reach a place of loss, confusion, or "wits end."

For Christ to dwell in your heart, sin must be expelled. So, the preparations required for him to dwell are not something you can even begin to do in your own strength. You need to be strengthened in you inner man (Ephesians 3:16), so that Christ can come to dwell in your heart by faith and you can then move on to know the heights and depths of his love and be filled up to all the fullness of God

For Christ to dwell in your heart means that your whole inner life, your thoughts, your feelings, your motives, your intentions, would be something Jesus could be comfortable with, which would make Him feel at home. How? Because He is there, in control, influencing, directing, energizing, and empowering. It means that you and He are on the same wavelength, enjoying deep, intimate, and conscious fellowship.

He may be present, but is His character taking shape in you? He may be present, but is He able to settle down into every nook and cranny, so that you begin to take on His personality? Does He dwell in your heart by faith? Does He feel at home? Or does He sometimes feel more like an unwelcome guest. Above all, can you say it is not you who live but Christ who lives in you?

For a Christian, total surrender is to let Christ become the dominating factor in your attitudes and conduct.

**Let Christ make your heart His home.**

– Bro. Clifton Clark

**Wednesday, June 13, 2018**

## A Word To The Wise

*Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."*

**James 4:13-15 (NIV)**

Concerning planning . . .

*"A goal without a plan is just a wish."* - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

*"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."* - Benjamin Franklin

*"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."* - Yogi Berra

*"Always, always have a plan."* - Rick Riordan

There are literally hundreds of quotes about planning for the future. We're bombarded by television commercials urging us to make plans for the future. As children, we are encouraged to make plans for our adult lives...What do you want to be when you grow up? What will your college major be? Do you have a "Plan B" in case "Plan A" doesn't work out? What type of person do you want to marry? How many children do you want to have?

Should we plan and think about the future? Yes! Jesus said, *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace."* (Luke 14:28-32 NIV)

The admonishment to listen is to those who make plans without the counsel of God...those who plan apart from acknowledging God, His guidance, help and care for our life.

We should recognize the uncertainty of life. We don't know everything, only God does. No matter what we plan or think, we do not know what will happen tomorrow, much less the next five minutes. We've heard, and even know of people who were about their normal daily routine, only to meet unforeseen tragedy. Though we make plans, we only

live in the present moment. When we place our lives in God's hand, we can be confident of tomorrow. Our confidence is in Him, not in our plans.

Never, never, never leave God out of your life's plans. Life's plans sometimes collapse against the uncertainty of the future. We do not know what tomorrow may bring, and to foolishly pretend that we are in control of the direction our lives will take is courting with disaster. Christians ought to have a keen concept of the Lord's purpose in our lives. That purpose should be our rock and confidence. This is a great source of comfort and joy in all of life's circumstances. It is living by faith.

*It's a funny thing, how much time we spend planning our lives. We so convince ourselves of what we want to do, that sometimes we don't see what we're meant to do.*

– Susan Gregg Gilmore

**True wisdom is surrendering to the wisdom and will of God.**

– Min. Mark Taylor

**Thursday, June 14, 2018**

**How Tight is Your Grip**

*Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross*

*daily, and follow me.*

**Luke 9:23 (NLT)**

*Give up my own way!* Houston we have a problem! The apprehension to giving up can be traced all the way back to our childhood. As early as we can remember, we've resisted the thought of surrender. From the early games of hide & seek, to tag, or wrestling with our older siblings, the thought of surrender is typically our last resort.

Not surrendering does something for a person's psyche, even if it means enduring a measure of punishment, as a result of standing our ground. We see this often in the modern-day gladiator matches of MMA. Men and women endure extreme pain from poundings rather than tapping out.

As common as this is, in childhood games or athletic competition, it's also a sad reality when it comes to our relationship with God. Many prefer to establish the terms of friendship with God rather than embracing the terms He's laid out.

In Luke 9:20, Jesus asked His disciples, "*Who do you say I am?*" Peter replied, "*You are the Messiah sent from God!*" It was with this understanding that He said, "*If any of you want to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.*"

Jesus tied surrender to our relationship with Him: "*If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it*" (Luke 9:24, NLT).

As much as we might resist surrendering, it's clear that surrendering is an absolute necessity for the Christ Follower. Jesus said that without it, we simply couldn't be His disciples.

**Are you trying to hold on to your life or are you giving it up for Jesus' sake?**

- Min. Dana Thomas

**Friday, June 15, 2018**

## **Don't Think, Just Pray**

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

**1 Peter 5:6-10 ESV**

If you are reading this devotional you probably are seeking some type of insight on God and prayer. Why? Isn't what you know about God or prayer enough? Prayer as we know can be a powerful thing if used in the proper way. Pray in your time of need is the most essential thing you can use to strengthen and get you through any circumstances. How is your prayer life? If you say you pray enough you are wrong. If you say not enough, you still have the same problem. Pride! What am I saying? I am glad you asked.

If we say that we talk with God enough then are saying is we do not need Him for everything. When God is your Supplier and Sustainer, you can never have enough. If we say we do need to pray more, we admit that we do not pray to Him, and we live life everyday like we do not need Him.

In our focal passage today, we see the remedy to pride. Humility. The writer Peter is talking to the church that is going through struggles of persecution and suffering for their faith. In one of the church's most desperate times, Peter calls for the believers to be humble, because if you humble yourself God may exalt you. The enemy is ready to devour you like a roaring lion. He uses every trick he can to steal, kill, and destroy you, but if you stand firm in the faith Jesus will establish, restore, strengthen, and confirm you. You can stand firm only by the power of prayer.

In Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18, Paul commands, "*Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.*" Prayer is the power that you need to activate the full body armor of God.

Think about if the church did not just try to endure their struggles, but prayed through them. How much more confident and at peace would the body be? This week as your struggles at work, home, or just life get to much, don't think just pray.

*To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. – Martin Luther*

***Prayer demonstrates our dependency on God. How dependent are you?***

– Min. Dennis Campbell