

# Pray On

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 00 ] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from the beginning of Psalm 64.
- Psalm 64, and we're singing from the beginning. When I to thee my prayer make, Lord, to my voice give ear, my life save from the enemy of whom I stand in fear.
- Me from their secret counsel hide, who do live wickedly from insurrection of those men that work in equity, who do their tongues with malice wet and make them cut like swords, in whose bent bows are arrows set, even sharp and bitter words, that they may act the perfect man in secret aim their shot.
- Yet suddenly they dare attend to shoot and fear it not. In ill encourage they themselves, and their snares close to lay.
- Together confidence they have. You shall receive, they say. They have searched out iniquities, a perfect search they keep of each of them, the inward thought and very heart is deep.
- [ 1 : 27 ] God shall a narrow shoot at them, and wound them suddenly. So their own tongue shall them confound. All who them see shall fly.
- And on all men of fear shall fall. God's works they shall declare. For they shall wisely look to stake, for these his doings are.
- In God the righteous shall rejoice, and trust upon his might. Yea, they shall greatly glory all in heart that are upright. We're going to sing from the beginning of Psalm 64, down to verse 6, 6 stanzas.
- When I to thee my prayer may, Lord to my voice give ear. When I to thee my prayer may, Lord to my voice give ear.
- My eyes shall fall near me. Of whom I shall in fear.
- [ 2 : 54 ] May from mercy and first the high.
- Who do wickedly promise the resurrection of those men that work in his pity.
- Who dare touch them of this land.
- And make them come like swords. Sin. That in his pengaru's■■■■.
- In his pengaru's embrace. He shall bear thus thus blogging in her heart. In his pengaru's heart as if his pengaru's heart postpone.
- [ 4 : 10 ] They may add the perfect man, and secret in the short, ye suddenly give at him.
- Who should and fear not, an hell and kind who jade themselves, and their snares close to lay, together conference they have.
- Who shall them see the same, they have searched by the negrities, the perfect search to keep, of each of them the inward thought, and with the heart is he.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Gracious God, we are thankful for the truth.

Your word is truth. And it describes to us different situations and scenarios that have been in this world from the beginning of time.

[ 6 : 31 ] It describes us the wickedness of heart that has resulted from the fall of man, the disruption that took place in that most intimate of relationships between God, the Creator, and man who was created in his image.

And the horrors that have ensued as a consequence, even the undisguised enmity against God that continues in the world to the present.

The words of the psalmist described to us the prayer of one such, who knew all about what it was to suffer the persecution of the wicked, and to be despised and maltreated by them, thinking that those who were responsible for such ill could do so without any repercussions.

And your word reminds us that that is not so. That God, the God that you are, you will have the last word.

And even in this world of ours and in this nation of ours where there is so much evidence of the name of God being trodden under foot.

[ 8 : 17 ] And your people in the world despised as their Saviour was despised. The truth that they embrace rejected openly.

And the love that they have for Christ, scorn poured over it as if it has no place in this world.

For every supposed love is highlighted and heralded and declared as if it was a noble thing.

And yet in the light of your word it is often something that has no claim upon that very name. We pray then for your help to understand that our God is a God like no other.

You are the only God who deserves the name God. There are false idols and they are renewed day by day, year by year.

[ 9 : 26 ] Those who once appeared on the scene of time are no longer to be found. Perhaps tomorrow there will be new gods and new idols.

And they will occupy time for the opportune moment that the wicked one finds to establish them in the hearts and minds of those who are desirous of such.

And yet the reality is that there is but one God, the only living and true God. And you have continued as you ever were from the beginning.

In fact the word of God, your word tells us that you have no beginning and you have no end. You are the Alpha and the Yamaka.

You are the beginning and the end. And your word as it is in Christ Jesus determines the outcome that awaits all flesh.

[ 10 : 43 ] That the day will come when the Christ whose word it is and of whom it speaks will determine the eternal destiny of those who are in this world and ever where in it will ever will be in it.

As we gather in your name this night we pray your blessing upon us according to the needs that are known to you. We do not share the knowledge of each other's circumstances or situations.

We may know some information but only in a limited way. But you know all things. Every thought that we have, every intimate moment that we share with others, they are within your eyes as if they were in the public gaze.

So we pray Lord for your grace to help us according to the knowledge that you have of us at this present moment. As we approach the final hours of 2023.

2023. It is another year that is added to our account. Another year that will add to our estimate in your eyes or otherwise.

[ 12 : 07 ] For all that we have done in your name by your grace. You will record that for our good or you will condemn us for its lack.

We bless you and thank you that there is a book upon which these matters are writ large. And you alone have the power to open that book and to close that book.

And the day that comes. And the day that comes. We measure days, we measure years, we measure decades, even centuries. And yet they all pass and the day will come when the time of that passing is over.

We will not pass beyond the appointed time that you have decreed where all things will be at an end.

And even the work of the gospel will have come to be fulfilled. And all who are to appear in the glory of Christ and share in it will have been brought in.

[ 13 : 18 ] And that day is fast hastening. Not one of us can lay claim to knowing when that is. Your word assures us that only the God of heaven alone has that information.

But we nevertheless are reminded that we need to have an eye upon it. And to prepare for it as best we can with your help.

So we pray your blessing upon us as a congregation. Even those of us who are gathered this evening. Others who belong to the fellowship who are unable to be out this evening.

Others who will perhaps never be privileged enough to rejoin their sisters and brothers in the Lord. And to the Lord such as their physical or mental weakness.

We commend them to your care where they are. All entrusted with their care. We pray that you would bless them as they undertake it. Whether it is in their homes, in care homes, in hospice or hospital.

[ 14 : 31 ] We pray Lord that you would guide all who throw the tools to alleviate the circumstances that sometimes mark us out in our short sojourn in this world.

When illness overtakes us or weakness of mind or body. Sometimes we are dependent upon others and for that reason those who undertake these duties we give thanks for.

Remember all the caring professions. All who are responsible for care within the community. Whether it is within the caring professions of other bodies that are responsible for our welfare.

We are keeping peace. The police force keeping us safe through the ambulance services or fire services or any such who have responsibility for ensuring our security.

We commit them to you. We pray for the various forces who are responsible for delivering peace at sea or on land or in the air.

[ 15 : 46 ] Especially at this time of uncertainty when there is war viewed from afar. It may be but it is still ongoing.

And it could so easily be like the embers that are scattered from the hearth spread into flame where it is least expected.

So we pray for the peace keepers of this world. We pray for those who seek to bring healing from this hurt. To bring comfort where those who have been left distraught and scarred by war.

That you would encourage them in their labour. We remember before you the grieving and the sorrowful in such circumstances. And remember similarly those amongst themselves who have sore hearts as they reflect upon loved ones who have been taken away in recent times.

We pray for your blessing upon the preaching of the gospel. That the name of Christ would be lifted up. Fearlessly and unambiguously.

[ 17 : 04 ] Presented as the one who is to be worshipped. Even as the angels of heaven bow the knee in his presence. So must we honour and elevate him with the praise of our lips.

Acknowledging that he is King of kings, Lord of all. That we would remember in our worship that we are called to worship the Holy Living and true God.

And that our worship would be consecrated to that end. Guide us in the truth we pray. And watch over us the short time that we are together. Forgiving sin in Jesus name.

Amen. We will continue to sing to God's praise. This time from Psalm 139.

Psalm 139 from verse 4 to 12. For in my tongue before I speak not any word can be.

[ 18 : 08 ] But altogether, O Lord, it is well known to thee. Behind, before, thou hast beset. And laid on me thine hand. Such knowledge is too strange for me too high to understand.

From thy spirit whither shall I go or from thy presence fly. As in thy heaven, lo, thou art there. There if in hell I lie. Take I the morning wings.

And dwell in utmost parts of sea. Even there, Lord, shall thy hand me lead. Thy right hand hold shall me. If I do say that darkness shall be covered from thy sight.

Then surely shall the very night above me be as light. Here darkness hideth not from thee. But night doth shine as day.

To thee the darkness and the light are both alike all way. Let us sing these verses 4 to 12 of Psalm 139.

[ 19 : 11 ] For in my tongue before I speak not any word can be. But in my tongue before I speak not any word can be.

But of again, O Lord, it is well known to thee.

Be behind me for thou art be said. To thee the Lord must be said. And laid on me thine hand.

Such knowledge is best strange for me.

To hide, to understand. From thy hand. From thy stead will ever shall I go.

[ 20 : 32 ] Far from thy presence fly. Ascent, God, I have.

For thou art there. Let it fill in thy life.

Take I the morning's wings and dwell. In thy soul.

In thy heart shall I. In thy heart shall I. In thy heart shall I.

And me lead. Thy right hand. Who shall me.

[ 21 : 33 ] Be of thy heart shall I. If I do see the darkness shall be covered from thy sight.

And surely shall our merry night Of light be as light Yet darkness I doubt not from thee But night doth shine a day Tell thee the darkness and the light Are both a like always I'm going to hear the word of God as we find it in the New Testament

And the epistle of Paul to the Colossians The epistle of Paul to the Colossians On chapter 4 Last chapter of the epistle We'll read the whole chapter Colossians chapter 4 Master, give unto your servants that which is just and equal Knowing that ye also have a master in heaven Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving With all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance To speak the mystery of Christ For which I am also in bonds That I may make it manifest As I ought to speak Walk in wisdom toward them that are without

Redeeming the time Let your speech be always with grace Seasoned with salt That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man At all my state shall Tychicus declare unto you Who is also a beloved brother And a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord Whom I have sent unto you For the same purpose that ye might know your estate And comfort your hearts With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother Who is one of you They shall make known unto you all things which are done here Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner Saluteth you And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas Touching whom ye received commandment

If he come unto you receive him Of Jesus, which is called justice Who are of the circumcision These only are my fellow workers Unto the kingdom of God Which have been a comfort unto me Epaphras, who is one of you A servant of Christ saluted you Always laboring fervently for you in prayer That ye may stand perfect and complete In all the will of God For I bear him record That he hath a great seal for you And them that are in Laodicea And them in Heropolis Luke, the beloved physician And Demas greet you Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea And Nymphas and the church which is in his house And when this epistle is read among you

[ 25 : 59 ] Cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans And that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea And say to Archippus Take heed to the ministry Which thou hast received in the Lord That thou fulfilled A salutation by the hand of me, Paul Remember my bonds Grace be with you Amen May the Lord add his blessing to this reading Of his word To his name be the praise We're going to continue singing to God's praise This time words from Psalm 141 Psalm 141 And from the beginning to verse 5 O Lord I unto thee do cry Do thou make haste to me

And give an ear unto my voice When I cry unto thee As incense let my prayer be directed in thine eyes And the uplifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice Set Lord a watch before my mouth Keep of my lips the door My heart incline thou not unto the ills I should abhor To practice wicked works with men that work in equity And with their delicacies my taste let me not satisfy Let him that righteous is me smite That shall a kindness be Let him reprove I shall it count a precious oil to me Such smiting shall not break my head For yet the time shall fall When I in their calamities to God Pray for them shall And so on From the beginning of Psalm 141

To the double verse marked 5 O Lord I unto thee do cry Do thou make haste to me O Lord I unto thee do cry Do thou make haste to me And give a hand to my voice When I cry unto thee As in sins and slay my prayer be Directed in thine eyes

And the lifting of thy hands As the evening sacrifice As the evening sacrifice Said Lord I tw  
■■eth For how that is Say it quiere I lift the door, my heart in pain that not until the hills I should have borne.

To practice wicked works with men that want iniquity.

[ 30 : 18 ] And with their delicacies, my chains, let me not satisfy.

Let him that righteous this night, it shall that kindness be.

Let him reprove my child, how precious oil to me.

Such mating shall not break my head.

For yet the time shall fall. When I in death calamities, till God pray for them shall.

[ 31 : 51 ] Can we turn to the Epistle of Paul to Colossians chapter 4.

And we can read at the beginning of the chapter. Chapter 4. Master, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. With all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.

That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak, and so on. But I want us to focus particularly on verse 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

As I said in the morning, bearing in mind that today is the last day of the year, the last Lord's Day of the year, I wanted us to focus on a couple of things that are of great import.

[ 33 : 27 ] In the morning, we spoke, considered the need that there is to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe in Him, to trust in Him, and to do so with haste.

And this evening, I want my focus with you to be on the need for prayer. And it's probably, I could have used any number of portions of the scripture to focus on this evening.

I readily confess that it is entirely subjective. The choice of topic is entirely mine.

And it's not necessarily the most important topic that you could hear anything about on the last Sunday of the year.

But I want to speak to the Lord's people in particular. Those who know the Lord, those who profess to have a relationship with God, and those who will, in a measure, understand the importance of being involved in a relationship of prayer with God.

[ 34 : 58 ] Now, I do have to say that for myself, prayer is not an easy thing.

It's not something that I find easy to do. So I'm not talking to you, and not talking to myself.

Nor am I talking about prayer as an expert on prayer. Sharing my expertise with you. But rather, taking the words of the apostle to remind every one of us, I hope, of the place prayer has in the life of God's people.

And it's something, when we come to the end of a year, we tend to look back and to reflect on the things that were important to us during that year.

And we look forward with anticipation to what we hope will take place during the year.

[ 36 : 16 ] And as God's people, I think we can look back on occasions where prayer was of greater importance to us than it is at other times.

Because all our lives demonstrate that there are occasions when prayer is something that we resort to more often or more earnestly than we do at other times.

For example, if we are unwell, or if somebody you know and love is unwell, it would be strange if we who know the Lord do not apply to him in prayer for relief of fullness or for him to comfort or to sustain them during their time of illness or our own.

If there is some predicament that's ongoing in prayer.

But I suppose at that moment that is the most important of prayer. I was listening to the words of R.C. Sproul just early this morning.

[ 38 : 05 ] And he was talking, it was a series of short talks that were delivered by him coming to the end of his ministry. And he was, I think, reflecting on things that were important in his life during his lifetime of ministry.

One thing he said, which has nothing really to do with prayer in a sense, was he remembered that when he was a young Christian attending a conference, and either the main speaker at the conference or somebody very much senior to him in years spoke to him.

And he held up the Bible before him. And he told him, read this, study this, meditate on this, pray over this, and your life will benefit from it.

And he said, these words remained with me. And they were important to me. Now, what's the connection between that and prayer?

Well, I think Paul makes a very strong connection to prayer and his word. Because he reminds us that when we pray, we're praying to the author of the word.

[ 39 : 39 ] And we speak to him in his language, using his words. So go right back to the beginning of this epistle. You find the apostle saying this, We give thanks to God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.

Begins the epistle, identifying the importance of prayer. A few verses down from there in verse 9, he says, For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you.

You would think that would be enough. But notice what he prays for. To desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, and to all patience, and longsuffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and so on.

So what Paul is doing in these few words, he is emphasizing the place that the word of God has in his own life and in their lives, so that they know who God is, and what God is doing, and why he is doing it, and what the Lord has done and goes on doing, and how their life will be enriched because of it.

Now when we come to look at the words of the text this evening, I want it to be as narrow as the text itself allows it to be.

[ 41 : 47 ] There are three things in particular that I've mentioned. He wants us to continue in prayer. I think that's sound advice.

At the end of a year, anticipating the year that comes, he is saying, continue in prayer. Good advice, don't you think?

Secondly, he says, watch in the same. Watch as you pray. Watch as you pray.

And then he says, finally, with thanksgiving. With thanksgiving. So there are three thoughts there, three separate thoughts connected with prayer that I want us to think about just very briefly this evening.

Now the word that he uses for pray, continuing prayer, is pray continually and pray persistently.

[ 43 : 03 ] I think there's these two words. Carry on doing what you're doing as you pray. don't desist from doing what you're doing as you pray.

And I think that's important for us to remember because Paul needs to say this and we need to hear it because it is one of the most difficult things to do, believe it or not.

It is one of the most difficult things to do. you might think that prayer is something that every Christian should be able to do and to do it without much forethought.

It's something that is you know, often you hear the description given to you of prayer as the breath of the believer. Something that a believer is because they're a believer they can't but pray because they're believers.

And if they are not praying they are not breathing. They're dead. Some people emphasize that. But even though that may be the case it doesn't mean that our prayer life our coming to God in prayer our coming to God with prayer is the way it should be or could be or ought to be.

[ 44 : 47 ] So what Paul is saying is we need to ensure that we maintain this practice with his help as much as we are able to do it.

I think there is a difficulty there because we find for example the disciples coming to the Lord help us to pray teach us to pray.

We find Paul having to teach in his epistles again and again the role of prayer the need for prayer the manner of prayer the time for prayer.

If it wasn't a problem why teach it why preach it why insist on it why remind people of it. The simple fact of the matter is that prayer is not as easy for us as it could be.

We did mention that there are times when prayer is something that that we apply ourselves to because our circumstances demand it.

[ 45 : 55 ] if you know to pray you would be very foolish if a situation comes about and you don't go to the very person that can alter that situation or that can help you in that situation.

If you are struggling with an issue where do you take that problem? Who do you come to with that problem if not to God?

Yes there may be people that you know that you that you go to that share your burdens with you but there's nothing like God who understands what is going on in your life better than you understand it yourself so you go to him because you know that he knows you and you know that he hears you to whom else can we go Peter says you alone have the words of everlasting life or eternal life problems arise difficulties rivalness comes our way and it is inevitable that we go to God and we pray to God there are other occasions just for an example times of spiritual quickening awakening times of revival all of you who are

Christians here tonight I believe that when you came to know God on his terence when you came to discover your need of salvation when you came to discover where that salvation was to be found when you came to discover through the gospel how the gospel brought to your attention the Lord Jesus Christ where did you spend most time well if not in God's word certainly you would spend it on your knees certainly you spent it in the company of the God who was the provider of salvation to you so on a personal level you know that the scripture has taught you and your experience has taught you that you go to God when your soul is crying out as parched ground for spiritual sustenance because you know that that is what he provides some of you are the products of revivals of religion if not you've read about it and one certain accompaniment of the pouring out of God's spirit was the rekindling of the spirit of prayer you know a person can begin well as a

Christian and can be very industrious on their knees for a time but then that time is not as clearly a time of prayer Christians can grow cold Christians fall into the kind of mindset that does not bring them as often as it should to God if you read the accounts that we have of the revival in the neighboring villages there and here as well there was a very clear time in the experience of these communities where the spirit of prayer was much in evidence people wanted to pray they prayed alone they prayed in families they prayed in company with others they came to the prayer meeting because they loved the prayer meeting they loved to hear

[ 50 : 10 ] God's people pray they wanted to be where prayers were offered and not only does he point out the fact that the product of that revival the conversions the coming to know the Lord over a hundred people in these short years the interest in prayer waned the desire to be in the company of God's people at prayer waned one interesting thing he pointed out was that people went away from the church at the end of a service hurriedly which tells you that when people are quickened when people are enlivened they want to be in the company of

God's people and one thing they wanted to do was to be in the company of God's people as they prayed have been in the company of people who find the prayer meeting monotonous who find the prayer meeting tiresome who find the prayer meeting something that suppresses their own interest in the Christ of whom the gospel speaks Christian people even they say it's lifeless they have no inclination to be found there now that says more about them than it does about the prayer meeting than it does about prayer what I want you to understand is this that it's not always times of revival it's not always times of extreme urgency it's not always times when we feel the burden to pray but it should always be prayer time it should always be a matter for us that we continue in prayer that we persist in prayer that we pray even when we don't feel like praying because it's what God wants us to do



William Hendrickson in his comments on this passage says three things and I think they're worth repeating prayer he says is the divinely appointed weapon against the attacks of the devil if you're a child of God you don't need to be told that your adversity to the devil is as a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour and every which way you turn he is intent upon undermining your confidence in God in his word in his people and he will do that was to keep you from it and your best weapon against his devices is prayer secondly prayer he says is the vehicle for confession of sin at the throne of grace we have never moved beyond the need that we have to confess our sins before

God however well advanced we are in years however long we've served the Lord however much we've lived in this world with a knowledge of Christ that makes sure that we are his we have never moved away from the place that we need to come to him at a throne of grace and confess our sins grace they are many they are great they are incapable of being dealt with except with God's grace and his mercy in Christ and we come to him knowing that and the third thing we come with gratitude we come as grateful souls to a God who is able to receive our first giving to receive from us what he calls a spontaneous adoration before the throne of grace we need to pray continuously we need to pray persistently we need to pray so that we can pray we need to pray so that our mouth is filled from on high well this is the second thing he tells us continue in prayer and watch in the same watch in prayer some would suggest that what is mentioned here by the by the apostle has at its back the thought of the disciples who were in the garden of

Gethsemane with Christ and as Christ went apart to pray he told them watch and pray pray with me keep alert but he fell asleep he fell asleep he doesn't mean that he doesn't want you to watch that you don't fall asleep when you pray and I was thinking of this I was reminded of an old friend who asked me when I was a young Christian what prayer do you like he said do you prefer to pray standing up with your eyes closed or do you prefer your head in the cushion do you prefer your head in the cushion it's a strange question but I knew what he was saying sometimes when you're alone with your God and your thoughts is the most precious of times rather than even when you're sharing your time with others but what the apostle is wanting is here he wants us to keep alert he wants us to keep alert in the sense that we don't allow our prayers to descend into frivolity or frivolity is not a good word formality formality you know what a prayer is don't you you've heard prayers they they have a certain construct you could break it up into sections and you can say

[ 58 : 08 ] I'll do section one two three and four I'll start with an approach to God and I finish with a PS or a thanksgiving or whatever you know all the parts you have all the parts you put them together and you've uttered them and you've completed your duties you've fulfilled all that is expected of you as you pray but that's not what you need to do when you pray that's not what I need to do when I pray first of all your material must be fresh it must be new it comes from God it's not something you go into a dusty cupboard and take out and you say well this worked ten years ago this was suitable when I began and it's perfectly you know it's the same word the same truth the best prayers that I ever heard or ever hear are fresh prayers prayers they're unexpected prayers they're prayers that that are

God honoring but not necessarily framed and formed with the perfect coordination that you would want if you were so intent on having order you look at the Old Testament the prayer of Hannah for example Eli looked at Hannah and I don't know if he could hear what she was saying but he didn't trust what she was saying he was convinced she was drunk and yet probably a more effective prayer wasn't heard by God God hadn't heard such an honest and earnest prayer from this woman's mouth because her need generated it and sometimes while we need to exercise care especially if we're in public we have to be jealous of

God's glory I suppose in a sense we can't be careless in what we say or how we say it we must be respectful to God and we must be honouring to God in the way that we express ourselves but there's a degree of flexibility allowed to us when we are alone with him which is not ours when we meet with others publicly but the thing is this that we should be able to pray wisely with discernment with knowledge with understanding knowing what to ask how to ask for it why we should ask for it what reasons do we have for asking what glory does God have in responding to our petitions we should have a degree of knowledge and awareness of what the word of God has taught us as we said a scriptural knowledge of God and his ways but one thing that we don't have I don't think and you may correct me if you will we do not have a shared knowledge an intimate knowledge of each other that was so obvious of our past generation we are much more private we are much more self-centered we are much more independent and that leaves us exposed in the sense that when it comes to people praying for us they are not really in a position to do that because they don't know what our needs are as much as they could if we had shared our times with them the church of Christ is I think at a disadvantage today because of that you know there's many experiences that I've come across and I've probably told you most of them but these two things came to mind as I was preparing this there's a woman from

Barvis Katrina Mackay I'm sure I've told the story before but it's written down anyway and she had a close friend I think his name was John Mackay they were both from Barvis and he was displaced from his craft by the landlord and he was forced to go to Canada he was driven away from his own home but these two were bosom Christians they were bonded together in the love of Christ and when he went to Canada they used to exchange letters but more importantly they used to pray for each other regularly and the story is told that at the point at which John Mackay came to die he sent a final letter home to

Luz to Katrina and he told her in his letter that by the time she would get that letter he would be dead and she wouldn't be far behind letter and then before the letter arrived she announced to a friend one morning or she said I will no longer need to pray for my beloved friend even before the letter arrived as she was making business with God in prayer as she always did praying for her friend the Lord in some mysterious way revealed to him that her friend had passed into glory I can't explain that I can't tell you how it works but I can tell you that they were bonded together by the spirit of God and they shared that bond at a throne of grace in prayer one praying for the other oceans set for them and yet they maintained their interest in one another and God chose to reveal their circumstances to them prayer is something that

[ 65 : 42 ] God can use but my question for you is how how much are you or how much am I so in tune with the needs of those that are in this world with me who are fellow believers that I would be constrained to pray for them in their need I know of one elder in my own congregation in Graber when I was there and he formed a relationship with an elder in this community not of this church and it was a spiritual bond they had because they didn't know each other they hadn't shared fellowship in the gospel but through the work they met together and they bonded together and one occasion the elder in

Graber had a family difficulty which got him out of bed and he went out because of the difficulty in the middle of the night and sometime afterwards he came over to the community here and he met this man and the man asked him did you have any problem on such and such a night and at first he couldn't recall but it was that very night where his own difficulty had taken him out of bed and this this previously stranger to him but now bound to him in the spirit of the Lord was driven to his knees on his behalf how can you understand that how can you explain it but God means it to be his means of sustaining his people and if we are told by the apostle that we should pray persistently and that we should pray with discernment and with awareness then we should do our diligence we should do our utmost to do that the final thing very briefly is this

Paul mentions thanksgiving are we in need of being reminded of the need that there is in our lives to come to God with thanksgiving is it something that we come is it something you know that comes from our lips easily enough we are ready to say we give thanks let us give thanks let us praise God but you know he has to unloose the cords that make us resonate with true genuine thanksgiving for all he gives us and for all he keeps from us I think you need to think about that not only do we receive so much from God every day that we live spiritual gifts temporal gifts they are without number but they are spiritual ramifications to our sinfulness that God deflects from us that if he were to deal with us according to our sins who could stand this morning

I mentioned Dr. Kennedy and in a book by Murdoch Campbell he I think it's from a highland harvest he mentions something that Dr.

Kennedy said and he was talking about Psalm 103 and we're going to finish singing these verses and in that reflection on Psalm 103 he lists some things which if you and I spent time thinking of them our thanksgiving would be genuine and whole hearted and unreserved after he spoke about the distance that was between east and west and the great oceans which rolled between he spoke of this the seas which separate forever the believer from the guilt and condemnation of his sins that's the first thing if you're a believer if you're a man at a moment of prayer surely you're aware of this fact the distance that God has placed between you and your sins the guilt and the condemnation that they're deserved of secondly the infinite sea of the electing and everlasting love of the father you can measure it there is the sea of the infinite merits of the eternal son in his atoning death and there is the sea of the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the holy spirit which he has given to us are you struggling to find reason to thank God or go to the psalm and think what the psalmist is to sing think what he is feeling and feel it with him and praise

[ 72 : 04 ] God that he is your God praise God for the saviour that has dealt with your sin praise God for the salvation that God has decreed to be used from all eternity praise God and offer thanksgiving for the love that he has placed in your heart for himself cold as you fear it to be that he can still fan it into flame surely you're not struggling to find reason for thanksgiving so pray on pray on pray earnestly pray knowledge happily play with discernment so that you know that in this year that comes when you're allowed to enter into it if you're allowed to enter into it that you begin well and you go on well and that the Lord will fill your mouth from on high and who knows but that your prayers may lead us into a time of refreshing and a time of revival who knows but that your prayer in silent solitude will guide you into the company of others who decide or desire the company of like-minded prayer warriors who knows but it might stimulate an interest in the prayer meeting that too often is neglected and that you may desire to be there hearing what

God's people have to say to their God what confessions come from their lips what utterances come from their soul that the blessing of the Most High would be theirs and would be shared with others or pray on may God bless this world Lord help us to pray help us to know that you're up here hearing God and that you are able to answer even our tongue tied offerings hear us in Jesus name Amen Amen We said we're going to sing from Psalm 103 from verse 8 to 12 the Lord the Lord our God is merciful and he is gracious long suffering and slow to wrath and mercy plentiful he will not chide continually nor keep his anger still with us he dealt not as we sinned but did quite a rule for us the heaven in its height the earth amount of fire so great to those that do him fear his tender mercy are as far as east is distant from the west so far hath he from us removed in his love all our iniquity these verses the Lord our God is merciful and he is gracious long suffering and slow to wrath long suffering and slaughter and in mercy plentiful he will not chide continually nor keep his anger still with us he dealt not as we sinned with us he dealt not as we sinned nor did we quite to him for us the heaven in its height we are we and his

In fear To stand The mercy's High Thus far As he Stays Distant From The Whistle Far Of The From Us Remove In His Love From Us Remove Within His Love All Earth In Equity Amen Amen Grace, Mercy, Peace

From God The Father, The Son, And The Holy Spirit Rest And Abide With You All Ever  
And Always Amen