

Ask in the name of God

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[0 : 00] 1 Kings chapter 8. We are going through the book of Kings. The material is rather unfamiliar. The chapters are quite long.

! But thus far, I think, without exception, we've been surprised the blessing we've received from looking into these chapters.

So we're in 1 Kings chapter 8. And let me introduce it this way. And ask this question, is Christian faith actually any use?

Does it make any useful difference? Thinking about prayer, is it actually possible to talk to God about stuff?

Or is it really just a sort of meditation exercise and there's nobody there listening? Is there anybody there listening when we pray? That's a question.

[0 : 58] Yeah. It's a very important question, isn't it? Is it possible that we could speak to God?

Well, I think John Humphreys on the, was it this week on the radio or last week, when Tim Fallon, the new Lib Dem leader, was interviewed.

And I think John Humphreys on the Today program said, do you pray about your political decisions? As if what normal person would dream of praying?

And he asked it in a very intrusive way. And he asked it in a very intrusive way. But this is what we're talking about. Prayer. Is it a real thing? Is there anybody listening? If there is somebody at the other end, can he or she or it change anything?

That's the question. That's the question. Or is it really just a sort of meditation thing that give us nice feelings? So here's the question. In any sense, does prayer work?

[2 : 03] What does prayer do? What does prayer not do? So these are quite fundamental questions, aren't they?

They're quite radical questions to somebody who is not a Christian. Just to think that you could speak and there's somebody at the other end listening who has the power to change things.

Well, this is very familiar to Christians, but let's not lose the fact. This is a very radical idea. And we're going to look into 1 Kings chapter 8 with those questions in our minds.

And let's remind ourselves of the context. So as I say, we've been working through this. We've been looking at the temple. Actually, literally the word in Hebrew is the house.

It was like this. I gave it a base. Steps up. It is 60 by 20 by 30 cubits.

[3 : 08] A cubit is about half a meter. So those are the dimensions of it, which we did the other day. It's a house for the name of the Lord. That's how it's described. It has rooms around the side.

Two bronze pillars at the front. It has golden doors. And although not absolutely huge, it's nevertheless a very, very impressive building. And Jerusalem, in the days of King Solomon, we read about this impressive building being set up.

It took seven years to build it. Inside it, it has two compartments. One of them being a cube, 20 by 20 by 20 cubits. So a little artist's impression there.

We've lost 10 cubits somewhere. So I've said we lose 10 cubits to make it a cube. So perhaps there were steps going up.

And it's all gold. Amazing, amazing building. It has the Ark of the Covenant inside it. So this bottom picture is actually looking inside.

[4 : 14] That's the Ark in the Inner Sanctuary. And it has these two, forgive my artistic impression there, these two cherubim. Cherubim are not chubby angels. They're quite fearsome creatures.

You can see a Syrian cherubim, I think would have been cherubim, in the British Museum and in the Louvre. You can look at it on Google. They were made of gold.

They would be, they're 10 cubits tall, so 5 meters tall. Quite impressive. And the inside of that inner chamber, the Holy of Holies.

So as I say, there's two inner compartments. And we're thinking about the most inner one, the Holy of Holies, with the Ark of the Covenant, the cherubim, and this extraordinarily ornate interior, all in gold.

Palm trees, flowers, there's a door, there are trees. And it's almost like a golden garden. And it's almost like the way into, through those golden doors, through that curtain, into the golden garden.

[5 : 25] A bit like getting back into Eden, in fact. Well, that's to revise a bit of what we did before.

And let's come now to 1 Kings chapter 8. Now, you'll be slightly relieved to know that on the diary, I said we'd actually do chapter 8 and chapter 9 this morning.

But that shows how optimistic I was. We won't actually do all of chapter 8. What I'd like to do is one part of it. And let's put it into a context.

The house was built. It took seven years to build it. And the chapter that we have had read to us is about getting the house up and running. So one thing to build a house.

And then, if you had your house, suppose you'd built it. Get the electricity in. Get the water running. Get the curtains up. And it's a house that you can live in. And this is the day when the house was up and running.

And it says that in verse 63. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the Lord.

[6 : 35] It's a word that means to get something up and running. And on this day, the ark was brought into its resting place. So you will have noticed that from chapter 8, verse 6.

It says, The priests then brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the most holy place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.

The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. So this is the day that the ark, the ark of the covenant is brought into its resting place.

So this box is brought up and placed in that inner compartment. And on this day, verse 10, the glory of the Lord appears. A thick cloud fills the temple.

And there is a great celebration. Because everybody comes and there's a great celebration. And it includes this long prayer in the middle. And my question is, what do you think is the main emphasis?

[7 : 38] So we're trying to sort this out. See the wood for the trees. What is the main emphasis? It could, of course, be the fact that they all assembled. There certainly is an emphasis on assembly.

Chapter 8, verse 1. King Solomon summoned into his presence the elders, all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the Israelite families. So there is an emphasis on the massiveness of the assembly.

But I don't think that's the key thing. The ark is the thing that is brought into the temple. Is that the main emphasis?

Is it the cloud of glory? That's an unusual thing to happen. Is that the main emphasis? So let's look together at the shape of the text to try and answer that question.

Now, if you're not used to looking at a text this way, please be patient. I think this is the way we're meant to look at the text. It begins, chapter 8, verse 1, with everybody assembling.

[8 : 44] Okay? They all assemble. And it ends with them all going home. So we've got assembling at the beginning.

And we're told that there's a feast and a festival, verse 2. It's the time of the festival. And we're told at the end that they've observed the festival, verse 65.

So we've got similar wording at the beginning and the end. And I think that's deliberate. And we have sacrifices being made.

And that is mentioned in verse 5. Sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be counted. And we have similar wording at the end, where there are sacrifices in verse 62 and 63.

So the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord. Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings. So we have assembling at the beginning and the end.

[9 : 46] Then we have sacrifices next from the beginning, next from the end. And we have a blessing. Please notice verse 14.

The whole assembly of Israel was standing there. The king turned round and blessed them. And he said, praise be to the Lord. And then if you look at the end, verse 55.

It says, he stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying, praise be to the Lord. Now that's a very, very similar wording, isn't it?

So we're getting a sort of sandwich. And the Bible does this. Do you understand? See what I mean? A sandwich, that, that, that, that, that, and that.

And when that happens, it's usually designed to draw attention to the very thing at the middle of the sandwich. Now what is there?

[10:46] We'll find out in a minute. Is it the ark? Well actually it isn't, because the ark was somewhere at the beginning. Is it the glory?

No, the glory is actually somewhere at the beginning. So what's right in the middle? The answer is this prayer. I think that's a little bit surprising.

Because he could easily have said, you know, the big thing is the ark. Come on, let's put that center stage. Or he could have said, the big thing is the glory.

Let's draw everybody's attention to this glory of the Lord. But strangely enough, the way it's written is designed to bring our attention to the prayer.

And that's what I'd like us to look at today. So the heart of the text is not the ark, amazing though that is, not the assembly, not the king. I mean the king gets a lot of attention in other places, but in this chapter it's not the king.

[11:47] The heart of the text is prayer. The heart of the text is prayer. This is a chapter, this is an event about prayer.

And it's prayer towards the temple. As you will have noticed, he keeps on repeating this idea. It's prayer because of the work of the king.

It's prayer in a rich tapestry. There's lots of things said about prayer. So much so that I found it quite difficult to draw out the strands in a way that is orderly enough for us to get our heads round.

But I've had a go, as we will see. And it's about prayer. It's about prayer on this great day of the inauguration of the temple.

Even though this temple ultimately failed to live up to its own ideas. So the chapter is a chapter about prayer.

[12:48] But it is a chapter about failure. Because everything that Solomon says about the temple, we cannot do because there is no temple.

Is there a temple in Jerusalem now? No, it's ruined, isn't it? The temple was destroyed many, many years ago. So what we're reading about here is something which on the face of it cannot actually be done anymore.

Now what I would like to say is that we can breathe a huge sigh of relief. Because all the things that the temple was able to do, we as Christians are able to experience through Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus is the fulfillment of everything the temple stood for. He is, if you like, our temple.

And I'll say a bit more about that in a moment.

So let's just look at what the text tells us. The idea of a house of prayer for all nations. Jesus himself said, this is what I want of this temple.

[14:00] To be a house of prayer of all nations. You remember how angry he got when he went into the temple. And it just was not doing what it was supposed to be.

Remember how he knocked over the tables of the money changers. And he said, it is written, this will be a house of prayer for all nations. But you've made it a den of thieves.

And I think Jesus wasn't just saying, tidy up your VAT returns. He was saying, this whole thing of the temple, finished. And what we have is Jesus.

So, what I'd like us to look at this morning is the matter of prayer. And God willing, we can look at the other bits next week.

So let's look at the text in verse 32. Where Solomon stands before the altar in front of the whole assembly of Israel. And spreads out his hands towards heaven and says, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you.

[15:11] In heaven above or on earth below. You who keep your covenant of love with your servants who walk wholeheartedly before your face and in your way.

You have kept the promise to your servant David, my father, with your mouth. You promised with your hand. You have fulfilled it as it is today.

Now, Lord God of Israel, keep for your servant, my father David, the promises you made to him when you said, there will never fail to have a man before me on the throne of Israel.

If only your sons are careful in all that they do to walk before me as you have done. And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David, my father, really come true. Now, so the question is, there's a lot of things going to be said about prayer. Why should God bother? Why should God bother to answer prayer? Okay. So, whoops.

[16:16] I've put, there's a tapestry. And I've put some different colored threads here because I think that's what we have. We have a number of different colored threads being built up.

And I'll say a bit more about that at the moment, in a moment. But how does Solomon begin? Because he's going to pray some fantastic things. He's going to ask for some remarkable privileges. How dare he do that? How dare he do that? And here is some of the reasoning that is given to us. Number one, God's word. Now, when I read the text just then, I read promise. In fact, in Hebrew, it just says word.

And it says, the word that you have spoken or the word that you have worded. Because word can be a verb and a noun in Hebrew. And it just keeps on saying, you've said you'll do this.

[17:16] You've said you'll do it. Do it. You told my father you'd do this. Do it. This is what you promised. Please fulfill your promises. And that's what he says.

Why should God bother? Because God has previously promised he'll do this. I think that's quite helpful for us. Why should God bother with us?

Because, not because of us, because of a promise that he'd previously made. A plan that he previously had. And we're saying, well, you said you'd do that.

Please do what you have said. And on the same theme, in verse 22, O God, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or in earth beneath.

You who keep your covenant and love with your servants who walk wholeheartedly in your way. So two words there. Covenant and the word love.

[18:26] It's not a cheap word for love. It's a word for steadfast love. Promised love. Committed love. The word hesed. This is what you have done.

You've made a promise. You've made a covenant. You've committed yourself. That's why we're asking you to hear prayer. I think that's a terribly helpful thought for us.

Because we so often would be thinking, well, why would God bother with me? I'm in a hole that I've dug for myself. And you could quite imagine God saying, well, you got yourself into that pickle.

Well, you get yourself out of it. But this is saying something different. This is saying God has committed himself to helping people, full stop. And we're saying we want to count on that covenant. That steadfast love. And it also says quite a bit about his choice. Look at verse 53. The end of the prayer. Hear our prayers.

[19:29] Because you singled out. You singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance. What sort of reasoning is that?

It isn't reasoning to say because we're such good people or we're so dependable. It's saying you, Lord, chose this for reasons best known to yourself.

And we are leaning the weight of our lives on what you have chosen to do. Another reason is his reputation.

Look at verse 43. One of the bits of reasoning that comes in. So that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you as do your own people.

And in verse 60. So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. This is what people think about God.

[20:38] God cares about what people think about him. The general members of the public, what they think about God. So some years ago I was involved with a little church in Port Slade.

And they'd asked me to be a sort of caretaker pastor for a while while they found another pastor. I found that quite a demanding thing to do.

Sounds quite easy but it's quite demanding. Next door to the church. Next door but three or four. They built a Hindu temple.

We don't get many Hindu temples in Brighton and Hove. This was one of them. And it was opened with a great fanfare. And the little church that I was being asked to help out seemed to be in danger of closing.

And that seemed to me to be a situation where you really say, Lord will you do something because of what it looks like to other people.

[21 : 39] If other people look around they see a Hindu temple growing up and a Christian church closing. What does that say to the world? And God answers prayer because he cares about his reputation.

It isn't always as simple as that. But I have to say that the church is still going. Don't know about the Hindu temple.

That's probably still going as well. But the church is still going. And I think this is telling us that God has committed himself to the business of grace.

It's an interesting prayer to get our heads around. Because at the beginning he says this is a prayer for people who are committed to God. It says you keep your covenant, verse 22, with those who continue to walk wholeheartedly in your way.

But then every single example is of people who've sinned. So I can't quite get my head around that. But I think what this is telling us is that God wants us to be committed for sure.

[22 : 59] But he's in the business of dealing with people who fail and fall and need help and come back and fall again and need help again.

And that is the people to whom is offered this amazing privilege of prayer. So God seems to me is interested in getting involved with rubbish people.

He's prepared to accept sacrifices for their sin. And the sacrifice he has provided in the first place. And he's prepared to hear the prayers of the king for his people.

Because bear in mind what's being prayed here is not the people praying this. But their saviour praying on their behalf.

We have somebody who stands before the throne of God above and prays for us. And Satan says well they're rubbish people.

[24 : 09] They say wonderful things and they make spectacular mistakes. Get rid of them Lord. That's what Satan says and Jesus says hold on.

I died for these people. They're mine. I'm committed to them. I chose them. I'm making it my business to bring them to heaven. So Satan get out of it because I'm on their side.

Hear their prayer. And if it was true for Solomon how much more is it true for Jesus? Well still at the beginning of the prayer he goes on in verse 27 to ask this question.

Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens even the highest heaven cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built yet give attention to your servant's prayer.

So here's the question. One of the big questions about the temple. How on earth can a building, even if it's lined with gold and made in whatever proportions, how on earth can a building contain God?

[25 : 18] That's the question that he asks. He doesn't answer it. So I won't answer it either. That's the question.

And I think it invites us to say well, yes. Does the temple contain God? It doesn't quite contain God, does it? It's a way to God.

There's a marvelous way in which you meet God there and yet God isn't contained within it. And then we start thinking about things like the TARDIS and thinking about portals and connections between different spaces and all that sort of stuff which we thought about the other day.

But this is the question here and the answer is not given so I will go straight on. And we think about this tapestry of prayer. Now one of the things in this tapestry is that there's lots of different words for prayer.

You might have noticed them or you probably didn't. Just look at, for example, in verse 28. Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy.

[26 : 28] So you've got two words there. You might not have noticed he uses two words. A prayer, that's one word, and as a plea for mercy. That's a different word. And at verse 30, hear the supplication of your servant when they pray towards this place.

So two other words. I'm not going to stop and try and make distinctions between them. I'm just saying it's like different threads in a tapestry, different colors. We've got different types of prayer. Perhaps there's requests. Perhaps there's a sense of deep need. Perhaps there's a sense of asking for favor. But different threads run through this. And various situations, various prayers, and various outcomes.

And I think there are seven example situations. It's always heartening when there's seven of something in the Bible.

You think, oh, that's probably right. Because seven is a nice Bible number. I think there are seven. I wouldn't go to the stake over the exact counting of them.

[27 : 41] Sometimes there aren't seven of things. Sometimes there's ten. But I think there's seven. See what you think as we go through it. Verse 31. When. So they're all like this. When something happens, then do this.

When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath. So that's example number one. Example number two is in verse 33.

When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned. And when they turn back. So that's example number two. Defeat by an enemy. Example number three.

When there is. When the heavens are shut. When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain. Because your people have sinned against you.

And they pray towards this place. That's number three. No rain. Number four. Verse 37. When famine or plague comes to the land.

[28 : 37] Or blight or mildew. Locusts or grasshoppers. Or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities. Or when disaster or disease may come. So it's some catastrophe.

That's example number four. Example number five is rather different. Verse 41. As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel.

But has come from a distant land because of your name. For men will hear of your great name. And your mighty hand and your outstretched arm. When he comes and prays towards this temple.

Then hear from heaven your dwelling place. And do whatever the foreigner asks of you. So that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you. And do as do your own people Israel.

And may know that this house I have built bears your name. So there's the foreigner who comes attracted by the greatness of Solomon's kingdom.

[29 : 35] Or the greatness of the temple. And Solomon says hear their prayer too. They're not fully paid up Israelites. They have no ethnic claim on this.

But hear their prayer. And aren't you glad that that sort of promise still counts. Because most of us have no ethnic claim on the God of Israel. But he still hears our prayer.

Number six is the going to war against enemies. Verse 44. When your people go to war against their enemies. Wherever you send them. And when they pray to the Lord towards the city you have chosen.

And the temple I have built for your name. And then the seventh is a quite long section from verse 46. When they sin against you.

And there is no one who does not sin. You become angry with them. And give them over to the enemy. Who takes them captive to his own land far away. And if they have a change of heart.

[30 : 34] In the land where they are held. And repent or turn. And plead with you in the land of their conquerors. And say we have sinned. And acted wrongly. And verse 48.

If they turn back to you. So that's the seventh example prayer. Of exile and captivity. There's quite a range of things there aren't there.

Quite a range. Of different situations for prayer. And if you work your way through it. You'll find there are other things.

That crop up or don't crop up. So for example. The first one mentions sin. Verse 31. When a man sins against his neighbour.

The second one mentions sin. When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy. Because they have sinned. The third one mentions sin. This is the rains being set up.

[31 : 31] The rain. The heavens being shut up. And the rain not coming. Because your people have sinned. But the fourth one doesn't actually mention sin.

The seeking foreigner doesn't mention sin. Going to war against enemies doesn't mention sin. And it's only the seventh one that mentions sin. So not all prayer is to do with sin. Interesting.

And there. So I put that as a blue thread if you like. And the thing that God is asked to do. So in the first example. He's asked to judge.

Verse 32. Between your servants. Condemning the guilty. Bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declaring the innocent not guilty. And so establishing his innocence.

And the wording there is what we in the New Testament call justifying. Justify some of your people. Justify those. And treat them as just.

[32 : 31] And bless them as just. And there's a whole section of New Testament teaching. On how God justifies people. But the wording that's used in the other cases.

Is when they're defeated by an enemy. Forgive their sin. When there's no rain. Forgive their sin. When there's a plague or a disaster.

Forgive an act. Not anything to do with forgiveness for the foreigner. For going to war. It doesn't say forgive. It says uphold their cause.

And with the exile one. It certainly says forgive. So there's a range of things that are going on. And there's other ingredients that are brought in in various proportions.

So the idea of turning. In the second example. It says. I've got to look carefully. If they turn back to you.

[33 : 29] So this is what we would call repentance. Turning back. And where's the next one. Where there's no rain from heaven. It says. If they turn from their sin.

So there's repentance in that one. And it next crops up in the sixth one. Where it says. Oh does it? Bear with me. I think that's wrong. I think it's in the seventh one. Where it says. If they repent. Not all of them say repentance.

But some of them say repentance. So there's quite a varied mix of things going on here. Now then. So we've got a mix. So I'm saying there's a tapestry of prayer.

All sorts of occasions. When we. When people would. Might want to pray. It isn't just one situation. There's many. There's a whole life. Full.

[34 : 33] Of varying situations. Where prayer is the right thing to do. Sometimes it involves sin. Sometimes. Repentance is a thing. But not in every single occasion.

Now. I don't think Solomon chose these examples at random. Because they refer back to the law of Moses. And in the initial covenant for Israel.

Moses said. Well. Suppose the people do turn away from you. Suppose this happens. Suppose this happens. And. I think it's Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

I think. Most. If not all of these situations. Are mentioned there. And Solomon is picking up. On what Moses has said previously.

They're all envisaged by Moses. And. Many of them. If not all of them. Are there as warnings. If you're not right with God.

[35 : 37] God will send some sort of discipline. To make you think. To make you turn. To make you think. Do you know. The reason.

What God is saying to me is. I'm not right with him. And what I need to do is to pray. Now let me tell you a striking fact. All of these situations happened in the book of Kings.

And on how many of these situations. Is there any record of anybody praying. Well I think it's just once.

That's rather striking isn't it. Of all the kings that came. And of all the problems that Israel had. Only on one occasion. Did anybody bother to make the connection.

We need to pray about this. And it was Hezekiah when the armies were around him. Who said. This is awful. I'll pray. And he went to the temple and prayed.

[36 : 39] But there are so few. I think there is no other example. I wonder if we can learn from this. How many times in our own situations. Do we say.

Oh. There's a problem in this area. This is terrible. Somebody's treated me this way. You know. The government. Social services. You know.

You name it. And one Kings 8 says. Ah. How do you thought of praying about it? It's the same thought that John Newton had in his hymn.

I don't think I'm. Unusually. Stupid. But to me this. Strikes a chord. I think. Yeah. I could do with that piece of advice.

On how many situations like this. Do we actually pray. Well. It's a tapestry. But I'd like to try and look at.

[37 : 42] What's in common with all these seven situations. Or what's going on. Some of them begin with sin. Some of them begin with trials. Disasters.

Something unexpected happening. One of them begins with wonderment. The foreigner coming and saying. Wow. This temple.

This king. This kingdom. This God. I'd really like to know more. And each of those feeds into prayer. So when those various things happen.

I'm sorry. A bit ahead of myself. We find ourselves in a situation of perhaps defeat. Perhaps lack. Perhaps distance.

Perhaps we feel akin to the experience of the Israelites. They're very distant from God. Or a situation of need. And each of those feeds into prayer.

[38 : 42] And Solomon in each case says. If they pray. If they turn themselves to this place. If they turn to God.

Please hear their prayer. And that leads to outcomes. And in each case. He says.

Hear from heaven. Now that might seem. Just a few simple words. But think what that's saying. Solomon is saying. Oh Lord. In all these different situations. If these people. Turn themselves to you. And speak to you.

Don't let it be just empty words. But will you. Oh God. In heaven. Hear what they're saying.

[39 : 41] Isn't that an amazing thought. That we. Us. Could do something like. Is being described here. And bring to God. Such and such a situation. Which we might think is impossible.

And bring it to God. And if Solomon's prayer was answered yes. Hear from heaven. Hear those prayers. Isn't that.

What a thought that is. In several of the occasions. He says. Hear in a forgiving way. Implying that the person praying. Is a sinner. Are you a sinner.

Conscious that you sinned. And do you think. That because you've sinned. We fear our sins. Will make you turn away. And that God won't listen.

And what this says is. Hear from heaven. And forgive. Hear in a forgiving way. What a remarkable. Thing is being spoken of here. And. In most cases.

[40 : 42] There is an action. May. You bring them back. May. They. Learn from you.

And we'll look at that in a moment. But. It's worth thinking about. What. Actually. Is the result. Of the prayer. From God's point of view.

And what it involves. From the. Our point of view. The human point of view. And what I want to say. Is that. What is. Said here. Is actually.

Totally relational. It is not. Magic. It is not. Mechanics. It is relationship. And if I've.

Got my. Slides in order. We'll see this in a moment. It. Is heard by God. God. And there is a movement.

[41 : 37] In the person. Doing the praying. So what I've meant to write there is. It moves. The pray. Er. The person praying. And it involves.

The pray. Er. And it changes. The pray. Er. The person doing the praying. And here are the texts. That say it. So. Is Solomon saying.

Lord. Whatever they say. Whatever way they come. Just do it for them. Just write them a blank check. It's actually not saying that at all. So they can have anything and everything.

They name and claim. It's the vulgar way of saying that. Gab it and grab it. I think. Isn't it. But. It's not. What prayer is about. Just look at what.

The things that are said. Verse 34. Hear. From heaven. And forgive the sin of your people Israel. And bring them back.

[42 : 34] To the land. You gave to their fathers. That's interesting. Isn't it. What's an answer to prayer. People distant being brought back. That's a relationship thing.

Isn't it. Are you distant from God. Might you be inclined to pray. Would you be surprised. To find yourself being brought back.

To God. Verse 36. Then hear from heaven. Forgive the sin of your servants. Your people Israel. End result. Teach them the right way to live.

That's interesting. It does say send rain on the land. But it isn't just rain. The end result of this prayer. Is that the prayer. Is taught.

What does it say. Teach them the right way to live. Makes it slightly dangerous praying actually. Doesn't it. Do you want to learn. The right way to live. Would you be surprised.

[43 : 36] If when you prayed. God began teaching you. The right way to live. Verse 40. End result of this prayer.

This is a prayer. This is a prayer about disasters. And it says. Verse 40. So that they will fear you. All the time they live in the land. That you gave our fathers.

That's fascinating. Person prays about a disaster. Ends up. Fearing the Lord. It's relational isn't it.

When you get drawn into prayer. You're drawn into relationship with God. And you come away. Relating to God. So that they may fear you. Fear is the deep respect. That we owe to God. It's a good thing. Verse 43. End result of this prayer. So that. Where is it? So that all the peoples of the earth.

[44 : 37] May know your name. And fear you. As do your own people. So there's an international thing going on. Of people from different nationalities. Ending up.

Respecting the Lord. Fearing the Lord. Would it be too much to say. That even in this room this morning. Those prayers are being answered.

Because this is the God of Israel. And very very few of us. Would have an ethnic claim. Oh I'm ethnically. The person who can claim this God.

I think nearly all of us. Are from different nations. Who have come to fear the name of the Lord. I wonder how many nationalities we have here this morning. So if I started Russian.

Lithuanian. Italian. I would get stuck here. Thai. Japanese. German. Sri Lankan. American.

[45 : 40] Singapore. Ethiopian. Gambian. Oh right. Okay. Right. Well. English.

Yeah. There's some English people. And. There's Welsh. No. There aren't any Welsh. Scottish. English. Yes. Many different nations.

That's what prayer is involved in that. A house of prayer for all nations. One of the other end results. Verse 45. Uphold their cause.

Verse 50. On that long prayer about in captivity. The end result that I could find was this. Cause their captors to show them mercy. It's an interesting prayer.

It's an interesting prayer. prayer. So I think in the New Testament we are taught that prayer. The first thing that is praying is about God and his purposes.

[46 : 45] May your name be hallowed. May your kingdom come. The results of prayer. So just finally to conclude. The failure of the temple. What we've been reading about is something we cannot do.

Because there is no temple. And yet it's. Yet the. The. The. The ideas of the temple. Are fully. Brought out in Jesus Christ.

The priesthood was ineffective. The promises were only partially fulfilled in that temple. The sacrifices didn't work.

Because it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. It needed the sacrifice of. The lamb of God.

The kings failed. And it was Jesus who said. Destroy this temple. And I will build it again in three days.

[47 : 44] The temple of which he spoke was his body. And Jesus quite calmly says all the things. That you would have looked to the temple for. You look to me.

And I will do all of that. And more. So. Finally. I don't know whether you've been to war against an enemy. Or been afflicted by blight.

Plague. Mildew. Actually I know you've got mildew. Haven't you? But. That would be a prompt to pray. Do we get that?

Or would we just moan to somebody else? Are we moved and involved in prayer? Because prayer is a movement. They turn to you. Prayer is a movement.

Do we pray? Let us pray. Let's be praying people. Let's be a praying church. Let's sing together.

[48 : 44] Let's sing together. Let's sing together. Let's sing together. Let's sing together. Let's sing together.