

The Need For Convicted, Confident, Steadfast Prayer Wrestlers

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[0 : 0 0] I want to talk to you this morning about the need for convicted, confident, steadfast prayer wrestlers. Wrestlers. That's why I said wrestlers.

Need for convicted, confident, steadfast prayer wrestlers, right? I'm going to start with a quote from E.M. Bounds. He says, this is not a praying age. It is an age of great activity, of great movements, but one in which the tendency is very strong to stress the seen and the material and to neglect and discount the unseen and the spiritual.

Okay? I can't stress enough the importance of prayer in the role of a church plant. Okay? I can't stress enough the importance of prayer as a role in the church plant.

Luke 10, verse 2. Jesus said to his disciples, he said, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Okay? A church plant, one of our goals is to win souls, is to go into an area, bring God's kingdom, by seeing people converted to Jesus.

[1 : 1 8] The Bible says the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. When you said yes to the church plant, you said, hey, I want to be one of those laborers. I want to be a team of people that goes out into the harvest field.

But that statement that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, demands a specific action. You think, well, it would demand that I be a laborer.

Yeah, it demands that you be a laborer. But what is the response that he has? He has a therefore there. Whenever you see therefore, look what is before it to see what it's there for. Okay? The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore, pray earnestly. Does the fact that there is a harvest that is plentiful and laborers that are not, does that cause you to pray earnestly?

Are you praying earnestly for laborers, for us to be laborers who would go into the harvest field and reap a harvest? Are you praying at all about it? And if you are praying, are you praying earnestly?

[2 : 2 2] Colossians 4.3, Paul says, Pray also for us that God may open to us a door for the word to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison.

As a church plant, we need to be praying into the work that God has us to do. Praying that God would open doors for the word of God to be preached in such a way that people be saved.

Okay? It's one thing to do the work of preaching the gospel. That's just as important. But we also need to realize this isn't just a physical act. It's not just words being spoken.

There is a spiritual reality here. And so we have to pray. We have to pray that doors would be opened for the gospel. In Acts 4.29-31, it says, Now, Lord, look upon their threats.

This is the prayer they're praying. Look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. While you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

[3 : 25] And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

This should be our prayer as well. Are we any less needy than the church in Acts 4? I don't think we are, are we? Do we need also to be filled with boldness?

Do we also need to be filled with the Spirit? Grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. This should be our prayer as a church.

Okay? We don't have no slick marketing campaign. There's no social media campaign. There's no slick sign. There's no Holy Trinity of church planting with a bunch of dynamic speakers and a slick children's program and a, you know, full band worship team of hired musicians.

We just have a ragtag group of people who love Jesus and who can be filled with the Spirit. And who have prayer. One of the greatest powerful weapons on the face of the planet.

[4 : 32] I'm not talking about a nuclear weapon. I'm talking about prayer. I'm talking about prayer. Grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.

Is that your prayer? Lord, grant us to speak your word with boldness. It says, and when they had prayed, how did God, it says, and while you stretch out your hand to heal and signs and wonders perform, praying for power.

When they had prayed, it was shaken and they were all filled with the Spirit and they continued to speak the word of God with boldness. What does it say? It says, God is faithful to answer prayer. When you ask to speak the word with boldness, guess what he gives you?

He gives you his Holy Spirit so that you can speak the word with boldness. He gives you his Holy Spirit so you can speak the word with boldness. Are we trying to do church without a dependence on the Holy Spirit to speak the word of God with boldness?

We cannot. We must not. We can't, you know, pray sometimes and not other times. It has to be sustained. There are many aspects of the work of planting a church, but one of the most important has to be, it's got to be prayer.

[5 : 42] Okay? Got four points today that I want to hit on prayer. Number one, we must possess a conviction of the necessity of prayer. We must possess a conviction of the necessity of prayer.

When I said before, the harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few. Therefore, pray earnestly. What does the word earnest mean? Dictionary definition is resulting from or showing sincere and intense conviction.

When you think of prayer, are you possessing sincere and intense conviction about prayer? Or is it just something you do in a crisis?

Is it just something you do because there's a prayer meeting? Is it just something that you do out of guilt? Or are you earnest in prayer? The Bible tells us to be earnest in prayer.

Earnestness in prayer is having sincere and intense conviction. Do you have this about prayer? Prayer is absolutely necessary.

[6 : 46] You might say, why do I need to pray? Well, let me give you two good reasons for it. Number one, prayer is necessary because God is necessary. That's good enough right there, right?

Do you need God? Is God necessary? Well, how do you apprehend all He is and all He has for us? Prayer. Prayer is necessary because God is necessary.

In Acts chapter 12, verse 5, it says Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for Him was made to God by the church.

To God by the church. That's prayer. We're saying, God, we need you. The church comes together and says, we need you. We have vision to say, hey, we want to see people saved in this area of town.

We left our church. We were sent out of our church for a specific purpose, and see God's kingdom in all of life together. And that means seeing people get saved. And so we preach the gospel.

[7 : 46] We get our mission to people. But let us not forget earnest prayer. Earnest prayer for Him was made to God by the church. It's earnest prayer for souls made to God by Christ's church.

It needs to be. It needs to be. Number two, prayer is necessary because God says so. People don't like it when parents say, when they ask, why do I have to do this?

And they say, because I said so. Well, guess what? When God says so, that's good enough reason. You don't need another reason. If God says so, that's all the reason you need. God is God.

God is the authority. And so when God says to do something, we say, yes, sir. When God says to do something, we say, yes, Lord. When God says to do something, we say, yes, my king.

Well, then you might say, well, isn't God going to do whatever He wants to do because He is king and He is Lord and He is sovereign? Isn't He just going to do whatever He wants to do anyways?

[8 : 49] Well, let's look at what the Bible says. James 4, verse 2. Ready? This is, you don't get much more simpler than this. You don't have because you don't ask.

Why don't you have? Because you don't ask. Is prayer necessary? Yes. The last thing I would want to be on my tombstone would be, here lies Josh Christopherson.

He did not have. Why? Because he didn't ask. That'll be the only reason. If I didn't have, it's because I didn't ask. I want to be someone who's convicted, who's sincere and intense conviction, that I have to ask.

Because that's the way God set it up. Wasn't God going to do it anyways? No, He set it up to not do it. Except through the prayers of the saints. Now, He'll still get His prayers. If He doesn't get it through you, He'll get it for someone else.

But I don't want Him to get it through someone else. I want Him to get it through me. I want to be the guy who's praying. I want to be the church that's praying. Do you want to be that church? Are we that church? You don't have because you don't ask.

[9 : 55] 1 Samuel 12, 23 takes it up a notch. He says, He says, He says, He says, He says, If I cease to pray for you, that would be a sin.

Do we ever regard prayerlessness as sin? Do we ever regard failing to watch, failing to be faithful in prayer as an actual sin that needs to be repented of?

When's the last time we went to the Lord and said, God, forgive me. I have sinned, for I have ceased to pray. I have not prayed. Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.

Do you see the language He's using there? Far be it from me. Is this something that's far from you, or is it a little too close? It's a little too close that we cease to pray for people. He says, Far be it from me.

Like, I don't want this even in the vicinity of me. And we, as a church, say, we don't even want prayerlessness to be even in the vicinity of Christ's church. Can we have that conviction?

[11 : 07] We must. Who's going to lead in that? Who's going to be an example in that? Who's going to be faithful in that? Matthew 7, 11, If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to who?

Those who ask Him. Those who ask Him. Those who ask Him. Okay? I'm going to give you two examples of, I'm going to drill down on this a little bit more, because I think sometimes we say, Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Yeah, Josh, I know, I know. I'm supposed to pray. I get it. I don't pray enough. I get it. I want to drill down a little bit more, look at more scriptures. I want to look at Elijah, and I want to look at Daniel, okay?

On this first point of having a conviction for the necessity of prayer. Okay? Elijah, first example. We're going to go to 1 Kings 18, starting in verse 1. This is the story of Elijah.

It says, After a long time, the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year. Go present yourself to Ahab. I will send rain on the surface of the land. Okay, did you hear that?

[12 : 13] What did he say he was going to do? He said, I'm going to send rain on the surface of the land. So done deal, right? I mean, God said it.

I don't need to do anything, right? Didn't God say it? Don't I just like sit back now and watch the rain come? Get out my umbrella, sit outside, start waiting for it?

Well, what does he do? 1 Kings 18, later on, 41 to 45, Elijah says to Ahab, Go up and eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm.

So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah went up to the summit of Carmel. He bent down on the ground and put his face between his knees. Is that just the way he likes to sit?

What is he doing? He's praying. How do we know that? James 5 tells us. James 5 tells us. So he goes, I thought God said.

[13 : 13] I thought it says he's going to send rain on the surface of the earth. Why doesn't he just sit and wait for it? No, he bends down onto the ground and puts his face between his knees.

Then he said to his servant, Go up and look toward the sea. So he went up, looked and said, There's nothing. Seven times Elijah said, Go back. So they're just repeating this.

He's praying. Go back, check. Nope, not yet. No rain yet. Okay. On the seventh time he reported, There's a cloud as small as a man's hand coming up from the sea. Then Elijah said, Go and tell Ahab, Get your chariot ready and go down so the rain doesn't stop you.

In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind and there was a downtour. So Ahab got in his chariot and went to Jezreel. James 5, 16 to 18, the CSB gives us a little more insight into this.

I love it when the New Testament gives a commentary on the old. It's fun because you get to see something. God is giving commentary on his own word, which is pretty awesome.

[14 : 12] So you don't have to try and figure it out. Just what does God have to say about his word? It's one of the best ways to interpret the word is with the word. Okay. So James 5, verse 16 says, The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.

Elijah was a human being as we are and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain and for three years and six months it did not rain in the land. Then he prayed again and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.

So which is it? If God said to do it, isn't that all we need to do? Or do we need to pray as well? Well, what did Elijah do? He prayed.

He heard the word of the Lord. He heard what? The revealed will of the Lord. And he said, Oh, that's God's will. Whenever a Christian hears God's will, knows God's will, he now has a responsibility to pray God's will.

And 1 John 5, verse 14 says, If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if he hears us, then we have what we asked. So this is the confidence we have in prayer.

[15 : 21] That's what it says. 1 John 5, 14. So that's what Elijah did. He didn't take the God's will to see something happen as, Oh, it's time to, it's Rancho Relaxo here.

I'm just going to wait for it to happen. No, he took it as a call to prayer. Do you? You know that God led us to this church. Are you just waiting for it to happen now?

Or do you take your involvement, your call to this church as a call to prayer? God wants to raise up a church. All right, I'm going to sit around and wait for it to happen. No!

Pray. It's time to pray. Just like Elijah. Hey, it's going to rain. Elijah prays seven times. He keeps praying. And then it downpours. He was a man just like us, says James 5.

Just like us. But how did he pray? He prayed earnestly. What does it mean to be earnest? To have sincere conviction. Do you have sincere conviction in prayer? Let's look at the second example with Daniel.

[16 : 22] Okay? Daniel chapter 9. Starting in verse 1. In the first year of Darius, the son of, oh boy, the son of Ahasuerus.

Sounds like a dinosaur. In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who was made king over the Chaldean kingdom, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books, according to the word of the Lord, to the prophet Jeremiah.

Okay? So he's reading Jeremiah. And it says that the number of years for the desolation of Jerusalem would be 70. So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer and petitions with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Same thing, right? He's reading. He's reading in Jeremiah. And it's saying how long the time of desolation would be.

And he says, oh, it's 70 years. So does Daniel, you know, pop open a bottle of wine and say, hey, the desolation's gonna end. This is awesome.

[17 : 27] And just chill out and wait for it to come? No. Verse three says, so I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer, petitions, which is a specific kind of prayer where we're asking him for things, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

This is intense prayer. Again, why didn't he just wait for it to happen? Isn't God just gonna do it? It says in Jeremiah he's gonna do it. What does he do? He prays.

He doesn't just wait for it. He's actively involved in seeing the will of the Lord done through prayer. The will of the Lord is revealed in the word of God to Daniel. He hears, oh, this is God's will and then knows immediately that my responsibility as a Christian when I hear that something is God's will is to now pray it into existence.

You might say, well, God doesn't need you to do that. He doesn't, but he chose to. God doesn't need anything from anybody. He is totally and fully self-sufficient. So what?

What does that have to do anything? He can choose to involve people because he loves them. Don't let this weird, hyper view of God's sovereignty keep you from doing your work in prayer.

[18 : 47] God has chosen to execute his will on the earth through the prayers of the saints. He gives us his intent, his will. It's in his word. We have a full book of all the things God wants to do and it's our job then to pray those things and as a church we need to be a praying church.

Okay? Daniel chapter, and if that wasn't enough, we get a little picture of what happened when Daniel prayed, right? Let's look at that. Daniel 10, the next chapter, verse 10 to 14, suddenly a hand touched me and set me shaking on my hands and knees.

Okay? He was fasting and praying for 21 days. He said to me, Daniel, you are a man treasured by God. An angel came to him. You are a man treasured by God. Understand the words I am saying to you. Stand on your feet for I have now been sent to you.

After he said this to me, I stood trembling. Don't be afraid, Daniel, he said to me. Listen to this. For from the first day that you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your prayers were heard.

I have come because of your prayers. What a statement. Isn't that amazing? The angel came because of his prayers. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days.

[20 : 04] Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me after I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to help you understand what will happen to your people in the last days. His prayers were moving angels.

His prayers were doing battle in the supernatural. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities. Here's an example of that right there. Daniel's prayers were moving angels.

That should build our faith. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective, it said in James 5. Okay? So that first point, we must have a conviction of the need for prayer.

Number two, we must wrestle in prayer. Okay? We see this example of Epaphras in Colossians 4. In the CSB, I love this language.

In the ESV, it says struggled. But in the CSB, it says he's always wrestling for you in his prayers so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills.

[21 : 08] He is always wrestling for you in your prayers. Have you ever wrestled with God in prayer? When you think of the word wrestling, this isn't, oh God, thank you for this day and I pray that it would go good and we'd have fun.

Amen. Right? That's not wrestling. Have you ever seen a wrestling match? Just watched the college NCAA championships last week.

Man, these guys are aggressive. These guys are aggressive. These are some of the best wrestlers in the world. Okay? They don't just come up in there and say, oh, hey, how's it going?

You know, let's wrestle. No, they want to destroy that other person. They are there to destroy them. They are there to conquer them, to completely defeat them.

When you wrestle, you are aggressive. Epaphras was like this in prayer. He was wrestling in prayer for the church in Colossae.

[22 : 14] He was wrestling for them. Have you ever wrestled in prayer for Christ's church? Now, I know you've prayed. I've heard you pray and I love when you pray.

I love hearing us all pray together. I know that you guys pray outside of our prayer meetings, but let me ask you a question. Have you ever wrestled with God together for Christ's church?

You're saying, these things must happen. These things have to happen. What does that look like? Genesis 32, verse 26.

Jacob, you know the story where Jacob wrestled with God? He says, let me go. The angel of the Lord was saying, let me go for the day is broken. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

And there he blessed him. You know what wrestling looks like? Losea 12, 3 says, Jacob wrestled with God. You know what wrestling looks like? Wrestling looks like, I will not let you go until you bless me.

[23 : 15] That's wrestling. Like, I will not let you go. God, I will not let you go until you bless Christ's church. God, I want to apprehend you and I'm not letting you go until you bless Christ's church with souls.

Until you raise her up on a sure foundation. Until you bring lost people in the darkness into the light. Do you rescue them from darkness and set them on a sure foundation?

You pray like that. Hebrews 10, 19 to 23 says, therefore brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened up for us through the curtain that is through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

With our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful.

Do you have full assurance of faith when you pray? Do you hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering? Why? For he who promised is faithful.

[24 : 26] For he who promised is faithful. We can wrestle with God in prayer because we know he's faithful. We know he is faithful to answer those prayers. What does hold fast mean? Holding fast means I will not let you go.

I will not let you go is what wrestling and prayer looks like. Holding fast. You're holding fast to who God is. You're holding fast to God himself. You're saying the one who promised is faithful.

God you said you said that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few and that if we prayed for workers you'd bring them. You said oh God that if I draw near to you you would draw near to me.

You said God it's holding God to his word. Don't ever be afraid to hold God to his word. Don't ever be afraid to be bold in prayer without wavering and full assurance of faith because he who promised is faithful.

But prayer the way God is described in the scriptures is prayer that is wrestling and it doesn't let go. It doesn't let go. Number three we must be confident in prayer.

[25 : 33] James 1 5 through 8 says if any of you lacks wisdom what should you do? Let him ask God. Okay same concept again. Who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given to him.

Again there's a promise. When you see these promises you say alright I can hold on to that one. If any of you lacks wisdom where do you go? Let him ask God. And then what's going to happen?

He gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given him. Not it might not hopefully it will it will be given him. You lack wisdom? You know what the Bible says he who wins souls is wise?

Are you winning souls? If you're not winning souls you may lack wisdom. If you lack wisdom where do you go? You go to God. And if you go to God and ask for wisdom what does it say? It will be given him.

You believe that. You believe that. God you promised. You said if I asked for wisdom it would be given to me. I need wisdom to win souls. I pray that often.

[26 : 34] I say God give me the wisdom to win souls. I want to see souls saved. You promised. But when you ask let him ask in faith without doubting for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

That person must not supposedly receive anything from the Lord. He's a double-minded man and unstable in all his ways. We can't be double-minded. God's not pleased.

Without faith it's impossible to please God. Hebrews 11.6 says you must believe that he exists and that he's a rewarder. Do you know that it does not please God to go to him and not believe that he's going to give you a reward?

You know that's not pleasing? But I prayed. So what? You didn't pray in faith and without faith it's impossible to please God. You can't just believe he exists. You have to believe that he rewards you. Otherwise it's not pleasing.

Romans 4.19-21 it says this is about what we just we just read with the kids with Adam. It says he did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body which was as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb no unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

[27 : 57] Oh my gosh that's so good. Right? No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God. This is wrestling this is saying listen I am going to be confident in prayer.

No unbelief is going to make me waver. He said it it's going to come to pass. His promise is faithful I am not going to waver in unbelief concerning the promise of God. Actually I'm going to grow strong in my faith.

How? As he gave glory to God. Why do we worship God in song every week? Well the main reason is because he's worthy but you know what else it does? When we give glory to God we grow strong in our faith.

We grow strong in our faith and we declare who he is and what he's done and we take to the Lord's table every week and we declare who he is and what he's done. We put our identity in the person and the work of Jesus.

We stand on it. We declare it. We boldly proclaim it. We sing it. We grow strong in our faith as we glorify God. How convinced? Fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

[28 : 57] Are you fully convinced? Are we fully convinced as a church that God is able to do what he had promised? Luke 7, 9-11 says, Which one of you if a son asks for bread will give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish will give him a serpent? If then you are evil and know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? Luke 11, Luke, he says, How much more will he give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Do you ever have a hard time believing that God wants to give you a spirit? Do you ever have a hard time believing that when you ask God if he's really going to give you a spirit, that he's going to pour out his spirit, that he's going to fill you with his spirit?

He says, If a good father gives good gifts to his kids, how much more will God give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Why are we doubting this? This is a promise that we can hold on to.

We should always be depending and praying for God to be filling us with the spirit. We need his power. If we're going to be God's church, we need his power. Which means we need his spirit.

[30 : 06] And we should be confident that that's a prayer that God always wants to answer. Why would we waver in unbelief thinking that God doesn't want to fill us with his spirit? That's one of the most ridiculous things to not believe.

Because you, even though you're not a good father, you would give that. So how much more a God who's the perfect father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Give good gifts to those who ask?

Think how foolish that is. If we wouldn't even withhold that, how much more would God not withhold that? That's the confidence we have. Because Matthew 6, 8 says, your father knows what you need before you ask him.

He knows. He's a father. That's why Romans 8 says, if God is for us, who can be against us? If he did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how much more will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Think of the greatest thing that God gave. If he gave you something that great, you could be confident that he'd be willing to give you less things. Like if someone said, hey, you know what?

[31 : 12] I want to gift you my car. Okay? You'd say, wow, that's a huge blessing. You just gave me a car. That's amazing. And then you realized that you brought your diaper bag but you forgot a diaper.

And do you think it would be weird to ask the person who just gave you their car for a diaper? Do you think maybe, I don't know if they're going to, they want to give it to me. You think, no, of course they would. But why do you think that they would give you a diaper?

Because they gave you a car. Do you understand what I'm saying? Like if God gave you a son, how much more will he give you all the lesser things than his son? Is there anything that's not lesser than his son?

That's why he says, how much more will he graciously give you all things? Because all things are less than the son. If he was, if that, the great gift that he gives is a revealing of his intent to be generous.

If someone gives you their car, of course they're going to give you a diaper. If somebody gives you his son, of course he'll give you all things. Why do we doubt?

[32 : 25] We need to be confident in prayer. Like 1 John 5, 14 says, if he asks anything according to his will, he hears us, and if he hears us, we have what we ask. This is the confidence we have in prayer.

Which means we have to understand what the Lord's will is. Like Ephesians 5, 17 says, do you know what his will is? That's why sometimes when we read the word, we should be reading it as our prayer manual.

It's like, this is what I need to pray. This is what God's will is. You understand what the Lord's will is. You pray what the Lord's will is. He hears you, and if he hears you, then you have what you asked.

This is why Epaphras, when he was wrestling in prayer for them, you know what he was wrestling in prayer for? That they would stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. He's actually praying in confidence that they would be assured in the will of God.

Why? Well, obviously, if the will of God is what gives you confidence in prayer, and he's praying that they would stand fully assured in the will of God, he's also praying that they would be people who would pray.

[33 : 25] Because when you know the will of God and you're assured of the will of God, then you pray the will of God, and if you pray the will of God, then he hears the will of God and you have a chance. Last point, number four.

You must be steadfast in prayer. Colossians 4, verse 2 says, continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

You know, getting people to pray in a prayer meeting, that's one thing, but you know what's the hardest thing? It's getting people to pray continually until they see the answer for a long period of time.

It says, continue in prayer. Have you ever been guilty of not continuing in prayer? Maybe you started off great. You know, maybe we start off the year and say, oh man, I'm praying for character, I'm praying for order, I'm praying for family.

The Spirit spoke this to us, so we're praying these things into existence. But what are you doing in November and December? You still praying? Are we still continuing? Are we still steadfast in prayer?

[34 : 33] Anyone can start, but who can finish? Who continues? Hebrews 6, 11 to 12, says, we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Everybody wants to say, oh, it's all about faith, man. You know, we have a, I'm a faith preacher, I'm in the faith movement. Where's the patience movement? Where's the patience preachers? Hey man, he's a faith preacher.

Oh yeah? Is he a patience preacher? I'm not impressed by the people who have a surge of faith in the beginning. Real faith continues.

Real faith perseveres. Real faith keeps going. Whoop-dee-doo. You get hyped up emotionally for a moment, and you pray, and you call that faith. The Bible doesn't call that faith.

The Bible doesn't call that faith. The faith that the Bible talks about presses in and continues, keeps believing. Okay? That's why Daniel said, you know what it said to Daniel in Daniel 6?

[35 : 41] Three times a day, he prayed and gave thanks before his God. And I love the verse, and the statement right after it says, as he had done previously. This is what he did. Three times a day.

Prayed. As he had done previously. This is what Daniel did. He had a life of this. Okay? We don't need the flash of the pan. Super charismatic.

Super emotional. Pray, pray, pray, pray, pray. We need the people who are consistent to keep praying, and keep praying, and keep praying. This is what Jesus talks about in his parable in Luke 11.

It says, Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, Lord, teach us to pray. As John taught his disciples. And he said to them, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name.

Kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins. We ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. And he said to them, which of you has a friend, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves.

[36 : 55] For a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him. And he'll answer him from within, do not bother me. The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.

We can understand this, right? If someone came over at midnight and said, hey, I got some guests coming. I want to feed them. Give me three loaves of bread. He'd be like, get out of here.

Go to bed, man. It's midnight, right? So we can relate to this story. It's like, of course. Of course he would say that. Jesus goes on in verse 8.

He says, I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he wants.

Okay, we're going to look at that word here in a second. I tell you, ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and the one who knocks will be opened.

[37 : 54] What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent? How much, you know, we just went over this. How much more will you give the Holy Spirit to those that? So he says, he says, he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, but because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Let's look at what that, what words are used in different translations for the word impudence. NIV says, shameless audacity. The NLT says, shameless persistence.

The New King James Version says, persistence. The NASB says, shamelessness. The Amplified says, persistence and boldness. The CSB says, shameless boldness.

You get in kind of a little picture of what he means by impudence. I know that's not a word most of you use in your vocabulary probably, but these other words give us a little insight. Shameless audacity, shameless persistence, persistence, shamelessness, persistence and boldness, shameless boldness.

Is this what your prayer life looks like? Is this what my prayer life looks like? Luke 11, 9 to 10, the following verse after he says, uses this word.

[39 : 15] In the Amplified, he says, so I say to you, ask and keep on asking. Then it shall be given to you. Seek and keep on seeking and you shall find.

Knock. You guess what it's going to say? Keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks and keeps on asking, receives.

And everyone who seeks and keeps on seeking, finds. And him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened. It's bringing out that this, the verb that's being used here is an active verb.

It's a continual verb. It's not a one and done thing. This is why Paul would say in Colossians 1, 9, I have not ceased praying for you.

Or Ephesians 1, 16, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remember you my prayers. Or to pray unceasingly. Okay? A lot of people say, well, that means you have to pray all the time.

[40 : 16] Maybe. That could be maybe what that means. I would maybe throw out to you that maybe what it means is that you have to pray and keep on praying and you don't stop. You don't give up. Like, you keep going.

You keep asking until you see an answer. You persevere in prayer, steadfast in prayer. And I think this is one of the major missing things in a lot of Christians is the persistence in prayer.

We're not talking about good starts. We're talking about good finishes. We're not talking about when you're a young, zealous man. We're talking about when you're still doing it when you're an old man and you're tired and you want to go home.

We're talking about not just when everyone's hyped up and there's thousands of people praying together and fasting together. We're talking about when nobody's praying and you're in your room and there's crust in your eyes and drool in your mouth and you really wish you could just sleep a little bit longer.

I'm talking about when you've seen over and over again that it seems like everything that you see with your natural eyes seems to go in contrary to what you're praying and seeing with your spiritual eyes and you don't let that which is seen dictate what is unseen but you walk by what is unseen not by what is seen.

[41 : 20] You walk by faith. I'm talking about continual persistent prayer. Do we have it at Christ Church? Do we have persistence in prayer where we keep praying and say God establish this church.

Establish this church. You might say well yeah that's what we're doing. We're doing the work. We come here we meet weekly we're trying to reach out to unbelievers.

Praise God for all that stuff and we'll talk more about that next week. But listen what we're doing the work of prayer. Don't neglect the most important work. The work that's done in the spirit to say God we need you.

We can do all kinds of things but if we don't have God we don't have anything. We have a church but we don't have God we have nothing. If we need God so we need prayer.

We need prayer. Lord establish this church. Lord give us the wisdom to win souls. God anoint us with your spirit to speak your word with boldness. Let a harvest come in.

[42 : 22] Pray for laborers to raise up who will labor in the gospel who will labor in prayer who will labor in the work of the Lord. And we keep praying. And when God doesn't answer do we give up?

No! We keep praying. And when we knock and the door doesn't open do we stop knocking? No! We keep knocking. And when we seek and it doesn't seem like we're finding do we stop seeking? No! We keep seeking.

Can we be as a people marked by this? Okay! If we're going to be a church plant this is what we have to do. Again, the props are pulled out. Like, I don't know, if you haven't noticed there's not like flocks of people coming to gather with us.

They're not banging down the door. If the door got banged down this morning it's because we farted in the wrong spots. Right? I don't even think they realize that we're meeting as a church. Right? Okay? We gotta pray.

We gotta pray. We need to pray. We must pray. As a church plant we need to be convicted of the necessity of prayer. We need to be wrestling in prayer. We need to be confident in prayer.

[43 : 21] We need to be steadfast in prayer. Amen? Amen. Amen. Let's stand.