

The Answer to Your Prayers

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Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0:00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Chapter 6, Gospel of Matthew. Chapter 6 is going to be our passage this evening. As Pat mentioned, we kicked off a new series last week, our summer series, which we're calling Good Intention.

Good Intention. And we kind of introed the series last week, talking about the importance of balance, how significant a balance is in life.

And all of us know that that's true, right? We all know that balance is important. It's key in so many different areas of life. For example, your diet is to be balanced, right?

[1:36] You're not to just only eat sweet as much as some of you would love to. I know. And all God's people said, oh, really? It's actually good to eat healthy. At the same time, I mean, you don't want a life with all broccoli and no bread pudding.

Amen? Like, I mean, if you've never had bread pudding, like, your life is not balanced. So we know that's important with, like, finances. We know that our finances should be balanced, that we should spend.

We should also save and give. That's a healthy balance as we approach finances. Work, life is not meant to be all play.

I know this is newsflash to some of you. Some of you are like, I can't just eat sweets and play all the time? No, you can't. There's a balance between work and having fun.

Same with relationships. You get the point. We all know the significance and the importance of having a balanced life. It's really, really important. And what this whole series is about is to say, yeah, the same thing is true in your spiritual life.

[2:44] That there are these things that tend to be opposites. They look like they're extremes, and yet they're meant to be held in balance. I gave you this list last week.

Let's look at it again. In fact, last week's sermon was the balance between spending time with people, but also making sure that you spend time with God. Community and solitude.

There's giving, but there's also receiving. There's working and also taking time to rest. There's feasting, and also the Bible talks about fasting.

We'll do a message on that. Praying, but also acting. Sometimes we just think, I'm going to pray, and I'm just going to leave it to God. And yet, we don't understand that with prayer comes action.

There's serving and being served. There's learning, and there's applying. And, of course, this is not an exhaustive list. There's more things that we have to learn to be balanced spiritually.

[3:41] And the way we're at the kind of the metaphor that we're using for this is the idea of tension. Is learning in these tensions or these extremes, we learn to be good in that.

To rest in that place of a balanced Christian life. And so, tonight, we're going to look at another one of these here in maybe one of the most familiar passages in all the Bible.

I guarantee you the majority of you have this memorized. Matthew 6 is the Lord's Prayer. And yet, Jesus actually in this prayer is going to show us something that's to be balanced, to be held in tension in our life.

So, let's look at it together. I'll invite you, if you're able to stand to please do so, as we look at Matthew 6. And we'll pick up reading in verse 5. Verse 5. Jesus says, Don't be like them.

Don't pray like that. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him. In fact, if you want to pray, you should pray like this. And I think what we'll do, since we all know this, is why don't we just say this, the Lord's Prayer together.

[5:15] Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for showing us how to pray. Thank you for teaching the disciples, and even here on a Saturday night, teaching us how we are to think about and approach prayer.

And so, help us tonight as we look to this very familiar passage of Scripture, to learn something new, to see a beautiful tension that, Lord, you teach us here as it relates to prayer.

And I pray it in Jesus' name, and God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. Melanie Stevens was a 29-year-old nurse from Los Angeles, California. One day, Melanie is on her way to visit a patient, and she's driving along the road, and she stops at this stoplight.

[6:26] And something kind of, you know, she sees out of the corner of her eye. It catches her attention. She looks over, and it's this, like, instrument case that's by this dumpster.

It looks like somebody has, like, cleaned out their garage and just left a bunch of stuff on the street. And so, she thought, you know, that looked kind of an interesting thing. So, she pulled over.

She got out. She put that instrument case into her car, and she drove home. When she got home, she opened that case, and what she discovered inside was an old cello.

Now, it wasn't polished. It wasn't in very good shape. There was damage to it. It certainly didn't look like anything that would be very important. And so, Melanie thought she'd come up with a really brilliant idea.

She goes, I know. I'll make a CD cabinet. Who does that? A CD cabinet out of that cello to store my old CD collection.

[7:26] Her boyfriend, actually, was a cabinet maker. She thought, this is the perfect job for him. Well, fortunately, her boyfriend was not in a hurry to get to that little side project, because about a week and a half passes, and Melanie's actually visiting a friend.

And the news report comes on the local news station. And one of the stories is about a musician by the name of Peter Stump.

And Peter is actually searching for his stolen cello. And what Melanie also learned in that news report was not just that there was a cello that had been stolen, but evidently this stolen cello was, I don't know, a 320-year-old Stradivarius.

Oh, there's more. That had been handcrafted by Stradivarius himself in 1684. It was one of only six in existence and worth over \$3 million.

Now, Melanie's sitting there watching the news report, and she thinks, huh, I wonder if the old cello that's currently sitting in my spare bedroom could be that cello.

[8:56] She actually hurried home. She looked at the label, and sure enough, it was the Stradivarius. She contacted the local authorities, informed them that she had actually found the stolen instrument, and it was returned to Peter, as you can imagine, much to his relief.

Now, as I thought about that story, I thought how a tragedy almost happened. And by tragedy, I don't just mean like a stolen cello that maybe never got returned.

What I mean is that what Melanie almost did with that. Are you with me? Listen to me. Melanie was about to take something extremely valuable, something that actually was created, listen, created to bring beautiful music to the world, and turn it into something that would just hang on the wall.

Like, that's a tragedy. To take that Stradivarius and turn it into a CD cabinet. Can we all agree with that? And yet, the reality is you and I do the exact same thing.

What I mean by that is that we take things, we have things that were meant to be used, like that cello, they were intended to be played, and we just like turn them into things to be admired or observed.

[10:21] We do this in a lot of ways. Many of you, you have books at home, and you've never read any of them, right? You know who I'm talking about. So, some of you, if I didn't get you there, you've got treadmills.

Have you heard of these? And it's become your second closet. You never get on the thing. You never exercise on it. Some of you have boats.

This is the greatest heresy. That have never seen the water. Some of you have knowledge that's never been applied. My point is that you and I, if we took an honest reflection of our life, we live with a disconnect of having things that are valuable, things that are meant to be used, and yet we don't

do anything with them.

And I would submit to you that that disconnect that we have is the very disconnect we have with the Lord's Prayer and even prayer in general.

Is everybody still with me? That disconnect is the disconnect that most of us have as it relates to the Lord's Prayer and even prayer in general. Let me explain. If we're honest, the Lord's Prayer, which is, by the way, this extremely valuable, beautiful, priceless thing.

[11:41] Amen? I mean, isn't the Lord's Prayer such a beautiful thing? That was a good place for an amen. It's okay. Right. And yet what it's become for many Christians is just something to hang on the wall.

It's something you admire. It's something that you... But you don't actually do anything with it. And I would say the same thing is true when it comes to prayer in general.

That is, we make our requests, we voice our concerns, and then we just kind of leave it with God while we go on about our way.

And here's what I think we fail to understand, both about the Lord's Prayer and about prayer in general, is this. We don't understand the tension between praying and doing.

Praying and doing. And what I want to show you today actually from the Lord's Prayer is this. Is that prayer is not something that's meant to be admired.

[12:47] Prayer is actually something meant for you to put into action. Prayer is not something...

And we think about... This is the way most of us... Like, okay, I prayed to God and now I'm going to leave it there because the answer to that prayer is for God to do.

And we see it completely disconnected from our doing, our action in life. And that disconnect does not exist in the mind of Jesus.

And it's precisely... In fact, I would suggest what we're going to see is that in the Lord's Prayer we see that praying and doing, praying and acting are actually two sides of the same coin.

Let me show you that here in the Lord's Prayer. Look at verse 5. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and the street corners that they'll be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they've received their reward. When you pray, you should go into the room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who's in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

[13:54] And also when you pray, don't heap up empty phrases like the Gentiles. They think they're going to be heard for their many words. Don't be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Now, here before we get to the Lord's Prayer, Jesus actually identifies two types of praying and two specific groups that pray that way.

Is everybody with me? You see that there. Don't be like the hypocrites and don't be like the Gentiles or the pagans. And first of all, Jesus deals with the, by hypocrites, He means the religious people. He addresses religious prayer. And what He says is, I don't want you to pray that way because the motivation there is all about self. Everything is focused on your own name, how you look, whether or not you're impressive, do you sound good and use the right words.

Now, let's be clear. I've actually done a whole series on the Lord's Prayer. But Belinda reminds you of this. Jesus is not saying don't pray in public. At least I hope not because like I just did, right?

[15:02] He's not saying don't pray in public. He's saying don't pray for publicity. The focus of the hypocrite is that I want to be seen. The focus is really about me.

And Jesus says, listen, don't pray that way. Just go into a room in secret because prayer is not about you looking good. It's about this beautiful, intimate, personal relationship that you have with your Heavenly Father.

Amen? That's the first example. The second example is that of irreligious prayer or the Gentiles.

And their form or expression of prayer was like a bartering system with the Roman gods.

And they would ramble on and on and on and on because they felt like they had to get the gods on their side to ultimately get what they want. And Jesus is saying, listen, you shouldn't pray that way.

And the reason you shouldn't pray that way is because you actually have a Heavenly Father that knows what you need. And so you don't, like, this is good news, you don't need to just ramble on a bunch of empty phrases to try to persuade Him.

[16:16] Now again, let's know what Jesus is saying and what He's not saying, okay? Jesus is not saying, don't pray long. He's saying, pray knowing you're loved.

Are you still with me? I haven't lost you, have I? Right? Do you see that here in the text? He's saying, you have a Heavenly Father that knows what you need.

So you don't have to just keep rambling on and on in hopes that you'll persuade Him. He knows what you need and He loves you. So with those two, don't pray like that in the context here, Jesus says, rather pray like this.

Verse 9. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now again, my intention tonight is not to unpack every line of the Lord's Prayer. What I want you to see here, and it's very easy to see in the text, is the two halves of the prayer.

[17:21] Do you see that? Or the two sections of the Lord's Prayer. The first section, very clearly, very easily, is a focus on God's name, is it not?

How will it be Your name? I want Your will to be done. I want Your kingdom to come. It's a prayer that's focused on God.

Now, which of the two prayers, let's see if you're paying attention, faith family, which of the two prayers Jesus just said, don't pray like, is He countering with this one? Do, do, do, do, do, do, do. Come on. It's the first one. It's the religious prayer. Because the religious prayer is all about Your name. I want to be seen. I want to be, you know, I want to look good in front of others. And Jesus is saying, listen, your focus should be on God's name, not your name.

Thank you for the amen. Right? I'm having fun up here. I don't know what you're doing. So, I've said this, I've said this before, that prayer is not I, but Thy.

[18:26] It's God-focused. It's not focused on your own name. Does everybody see that's the first section, which is prayer is focused on God's name. Everybody say yes.

All right. Here's the second section. Verse 11. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as also we've forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. So, the second half focuses on our physical and spiritual needs. So, the first section is about a focus on God's name, and then it shifts to a focus on our needs.

And everybody, I assume, you see that there in the text. So, it essentially goes, you, you, you, us, us, us. That's the basic structure of the prayer.

Now, which prayer is Jesus countering with this section? There's only one left.

[19:25] That's right. The second one, the irreligious prayer. Because did you notice that it's not long? It's not rambling. It's, I need this, and this, and this, and this, and you know about that, and if this happens tomorrow, then I'm going to be in this situation, and Lord, that can't happen.

Like, it just, you don't have to say all that. He knows. He knows. So, like, like, share your request, but you don't have to ramble on and on.

Now, did you notice, or have you ever wondered why, if you've zoned out, what do you do? I want you to get this. Have you ever wondered why it's us instead of me?

Because I think if we're honest, we assume me. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give me this day my daily bread. That's kind of what we assume, right? But it's not what Jesus says.

[20:33] Jesus says, give us our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses. Lead us not into... In other words, the plural is actually really critical.

What do you do with that? Well, before we relieve that tension, is this the only time Jesus ever taught the Lord's Prayer?

You're really quiet tonight, but that's okay. I'll be loud for you. It's not. It's not. Luke gives us another account of this in Luke chapter 11.

Look here at verse 1. Now, Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of the disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples. And He said to them, when you pray, say, Father, how would be Your name, Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins. For we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. Now, is that the Lord's Prayer?

[21:41] It is. It is. I mean, it was taught by the Lord. So, it's the Lord's Prayer. Is it exactly like Matthew's? It's not, is it?

It's actually even shorter than Matthew's account. And that actually shouldn't bother you at all. Why? Because remember that Jesus is a traveling teacher.

And He would have taught a lot of the things that He taught over and over again in different situations. And so, He would have actually probably taught this prayer that we know is the Lord's Prayer on many different occasions.

And so, the fact, this is actually really important, the fact that it isn't exactly word for word the same should show you that what Jesus is not doing is giving you a ritualistic prayer.

He's able to change up the words or leave certain phrases out. But did you notice in Luke's account what is the same? The exact words are not the same, but what is the same as in Matthew?

[22 : 53] The structure. It's still a focus on God's name followed by a focus on our needs. Does everybody see that?

Now, you say, like, why is this important? Why does Jesus teach us to pray this way? Come on, Lord, help me. Help me. Could it be, I'm going somewhere, I'm going somewhere, okay?

We're going to Minneapolis via Shakopee, all right? So, but we're going to get there. Could it be that there is a tension that Jesus has in His mind that we don't when it comes to prayer?

Which will help us understand why He says us. I think to understand the way Jesus views this, we actually need another passage, another encounter with someone, another part of Jesus' teaching that will help us understand this.

And that's in Matthew chapter 22, all right? So are y'all still on board for the ride here? All right, Matthew 22, look at what happens in verse 34. So when the Pharisees had heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, that's not obviously illegal, that's the Mosaic law, asked Him a question, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

[24 : 25] And so here you have an expert in the law of Moses who asked Jesus, and actually a very good question, a very good question, but he asked Jesus with the wrong motive.

In fact, the question that He asked was a question that was heavily, heavily debated in first century Judaism.

Let me explain why His question, what's the greatest command, is actually a good question. If you remember in your Torah, in the Exodus and Deuteronomy, Leviticus, God gave how many commandments to Israel in the Torah, 613.

Now we tend to focus on the Ten as the Ten Commandments, but He gave 613. And if you remember when we went through the book of Exodus, you'll remember that some of those laws are very, very specific, right?

They get into a lot of detail about life, things like when you can boil your young goat in its mother's milk, because I know you were struggling with that yesterday, how long your beard can be, what clothes you can wear.

[25 : 39] Like it, you know, it gets really, really specific into the minutia of life. And while you think 613 laws are a lot to keep up with, there were actually like hundreds of scenarios in life that the Mosaic law didn't speak to.

And so, the religious leaders, are you still with me? The religious leaders would come up with all these like subcommands to add on to the 613 laws.

So now you have even more than 613. Now try living that way every day. So what, yeah, no.

So what the debate was, then which is the most important? Because it's very hard for me to keep up with all these laws, so is there some way that you could like give me the ones that really matter? Like what's the one that matters most? So does everybody see why that's actually a good question? The problem is the man here is asking with the wrong motive.

[26 : 47] He's asking the good question to try to trick Jesus. It's like asking this. If you haven't woken up, this will.

How do you feel about illegal immigration? Let's talk illegal immigration. You want to do that tonight? So, somebody say, yes, no.

Which is it? Imagine Jesus is asked, I'm just using this as an example. Imagine Jesus is asked about illegal immigration. Jesus, what do you think?

Are you for illegal immigration? Now, there's a trick behind that question, do you see? Because if Jesus, in this hypothetical scenario, were to say, yes, I'm for illegal immigration, then what are people going to say?

You're against breaking the laws of a country? How dare you? Gotcha. If He says, no, I'm against illegal, you don't care about people that are suffering and going through all kinds of difficulty and trying to find a place for a better, does everybody see what I'm saying?

[27 : 57] It's a question asked in a way that however you answer it, I got you. I got you. Because you're going to say one thing and then assume you left this out, or you're going to say something else and have left the other half out, and either way, you're in trouble.

And so to put this in Jesus' actual scenario, is everybody still with me? Are you having as much fun as I am? No chance. If Jesus says the most important command is have no other gods before God, could He have said that?

Are you awake? Yes, He could have said that. And what would the response, see, you don't care about people. You left people out.

Like, your answer was just about God and you didn't say anything about others. Or, Jesus could have said the most important commandment is not to covet your neighbor.

See, you didn't say anything about God, you focused on people. Does everybody see what's happening here? So it's actually a really good question that's asked with the wrong motive, and that whole context is meant to show you how brilliant Jesus is and why you can't trick Him.

[29 : 17] Amen? Because what is His answer? Verse 37. Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment and the second is what? Like it, equal to it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands depend all the law and the prophets.

Like, brilliant. Amen? Total brilliance. What does Jesus say? He says, you have to love the Lord your God with all your heart. What's He quoting there, Old Testament scholars?

The Shema. He's quoting Deuteronomy. He's saying, what matters most is that you love God. And then He says, but what is like it, equal to it, is love your neighbor.

What's He quoting there? He's quoting Leviticus 19. Now here's the thing. Come here, come here, come here. What was the man's question? What's the greatest commandment?

[30 : 26] Like, what's the one commandment? You don't get to pick two. You have to give one. And what, how many commands does Jesus give? That's what I thought you'd say.

It does appear like it's two, but in Jesus' mind, it's actually one. It's why He says, the first one is like it.

You can't separate, these two commands are actually two sides of the same coin. To where you do not have one without the other, and you can't have the other without the one.

Are you with me? So, the greatest command is love God and love your neighbor. Notice, here it is. Jesus is saying that the greatest command is loving God and love, it's not love God and then the second most important is loving your neighbor.

That is not what Jesus is saying. He is far more brilliant than that. Jesus is saying loving God and loving neighbor is the greatest command. And you cannot separate them.

[31 : 45] Jesus, listen, Jesus sees your relationship to God as completely interwoven with how you love image bearers of God.

I'm going to say that again. Jesus sees your relationship to God as completely interwoven, inseparable from how you love image bearers of God.

They are so closely connected that together they make the single greatest command. And if you say, I don't actually believe you're interpreting Jesus right, here's what I would say to you.

You're wrong. Right? But you're not wrong because I say you're wrong. In fact, if you don't want to take my word for it that this is exactly what Jesus is teaching, that what I've just shared is exactly right, don't take my word for it, take the apostle John.

What did John say? In 1 John 4, verse 20, here it is. If anyone says, say it, I love God, that hates his brother, he's a liar.

[33 : 13] For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And these commandments, no, this command, come on, meant this one command we have from Jesus.

Whoever loves God must also love his brother. So, am I interpreting Jesus wrong? No. It's exactly how John understood what Jesus taught.

Now, talk about being good intention because what we want to do is we want to say, I love God, I just hate people. Can I get an amen? Come on, you've said it.

I never have, but you've said it, right? Or, or there's people, I just, I love people and I love human beings, but I just don't really care anything about, it doesn't work that way. You do not get to love God and hate people and you cannot hate people and love God. They're one and the same. They're held in tension.

[34 : 35] And some of you are thinking, what does this have to do with prayer? Because what I need you to see is the framework from which Jesus is operating in life. and the way He's teaching His disciples to think about life.

And as, we're going to go back to the Lord's Prayer in a minute, as we go back to the Lord's Prayer, here's what we're going to discover. Are you with me? Here it is. You ready for the light bulb? Here we go. Here it is.

That the Lord's Prayer is how we live out the greatest commandment. The Lord's Prayer is how we live out the greatest commandment.

Loving God and loving people. So let's go back to Matthew 6. Let's tie this all together and we'll be done. Verse 9. Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So the prayer begins with God's name to be revered, God's kingdom and His will to be done on earth as it is. Does everybody see the loving God there?

[35 : 48] The, I love Your name, I love Your will, I want Your kingdom to come on earth that is in heaven. God, I love You.

You see that? Well then, somebody maybe say a preach preacher? Then what does loving God look like?

It seems to me it's what the second half of the prayer is about. Verse 11. Give, huh, it's not me. Give us this day, not my, our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors and lead not me, us, not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

How do we make sense of the second half of the Lord's prayer? And again, this is going to teach us something about the tension of prayer.

[37 : 21] How does the second half relate to the first? Jesus doesn't say my bread. He says our bread. Why does He do that?

And He does that every time the Lord's prayer is recorded in Luke's account as well. Listen to me. I do, like, in all seriousness, please lean in because this may be transformational in the way you think about the Lord's prayer and the way you think about prayer.

if you're praying the Lord's prayer on a day when you have bread, what would praying the Lord's prayer make you aware of?

People around you who don't. Your neighbor. In other words, the Lord's prayer is actually meant to direct your mind not just towards your needs, but your neighbor's needs.

Because I want us to have our daily bread. Jesus didn't say forgive me. He said, forgive us.

[38 : 43] Why did He teach that way? Because He held things in tension that you and I don't. When you're praying the Lord's prayer and you're reminded of your forgiveness, how you've been forgiven, what would praying the Lord's prayer make you aware of?

The people in your life you haven't forgiven. Your neighbor. those around you who need forgiveness.

Those who've sinned against us. Thirdly, Jesus didn't say lead me not into temptation. He said what? Lead us not.

Why would Jesus have you pray that way? Because you may pray the Lord's prayer in a season where your faith is really strong. yet praying the Lord's prayer would make you aware of who?

By now, I hope you've seen the pattern. Your neighbor who isn't. Your neighbor who's fallen. Your neighbor who's weak.

[39 : 58] Now come on, come on, come on, come on, please lean in, please lean in. This is the moment. I've been building the whole sermon for this moment.

What happens when you give your neighbor bread, forgive and reconcile relationally and help others in their time of weakness.

Here's what happens. God's name is exalted. His will is accomplished. And His kingdom comes on earth.

as it is in heaven. Here it is. The Lord's prayer is not meant to admire.

It's meant for action. Because there is no disconnect from praying and doing.

[41:10] It is not, God, I said my prayer, now the work is all yours. Jesus actually teaches us in the Lord's prayer. This is going to make some of you uncomfortable.

That at least in part, you are meant to be the answer to your own prayers. I don't think I've committed heresy there.

I'm well aware of my theology. Alright? Here's what I mean. Listen, the Lord's prayer like that Stradivarius, listen, it's not meant to be hung on the wall.

It's meant to be played. It's meant to be lived. Why? Because it brings beautiful music into the world.

Like caring for your neighbor and forgiving people that have hurt you and helping those that are broken and weak and struggling in their faith.

[42:16] Jesus expects you to pray and take action. To be involved in the very answering of the prayer you prayed.

How would be your name? Your kingdom come. How is that going to be answered? Loving your neighbor. Now, before you throw your Bibles at me and think, pastor said we're the answer to our own prayer.

Okay, let me just clarify a few things so that you don't think I'm off the rocker. I might be, but it's not on this point. I'll prove it again in just a moment.

Number one, I want to be very clear, there are certainly some things we pray about that only God can do. Amen? One example, of course, I would say is you could pray for healing.

You could pray for healing. I'm not up here saying pray for healing and then go out and perform healing. Okay? I'm not suggesting that. What I am suggesting though, please listen to what I am saying and what I'm not saying.

[43:24] What I am saying is you should pray for healing and go out and research the best doctors and seek the best treatment because the Lord may bring healing.

Did you notice I said the Lord? The Lord will bring that healing, He may, through those actions, through that doing something.

It's not just, all right, I prayed and now it's all up to you. The Lord's like, no, I actually answer prayers through my people. I'm the one answering it. I'm the one with the power and authority, but I answer it through my people as they live out and spread my kingdom in the world.

Which leads me to my second one, that there are times that God answers without human action. Of course, there are examples when God does not use human agency and He just directly does something.

Can God do that? Absolutely, He can do that. Make no mistake, He can do that. However, that's not normative in the Bible. That's not normative. I've taught you this before, but let me say it again.

[44:32] The normal way that God exercises His sovereignty is through our daily activity. That God is sovereign over the ends, but He's also sovereign in the means, and the means is you living your life.

Amen? Now, again, if you think I'm just making this up, this is precisely what the Bible teaches. Look at what Paul says in Philippians 2 verse 12. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation.

So, who's doing that? You. Work out, live out your salvation. Verse 13, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

So, who is it? God or you? Yes, right? So, belief in the sovereignty of God does not paralyze someone to go take action.

It actually catapults you into the world to take action because you believe that God is at work in you. Thank you, three of you.

[45:47] Okay? What about James, the brother of Jesus? James, the brother of Jesus, chapter 2, verse 15. If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, where have we heard that before?

I don't know, like the Lord's Prayer. And one of you says, go in peace, be warmed and filled without giving him the things he needs for the body. What good is that? So, also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is what?

Dead. There's an expectation of living out that very faith of taking action, trusting, and also obeying.

Spurgeon, you know, one of my favorites in church history, says, I've never had to reconcile friends, divine sovereignty and human responsibility or action, have never had a falling out of each other. I don't need to reconcile what God has joined together. Whether these two truths, where these truths meet, I don't know, nor do I want to know. They do not puzzle me since I have given up my mind to be leaving them both.

[46 : 50] That God is the one answering prayer, hallowed be your name, through you loving your neighbor.

And we have to learn to be good in that tension. Amen? We begin to see that praying and acting, praying and doing are two sides of the same coin.

Just like loving God and loving others, you can't separate the two. They go together. And I'm going to close with this. You ready for me to be done?

Because I'm backing all this up, right? I'm backing it up. Is this how the apostles understood what Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer?

I mean, obviously, if I didn't think so, I wouldn't be mentioning it, right? I want to show you here as we close that this is exactly how the apostles lived.

[47 : 55] The apostles understood what Jesus taught about prayer. And they lived like Jesus taught with good in these tensions of praying but also acting.

Here we go, Acts chapter 2. And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Interesting. How'd that look in real time? And all who believed were together and had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

they devoted themselves to the prayers. Listen to me. You do not need a degree in New Testament to know that when they devoted themselves to prayers, they devoted themselves to prayer the way Jesus had taught them.

Like the Lord's prayer. And how did praying and committing themselves to the prayers daily look?

[49 : 08] It looked like taking care of one another and making sure that no one went hungry and making sure their neighbor was cared for.

In other words, here it is. They asked for daily bread and they took action in giving bread. Amen? You see it? Jesus was good intention when it came to praying and doing. The apostles were good intention. They understood this balance between praying and doing.

So, Faith family, let's not make the tragic mistake that Melanie almost made. Melanie almost took something that was meant to be played.

Something that was given and made for the purpose of bringing beautiful music into the world and just hung it on the wall.

[50 : 17] May we not make that mistake when it comes to prayer. We need to learn, like Jesus taught and the apostles practiced, to be good intention when it comes to praying and doing.

After all, it was our own Savior, do you remember this, in the garden. What did Jesus pray? The Lord's prayer.

Your will be done. And then he got up and did it.

and all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray. Father, help us understand this tension and to live with this proper balance of praying and doing.

It's very easy for us sometimes to think, well, I prayed and now I'm just going to wait for the Lord to do something. But Lord, you do something through our lives.

[51 : 25] We work out our salvation and it's you that work in us. And so help us, Father, take on this mindset that Jesus had.

To not separate the two between praying and obedience. Between loving God and caring about neighbor.

God and Lord, now we come to this time where we think about the fact that how Jesus in the garden, he prayed, your will be done and then he took action.

He obeyed. And your kingdom came through the cross in the empty tomb. And so I pray that we would reflect on that but that we would also let that shape the way in which we think about our own lives.

It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.