

Praying for the Spirit's Power

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[0 : 00] I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to Ephesians chapter 3. We are going to study verse 16. Give me a little more room. I tend to wander a little bit here.

I wonder, are there any of you besides me that occasionally kiss your Bible? Do you do that? Bible kissers. I kiss things I really love. You understand that? I kiss my wife. I kiss my grandchildren. I kiss my dad and my mom. I kiss my Bible.

Let me read the passage.

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory, He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being.

[1 : 26] Let's pray. Father, prayer is not a habit, but it's our life.

For we who were once far from you have been given the privilege of calling you Father and Abba. prayer is the expression of our heart that communes with you, first of all, with thanksgiving and satisfaction in the fullness of your character and person.

Our prayer should always begin with thanks because of who you are. Our prayer should always include a desire for your glory and an interest in your supremacy in our life first and in the lives of others.

And prayer, Lord, also, as we understand from the scriptures, should include expressions of our need and dependence.

[2 : 35] Because we who are your children need you to work in us. And we want to be faithful to ask for those things that the scriptures instruct us to ask for.

And so we pray, Lord, that these truths would be burned into our memories and into our conscience. And that as a result of understanding in our heart the truth that is in this book, that our lives would be enriched and we grow to be more like Christ.

We ask this in your precious name. Amen. Amen. I am probably at that passage that is closest to my favorite currently.

And if I... How many of you have appreciated hearing all the different people memorize different passages of scripture? It's been a blessing, hasn't it? Now, I'm going to ask this question, and I do want you to know I have a backup.

But Ephesians chapter 4 is temporarily available if there's anybody out here that thinks they would be willing to tackle it and be ready to recite it in three or so weeks.

[3 : 52] No less than three weeks. So you're sitting there and you're thinking, Okay, I'll try. You've got to let me know. Remember, I have a backup, okay?

But I want to encourage someone to be willing to tackle... Tish, where are you? You're doing five? Right. Okay. I just... Okay. So there's an opening.

There's a window. There's an opportunity for four. Did anybody say there was a \$1,000 bonus for this? Nobody said that. Okay. Just wanted to clear that off. It's just because you're willing to do it for Christ's glory.

Now, that's chapter 4, but I'm going to make an appeal. And Linda, if you would put this in the bulletin next week. I would love for us to work together as a family of believers to memorize Ephesians chapter 4 or 3, verse 14 through 19.

Ephesians chapter 3, verse 14 through 19. And I'm going to ask you, I'm going to ask you, please memorize this passage. It is huge.

[4 : 59] It is a blessing. It is full. And there is a reason why, as I've been preaching through the book of Ephesians at a clip that is...

I remember when I thought that preaching one, you know, three weeks on one verse was the way to do it. I'm preaching more verses than ever at this point. But I've got to tell you, we're slowing down.

Because this is such an important passage. It is so rich, so full, so precious that I want to take the time to have you understand the fullness of what's being said.

And along with that, I'm going to ask that you memorize it. You memorize it. And we're going to take time to work at that. So you kind of keep that in mind. Well, let's look this morning, if you would, at Ephesians chapter 4, picking up in verse 16, where it says that...

...according to the riches of His glory, He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being. Paul is now coming to the substance that he is praying for.

[6 : 08] So someone says, let's pray. What they're doing is they're announcing that they're going to be engaged in talking to God. Immediately after they say, let's pray, they usually start into their prayer.

And they speak to the fact that they are addressing the Father. That's what we had earlier on. Now we are moving our way actually into the matter or the concerns that the apostle has.

And let me play them out for you. Some of you are going to say, well, if you could make it so simple, why preach more than one week on the subject? There's a lot there. But I want to give you an outline, just a little terse form, so you can kind of keep it in front of you.

What is going to be the prayer focus in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 14 through 19 are these five things. One is that we are strengthened.

Two, that we are controlled. Three, that we're stabilized. Four, that we grasp and comprehend. And five, that we fully enjoy.

[7 : 15] So that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. We want fullness. We want it all.

In fact, I want you to understand this, that the apostle wants all. He wants us to enjoy the fullness of God. That means that there's nothing kind of, well, I wish I really had that, or it would be nice if I understood this.

He says, listen, my prayer is that you would be filled with all the fullness of God. And so that that might take place, he prays, as he does in these verses, that we would be strengthened, that we would be controlled, that we'd be stabilized, that we would comprehend, and that we would fully enjoy.

Those things are part of the process of getting to the point of being fully engaged and blessed in our relationship with the Father. Now, I want you to recognize that what we pray for is important.

I want you to think with me just for a moment to James chapter 4, verse 2. And here's what it says in James 4. It says, you have not because you, what? You ask not. You don't have it because you don't ask.

[8 : 24] And there is a sense in which God is at work in the believer's life, and we are reminded of that in Philippians chapter 3 or 2 where it says, for He works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

He works. He is at work. But on the other hand, and this is one of those things of keeping that tension, that difficult balance between God who does it and we who are to appeal for it.

We are to pray, and God does it. God does it. We are to pray. Hard to keep them balanced, but there they are in the Scriptures. And so I want you to look this morning at, first of all, the subject of what we pray for as being instructive.

The things that occupy our prayer life always announce what we care about and what we believe is really important to us. And so what you can do as you sit here this morning and think about it, you recognize that your prayer list this morning or the things that you prayed for yesterday or the things that you pray for on a regular basis do nothing other than really announce the things that you think are most important.

Prayer also reveals what we think is important and what we really think about God. I want you to take just a moment. We touched on this several weeks ago, but it fits well with what we are looking at this morning.

[9 : 44] So turn back in your Bible, if you would, to Matthew chapter 6. I referenced the fact several weeks ago that what is commonly, and I think inaccurately, I'm not going to throw stones to people that do that, but we talk about the Lord's Prayer.

How many of you know that the Lord prayed all kinds of prayers? He prayed all the time. And actually, the prayer that we find in Matthew chapter 6 and we find in Luke chapter 11, we could probably better call the Lord's Example Prayer because it's kind of a Cliff's Notes of how to pray. How many of you know Cliff's Notes? The scholars among us know that it's an abbreviated form to figure out how to get a book report on the short. Cliff's Notes are greatly helpful because it tells you all the salient points and you can pretend to be intelligent as a result of that.

Matthew chapter 6 is kind of an abbreviated form or an outline of here are the broad things to pray for. And you look there in Matthew chapter 6 and pick up there, if you will, in verse 9.

It says, 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. And the reminder that I want you to see here is that when Jesus teaches us to pray, He says, listen, the starting point of your prayer life should be about God. [11:10] I mean, after all, if He is the most important person, He should be the one that you reference first. And if His interest and His kingdom and His glory is your primary interest, that is appropriate to put at the first of the list.

And that's what we find in this example here. We find Jesus, as He teaches on prayer, He says, hey, start with the right view of God. I want you to recognize as we think about this subject of prayer, going back to what I said earlier, prayer reveals what we think is important and what we think about God.

Another illustration of what prayer teaches us about what's inside of a man is over in Luke chapter 18. Luke chapter 18, verse 10 through 14, we have two different men praying, and the way they pray tells us a lot about their heart.

Luke chapter 18, verse 10, two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. Now, let me have you understand this.

The Pharisee was the high end of the food chain, spiritually speaking, in the Jewish community. They were the ones who were really, really orthodox.

[12:25] They were all about the law. They were very, very religious, at least on the outside, and the tax collector was basically just an absolute scoundrel.

The way taxes were collected in that day is that an individual would buy the right to tax a certain amount of the city. It's like I paid \$20,000 for the privilege of taxing everybody in Treview Woods, 400 and some homes.

Now, the government would really not have anything to say about how much tax I got out of that area. All that they were concerned with is that I at least got the amount that they expected.

So I paid \$20,000 for that privilege, and guess why I paid that money? Because I just wanted the sweet privilege of helping the government collect their taxes, and so I'd go knock on doors and say, hey, 400 homes divided by 20 and blah, blah, blah, 20,000, so here's how much you owe.

That's not how it worked. The tax collector figured out how he was going to gouge people and get everything he conceivably could out of the people. They were hated. They were detested.

[13:39] And so here is Jesus saying, two people went up to pray, and one was a Pharisee. Ooh, boy, I'd like to hear his prayer. Ooh, thou ubiquitous God, holy in the heavens, glorious above all things.

You know, and how many of you have ever listened to people pray, and their voice takes on that kind of stentorian tone, and it sounds as if they're blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, you know, and they use the King James to the nth degree.

And there's nothing wrong with King James. Don't send me an email on that. But, you know, it's like the Pharisee was really into professional praying. And listen to what he prays.

The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus, God, I thank you that I am not like other men. Extortioners, unjust, adulterers.

Ooh, thank you for the illustration. There's a tax collector. I didn't know he was here. I'm glad I'm not one of those. Yes. You ever find yourself comparing yourself with other people and feeling superior?

[14:53] That's downright stupidity. Here's the Pharisee, full of himself. And what was his view of himself? It was pretty favorable, wasn't it? I feel pretty good about myself today, God.

I'm happy with me. And you must be too, because I'm not like, whew, over there. And then here's the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven.

Do you realize what that's saying? This man was so broken because of the bankruptcy of his soul. His heart was burdened with his wickedness and his iniquity.

He knew what he was like inside. And all that he says, look here, he beats his breast.

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. That's all. That's all. Well, I want you to recognize as you look at these two models that one is spiritually bankrupt and doesn't know it, and the other is spiritually bankrupt and knows it.

[16:09] And guess who is the one who's justified? It's the one who... Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount? What did he say? Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

Those who are poor in spirit. Those who mourn. And what we find here is the illustration perfectly played out because the Pharisees' prayer announced that he was all about himself, and the poor broken sinner announced that he was all about broken heart with the reality of his sin.

In Ephesians, what we see in this prayer is a very interesting example of the apostle doing what he often did, and we learn something from it.

Usually when we pray, I don't want to say this, but most of the time when some of us pray, we pray about things that are important to us. Am I right? You pray for your kids.

You pray for your job. You pray for really important things like, I hope the traffic's okay because I left seven minutes late. You know how I stayed up to watch the ball game, and I didn't actually.

[17:18] I went to bed at 10. 10 is the magic hour, and Sunday is coming. But I was... I won't go there. You know, we decide we need a little extra grace because of our own carelessness.

Do you follow that? And we pray about us. We pray about our things. We pray about me, myself, and I. And here we find Paul not doing any of those. He could have been praying about his condition in prison.

Oh, Lord, let me out. These people are being abusive. It's not nice. What they're doing to me, I am your servant, and here I am suffering for you, and it's just not fair.

Can you imagine how that prayer could have gone? Lord, your gospel is going to be compromised if I'm not out of jail. Well, I, not too long ago, got an email from one of these Christian fundraising groups that were letting me know that if I did not donate to them, that the cause of Christ was going to be handicapped.

And I thought to myself, delete, you know, gone. Inaccurate theologically. An offense to God. Can I tell you that God's ministry and God's testimony is not hampered by me or you or anybody else?

[18:31] It's important for us to remember that. Here's Paul. He's not the least bit concerned for himself, and what he's interested in is those who he's ministered to getting a better handle on the richness of their salvation and the power that they have available to them.

So let me ask you a question. What marks your prayer life? What are the things that you actually pray for? Take a minute. Think about it. Well, what has taken up the energy and the focus of your prayer life?

Lord, I'd like my job to be easier. Or I would like people to like me more. Now, most of us are just not that crass and honest, but in an oblique fashion, that's what we're a lot of times concerned with. We want things to go our way. That's not what Paul's praying about. So let's recognize what he actually does pray for. Here he prays for spiritual power in the inner man.

And I've got to admit that as I was studying, it kind of dawned on me from my own life and talking with many other individuals to recognize that we do not tend to think about the inner man as much as the Bible does.

[19:45] Now, recognize that the Bible makes a distinction between what we are like on the outside and what we are like on the inside. Remember when God was dealing with Samuel, the prophet who had gone to anoint the second king?

That was David. And remember that tall, strong, handsome first of Jesse's sons walked by? And Samuel said, ooh, this has got to be him.

And God said, what? Do you remember? Man looks on, say it with me, the outward appearance. Man looks on the heart.

The inner man. And I want you to recognize this morning as you think about the inner man that what a man is like inside is profoundly important.

What a man is like inside is profoundly important. Let me recite several different passages to you on this and turn back in your Bible, if you will, to Proverbs 23, verse 7.

[20 : 47] Proverbs 23, verse 7. It's talking about the situation where an individual is making one statement, but inside he's thinking something else.

Look at verse 6 first. It says, do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy. Do not desire his delicacies. How many of you realize that when you get gifts at Christmas from the salesmen who sell you product, they're really not giving you a gift because they love you.

They're giving you a gift because they hope you'll continue buying their product. It says, for he is like one who is inwardly calculating. So how much is this lunch costing me?

Well, so I'm buying this stuff at Panarin that's costing me \$8.50 per person, but I am sure hoping that the doctor's office really likes me and in the future recommends the drugs that I'm here to sell. Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you. On the outside it's one way, on the inside it's another. Proverbs 4, verse 23. I want you to look at that one.

[21 : 58] It's one worth memorizing in your own life because it speaks of a critical discipline. Proverbs 4, verse 23. Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Keep your heart with all diligence. Keep your heart with all diligence. Guard your heart. Protect your heart. Be careful what comes into your heart. Deal with those things that grow up in your heart that don't belong there.

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Listen to what Jesus said about this. Turn over in your Bible, if you will, to Mark.

Let's go to Mark chapter 7, verse 20. Mark chapter 7, verse 20. There was some bickering going on with the spiritual leaders of the day, and Jesus cut to the chase.

He said there in verse 20, he said to them, What comes out of a person is what defiles him. From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

[23 : 23] All these evil things come from within, and they defile the person. I'm reminded of the little saying. Thoughts create actions.

Can anybody finish it? And actions create consequences. Thoughts create actions. You might want to write it down because it actually plays out in your life all the time.

Thoughts create actions, and actions create consequences. Thoughts create actions. Actions follow up and create consequences. And here's Jesus saying, Hey, listen, it's not what inside is causing the problem.

It's not what outside is causing the problem. It's what's inside that comes out. How do you manage what's inside? You see, we may not always act on our inner thoughts, and the truth of the matter is that we seldom do.

Aren't you glad for that? But the truth of the matter is, listen to me carefully, if you let that inner thought fester, that is an open rebellion against God's Word, eventually it will lead you to behave in such a fashion that the Spirit of God and the hand of God begins to deal with that attitude and the outcome.

[24 : 38] It's what we think about inside. And if you're here struggling this morning incessantly with pride, or you're overwhelmed privately with covetousness or suspicion or lust or jealousy, hate, or any other sin, I can tell you that that thing festering in your life eventually is going to produce the unintended consequences that sin creates.

Let me have you look at another passage that really helps us understand this matter of our thought life and turn back, if you will, to Matthew 6, verse 33. How many of you know Matthew 6, verse 33? More or less, just by heart. Everybody look up and smile. Do the bobblehead thing just for a second. You know Matthew 6, verse 33, which is, Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

Start too low. And his righteousness. You got it? Okay. And all these things shall be added unto you, right? Allelu, alleluia.

I think that's the first special I've sung in 26 years. Now, you probably wonder why I don't sing more often, right? Okay. But here, here. By the way, this is at the end of the lesson.

[25 : 58] Do you follow that? This is where he says, okay, guys, get this. But we really need to back up to understand the lesson, and he begins earlier in the chapter, and he says this in verse 25.

He says, therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life. Huh? I've got so many things to worry about. I've got to worry about my job.

I've got to worry about whether or not I'm going to have money to make the car payment. I've got to worry about whether or not I'm going to be able to meet the taxes, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. You

know, having a meltdown. He says, that's the way the pagan acts.

Now, does it mean that we should not give attention to what we eat or what we drink? The answer is that's not what he's saying.

He's saying, you guys have the order reversed. You're putting all your energy and your anxiety is focused on things that have no eternal consequence.

[26 : 59] Does that make sense? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and these things will be... He knows you need those things.

I'm getting older. It's one of the things that's actually happening. And I'm getting to the point. I don't know what the actual Bible boundary is, but I'm thinking about that passage in Scripture.

It says, once I was young, and now I am old, and I've not seen the righteous forsaken or a seed begging bread. But... And Jesus is saying, hey, listen, what's going on in the inside is pretty critical. You're caught up. Can I tell you a little secret about anxiety? Everybody listen, smile. I'm not talking about you. Anxiety is a self-consuming affliction that always grows as you entertain it.

Can I say that slowly so you understand it? Anxiety is a little bit like a virus. Left unchecked, it will always get worse on its own.

[28 : 09] How many of you understand that? Anxiety is a self-consuming affliction that will just keep on becoming more dominating as you allow it to fester in your life.

I saw a cartoon. I'm not real sure if it was Gary Larson and Farsight. It should have been because he's my favorite. But there was this woman who had... What's it called? She had anorexia.

She was afraid to be outside, and she was afraid to be inside. What is it? Claustrophobia and agoraphobia. I mean, I really appreciate the psychologists that have identified these two problems. Because here was this woman who, in this little video clip, would run out of the house because her claustrophobia was getting the best of her. And she'd sprinkle out the door, down the sidewalk a little bit.

Ah! Then the agoraphobia would get... And back she'd go. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! You know? I've said many times, being me is very difficult.

[29 : 14] You can see that. Here's what Jesus is telling us. You got to think about the right things. So, we can understand, as we look at this, why Paul would pray about us being interested in our inner man.

His warning to his disciples to not be consumed with the things that the unbelievers are consumed with was for their benefit. Their lives were caught up with concerns about food and drink, clothing and comforts.

And if you have any doubt about that, all you have to do is think back to after he initiated the Lord's Supper. Remember that? And he talked to them about, this bread is my body which is broken for you, and this cup is the cup of the New Testament.

Guess what they started arguing about immediately after that profoundly theological statement about their redemption in his blood. What did they argue about? I'm concerned that somebody else has a better car than I do.

Or, hey, they're always bragging about their kids being on the honor roll, and mine aren't. Or, you know, the kind of things we all get worked up about, you know. So, Jesus dealing with this guys.

[30 : 36] Okay, so we should, I want you to recognize this, we should be praying about our inner man as well. If Paul thought it was important to pray about, we ought to be praying about that. So, we ought to do that.

Honestly, your prayer life should include prayer for your inner man. 2 Corinthians 4, verse 16. 2 Corinthians 4, verse 16.

Just touch on this just for a moment. Here's what it says. So, we do not lose heart, though our outer man is wasting away. Our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Hey, face it. You're dying. That's what's being said here. There is an interesting chart that would describe your life.

If you are a spiritual person, your physiology, your physical body is going this way. You got that? Now, some of you are sitting here, you know, you're 18, you're 20, and you're thinking, yeah, I can't believe a word he says.

[31 : 44] But trust me. Your spiritual body should be going uphill.

One of the things that burdens me as a pastor is I see people who, they have 50 years of Bible knowledge, and they're still wearing pampers.

We ought to be growing spiritually. Do you understand that? So, our inner man should be growing to be more like Christ, and we see that in this passage.

Well, why do we need the Spirit's power? Because that's what's being prayed about here, right? Growing to be spiritually mature is just not a matter of developing a good set of behavioral patterns. I'm going to grow to be spiritual. What I'm going to do is I'm going to begin having devotions five days a week. I'm going to journal nine sentences because, well, who knows? But that's what I'm going to do.

[32 : 45] And there are some of you all, I'm an exception because I can't, but some of you will, yep, I decided that. It's settled. And 39 years later, you're still doing exactly that.

Inside, you're a stinking mess. I'll never forget. I've referred to this before, but I'll never forget the pastor that I counseled who'd come in to me. And he couldn't understand what was going on in his marriage.

He couldn't understand what was going on in his church. And he came in to me, and I said, so tell me where you are. Help me understand what's going on. He said, I read one proverb. I read one psalm.

And I pray my prayer list. I mean, this guy was just dead earnest. And he says, I journal one page. One proverb, one psalm, one page. One proverb, one psalm, one page.

And I said, so what makes you happy? Now, that's a real telling answer. Question. Oh, not really anything. What has really encouraged your spirit lately as you're reading one proverb, one psalm?

[33 : 45] You know, well, not really much. And my point is that growing to be the man God wants you to be or the woman God wants you to be is not just a matter of kind of picking up some spiritual disciplines and deciding that that's going to be the key to it.

So what we find here in Paul's prayer is that he recognizes we need help. That's what he's praying about. And he recognizes that what we need is the power of the Spirit of God working in our inner man.

Why do we need the Spirit's help? Let me just run through these. One, because of our natural weakness in spiritual things. We don't have it all together spiritually. Our thought life.

Our thought life over in Romans chapter 8, verse 5 and 6. And I want you to recognize that every single one of us battle every day with our thought life, whether it's a man or a woman, whether it's a boy or a girl.

We battle with our thought life. Whether you're in fourth grade or whether you're 80, your thought life is an issue that you need the Spirit's power to deal with every day. And you ought to have the humility to cry out to the Spirit of God and say, Listen, I need your help today the way I think.

[35 : 02] Prayer. In Romans chapter 8, verse 26 and 27, it says, For we do not know how to pray. I think back.

Some of the things that I just, I was on my knees crying out to God and asking that He would do. And in retrospect, He didn't do them. And later, I got to thinking, Man, I'm really glad He didn't do that.

Third, understanding and applying the Word of God. 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 12 says that spiritual things are not just understood by intellectual apprehension.

It's not like, well, I can study this a little while longer and I'm going to get it. The carnal, natural mind will not grasp spiritual truth. And even the mind of the believer.

Let me say this carefully. I was reading this morning where it says we have the mind of Christ. I said, now, everybody put your head down just for a second so I can say this safely. I said, I wish.

[36 : 03] And then I understood what the passage was saying. I have the indwelling Spirit of God, but guess what? I need the Spirit's help all the time thinking the way I ought to think because that's what it means to have the mind of Christ, to think the way He would have us think.

And so we need the Spirit's help. There's another reason why we need the Spirit's help. Because we have an enemy. Now, we can't blame the enemy for everything.

I create a lot of my own baggage. But over in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 11 and 12, it says, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. There is an enemy who is bent on our destruction.

I will never forget. During some of the hardest times in my life, in each of those occasions, the Lord brought in someone who said to me, Satan wants to destroy you.

And that's what he's after. Because, see, I thought it was all about the way I was being treated or things that were happening to me, etc. And this dear friend got his arm around me and said, Hey,

Satan's trying to destroy you.

[37 : 23] Furthermore, we need the Spirit's help to put to death the inclinations and affections of our flesh. Romans chapter 8. I do want you to look at this. Romans chapter 8, verse 13.

Verse 13. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Let me say that or read that passage slowly, and I want you to grab onto that and understand it. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.

I'm saddened when I realize, and by the way, I want you to know that next week, you can pray for me. You can pray for me extra. You can pray for me extra, extra, because next week I'm going to preach about the issue of homosexuality in our culture.

But my greater concern is not for homosexuality and what the Supreme Court may be doing in relationship to that. My greater concern is for the impurity in the lives of many, many, many men and women who know Christ as their personal Savior that have lives that are consumed with pornography and sexual immorality that's practiced privately.

[38 : 50] There is no surprise that culture is rotting around us because the salt is no longer salty. I come back to that passage in Romans 8, verse 13.

It says, if you, by the Spirit you want to put to death that struggle that you are having, then you cry out to God and you say, I need the help of the Spirit of God to break this bondage in my life.

It may be your self-obsession, which our world thinks is quite okay. Do you understand that? It may be your battle with purity, and the world today is saying, yes, it's okay.

I want to tell you something. The vocabulary that was used, was used about 20 years ago to begin to soften our culture's attitude towards homosexuality is being used today in relationship to pedophilia.

That's a fact. That's a fact. You cry out to God and say, I need your help. I need your help. I want you to understand also we need the Spirit's help because all the fullness of God comes through the Holy Spirit's work and ministry.

[40 : 10] You see the end there in verse 19? For this cause is how it begins in verse 14. For this cause I bow my knee to the Father. For this cause is how it begins to be filled with all the fullness of God.

God, please, do not sit there this morning with an indifferent heart to where you are spiritually. God's Spirit wants you to enjoy the fullness of God. God, please, do not sit there this morning with an indifferent heart to where you are spiritually. God's Spirit wants you to enjoy the fullness that has been given to us by virtue of Christ dying on the cross and raising again and giving to us the ministry of the indwelling Spirit and being consumed with things that in the scope of eternity do not amount to a thing.

God's Spirit wants you to enjoy the fullness of God.

and plead with Him that the Spirit of God would go to work in your life. And here's the gutsy prayer. I'm all about gutsy. You go ahead and say to God, You do whatever you think is necessary.

[41 : 51] Just help me grow to have your fullness. Let's close in prayer. Beloved, the purpose of preaching is not to entertain, but just to bring you to the point of saying yes or no to God.

And my request is this, Do you have the fullness? Are you filled with the fullness of God? Or is there this spiritual emptiness, this shallow, self-consumed, and discontent spirit?

And what I would do is plead with you that you would cry out and say, God, do whatever is necessary. I don't want to stay here. And if that's your prayer, you settle it.

And then you share it. And beloved, I would ask that if that's your prayer this morning, that you quietly slip up your hand where you are and say, I need God to work in me that I don't stay at this point.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. I need the spirit. Yes. To work in me that I do not live in this discontent, dissatisfied, unhappy predicament that I'm in.

[43 : 13] I'm willing to let God do whatever is necessary. Listen. Some of you know where you're at this morning, and your pride stands between you and deliverance.

That's a sorry place to be. Father, work in us that Christ Jesus, who enjoys the praises of heaven, will be praised and adored here on earth among believers and those who don't know Christ.

And I ask this in your precious name. Amen.