

# What Does God's Word Say About the Mountain?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 November 2023

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Who taught you how to pray? Who taught you how to pray? Because I would like to give you one way in which we have learned to have the prayer life that we currently have.
- Am I good to go? And learning how to pray. If you've ever, some of you may remember growing up and being in the garage with your dad or outside. Maybe Hudson helping his dad change a tire.
- How many of you remember never being able to hold the flashlight the way your dad wanted you to hold it? All right? Just never got it right. He was frustrated and he just assumed that you knew what he was thinking.
- That's what I had happen earlier with my son. I have to publicly apologize to my son since I publicly embarrassed him. He's in the sound booth. If you don't know this, you should. The person running the computer in the back is my 15-year-old son.
- And so sometimes I talk to him like we're in a garage and he's not paying attention. But I said, Thatcher, you need to know what I'm thinking. And so I told him to get to the first slide. And there's a lot of first slides on that computer.
- [ 1 : 0 0 ]     But the point is, people don't, if you have enough time, you learn how a person thinks. And eventually you get a little bit better at it. But there's some things that you don't necessarily learn by somebody telling you. You just spend enough time with them and you learn.
- So a lot of our learning that we've done in our Christian life has been by being around people. And we've been blessed by it. That was kind of the emphasis at the end of our volunteers meeting is that so many of us have had a lot of people invest into our lives.
- And they helped us know how to do things. And what was important. How to understand the Bible. And now God has given us the glorious privilege of being those people to a new generation of Christians.
- To be those people to unbelieving people. And in teaching them the gospel. So I ask you, how did you learn to pray? And you might go to some example given to you in your family.
- I'm actually picturing somebody praying. Thinking about, or I think of my grandfather, Paul Johnny, Johnny Nelson. He would pray before the meal. And he would always pray for those who didn't have a meal to eat.
- [ 2 : 0 3 ]     I'll never forget that. Every time we prayed, he thought about people who didn't have a meal to eat. Or listening to others in church. People pray and then you learn from them. When we pray, you hear people say things.
- And so you're learning. And a lot of them, when you first start praying, you're repeating a lot of what you have heard. I won't say it's bad. I'll say that it's natural. It's how we learn anything else.
- We learn to speak by repeating what we heard. We learn to speak to God by repeating what we've heard other people say. It doesn't make it insincere just because we're repeating a phrase. If you say, God, what is it we say at the end of the meal, at the prayer meal?
- God bless this meal for the, what do you say? Nourishment of our bodies and our bodies for your service. How many of you say that? All right.

You didn't make that up. None of you do. All right. I made that up. All right. And I've heard some of you, Ben Mize, where are you at? Where's Ben at in here? Ben, you say it at the end of the meal. I've heard you say this before. And does your dad say that?

[ 3 : 01 ] Nobody says that. All right. And I apologize to Ben in the next service. All right. But you repeat things. It doesn't make it insincere. All right. So we know that. And you knew I was going to say that.

But here's the thing that I want to emphasize tonight. And from the book of Matthew and verse number 17, if you want to go ahead and turn there. But this is the thing. And maybe we'll put it up on the screen.

If you want to, good. If you don't, no problem. Okay. With me. I have a quote. Okay. Here's the quote. Not from Matthew, but the quote that I have in there. This is it. What we say to God in prayer is our response to what we have learned about God from His Word.

How we speak to God in prayer is a response to what we have learned about God from the study of His Word. Yes, it's learning from one another.

But you speak to God in a way in which you've learned from the Scriptures. If a person was to pray to God in an irreverent fashion, if they would be flippant about it, then you would know that that was a person who has not ever seen a holy God from Scriptures.

[ 4 : 05 ] Or if a person was to come to God and they had a very distant view, they were talking as if they were speaking to somebody that was far away and completely distant, then that was what they have learned from the Bible about God.

You hear somebody speaking to God and it feels real and intimate and they believe that they're speaking to somebody that knows them and cares about them. It's because they have been shown from the Scriptures that we have an all-loving God that hears and answers prayer.

There's two stories in the Bible that really fascinate me about prayer. And I'm going to tell them to you, even though I'm not going to give you any understanding, because I just told you I struggle understanding them. But I want to tell them to you so you can share with me what you know about them, and I would love to hear it.

The one is about Jacob wrestling throughout the night to receive a blessing. And the next morning his hip is touched and he wrestles throughout the night. I know some things about that, but I want to know more.

I think there's much to learn about prayer through that story. The second one here is the one I'm going to look at here just for a moment, is the disciples being told that if they have the faith of the grain of a mustard seed, they could move a mountain.

[ 5 : 15 ] And I don't think I understand that. I'm not saying that I don't have a lot of books that talk about this, and I'm not saying that I don't understand the proposition that is being given, but biblical understanding takes more than intellectual knowledge.

We experience the truth as we live it out. And I feel like I don't know that passage in the way that is available to me. Prayer is the most undervalued resource in our lives and our families and our church.

I believe that is true. And I believe it's true in our lives as a church family. I believe it's my life personally. I believe it's true of many churches in America.

It's an undervalued resource in our lives and our families. The Bible teaches us that all blessings that God wants to bestow on us, He does so through prayer. And then prayer is a means in which we lay hold of the promises and the blessings of God.

I think that's what we're seeing in the story of the life of Jacob, wrestling, but I'm not sure. But I'd like to know more about it. But looking at this story in the book of Matthew, about the grain of mustard seed and the moving of mountains, this story opens with the disciples asking why they were powerless against the demon spirit, why they weren't able to do something that they had set out to do.

[ 6 : 36 ] And so they went out attempting ministry, and then they came back and it was not the report that they wanted to give. Their prayer letter was not exciting that month, all right? They attempted something and now they have to say, we weren't able to do that.

And then Jesus tells them that the least amount of faith is greater than the greatest amount of difficulty. Verse 20, Matthew 17. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief, for verily I say unto you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence the yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

You see, the disciples, it says in verse 19, wanted to do something that they knew that needed to be done. Then came the disciples of Jesus' apart and they said, Why could we not cast him out? Their question was, Why were we not able to do the thing in which we know needed to be done?

Probably throughout the week or at least throughout the month, you find yourself at a place where a person asks if you have any prayer requests. And if you're like me, there's times where I think, I don't have an answer.

Then I rack my brain and I think, Am I really being asked by a group of Christians how they can pray for me? And I have nothing just immediately to say? And that becomes a prayer request in itself, a conviction.

[ 7 : 59 ] What is it in my life that I'm asking God to do? Can any of you think of a time in your life where that shouldn't always be? Something that we'd have upon our heart, that we shouldn't always be able to answer that? Question, what is it that you're asking God to do through your life in this world?

How would I ever? I mean, honestly, when they ask that question, I'd be like, All right, how much time do you have? Do I have to share the time with anybody else? Here, I have printed copies for everybody, right?

That would be a more reasonable type of answer. And as we look at this passage, I think we're all familiar enough with the size of a mustard seed and the size of a mountain. I could take a long time to explain that to you, but I think you have an idea, right?

And even if you're off on the side of a mustard seed, you're probably not off by much. It's really small, all right? Really, really small. And mountains are really, really big. So I just want to look at one truth about this before I ask Pastor Bo to come up here and give us some...

Oh, no, we have our missionary update, and then he'll give some instructions about our groups. And so I think there's something that we can help each other when we're in our groups, in our prayer groups here in a moment.

[ 9 : 06 ] And I appreciate your not just willingness to do this, but ready reception of it. After we did this last time and met in the groups, there's many people said how much they enjoyed spending the time and they're praying with their family and in their groups.

And if you don't, I would encourage you to do it anyway. And I think on the other side, maybe you would see the great value of having time set aside. But out of this story, Because of your unbelief, verily I send you, your faith is granted.

If you have faith, granted mustard shall stay in this mountain, remove hence the yonder place that shall remove. Nothing shall be impossible of you. Speaking about belief is speaking about faith. In the Bible, faith is never a positive emotion towards God.

It's not a positive emotion or a feeling. It's not an optimism that we work up. You can't play some pep band music before you go on the prayer time and think that is going to make the difference in your life.

That's one of my favorite things. The other day, I was watching Austin and Alex at the football game. That's where I can't believe it. At halftime, I was filming the marching band. I'm thinking, who have I become? All right? Never paid attention to the marching band.

[ 10 : 09 ] That's where I'm in the marching band. And you listen to them. The pep band, they get you fired up and excited. You're supposed to play the game better. Faith is not this positive emotion where you just get a greater feeling.

Like if I just have great fervor when I pray, that's going to be done. But faith is a response to what God has revealed. God reveals Himself through the Word and by the Spirit.

And so if it's here that those things that show up what mountains they want to move, then we ask Him to move them, and He does. These people are asking God to do something that they believe that He wanted to happen.

And they ask Him to do it. Remember in the model prayer Jesus gave us to pray, one of the first things that He taught us is this. Your kingdom come, your will be done. And we learn that what His will is from Scripture and from the Spirit.

So we're asking that God's will to be done upon this earth. That it would be on earth as it is in heaven. So I want to give you this encouragement. If you're experiencing unanswered prayers, the first place I'd ask you to look is whether that your prayers are grounded in God's revealed purposes in Scriptures.

[ 11 : 21 ] The prayers that are heard by heaven are the ones that start in heaven. And so there's a way in which we could help each other. Tonight, sure. But just throughout the year, when people are sharing prayer requests with us, we could help them know where the prayer requests that they're given, how it's rooted in Scripture.

So we ask God to give us the things in which He has promised. You know, you could ask for things, but you could also maybe the prayer requests that you're given as you're praying for the salvation of a lost person, which would be a very legitimate thing to be praying for, revealed in Scriptures, that God would have, that all men would be saved.

And so that would be a thing that you would know that you could pray for. And when you pray for your family, you may pray specifically for patients. And we're told to ask for it. But when we talk together, we ought to talk about, are our prayer requests rooted in Scripture?

What are the promises of God that are given the Scripture? We could say the words. That's what you find so many times in the Old Testament. A large portion of the Old Testament are people and prophets repeating to God the promises in which He has made to them.

Not that God had forgotten, but that's what prayer is. It is knowing God, this is what you have told me that I could ask for. This is the treasure that is available to me.

[ 12 : 40 ] And so that confidence of moving a mountain comes when you know those are mountains in which that you are told can be moved and should be moved and ask Him. So I'm going to leave this with you before whoever's going to come up and do the update for our missionaries is this, is that you need to ask yourself whether the prayers that you're asking are grounded in God's revealed purposes in Scripture.

And then let's help one another. Tonight, when we take some time, you have the handouts, but there's also a time where you can ask people in the room. You can encourage one another. And when they share a prayer request, say, hey, let me encourage you.

The Bible speaks about that. And when people ask for this, this is what they say. And this is what we're told that we can ask for. Heavenly Father, as we go into a time tonight praying, as friends and brothers and sisters and as family groups, I pray that you'll help us make our prayers be rooted in Scripture, that we know that you have offered us wonderful promises, and that we'd be like these disciples who come back to you, having attempted things in their own power.

Now they come to you, and they're at a place and a position, Lord, where they know that they cannot move these things without you working in and through them. Lord, may we all be at that place tonight. May we have a prayer list of things in which we're asking for.

May it always be upon our heart. May it always be upon our mind what we're asking of you to do in this world. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.