

DEPTHS OF PRAYER SERIES

HOW TO CRY TO GOD

We want to look at how to cry out to God. It's not just simply crying out to God that works. At the same time sometimes there is a necessity to cry out to God. Sometimes God wants to see whether we mean it with all our hearts, our minds, our souls, our strength and everything within us. He wants to see whether we want whatever we are praying for as much as He wants it for us. In Jeremiah 33: 3, we know the familiar verse where God says, "Call onto Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you do not know of." He also tells us we must seek after Him with all our hearts. When we have sought after Him with all hearts then He will hear us.

There are many things in our life that we could classify into different degrees. You prayed for some things and the answer comes. For some other needs, you prayed a prayer of faith and the answer comes. But then there are always in every life one, two or handful of areas where you have got the best men or women of God to lay hands on you and nothing seems to work. Then you have tried your best and practiced every principle you know how and still you don't seem to have a breakthrough. Then you are wondering what's the problem. Men and women of God laid hands on you until the shape of your head has changed. You are wondering, "God what else can I do?" You take every opportunity to get believers to pray and to agree with you until you literally have lost count of the number of people to agree with you.

See, we are always humanly interested in what goes on in our present lives while God is interested in our future. So in all of our lives there will always be one, two, or handful of areas where nothing works except by crying out to God. God has designed it as part of our training. We need to know the principles of crying out to God. There are some others in the bible who cry out to God and there is no answer. There will be different principles of prayer for different types of answers. For another person the same thing that they are praying for they got it

just by simple prayer and worship but for you, you are having a difficult time. So each one of our lives we have our strong points, we have our weaknesses. God knows the depths of our hearts. He knows what is inside us even more than we know ourselves. And He knows particularly which area He can draw the fullness of our heart cry to Him in order to receive what He intended and wants us to have all the time.

In the Old Testament, we read a story of how the Israelites cried out to God. It was a long cry. Lets look at the book of Exodus chapter one and see some of these cries that reached onto the throne of God. Exodus 1:7-8 the background *But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty: and the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.* Chapter 2:3-24 *Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage and they cried out, and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.* That was a long, long cry for many generations.

The bible tells us that it was about four hundred years the Israelites were in Egypt. At first, they had a good life but after some time persecution arose. When persecution arose, they cried. Notice something at first their cries were more for their bondage. Look at that in verse 23 *Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage.* How human they were. Just like us many times. When you are walking with God and you are doing all you can, suddenly there is something that hits you. Perhaps it's a crisis. Perhaps it's a difficult situation. You seem to hit against the wall. Your first cry is not a holy one. Your first cry is out of despair and perhaps even out of anger. Perhaps out of frustration, out of your humanness you cry. It's not a holy cry. Its amounts to "boo-hoo" that's all it amounts to. It has not reached the heart of God yet. There are many "boo-hoo"s that have gone out from our lips but nothing happened because there is a principle involved. It's not just our cry. There are two sub-principles involved in regard to this unholy cry. No. 1 we must understand the timing of God. There is such a thing as God's time and God's season. The book of Acts tells us that in the beginning of time that Jesus said that the Father has set times and seasons in His hand. Peter in his sermons talks about times of refreshing. So there are times and seasons with God. We must understand No. 1 timing. There is a time to cry. There is a time when it's too late to cry.

In the book of Matthew 27, the bible says that Judas did cry after he had betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ and he saw all those cruel and horrible things that happened to Jesus. He was responsible. He had sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. And he saw his Master taken and given an unfair trial. He saw his Master being beaten up. He saw his Master taken and crucified. There was a cry that came from his heart. And in Matt. 27:3-5 *Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.* But here is remorse; the Greek word involves a cry. There was a bitter cry that came from his life. But it was too late.

There are times when it's too late to cry. The bible says to humble yourself in the sight of God and He will exalt you in due time. He exalts the humble and He brings down those who are proud. God desires a humble and contrite spirit. Heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool where will He dwell but in the humble and contrite spirit. Notice that there are two groups. One group needs God to bring them down. The other group has to bring themselves down in the sight of God.

And there are two groups of people. One group are those who will cry but they will cry too late. They will continue on their own ways stubborn as a mule, ignorant of the ways of the Spirit, walking in the flesh and in the pathway of sins. Though there are cries from the Spirit of God to turn aside they will march on until one day they hit against a solid wall then they began to cry. Sadly, it will be too late sometimes. Why was it too late for Judas Iscariot? You know when he should have cried? When Jesus and His disciples were at the Lord's Supper, he had one last chance to repent. Jesus Christ knew who was to betray Him. And Jesus Christ even at the Holy Communion said, "One of you shall betray Me." Judas was there and the thought of betrayal was in his mind but he did not cry. He did not repent. And all the disciples said, "Is it I?" They were all frightened. Everyone was asking, "Is it I?" Judas also joined in. Even though Jesus point blank pointed to him, he still did not repent. Besides that when John who was interested in all these things said, "Master, who is it?" Peter was also interested and he knew a way to get information said, "John will you ask the Lord who it is?" And Jesus took the bread, dipped it in the wine and gave it to Judas. Normally that is something you would do only to your highly favored one. Normally you would only do that to somebody you really love. And Jesus did it to Judas. Second chance he still didn't repent. Third chance Jesus took off His

robe put on a towel then He came to His disciples one by one and washed their feet. He even came to Judas, took his feet and washed it. How can someone like Judas not repent after all that has happened? He did not. He reached a point that we call a point of no return. Jesus is not like some of us who repay evil for evil. He repaid good for evil. If it were some of us who were washing the feet, we may have used a steel brush for Judas' feet. Jesus is different. He gave him the same treatment and the same love. Third opportunity and he still did not repent. After everything was over and Jesus was condemned, then only Judas wanted to seek after God. He knew he was wrong but it was too late. Brethren, there comes a time when it's too late to cry. There comes a time in everyone's life when we feel the beatings of our spirits, when we feel the heart beat of the Spirit of God in us and the Holy Spirit wants to cry out through our lives. And we do not because humanly we are trained to withhold the things of the Spirit. And we hardened ourselves up. It may be too late when we cry to God. The first thing there is timing.

Secondly, as we see here it never said that Judas was repentant. It only said that he was remorseful. It's a different thing to feel sorrow at what had happened and another thing to feel sorrow and want to change your way. A robber or a thief may go out on the streets and in the process of robbery killed a few people. They may feel sorry about it but that's all they will feel, they have no intentions of changing their habits. They may be sorry because they may not want anybody to be killed. I mean all they want is money. If they could have it without killing, they would. But there are times when they kill and then regret the killing. They are remorseful of the killing and wished that they didn't have to do it but they have no intention of giving up the life of a robber. That is remorse without repentance.

The bible tells us there are two kinds of sorrows in II Cor. 7: 10 *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death.* There are two kinds of sorrows. There is a sorrow and a cry that puts people into more bondage. But there is a sorrow that sets them free. Judas had the first type. He was sorrowful and remorseful onto death. It didn't deliver him and he died in his remorse. That's the sorrow of the world that produces death. But there is a godly sorrow that produces repentance. There is a godly sorrow from a humble and a contrite spirit that says, "God I cannot do it. You have to do it through me. God there is no way we can get this done. God we need you." It's a cry of one who needs the Savior; one who needs God. It's the cry of a humble and contrite spirit. And that's the godly sorrow that Paul says we need to have.

Now looking back to Exodus 2 we noticed here that the Israelites groaned. At first, their first groan was not holy. But after sometime, they began to cry out to God. Instead of just crying because of their circumstances, they are now crying out for God for His deliverance. In fact, God told Moses that He had heard the cry of His people. Exodus 3:7-9 *And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.*

I heard their cry. Now what were they crying for? At first, their cry was not a holy one. But through time, they began to cry for a deliverer. They began to cry out because God promised them deliverance. God has spoken long, long ago that He will send a deliverer and bring them out of Egypt. They remembered the promises. Jacob remembered the promise when he died. Joseph remembered the promise when he died. And some of the Israelites remembered the promise of God. And they cried out to God and said, "O God where is the deliverer?" They are crying out with all their hearts, all their souls and all their strength. That is not an ordinary cry. It's a cry that you notice here a cry in chapter 2:24 that is based on the covenant of God. They were crying because it was not supposed to be as they were going through. In other words, they were crying because they have a covenant with God. And they were coming before God in His covenant. And they were not the only ones. Moses also remembered the covenant of God. The reason why he went to see the Israelites is told to us in Acts 7 – it is because he came to see the afflictions of the Israelites. And everyone was crying for the Messiah. In those days, it was Moses the deliverer. Why should we cry? Why does God want His people to cry? God has reserved some areas where we must come to the end of ourselves and cry. This is exactly what God wants us to have.

No. 1 He wants us to come to the end of ourselves. He wants us to come to the point where we realize we are nothing and we cannot do it without Him. He wants us to come to the end of our pride. Only when we reached the end of all that we can do does God steps in. Just like the woman with the issue of blood. In Mark 5, she spent all her money, all her savings, and all her possessions. She has literally bankrupted herself in order to get healing. She has reached the end of

her road. She has one more hope left, the Lord Jesus. If you examine your life, you realize that there is nothing that can replace a humble and contrite spirit. And there are many times when things happened and we reached a point where we have to cry out to God and you realize what God actually want is for a humble and contrite spirit. John Osteen was sharing with us when he was here, how he suffered all kinds of afflictions. He got the best people to pray for him and nothing happened. Until one fine day, he shut himself up before God and said, "God I am not coming out until I find out what's wrong." And God dealt with his pride and with his self-sufficiency. When he came to the end of himself and he repented then the healing came. He left the room completely healed. Although he had the affliction for years, it left him completely.

We all need to learn not only to cry to God but also to continue to cry. Because when we come to a time when we cannot cry, our hearts are hardened. Let me give you an example how our hearts can be hardened. All you have to do is look at the papers and you see evil happening. But we see it so often that we have no more feelings. That's why at first when people who watch wrong T.V. programs like killing, murder, and violent crimes, their inside churns and turns upside down. But if they continue watching violence and the tolerance for sins inside them is hardened, they no long can feel compassion. This is what God does not want. The bible says to have a soft and tender spirit. But society and this world is so much in darkness that you could look at evil, crime, famine, pestilence, people dying with hunger in the papers perhaps for a thousand times and you have no more compassion left in you - something is wrong. We have allowed sins and the harshness of this life to harden us. You say, "How can we live if we don't harden ourselves?" You can through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Although Jesus lived through the hardness of His times, He never had a hard heart all His life. It says here in Heb. 5:7 *Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear.* You could have removed the phrase *with vehement cries and tears* and it would have still look all right. See you could have read it this way, "And in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear." It would look like a normal passage on prayer. And it would still look O.K. But then you would have missed one of the greatest truths that the bible has preserved for us. Jesus Christ has to sow His ministry in tears. What was the necessity to cry out to God with vehemence? The word *vehemence* in the Greek speaks about a deep heart-felt cry. It's not something just outside. It's deep and moving and vibrates

through a person's being. Then we can imagine how He prayed when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was not just silently coming before God and kneeling down before God and saying, "Father if it be Thy will take this cup from Me." And there was silence and He was just waiting. If you were there that day in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, you would have heard the most heart-wrenching cry you have ever heard. You would have heard a cry like a man whose heart is torn out of His body. The Garden of Gethsemane was not a very quiet place that night. You could tell that there was something physically taking place, awesome. It was not just Him silently waiting on God. And the sweat that dropped from His face as blood. I could imagine Him crying, weeping, and the disciples Peter, James, John, and the rest could never understand that kind of tears. They will never be able to understand what went on in the inside of Jesus' heart.

This brings us to this statement - one cry is worth ten thousand words. One godly cry to God that reaches out from the depths of your spirit into the heart of God is worth ten thousand words. There is something too deep for words. There are some prayers too deep for words. It can only come when we allow the Spirit of God to cry out through our very beings onto Him. That was what it was like for our Lord Jesus

Christ. It says that because of His vehement cries that He offered up that He was heard. His prayers and supplications were no ordinary prayers.

I know there are times when you could offer ordinary prayers and supplications. There are times we need to learn to cry out to God because that is the only place where you are alone with God. You have nobody but God. Everyone in this life has to reach a point where we know that we are alone with God no matter how close you are with your loves ones. We must reach a point where it is only between you and God and no one else. When you have reached that point, something on your inside will reach out to God because now you realize you have no one that you could depend on except God. That is not to say that there is no need to depend on each other. There will always be times and places where there is team work. There are times that you need to call on others to work together with. But if you have walked with God and if you have ever treasured the depths of God's presence, it is only when you reach that one point when you sense you are alone with God that you cry out to Him. If you have never reached the point of sensing being alone with God, it is because you are too dependent on human beings. You are too dependent on people here and there. And you have never reached a point where you are totally dependent on God and God alone. Every one of us needs to reach that point. When you reach that point, you cry out

to God, and God hears your cry.

You will never leave that place of prayer the same. When people meet you from then onwards it will be like you have a character of steel but the tenderness of cotton. There will be strength in your character that was never there before. Why, because now you have walked alone with God. You have never walked alone with God. You do not know that inner strength that can come only from Him. Now there is something placed in your spirit and you come out like a spiritual giant in God. You are not the same man or woman before you entered that closet. You are different.

Lets turn to the book of Isaiah 66:1-2 *Heaven is My home and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build for Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hands has made and all those things exist," says the Lord. "But on this one will I look. On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word."* God is saying here that He does not desire to live in houses of clay or stones made by human hands. If He says heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool and there is no dwelling place except this - that tells you this is His most precious thing. More precious than silver and gold is the cry of the created for the Creator. It's the cry of His children for Abba Father. And God desires that more than anything. He wants to hear our dependence on Him. Why is that so? In the depths of His heart of hearts, He is Papa God. He is still our Father. He wants to hear His children dependent on Him and reach out to Him. We must cry out to God because we need Him and depend on Him.

We realize from the book of the Old Testament that their cries were within His covenant. Of course, we realize what Paul has said in II Cor. 7 in the first type of sorrow. There is a cry that wants a change. Godly sorrow leads onto repentance. You are willing to change. It is not the cry of Judas Iscariot who was not willing to change. It's not the cry of the robber who was only remorseful of some killing he had to commit in the process of looting. There is a depth in your heart that reaches out to God. No. 1 is the covenant cry. No. 2 is a repentance cry. The word repentance means you are willing to turn around and change. And it's a cry that says, "O God you do not want me to live life as it is any more." Unless something changes you, you don't want to live. You want to live only what God wants. You want to change that only God can give. It's a cry of repentance. You say, "I thought we have repented." Repentance is an attitude that we maintain and not just an act that we did once. It's an attitude that all the days of our lives we keep

on saying, "O God how we need you."

Remember the cry of the publican. There was a Pharisee who came to the temple that day. Jesus used the illustration of how the Pharisee says, "O God I have given my tithes, I have not sinned like this publican next to me, I have done this, I have done that, all these religious works. Lord, I am not too bad. I am better than this guy." The Pharisee's prayer reveals the pride of life. But the publican didn't even dare face God. He came and he beat on his chest and says, "God be merciful to me as I am a sinner." And Jesus said that the publican left with his prayers answered but not the Pharisee. That doesn't mean that we all have to have a negative mindset where we lose the righteousness of God and become sin-conscious and not righteousness-conscious. It doesn't mean that. In the depth of righteousness-consciousness is a humble and contrite spirit. It's an understanding and knowing that your righteousness depends on the Lord Jesus' grace. It's not your righteousness but it's God righteousness.

Let us look at the book of Exodus as the Jews came face to face with the Red Sea. Exod. 14:13-15 On one side was the mountains and on the other side was the sea. The third side was the Egyptians coming after them with Pharaoh leading the whole army. And Moses spoke to the Israelites who had never fought any battle before. *And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see them no more forever. The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace. And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me?"*

Isn't that remarkable? You see the cry is only the first step. The cry to God must lead to a revelation of God. After Moses has spoken to the Israelites, he came to God and cried and cried, although its not recorded how he cried. But we know from God's statement that he did cry. Moses was honest that there was no way out. The Egyptians were coming from behind, the Red Sea was out in front and the mountains were on the other side. He got no way to turn to. So, he turned to God and he cried. Then God said the word that we need to hear as we learn to cry to God. God said, *"Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. The cry is only the first step.*

You see the Garden of Gethsemane was not the end in itself. After His crying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus walked in authority. They came after Him and he said whom do you seek. There was not one drop of fear in His life. He came out from the Garden of Gethsemane bold as a lion. He was not the same Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane crying the heart-wrenching cry. He did not cry in front of His enemies. He did not cry in front of the demons. He cried in the sight of God. But when He faces His enemy, it is now different. He walked in such authority that Pontius Pilate said "Don't you know that I have the authority to crucify You and to set You free." And He said, "You have no authority over Me except what is given to you from heaven." No man talks like that man. It's the authority that flows forth. This is where we realize that the humble and contrite spirit in the sight of God there is meekness but when you move out of that position to face the circumstances you have a new realm of authority. A new revelation of God produces a new level of authority.

So, when Moses having met God moved out he had to move in authority. God said, "Stop crying." God said, "Part the Red Sea," and he parted the Red Sea. There is no more time to cry. Brethren, there is a time to cry and there is a time to take authority. There is a time to allow ourselves to weep in God's sight. There is a time to wipe those tears from our eyes and let the Lion of Judah rise in our life and march over the enemy. So, the cry is the first step. If it is a true cry of God, it should produce the revelation of God and a new measure of authority. There is no greater authority than the authority that flows from a surrendered heart and a surrendered life. There is no greater authority than the authority that flows from a humble and contrite spirit. Moses moved forward and launched such a powerful miracle that they had never seen the like after that except at the River Jordan in Joshua's time. We have to harmonize between crying to God and the authority of God.

Lets close with the book of James 5:15 *And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produces its fruit.* The fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. We all need to reach that point that we not only pray a righteous prayer. In this passage, righteousness is not a problem because Jesus is our righteousness. But the problem in most of our life is effectiveness and fervency. Some of those

things that you and I have been praying for have taken umpteen years and the answer has not manifested. Year in year out you are longing for the answers. You sing the song that He is a prayer answering God but the answer doesn't seem to come. You turn to one man of God after another to pray for you and the answer doesn't seem to come. God is waiting for you to get alone with Him and then get serious with Him.

You really have to come before the face of God and really cry out to God in your aloneness with God. There is no short cut. There are some areas in our life that we need to do that. We need to shut ourselves up from our friends, our people and our loved ones and get into the closet with God. You pour out your heart to God until God reveals Himself. But remember this when you reached that stage you are not just crying out for your answer. You are crying out for God. You want to meet face to face with God. I don't understand why God sometimes allows that in people's life. But one thing we possibly can understand He wants us to want Him with all our hearts, all our minds, soul and strength. You have to determine if there are areas in your life where you have not have any breakthrough. Then you must come to that stage where you are willing to go all out for Him. You are no more just interested in the answer. You want to hear from God. You want to meet Him face to face. Then my friends prepare thou to meet the Lord thy God. Prepare to meet Him face to face. And He will meet with you. Men and women who truly come with all their hearts to God to meet Him, to turn away from the distraction of life, turn away from the distractions of loved ones and to be alone with God to hear Him, God will come down and meet with them.