

DEPTHS OF PRAYER SERIES

PRAYER BETWEEN PHASES

Lets turn to Luke 6:12-16 Now it came to pass in those days that He went up to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Him. And from them he chose twelve whom He also named apostles. Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

Now this is one of the first records of Our Lord Jesus praying an overnight prayer. Although I believe He probably has prayed several overnight prayers before that. Our Lord Jesus Christ is praying an overnight here because He is moving from one phase of His ministry to another phase of ministry. See when He started His ministry He was alone. The gospel of John records the first part of His ministry when He was alone. And the disciples had not followed that closely yet. He had a lot of followers. But there was none that was what we may call confirmed to be with Him. So Our Lord Jesus Christ seems to sense a different direction. I believe He was seeking God regarding who the twelve apostles were to be. But of course He does not need the whole night to just do that. All He needs is to pray for about ten minutes and say, "Father who are the twelve whom I am to select." And the Father will say, "Select this and this and this." If that was so why then He had to pray an overnight prayer? It was directional but more than that.

There was more than just direction that was involved. It was something He seems to be pouring forth before God in order to be able to continue the whole night. And as we realize you have to have quite a lot of things to pray if you want to pray the whole night. Thank God for tongues. I wonder what we are going to do without

tongues. Can you imagine praying the whole night without tongues? Thank God for tongues where we could just let go and let God to pray through us. Now here is something happening in Jesus' life where we believe He was also praying regarding the apostles.

And here is where some clues come. See Jesus Christ does a lot of sowing in prayer. Jesus Christ does a lot of travelling in prayer. I personally believe that before Jesus did any thing He has already got the whole result in the spirit realm, especially during times when we are what we call between phases. We are changing from one phase to another phase. For example, you could be changing a phase in the natural. There are many phases in the natural in life that we go through, like the phase between schooling and working life; the phase between working as an employee and becoming your own employer. That is all natural phases.

Then there are spiritual phases that we go through. There is a phase that you go through perhaps when you just began to discover your spiritual gifts and position. And then there is another phase that we go through when we began to move into a area of spiritual ministry where we realize who are to be involved in the ministry. So there are different phases in the life and ministry in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Before this time in Luke six Jesus used to travel all over the place. And everywhere he went the kingdom of God was announced. He had many, many multitude of people following Him. But He had not selected any apostles yet. And here is the time when Jesus is going to change. Not change in power, changed in a sense of His ministry because He is still going to preach and He is still going to heal. He is still going to cast out devils. He is still going to do basically the same thing. But His privacy is going to be invaded by twelve fellows. He is never in a sense going to be alone again. Wherever He goes He is going to have these twelve guys follow Him, whether they fully understand him or not. But these twelve fellows are going to be right behind Him. Sometimes quarrelling, sometimes fussing, sometimes becoming His great defenders, sometimes doing the wrong thing. Here is where His privacy is going to cease to a certain extend. Of course for these twelve people it would also be a commitment. It would be following Him for three years.

As we read just in one or two sentences the whole thing was over. Jesus prayed overnight, the next day He came and everything was over. But mind you there are a

lot of decisions making. There are so many things that are involved when you are going to make a decision in life, things are going to be different. So we realize here that Jesus was going through a different phase. His whole life is going to be affected by these twelve fellows. Where from time to time they may disappoint Him. He goes through everything that every normal relationship we go through. There were times where they probably disappointed Him. There were times where they encouraged Him. Yet there were a lot of investments that the Lord Jesus made between the phases. This is not the only time He did it. Every time there was a significant movement or change, you will always find the Lord with you, especially in an overnight prayer like this.

Turn to Matt. 14:22-23 after the feeding of the miracle of what we call feeding the five thousand men. In verse 22-24 *Jesus immediately made His disciples to get into the boat and go before Him to the other side while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. And when evening has come He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves.* Verse 25 *Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.* The fourth watch means it is between three to six in the morning. And Jesus went up immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, which was probably about six or seven in the evening. And He was there the whole night alone spending time with God. And then the next morning He had not slept a wink yet. He comes down and walks on the water. Understand the time and the context from Matthew.

Then let's look at the gospel of John chapter six. There was actually an event that was going to take place, which the other gospels did not record. John 6: 15, *Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to a mountain by Himself alone. And when evening came His disciples went down to the sea.* That is when we see the walking on the water incident. So it is in the same context of Matthew 14, except John gives us more details. John 6 says after the feeding of the five thousand. These five thousand wanted to take Him by force to make Him their king. Now Jesus of course knows the hearts of men. And He knew that they are going to make Him king not because they believe in His miracles. It seems that He doesn't even mind if people believe Him just because of the miracles. But it was more than that. See in John 6: 26, *Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly I say to you. You seek Me not because you saw the signs.* It seems as

if seeking the signs was okay but He says, *"You seek Me because you ate of the loaves and were filled."* In other words they're going to make Him king because He is now going to provide their bread and their butter. They don't have to work any more. The king is going to supply from His table. They were seeking Him because their stomachs could be filled. Not because of the signs, which He doesn't seem to mind because the signs will lead you to Him.

Now Jesus seems to perceive something else that was not apparent. There is a great event, a great test that was about to happen and Jesus must have picked it up in the spirit. Sometimes we cannot pick up a great test coming because it is hidden by physical event. But the next day an important event was about to happen. Probably the Lord Jesus perceived it. There was something significant, which the world would call a failure. Read on in John 6 the same day Jesus taught them about Him being the bread of life. In verses 59 – 60, *These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of his disciples when they heard this, they say this is a hard saying. Who can understand it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured about this He said to them, "Does this offend you?" Then in verse 66 from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.*" He didn't say a few. That could have been an exodus in a reverse sense. Something significant was going to happen the very next day. The day before they were going to make him king. The day after there was going to be a test for the people. Jesus was going to reveal more of Himself. When the bible says many it is not just a dozen. Suddenly almost everybody leaves. And you know how crowd psychology is like 90% of the people don't do the thinking, they do the following. If you say something wrong but if you put enough people in the crowd to say the amen and clap hands, the rest will follow. It is a natural flow.

So here many left and our Lord Jesus in verse 67 He turned to the twelve and asked, *"Do you also want to go away?"* At a point like this as the most encouraging statement came from Simon Peter, of all the people. Sometimes he says the wrong thing. But this time he said the right thing. This was one of the few times he engages his head before his mouth. He said, *"Lord to whom shall we go" You have the words of eternal life.*" If you experience what Jesus went through here, it is not something easy to take emotionally. It is not easy to take it emotionally when people leave you. Here is the Lord Jesus is facing the pressures on the human soul. Now there is going to be a different phase in His life because some are going to

drop off. He is going to a time of testing. He picked it up the night before. The whole night He prayed. That was when He walks on the water.

We realize that both the physical life that we are living and the spiritual life come in phases. It is not just one flow. Life is like waves. When the waves are over there is a period of calm. Then comes another wave. Then comes another phase. It is unending. There are different times of testing. Different times of growing. Different times of moving. But the most important time is between the phases. It is where you make it or you don't make it. You break or you make it. In between the phases is one of the most significant points of time where the devil loves to attack between the phases. The weakest link in the whole flow of your life is between the phases. And of course where it is weakest we pray the longest. Where it is hardest we travail the deepest. That's where our Lord Jesus prayed overnight.

I am sure there are several other occasions that the bible did not record that much. But of course the greatest point of time was when He faces the cross of Calvary. That is something that none of us could comprehend. None of us could even sense a portion of what He went through. The bible tells us in the book of Hebrews 5: 7, *Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers in supplication with human cry and tears to Him who was able to save him from death and was heard because of His godly fear.* Now we realize that this sentence talks about His entire life. But there is also an emphasis on the point of time before Calvary.

Luke 22:40 says When He came to the place He said to them pray that you may enter into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone throw. And He knelt down and prayed saying, Father if it is your will remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless not My will but your be done. Then an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening Him and being in agony He prayed more earnestly and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Although it is not mentioned here we realize that He prayed throughout the night. And it was in the early hours of the morning that they came for Him. That was when they took Him to that priest's house. And when Peter was there the cock

crew. So it was towards the morning by the time everything was over. Isn't it a great thought to think that the last night out Lord Jesus experience before the cross was a night spent without sleep? It was an overnight. The last night spent was significant. He travail, He prayed, He cried. The reason we put this pattern in Jesus life is to show us that our Lord Jesus Christ picks up in the spirit the things that are to come. See as you near the end of each phase you could sense it. It is just like surfing. The person who does surfing have to sense correctly the end of each wave comes. When they surf they are going by the energy of the waves. The waves would carry them. Then when the waves come down the momentum still continue. When there are not enough waves they paddle a bit. So the skill of surfing rests on the fact that the person who does surfing must be sensitive to the waves when it comes and the waves when it ends.

When you ride a two-wheel vehicle you will realize that when the momentum is there it is easy to balance. The thrust of the vehicle carries you and keeps you straight. But whenever you come to a red traffic light, you have to put your legs down. Have you seen a motorbike rider who reaches a traffic light and he is balancing. So we realize that there are certain situations like a two-wheel vehicle unless there is a movement it is not easy to balance. The moving makes it easy to balance. In the same way we realize that when the waves are there it is easy because you have a certain thrust involved. But when the waves are not there it is not easy to balance. And so the times between the waves in a sense are more difficult. In fact the joy of surfing is to get on the waves. You don't go surfing when there are no waves. You don't enjoy it. The joy of it is that the waves are carrying you.

And so in the same sense there is what I call a phase and different phases in life. And some of those phases are when they literally twist and turn your character to squeeze out the best in you. Where they twist and turn your emotions and squeeze out the best in you. They squeeze and turn you until you know your energy level in the physical, in the soul and in the spiritual between each phase. See the next phase will not start until you are faithful to the fullness of your previous phase. Unless we are faithful to our previous phase we cannot move to the next phase. That is God's order. If you are not faithful to what God has revealed in the first phase, you will never move to the next one. God will let you reach the maximum capacity possible within the boundaries of that first phase. Unless you have stretched yourself to the

fullest you cannot go to the next. He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much.

So the points between each phase are really pressurized situations where it brings out the best in you. Which is why I believe that every person must push himself or herself to the limit to know at least where their limits are. And the rest of the way, ask God for grace. I know what it is like. I have gone for three days without sleep to push myself through. When you have gone through it you can know how you can push yourself through. Those who have not stretched themselves to the fullest do not know the limits of their ability. Sometimes we don't know what we can do unless we have done it. It is just like the disciples in the book of Acts. They were growing stronger but without knowing it spiritually they may have been growing a little bit overweight until the great persecution arose. In Acts 8 all the disciples fled from Jerusalem. As they went forth they preached. And lo and behold there were great results. We know not what we can do until we are put in a situation.

Think about how Reinhard Bornke started. In South Africa he used to plan crusades for others. He was an evangelist to a certain extent. But he was not well known. His ministry didn't take off. One day he planned this crusade. The speaker didn't turn up. All the people turned up except the speaker. So the most logical thing to do was to take over. He took over and the results of the anointing were so powerful that the people started coming back. It seems like overnight his ministry took off from one incident. There are a lot of situations like that. Oral Roberts was virtually unknown. There are hundreds of people like Oral Roberts in the healing revival. But one day somebody took a gun and tried to shoot him. And he missed but Oral Roberts's name came on the headlines. Then everybody ask, "Who is Oral Roberts that people want to shoot him?" And suddenly the graph of his ministry shoots up. I do not recommend that be your method. You never know when the next phase actually begins. You could pick it up in your spirit but it does not flow in a logical manner sometimes as the secular realm because the ways of God are higher than our ways.

I remember how my ministry took off. I was virtually unknown just a Baptist black sheep trying to do his best. Then it so happen that one day God opens the door. Just one day, just once, you have only sometimes you got only one chance. You either make it or you blow it. Just once, I had the opportunity to minister just once

in a public meeting in Kuala Lumpur. I was based in Penang. Before that we were already moving in gifts to a certain extent in small, small groups. So when they put me up in a public meeting that was in ALC (Abundant Life Center), I operated the gifts. So people asked, "Who is this guy? From where does he come from? Local person operating the gift." That was when suddenly every meeting I went to after that was packed. The next meeting I went to was in a home. And from that time onwards it just shoot up. And of course together with the cheers are the jeers. There are people you make very glad and there are people you make very mad. As I grow experience in God it seems like a graft. If you take your muscle and press one part, the other part comes out. It seems that this is true in what I call society in partly spiritual realm. Before you are exalted you are humbled.

David seems to understand that. He made mistake one time and his own son was throwing him out of Jerusalem. On his way out there was one guy who was cursing him. His soldiers could have just killed that guy. But he said never mind. Perhaps God who hears this will repay me. He was being humbled. He was being cursed. And he was saying if somebody curses you, somebody else will be made to be your blessing. It is proportional. Before every exaltation there is a humiliation. There is no half, half. For exaltation to take place there must this going down. There is this realm that is operating all the time. I see it so often that it looks like a pattern. Every time where there is something good, where people are drawn to you like David's mighty army, at the same time there were others will begin to reject you more than ever before.

Your life becomes like a ruler. God uses you as a standard. God puts you in the midst to separate those who are for Him and those who are against Him. As you walk closer and closer with God that literally what Jesus says takes place. Whoever rejects you rejects Him. Whoever accepts you accepts Him. You become the trademark of God. God measures and judges by you. Your life becomes 100% yielded to God. You become the yardstick by which God measures how people accept Him.

There is this law of God that operates in what I call the between the phases. So knowing all these things helps us to prepare for the trails and the testing. You don't

have to pray for it. Some people pray God give me more tribulation. There is not a single prayer in the bible that asks us to do that. Instead the prayers in the bible ask for deliverance out of tribulations. The reason you don't have to ask for it is because it does not come from God. It's the devil who is doing it. Instead we should pray for God's deliverance and learn how to come forth, wisdom to come forth. And here are some principles as we see between the phases.

What to do between the phases? Number one we should spend quality and quantity time with God. If you are about to leave a job to start your own business, don't only apply natural principle of research. Perhaps I would suggest to you to go on a three day fast. So it is important to seek God not only in quality time. But during times like that please add quantity. We need to sow into that which is to come. We need to put in intercession for what is to come. Then there is the need to have quality and quantity time; long quantity of time spend in God. And it seems that God always moves in His grace when you do that. He takes what you invest into consideration. And at the next phase as you enter it looks very easy. In fact I would say it is possible to move in a Christian life like this up hill graph all the way. But that is because there are a lot of things holding you up at each phase. And in Jesus' life you see Him in spite and despite of what the response was to Him He just move on in what the Lord asked Him to do. So No.1 there must be quality and quantity time spend in between those phases. It may mean you may need to take a break to go somewhere and be alone with God. What ever it takes you need to have what the bible says alone with God. That is why overnight prayer we do different from 24 hours praying. Overnight night prayer we switch off the lights so that you have a sense of aloneness.

Number two in between those periods there must be what I call a depth, a out-pouring, and a full expression of all that is within you. Sometimes it may mean tears. See tears can be good, can be bad. Not all tears are good. Some tears are good and some tears are not good. In the book of 2 Cor.7: 10 *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death.* So the bible tells you there are two types of sorrows. One sorrow from the world another sorrow from God. The reason we have to differentiate the two types of tears is this. I know people who have gone through a crisis. Perhaps the death of their loved ones. Perhaps a crisis that means a separation. And the tears come forth unendingly. And they never get away the rest of their lives. The scar they allow to

come into their life is so deep that they literally do what they should not do. They allow their past to rule their future. Not only rule, to ruin their future. And so sometimes there are grief and sorrows that we must not allow into our life. Sometimes you do weep and cry but don't let it last long. So there certain sorrows and grief that we should not allow to grip into our life. Some people sometimes they cry over some physical crisis and after that it stays. And they do not allow it to be lifted off. They allow it to come into their life; it is like death coming into you. A person's character can change. A person character can change. A person loses their joy of living. Death starts taking place in their life. It is first death of their social life. They are not the same any more. They cannot have a very loving relationship with people. They become withdrawn to themselves. Then death comes to the own character. They are no more the same. And then finally comes the whole death of their soul. Their souls are no more the same. Their eyes lose the brightness of life. So there is sorrow that we must not allow to dominate our life.

There is another sorrow that comes as a result of travail and being contrite in heart. And that is the type of sorrow that Psalms 126 talks about. Ps.126:5 those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping bearing seeds for sowing shall doubtless come again with rejoicing brining his sheaves with him. Notice the seasons that he talks about. We realize there is season to sow. There is a season to reap. The season of sowing is in between the phases. So the period between the phases is a sowing for the next phase. That is a time for sowing and there is time for reaping. There is a time and place for everything under the sun. So during the sowing there are tears. During the sowing there can be great travail.

I remember after some time of public ministry among the businessmen, because I was a faith preacher, I preach the word of faith without compromise. It was a very controversial thing to say that God wants you to prosper. To say that you can confess what you possess. It is not easy to preach those truths in those days. But I never believe in compromise because it was a part of my life. So I took a stand on faith. And the controversy was worldwide. Even Kenneth Hagin himself was heavily persecuted. And great big denominations wrote articles, theological thesis against it. It was very hot in those days and heavy. And I remember a decision has to be made whether to go on or not. Finally when the decision was made, I found one chapter closing and another chapter opening. When you read a book sometimes the end of a chapter makes you look forward to the next chapter. In life you do not

know what the next chapter is going to be. Who are going to be with you? Who are not going to be with you? I remember in one of the last meetings there. The tears flow forth like a fountain. I understand what Jeremiah says when he says that his eyes were like a fountain.

There were a few friends with me. One of them is a medical doctor. After the meeting I stayed back and knelt at the platform and poured my heart to God because I do not know where my future lies except in Him. What was to be my next step? I remember I was kneeling at the platform weeping out my heart to God. By the time I finished there was a pool of water, which was my tears. He was the last one there and he came and knelt next to me. When he did that the spirit that was on me came on him. And he said, "I never felt like that before." I said, "Now you understand what travail is like."

People think that ministry is glamorous being in the public life. They are living in a glass house. So after that period there was great relief. I remember three weeks before that there was also another heavy period. I was accused of things that I never did. I was accused of things that I never said. I went through a sort of trial. We had a group of people there asking questions. And I came out from there grieved. I cried for one whole day nonstop. So those who sow in tears, I know what it is like to sow in tears. I know it is like to be broken and crushed until there is nothing left. But it is at that point where God takes you and began to form what He wants out of your life. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Now that is only part of a life. As I said the normal Christian life is a life of joy. But in between the phases you sow in tears. There are also times when you look back and that are what I call bringing in the sheaves. When the times come for bringing in the sheaves there is joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. When you sometimes see the result of the price you pay. When you see the results of God's grace. There is joy unspeakable and full of glory. And they out-weigh whatever you have ever paid. And you look at it all and you say it is worth it. So there two things when you go between the phases. One is to give quality and quantity time. The other is death. By death I mean spiritual death, emotional death, character death, physical death.

