

# Pushing Forward in Prayer

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Acts chapter 4. So while you're doing that, I just want to give some background to this series. So we're calling this Body in Motion, right?

And so Body in Motion, this isn't like helping us get into a better exercise routine as Christians. It's talking about the body of Christ. The church is the body of Christ.

And so we're looking at the Book of Acts, not verse by verse. We're just taking these little stories, these little pictures of the church throughout the Book of Acts.

And you can kind of read through or study the Book of Acts and kind of look at particular individuals and particular players in there and see like, wow, there's these guys that were doing amazing things.

And you can definitely do that. And that's a great way to approach it. But the Book of Acts also gives a lot of insight into the early church, this first group of believers that like Jesus died, rose again, ascended into heaven, gives in the Holy Spirit.

[ 1 : 05 ] And then the gospel from this little 120 huddle explodes out from there, from their little town of Jerusalem all over the world.

And so we're looking at this because we want to see like, man, it would be great if Acts got repeated in our day and age. We want to see that, right? We are hungry for that kind of move of God again to take place and to be a part of it.

And so we're looking at that and we're seeing like, okay, not only like obviously the Holy Spirit was making that happen and the power of God was with them and that's why they were able to push forward.

But the church was participating in that as well. The Holy Spirit was working through his people. He's working through his church. And so we want to look and say like, man, what did the church do?

What were the essentials that they were on about that we can learn from them? And from that we can say, what us as a church, what should we be doing? What are the essentials that we should be doing to advance the gospel?

[ 2 : 12 ] And then we can learn from that and calibrate back to that. Because to be honest, we just pick up all kinds of unnecessary stuff that we think is like, oh, this is what church should be doing.

But actually, if you strip all those things away, you can get down to the essentials, right? To the nitty gritty of what we should be doing as a church, the necessary stuff. And so before we read this passage, I just want to give us some context of what's going on here.

First, to understand like the book of Acts where the church is at, they're in this sweet season, right? Sweet season. There's more and more people being saved all the time, being knitted into the church.

In fact, at the beginning of chapter 4, it says now there are about 5,000 men in the church. And it says men, which we can assume safely that they're not even counting possibly the woman and the children.

So you're talking about like a church between 5,000 to maybe 10,000 people, like safely, just in that church in Jerusalem. That is a massive church.

[ 3 : 17 ] That is a massive group of believers in one place. And so it's not this little ragtag group in Jerusalem that nobody really knows about. Now you're in Jerusalem, 10,000 possible people that are devoted to Christ and proclaiming the good news.

It's like if you're a non-believer in Jerusalem, every time you turn around, you're probably bumping into a disciple of Jesus. That is probably what is happening. And so they're enjoying this sweet time, right?

And that the believers are together. They're devoted to one another like we talked about last week. They're devoted to the gospel, looking into it, growing into it. And they're also devoted to gospel living.

And now, now they hit opposition. So Peter and John, what they do is their typical habit is they go preach in the temple.

And so that's what they've gone to do. And they preach the gospel in the temple, which is a very public place. But on this occasion, they get arrested. And they get put in jail. They get put in custody by the Jewish authorities because they are preaching that Jesus rose from the dead.

[ 4 : 20 ] They're preaching the name of Jesus and salvation in him, that he is the Messiah. And so they get brought before the chief priests and high priests and elders and scribes. Basically all the dudes in that day that had religious, social, and political clout.

They're standing before these guys. And these guys are not happy with them. And this congress of men tell Peter and John, stop preaching Jesus. You need to be done with that.

And if you don't do that, next time we're going to do a little bit more than just arrest you and threaten you. They're intimating that, hey, next time there's going to be some physical consequence.

And these guys have the ability to do that. And after they make these threats, they release Peter and John. And here's where we pick up the story. And we're going to be in verse 23 of Acts chapter 4.

And it says this, when they, when Peter and John were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said, by the Holy Spirit, why did the Gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain?

[ 5 : 41 ] The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly, in this city, they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

This is God's word. So what we see in this chapter is how this early church responded to opposition of advancing the gospel.

They didn't just put their heads down and continue to push forward. What they did is they actually put their heads down in prayer. And prayer wasn't their last resort. It wasn't like, well, we tried everything else.

[ 6 : 54 ] Now let's, I guess, we have to go to God now. They went to prayer first. That's what they did. And that is what we are going to look at today with regard to church as a body in motion, pushing forward in prayer.

And there is always good gospel work to be done, even in our day, right? We are given this mission. We've got to take up God's mission to make disciples and to push back darkness. And sometimes that work produces fruit.

There's nice seasons of that. And sometimes it just feels like white knuckle endurance. Like we're not seeing any fruit, any harvest, but you know what? We've got to keep going.

But I would say regardless of the fruit or not the fruit or activity, our activity, our busyness, what we do for God can't be the only measure of our success. Because that isn't necessarily church at its best.

The church at its best is also at its best when it pauses to pray. And I would say it's at its best when it pauses to pray too, right? And this is more than like, okay, maybe they were just really good at saying grace at mealtime.

[ 8 : 00 ] They were just really consistent with that. This is a lot more than that. These first disciples of Jesus, they hit significant opposition for the very first time.

And let's consider this. Let's step back, right? This is the first time post-resurrection and ascension that they really hit like a roadblock. Now compare this to when Jesus was arrested and crucified.

What did these same disciples do back then? Well, they ran and they hid and they scattered. And in the gospels, we don't find them crying out to God. We actually found them scared, consoling one another.

Or as in the road to Emmaus, you see these two guys walking and talking about what happened. And they're confused and they're trying to figure it out. They're trying to like delve into, like find some answers.

But that was then, right? That was then. Now look how different their response is. In verse 23, when they were released, they went to their friends and they reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

[ 9 : 02 ] And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God. So what had changed? Well, they knew something now they didn't know back then.

Jesus rose again. They were on the other side of the resurrection. He had ascended into heaven. They knew that he was seated on the throne with all power and authority given to him.

And here's the thing, knowing the extent of God's power fuels our prayer life. It fueled theirs. These guys didn't have a fingers crossed, hope it works out kind of faith.

Right? They were eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection. They knew without a shadow of a doubt that this had happened. Jesus conquered death. Like literally that was their reality.

They knew their Savior in heaven had beat death and he was living, he was alive, he was reigning in heaven. There is no greater power to overcome. Right?

[ 10 : 06 ] When you defeat death and you can't die again, that's pretty smooth sailing from here on out, right? And if he defeated death and it stands that his claim of supremacy over all things has to be true.

What could possibly stand against Jesus now? And the apostles in the church stood firmly fixed in that truth. Jesus rose from the dead.

But even more than that, okay, he's the God who defeated death. Awesome. But he's the God that made all life as well. Right?

In verse 24, they lean into that. When they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, The sovereign Lord who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them.

They are ascribing to God, not only you are the victor over death, but you are the creator of all life. Total sovereignty. And we are living in a day and age where it is tempting for us as Christians to sacrifice and minimize or just chuck out certain parts of the faith that are just harder to believe.

[ 11 : 17 ] Right? Like the virgin birth. Man, try explaining that to somebody who isn't a believer. I'm sorry, what? God. Yeah, yeah, God. Jesus got born. It was this lady.

She was a virgin. But yeah, just kind of God just, you know, impregnated her with Jesus. Okay. Or miracles. Right? Man, during the enlightenment, there were people that would come through.

Thomas Jefferson did this. He would go through and he would rip out the miraculous parts of the Bible because he was a naturalist. And he said, well, these things can't be true. This is just fabrications of superstitious people that just weren't as evolved as we are.

And they just don't know science like we do today. And so, you know, we just got to like, that's cute for them back there, but we know miracles really don't happen. And then there's creation.

Right? God created everything out of nothing. He spoke and it came into being. And that just doesn't jive with modern scientific theory. So let's chuck that out. But here's the thing.

[ 12 : 21 ] It attempts to make our faith more relevant to those outside the faith. What we end up doing is de-godding God. And at the center of the virgin birth and miracles and resurrection and creation is one God, three persons.

Like, try to explain the Trinity. Talk about a mystery. There's one God who purposed it. One God who commanded it. And the one God who continues to sustain it.

All life. And either he is powerful enough to make all those things happen or he is not. We don't get any in between. Now I would say to this, imagine if God wasn't that powerful.

That he didn't do those things. Suppose he didn't create all things. Suppose he isn't a God who exists outside of time and knows the end from the beginning. Suppose he isn't all powerful and has all might.

That he can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, and nothing can stand against him.

Suppose he's none of those things that he claims to be. Well, logically, it should follow that we, why would we pray to him at all then?

[13:22] Why pray to a God like that? Because you know what? He may not be able to do any of those things that we ask. And what good are the promises that he's given to us?

How can we stand secure that he is able to pull any of those things off if he is just a semi-powerful being? I mean, if he couldn't create the original heavens and earth, what security do we have that he's going to be able to come and create the new heavens and the new earth?

And that's supposed to be Jesus' final work of redemption. That is one of the pillars of our faith. If he can't predict the future, if he doesn't know the future because he is an all-knowing, and he doesn't have the power to make it come to pass, then why do we have any confidence that he will be able to do what he said he will do?

See, if God is not an all-powerful, all-knowing, then all his promises he's made in the Bible are simply hopeful wishes. I'm a nice guy. And all that were left is we're standing back and we're saying, man, I hope it works out, you know?

And when you consider what those promises are, these are good promises to us. Our faith, like, it's, these are foundational to it.

[14:43] He told us that his church will ultimately prevail. He told us that he would be with us to the end of the age. God promised that the new heavens and the new earth would be a place of ultimate joy in eternal life where there's no sin or sorrow or suffering forever and ever and ever.

But here's the thing. How can you and I hold fast to that if the God we've constructed is only a little bit higher and a little bit more powerful than us humans or a little bit more powerful than the angels? See, without faith in the sovereign God of the Bible, there is no true prayer with any kind of real hope. Now, some of us may not fall into that category of doubt and, like, trying to be relevant and end up de-godding God.

That may not be where you're at. You're like, just, I'm amening all this full into God's sovereignty. Right? I believe he's all-powerful. I believe he's all-knowing. He knows the end from the beginning. But his sovereignty and believing in that, that can bring up some other hard questions to answer for us.

Right? If God is sovereign and he is going to do what he has purposed and is able to do what he has purposed, then why pray at all?

[16:01] My prayers aren't going to change anything. Right? So the thinking goes. He's already made up his mind. And that is a good, honest question I think many of us wrestle with.

And what we have in this text is the answer to that question. Let's look at verse 25. Right? They're saying, they're remembering back to a point in history.

And it's actually Psalm 2. And it says, Who threw the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit. And they start to quote Psalm 2. Which was written by King David a thousand years before Jesus would die and any of this would happen.

And they say, they quote it. They say, Why did the Gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed.

So they quote Psalm 2, but they do something interesting with it because they change the verb tense. In the original Psalm, it's written in the present tense. It's written as if it's happening before your eyes as you're saying it.

[17:07] Right? But these disciples, as they pray that same song, they change it to past tense. They change it as if it had already happened. And what they're doing is they're connecting this Psalm.

And they're saying, you know what? This is a promise fulfilled in God's redemptive plan. And look how, excuse me, look how they connect it. Verse 27. For truly in this city, there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel. To do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. See what they did? Psalm 2 talks about kings and rulers of the earth gathered against God's anointed.

And so what do they do? They mention in their prayer a king, Herod, and a ruler, Pontius Pilate. That took place over Jesus' trial that led to his crucifixion.

And then they also talk in Psalm 2 about the nations, the Gentiles, and the people Israel, raging and plotting in vain. Against who? Against God's anointed, who is Jesus.

[18:18] And so they look at this and they understood that. And even mention in their prayer that, you know what? All of this happened. It didn't happen by circumstance. It didn't happen by mistake. It didn't happen because men are fully free in their will and carried on by their own desires.

And thank goodness we all lucked out that the crowd was stirred up with the right venom against Jesus. And Herod and Pontius Pilate didn't know how to do it. And so they kind of like dealt with it in the way God was hoping they would deal with it.

No, they are saying they did exactly what God had predestined to take place, exactly when he wanted. And God made them and led them into that. That is what they're saying here.

That is what they are praying. Which means what they are doing is they are accepting that God was in control that whole time. He purposed for it to happen in the manner that it did and in the time that it did.

But what that does and what you see in this, they're accepting the sovereignty of God, but it doesn't turn them into spiritual fatalists, right?

[19:17] They don't start believing this like, well, God's going to do whatever he wants. Why even pray? It doesn't even matter. What they did is instead they did what we should do. They embraced a mystery that we need to embrace as well.

Although God is sovereign, he chooses to work through the prayers of his people. My friends, that is a mystery that you can't figure out. And I want to just leave that slide up for a minute longer.

I just want to have it up there so we could just like look at it, let it marinate into our minds. That would be a cool tattoo. Like, y'all that like tattoos, like put that on them.

I'll be honest, this one is a hard one for our brains, right? That is a hard one for our brains. We don't like mystery. We like to have all the answers. But we have to accept the fact that not all things can easily be reconciled with a God who exists outside of time and space.

Deuteronomy 29, 29. It says, the secret things belong to the Lord our God. But the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.

[20:28] That way we may do all the words of this law. If we can just bring that other slide back up again. Now, God tells us that enough has been revealed to us so that we can know him and obey him.

There is enough that he has revealed of himself to us. But he also says to us in that same verse, there are mysteries that belong to him alone.

That he is not going to reveal to us. And what happens is you and I, we get into trouble when we ignore what is clear and try to figure out and reconcile what is not.

And when it comes to God's sovereignty and his providence and prayer, I want to encourage us in this. Guys, gals, let's just embrace the mystery. C.S. Lewis explains this best in his fictional book, *The Magician's Nephew*, which is part of the *Chronicles of Narnia* series.

And so in this particular story, Aslan, who's the lion god figure, he has just created the world. And there's some things that have happened after that.

[21:36] And these two kids are there with him. And there's a flying horse named Fledge. And so what he does is he sends these two kids, who are named Polly and Didgeri, on an errand with this flying horse named Fledge.

Some of you are thinking, I can't believe my pastor is talking about a flying horse in his sermon. Yes, that is really happening. Okay? But trust me, this is really good. Honestly, a kid's book has helped me understand the mystery and just accept this, the Sommet of God in prayer.

So Aslan sends these two kids and a flying horse on their way. And at the end of their first day of their travels, they're tired and hungry, and they realize that they forgot to bring food.

And there is no food around them. And so they're in a bit of a pickle. And so here's what happens in the book. It picks up on that. Polly and Didgeri stared at one another in dismay.

Well, I do think someone might have arranged about our meals, said Didgeri. I'm sure Aslan would have if you'd asked him, said Fledge.

[22:39] So he's not just a flying horse, he's a flying talking horse. All right? Yes. Wow. And Polly says to that, well, wouldn't he know without being asked?

I've no doubt he would, said the horse. But I've a sort of idea he likes to be asked. Let that sink in. I think Lewis gets it right.

And he leaves it there and he doesn't try to explain it any further. God knows what we need, but he also likes to be asked. Which can sound like a bit of a silly nonsense.

A little silly game God's playing. Man, God, what the heck is that all about? But actually, he's not all-knowing. He's not just all-knowing. He's just not all-powerful. He is good. He is all-wise. He knows what is best for us. And if we are always given what we need before we realize we need it, what will it create? Entitlement.

[ 23 : 43 ] Right? Because you don't ask for what you're entitled to. If you're always just given everything, man, you start to think you deserve it.

And you start to think, and then that deserving comes demanding. And entitlement, what it does, it confuses power dynamics. Right? It confuses the power dynamic of our relationship with the sovereign God.

When you are entitled, those in power exist to serve you and your needs. And it's not reciprocated back. See, think about this in our political system.

Right? We have politicians who seem to be in power, but at the same time, politicians are dependent on our vote. So, in a sense, you have power over them.

They serve you. This thing, this dynamic, this power dynamic can happen in parenting too. If your children's happiness determines whether or not you're a good parent, you live in their debt all the time.

[ 24 : 44 ] They have power over you. And they will end up becoming entitled as you live to meet every single need, no matter what. And they will not ask you for things.

They will begin to demand you for things. They're called brats. But that happens because the power dynamic is in their favor.

And you will capitulate every single time in order to get out of them what you are needing because your heart is so desperate. You have an idolatry over your children that you are trying to get something from them that you should only be getting from God.

Now, think about any relationship. This is always true. Every relationship has this potential for this upside-down power dynamic.

But our relationship with God shouldn't be like that, and it isn't like that. He doesn't play that game. He loves you. But that love, his love for you, is not defined by you getting whatever you want and whatever you ask of him.

[ 25 : 57 ] He serves you, not because he has to, nor is he dependent on your affections. He serves you out of love with no conditions attached.

That's it. Think about that. And, guys, that's really more loving. That is really the essence of true love. He does what he does.

I think the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1 writes it so well. He does what he does according to the pleasure of his goodwill. That's how God works.

According to the pleasure of his goodwill. But still, he likes to be asked. And he has ordained it so that he will work through the prayers of his people.

Mystery. And this is good for us. Because God is good. He knows what is best for us all the time, which means he is not going to say yes to all our prayer requests.

[ 27 : 00 ] The thing that we may want God to say yes to so badly might be the thing that could ruin us further down the road. We just don't know that.

But he does. And God's goodness is rooted in the fact that he is not, his goodness isn't built on the fact that he is making his kids happy.

His goodness is about him being devoted to making us holy. That's what his goodness is rooted in. But he knows this. Our holiness, as we grow in holiness, becoming more and more like him, is going to yield true happiness.

So God alone knows which prayers will turn out for our good. Which shouldn't discourage us from praying. It should get us to think more deeply about what we pray for.

And prayer is potent when it fits in God's plan. Now you might say, Jesse, that's great. But how do we know the finer details of God's plan, right?

[ 28 : 05 ] How do we know when we are living right in line with the perfect will of God? We don't. All right? We don't always.

Why does God heal one person of sickness but not another? Mystery. Why does God meet that need that I ask for, but he doesn't answer that other need that I prayed for?

Mystery. Why does God give someone else the very thing that I've been longing for and requesting of him? Mystery. Mystery.

When you and I, if we were to go and look at the prayers in the New Testament, including the Lord's Prayer, they rarely, if ever, ask for God's intervention from suffering.

It's amazing. But instead, they ask for faithfulness to stay obedient through suffering. And that's how these disciples prayed into this moment of impending danger.

[ 29 : 16 ] Verse 29, it says, And now, Lord, look upon their threats. And then what do they pray? They say, wipe out those dudes. Those dudes are their threats. Just, just come with your mighty hand and extinguish them.

They don't pray that. They say, grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal.

And signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant, Jesus. They don't ask God to take out their enemies. They don't ask God to silence them. They counted it joy to suffer for Jesus' name.

And for the advancement of the gospel. Which is an important aside. And here's an important aside in all of this. They weren't suffering for a political cause, right?

Or they weren't suffering because they've made sinful choices, and now they're bearing the harvest of that. They were suffering for righteousness' sake. They were suffering for the name of Jesus.

[ 30 : 17 ] They were suffering for spreading the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what their suffering was rooted in. And this prayer was a prayer for God to embolden their hearts and to work power, his power, his mighty hand, as they continue to preach the gospel in the face of adversity against the gospel.

Friends, those are great prayers to pray. Those are prayers that God loves to answer because you know why? They fit into his plan of redemption. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he gave them a template to follow that was heavily weighted with redemptive requests, right?

Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, which is praise to him. And then he says, may your kingdom come. Right? Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy.

May your kingdom, it's sinless. It is a kingdom where, if it's kingdom in heaven as it is now, it's where everybody is submitted to him and surrendered to him and there's no sin.

May your kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven. He goes on to say, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. That is redemptive. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

[ 31 : 39 ] That is redemptive. And when you and I get caught up in God's redemption, when we get caught up in his beautiful mission of what he's on about and reconciling men and women to himself, you're going to care too, you'll care too much about heaven breaking into earth.

So that happens more and more and more. You're going to care about that a lot more than trying to turn earth into heaven for yourself. And redemptive prayers, when we pray that way, those are the prayers God loves to answer.

And the Apostle James, he said, he says in James 5, the prayers of a righteous man has great power as it is working. And to back up and explain, James goes on to explain what he means by that because actually he talks about, let me tell you and remind us about the story of the prophet Elijah.

Elijah, he prayed that it wouldn't rain for three years and it didn't. And then at the end of three years, he went and he prayed for it to rain and it did. But the full story of this, right, isn't that Elijah had some like, some power to say stop raining and start raining.

It's because that was God's purpose. That was his intent. He told Elijah, I'm going to bring a famine. It's not going to rain for three years. And he prayed and it happened. And then God said to him, okay, the time of rain is coming.

[ 32 : 59 ] Start praying for rain. And he went and he prayed for rain. Guess what had happened? Elijah is praying in line with God's purpose. And that's what James is drawing us to. The prayer of a righteous man, it is effective and powerful.

It is in line with God's redemptive purpose. And so we see that. That's why they were potent. But here's another thing.

Through all of this, Elijah wasn't just praying on the sidelines, right? He wasn't out there just like in that time. I'm going to pray and then just like sit back and watch this whole thing go down.

He was busy about God's mission in his day. He did a lot of stuff in between those years of rain and no rain. And these disciples in Acts 4, they didn't pray like they were monks hidden away in a

monastery.

They were in their cities fulfilling God's mission. And here's what I want to say is prayer pushes the mission forward, yes, but we still have to be on mission. We need to be warriors for God's mission in the prayer closet, absolutely.

[ 34 : 02 ] But we also have to be witnesses out in our cities as well. And that's what they did. And after God comes and he shakes that, look, verse 31, after they had prayed, the place in which they were to gather together was shaken.

And they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And you know what they went and did? They didn't have another prayer meeting and another prayer meeting was like, hey, man, let's keep doing this. Let's get some more shaken.

I want to experience some more shaken. They continued to speak the word of God in boldness. God answered their prayers for boldness. But I love that, that he came and he said, you know what, I hear your prayers.

And he shook that house. He shook it. He filled them with the Holy Spirit. And you and I, we need to experience that. We need to cry out to God and we need some things shaken.

We need to experience him. That's a game changer. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit so we can be bold witnesses for Jesus out there. Too often we relegate the Holy Spirit to powerful experiences in church meetings, right?

[ 35 : 15 ] And we should want that. I'm not saying that's a bad thing. But we kind of limit everything to that. But what if we prayed just as often for God's power and presence to not only be experienced in here, but to go with us out there?

Amen? As we go when we share the good news of Jesus, as the band comes up, how can we respond? If you're listening to me, you're not yet a Christian, so glad you are here.

So often, again, I want to remind us that we often associate prayer to God with like the last ditch effort. It's like our last hope. After we've exhausted every other possibility.

We've tried everything in our own strength. We turn to everybody else, everything else, and none of that worked. And now it's like, well, I guess I'll try this God thing. And you know what? Maybe that's why God has you here today.

Maybe you're here today and you've exhausted every effort to find joy and meaning and purpose in your life. Maybe you've made a huge mess of your life and are wondering, well, maybe God can fix it.

[ 36 : 30 ] And I want you to know, setting those things to the side, I want you to know, the most important prayer that you can come and pray today is not, God, come fix my life.

It's, God, I need you to save me. And the good news of Jesus is that he died. He died for all your sin.

You don't have to get your life in order before God's going to hear your prayer for salvation. And in a moment, we're all, all of us together are going to take time to come to God in prayer.

And those of you, if God is calling you today and you're just like, man, I think that's the prayer I need to pray. I need to pray Jesus come and be Lord and Savior of my life. There's going to be a prayer up on the screen for you to read and repent and believe in him.

Believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior who died for your sins. Now, if you're in the room and you're hearing me or you're hearing me, you're already a Christian, what adjustment is God calling you to make in this aspect of your walk with him?

[ 37 : 36 ] Is prayer a priority in your life that you run to first? Do you ever spend time praying redemptive prayers for gospel advancement?

Praying redemptive prayers for boldness to proclaim the name of Jesus? Is it simply that you need to grow in embracing the mystery that although God is sovereign, he can also work through prayer? And he does work through prayer. And in our time of prayerful examination, we're just going to take some time. We're going to take a minute just to respond to God and what the Holy Spirit is doing and leading us into.

And so let's do that now. Let's close our eyes and do business with God. Father, we come to you in prayer saying we need you.

For my friends who are realizing for the first time that you are Lord and Savior. And meet with them in a profound way. For those of us who have known you for a long time, meet with us in a profound way.

[ 38 : 53 ] Stoke the fire in our hearts to run to you in prayer. And to believe that you are a sovereign God that can do all things. Amen.