Pray Without Ceasing

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: 08 March 2026

Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[0:00] Now, we get to pivot to the sermon. If you got your Bibles with you, you got to get to doing it at some point, right?

It's tempting to want to pivot, like from this to what's next, but I believe that God's desire for us is that we become a praying people and a praying church, where what I mean by that, just prayer is weaved into everything that we do.
Prayer needs to shift from being like the special treat we take out of the cupboard to munch on every so often and be like, hey, that was really nice. It needs to become more like water that we drink throughout our day.
And the latter is praying as a way of life. In Bible terms, it's called praying without ceasing. It says this in Ephesians 6, verse 16 to 19. Paul's writing to a church in Ephesus, and to them he says, in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Praying at all times, praying at all times, in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication. Remember what verse 16 said, in all circumstances.
[1:39] It's a lot of all. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance. Still talking about prayer. You know, when you read about the armor of God, which is kind of a famous section in the Bible, he just gives short little descriptions, and he gets to prayer.

After the sword of the spirit, he gets to prayer, which is another offensive weapon that we have, and it's the longest part of the armor of God that he talks about. To that end, keep alert in this prayer thing, with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.
And now in 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 to 18, it says, Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
This is God's word. Praying without ceasing seems like a tall order, and it is. And so my goal today is, first, to get us to believe that constant prayer is more necessary than we realize.
And I want to next provide some practicals on how to do this, because we live in a distracting world. And I also want to get honest about why this idea of unceasing prayer is difficult.
[2:59] Let's be honest. We hear pray without ceasing, and if I was, if God was to expose all our inward thoughts here, it would probably look like eye roll, right? And then finally, my goal is, is that we absolutely need to cultivate a prayer-filled life and what our hope is in doing that.

So first, why do we need to pray without ceasing? Now our minds might run to answer that question in various ways. We can think about, well, there's benefits to prayer. How else are we supposed to get things answered by God?
We look for the outcomes. We see those things and think about those things. And those are very important, very good answers to why we should pray without ceasing, but let's start where 1 Thessalonians 5.18 ends.
And it says, because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. That's what it said. Constant prayer is God's will for all who are in Jesus. And we have to start with God because we are saved by God, in God, through God, and for God.
And as Christians, we believe God knows better than we do as we follow Him. It's why salvation starts and continues as surrender. And life in Him is one step of surrender after another to His will and to His ways and to His purpose.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

[4:18] And God says here, my will for you is among many things to pray constantly. It's like the Rockefeller ethic, but for prayer instead of money. God, how much prayer is enough?

And I think He says to us, just a little more. Now it's important to realize that this is our Heavenly Father's will for us. The Father's will, when you think about Jesus here on earth, right, He came to show us the Father, to display the Father, but He also came to show us what it looks like to be the Spirit-filled man that can love the Father, know the Father, and follow in His will.
And so, the Father's will mattered to Jesus. He lived by it. And as we submit and surrender to that ethic, pray just a little more, what we start to realize is how necessary prayer is.
Prayer isn't, it just can't be for us another religious duty that we must engage in because God demands it. Prayer is a way of life because God's salvation is many things.
It's forgiveness and healing. It's an internal inheritance. it's coming into this kingdom, right? We're in this present age of darkness and now He brings us into the kingdom of light of the Son in whom He loves and it's a kingdom that is at war with this present age.
[5:35] It's pushing back against it. Those are all important things to know and understand about God's salvation for us, but one that is often overlooked and I think to our peril is that our salvation means for us that we are adopted.

So that's a doctrine of the Christian faith that has been around for all time in the church. Salvation is an adoption. God chose you, He saved you, He made you His child and He made you that way because He intends for you to be in a loving, intimate, connected relationship with Him.
And prayer is our connection to God. prayer is to life in God like breathing is to life in our body. We pray because we need to breathe in the spiritual oxygen of God's nature, His person, His heart, His mind, and to know His will.
God's command to us in the scripture through the Bible of don't stop praying is kind of like a doctor saying to you don't stop breathing and you don't even have to pay the copay charge for it.
It's so nice. In the Western church, we do a lot of things well. We focus on spiritual formation of the heart and mind and we need that. And we want to know and feel the joy of the Lord.
[6:59] We want to know and feel God's love. We want to know and feel and live in the hope of the Lord that He is working out all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. We want to see the fruits of the Spirit being formed in us.

We want to have God's love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and gentleness and self-control being more and more present both in our lives and working out of our lives.
We want to know God. We care about theology. And we mainly achieve that in the Western world by Bible study. Everything can be solved with one more Bible study or better study techniques.
We want our minds renewed and we want to be filled with sound theology. And don't get me wrong, these are all indispensable things. Don't hear what I'm not saying. As the body of Christ, we need these things because a healthy heart and a healthy mind equals a healthy functioning body.
Those things are necessary for life. But what about our lungs? A prayerless church, a prayerless Christian is like a person with sleep apnea.
[8:10] Apnea symptoms, they say, are daytime fatigue, poor sleep, lack of rest. When you think about what the Bible says about what it means to be a Christian, it likens following Jesus to walking with him or running a race.

Have you ever seen someone walk or run holding their breath? You aren't going to get very far. So I went out on a run on Friday knowing full well that this was kind of a picture God gave me for this sermon and then I hit mile three and I was coming to the end of my run and I was like, you know, I was doing okay.
It was a slow, easy run. My heart rate was like, you know, in the low 130s, no problem. I could have like, if somebody was running with me, I would have been, be able to conversate with them and I was like, you know what, I'm going to try holding my breath and running and the first time, I think I lasted six seconds and my body is, I was like, I was having a mental, I was like, breathe in, just take a, no, no, no, I'm going to push it a little further and I'm like, oh my gosh and then I let go and I'm like, I'm gasping for air for the next like 30 seconds and trying to get my breathing under control and

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

as soon as I do, I do it again and this time, I only got three seconds that I could pull this off.
I mean, my brain is going like, what is wrong with you? What are you doing to me? And after the third time, the only thing I wanted to do was stop running. That's all I wanted to do and I still had a little bit of time left.
You hold your breath too long, you get woozy, you get loopy, your muscles start to fatigue quickly, you start to feel it. But the Western church seems content to live this way.
[9:54] We go about our days prayerless until we get so desperate, we gasp in some of God. Oh my goodness. And then we wonder why we're always worn out, why there's little joy in the running.

It feels like the kingdom work is so hard for so little gain. Here's the thing, the point of constant prayer isn't just that we pray for prayer's sake.
The point of prayer is our connection with God that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and God wants to fill this temple. He wants to fill this body of Christ, these living stones that he is creating. Each of you as individual members of it, he wants to fill it with his presence and with his power. And that's the Holy Spirit. It's our connection with God.
You know, Paul calls this thing of constant prayer, it's the missing power train of the church. And he, show a slide here. And so his whole idea here is that as we pray, prayer, what it does, it connects us with the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God.
[11:08] And the Holy Spirit connects us with the person and power of Jesus that then manifests itself through his saints. So we both feel the power and we get to display that to Jesus, which again, Jesus calls us to be witnesses of him.

Paul Miller says this in his book, A Praying Church. Prayer accesses the spirit of Jesus. Prayer, Paul prays the church's power train in Ephesians 3.
He prays to the Father for the gift of the Spirit to make Jesus present. Here's a paraphrased version showing the Trinity at work. I pray to the Father, I bow my knees before the Father, it says, for the Spirit to continuously recreate resurrection power in our lives that he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, it says in that same passage in Ephesians.
So that Jesus possesses us, or as it says in that same passage, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith in order that we overflow with the love of Christ.
Or as it says in that Ephesians passage, that you know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Paul Miller goes on to say this, prayer is the critical spark that brings this spirit engine to life.
[12:32] Consequently, prayer is not one more activity of the church it lies at the heart of all the church's ministry. To understand how the Spirit works in the church, we need to understand how the Spirit works in Jesus.

After all, the church is his body. Let's go back 2,000 years to Easter morning in the lifeless body of Jesus. The Apostle Paul gives us x-ray vision to see what happens next.
Thus it is written, the first Adam became a living being, the last Adam, Jesus became the life-giving Spirit. It says in 1 Corinthians 15, 45.
What does Paul mean that Jesus became life-giving Spirit? The Spirit unites with Jesus so intimately that without losing their separate identities, Jesus and the Spirit become functionally one. Think about that. Now think about this. What is true of Jesus because you are saved into Him is true for you.
[13:39] The same happens with us at salvation. We are united with Jesus so intimately that we become functionally one with Him, but also we become functionally one with the Spirit as well.

Romans 8, 11 puts it this way. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, resurrection power, dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
And in another place, Paul encourages the Ephesian believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And that verb, be filled, is ongoing present tense. To say it another way, he's saying, Paul is saying to the believers, be being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

To say it another way, Christian, don't stop breathing. Fill those lungs with the Holy Spirit who manifests the person and power of Christ in us and through us so that we might know Him and be able to display Him.
Don't settle for a life of spiritual apnea. Use those spiritual lungs that God's given you. Pray. Breathe in. Breathe out. Now you may say, Jesse, my day is so full.
[14:53] Praying without ceasing, that's a nice ideal to live toward, but it's impossible in my life where I have bosses and clients and employees or young kids vying for my constant attention.

I have a spouse I need to love. I have friendships to steward. I got chores to keep up on and hobbies to indulge in and sports to enjoy and social media to doom scroll on and news to never stop watching and then I gotta sleep.
I get all that. It's a fair argument. I got all those same things pulling at me too. Now here's some wisdom that I learned along the way from productive, busy people who were still able to cultivate a praying life.
And it's proven to work for me and I feel like even as it's working for me, it's not because my life's getting less busier. I feel like my life just gets more busier with age. So here are two things we need to do thinking about this praying without ceasing.
Two things. First, establish anchor points to stop and pray in your day. And second, also pray as you go. I'm getting very practical here but I think it's practicality is well informed by scripture.
[16:08] If you look carefully at Jesus' life, we find him stealing away at certain times. It'd be early morning hours, he'd slip out while everybody was asleep, his disciples were sleeping so he could just be alone and spend time with his father in heaven.

The apostles, they lived in a culture that had set times of prayer. Morning prayer, midday prayers, and evening prayers. Right? They talked about in Acts, they were going to the temple to pray. It talks about another time in Acts, Peter was praying up on a rooftop at a specific time of prayer, the sixth hour, which is noontime.
Right? That's when he saw that vision that led to preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. those were all anchor points in their lives. Right? Maybe you've heard it called a rule of life.
It's kind of the hip, new, trendy way to call it these days, which sounds like, what the heck is that? It's really just a throwback term to an old monastic tradition to build your life around anchor points. Right? These monks in monasteries, they would say like, okay, we are agreeing upon that these appointed times every day, we're going to stop what we're doing and we're going to pray. You know, Sunday from 9 a.m.
[17:16] to 10 a.m., we're going to be going to church. Anchor points are important, but here's a warning. Anchor points are meaningless if they're easy to move or to ignore.

You've got to put in anchor points and say, you know what, these things are just about nearly immovable. I have three alarms on my phone. Right? They go off at 8 a.m., they go off at 12 p.m., and they go off at 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.
And they are reminders to say, Jesse, it's time to stop and pray. That's why I have them on there, because if I didn't have it on there, I would just blow right through those times and totally forget about it. And you know what, sometimes when those things go off, I have more space to pray than I do at other times.
Like often at noon, it's a quick, like little 30-second centering prayer just to be mindful that God is with me and not to lose sight of him through the busyness of my day.
Just boom, just stop. Sometimes it'll just be a quick, let me just pray Psalm 23 real fast. Connect to my shepherd. Yes, you're with me, you're leading me, you're guiding me. Be with me, Lord. Those are anchor points for me.
[18:20] Those are immovable. And yet, within that, within that, there's flexibility there. How I pray in those specific moments when 8 a.m. hit or 12 p.m. hits or 4 p.m. hits, I'm like, I'm seeing what's going on and I make do with what I got, but I want to make sure I stop for that sacred time and I don't mess with it.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

But my 6 a.m. time in the morning, that's my longer anchor point, right? And it's, I get to just be that, my house is dead at the, it's just like, man, I go downstairs, I make myself a cup of coffee and I sit and I journal and I pray to God and I open the word.
I just enjoy unbroken time with my heavenly father. It's an anchor point that I'm like, man, that's super important. And sometimes that means I have to say no to things later at night because I might be too tired to wake up for that time in the morning.
At night, when I put my head down to sleep, I practice in old Ignatian time a prayer called examine. It's just simply thinking about your day and where you saw God at work.
Or I just simply pray Psalm 23 again, thinking about how the Lord was my shepherd and thinking about all the times of the day when he was there with me. And even times maybe I missed him. But those two things bookend my day.
[19:43] They're important for me. They're anchor points. An anchor point, you don't have to like be so rigid about it. It could be as long as 30 seconds. It could be five minutes long. Or if you're so inclined, it can be an hour long.

I'm saying, man, there's no hard and fast rule for these things. Take what your life is giving you, but you need to put in anchor points if you're going to obey this command to pray constantly. Now, anchor points are important, but there's something else we can do.
And that's weave prayer into life on the go as you're going about life. If I'm at the grocery store grabbing milk and I'm thinking of someone in their situation, right? I'm thinking about Otis and Neambi and like, I'm thinking about, Lord, man, like their new business, their stuff, bless them. Bless what's going on over there. I'm thinking about somebody who's like family member just had a crazy diagnosis and I'm like, I'm stopping you. I'm saying it quickly. Lord, be with them.
Give them favor. Bring healing. Give them comfort. Be with them. And you know what? I don't even have to stop and kneel on the ground in the grocery store and do praying hands for that. I just pray inwardly. It's praying on the go.
[20:50] It's not weird. Or if I'm talking with a friend and they mention a stress point in their life, like I'll wait for a break in the conversation, I said, hey man, can I just quickly pray for that right now?

And you know what? It's just, it's not long. It's one to two sentences. I'm praying, Lord, you heard what he said. Bring favor over that. Your favor over that. Please help. Please break through if there's a breakthrough in you, whatever it may be. And then, amen, boom, let's go talking again, right?
We're off on the conversation. You may hear all that and you may be like, Jesse, that just sounds really weird. But it's weird because we don't do it. It's just not our familiar.
And I just want to say, we used to think women wearing pants was crazy. So, just saying, it's not always wise to gauge what should be based on what is familiar to us.
Let me be clear. Weaving God into a conversation isn't turning that conversation into a prayer meeting. It's just, what you're doing is you're intentionally bringing God into life with us.
[21:54] Which should be a little more natural if we are those who believe the whole Emmanuel thing. Right? God is with us. We talk and share. We stop and we pray bringing God into the conversation with a quick prayer back to talking and sharing.

It's weaving. God weaving through it in and out. It can become so natural and normal and easy. Community group is a great place to practice this. We often think like in community group, let's be honest, we often think of like prayer time as what we do at a specific part of our time together and it's usually right at the end when there's only one minute left and we all feel like we gotta throw up a token prayer.
Right? That's what we do. Let's be honest. Or if we do pray for someone, there seems to be this kind of unwritten rule that everyone in the room must pray but you only get to pray once.
Right? Where do we get all these rules from? Like right? These unspoken unwritten things. When you stop to think about it, it should kind of make us chuckle.
Our familiar to us how we do church would look very strange to the first century church. I just wanna let you know.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

[23:06] So let's break out of unnecessary ruts. To recap all these practicals, we need anchor points in our lives that are immovable or at least very hard to move and we need to learn to pray on the go.

Weaving in prayer through our life. it's possible and it's necessary if we believe in the power of prayer and the power of prayer is what I wanna touch on next because if we aren't convinced this much prayer is needed, I believe we imbibed a spirit of our modern moment which is cynicism. Cynicism discourages us from prayer in a discouraging world. In my fantasy life as a pastor and hey, probably all of you are like, what is he about to say next?
It's heading in a good direction. In my fantasy life, I wish for a lot of things that God would do among us. One thing is that every one of us would read, pick up a praying life and read the chapter on cynicism that's there and then the next two chapters of what brings us out of cynicism.
Now, I know it won't happen but a pastor's got a dream, you know? I recently read those three chapters and it cut me to the heart. I don't think of myself as a cynical person.
[24:26] Like, my strength finders is like, I think it's optimism is one of my top five strengths, you know? So I am a pathological optimist which gets me into trouble sometimes because I'm like, yes we can!

But reading that chapter I was like, oh my goodness, I have a lot of cynicism around this prayer thing. Cynicism is realism.
We look at the world and we see things but it's realism without hope. And we get it on us. We live in a fallen world. Evil seems omnipresent and endemic. And add to that are screens that expose us to more evil than any other time in history.
It's just more than we can handle and we can't look away. It's like the palantir stone in Lord of the Rings. We've stared too long and evil feels unstoppable.
And so we lose hope. We become cynical. Let me share a quote from that chapter on cynicism by Paul Miller.
[25:31] It's a long one so bear with me. It's so good. Maybe this will convince you to go by the book. Cynicism creates a numbness toward life.

Cynicism begins with the very reassurance that everyone has an angle behind every silver lining is a cloud. The cynic is always observing, critiquing, but never engaged, loving, and hoping.
R.R. Reno, a Catholic scholar, not to be confused with Janet Reno. Just found out who the old people were in the room by that. R.R. Reno, a Catholic scholar, called cynicism a perverse version of being in the world but not of the world.
Yanni Sanchez, a 32-year-old Cuban blogger and leading spokesperson for her generation, wrote, unlike our parents, we never believed in anything. Our defining characteristic is cynicism but that's a double-edged sword.
It protects you from crushing disappointment but it paralyzes you from doing anything. To be cynical is to be distant while offering a false intimacy of being in the know.
[26:48] Cynicism actually destroys intimacy. It leads to a creeping bitterness that can deaden and even destroy the spirit. A praying life is just the opposite.

It engages evil. It doesn't take no for an answer. The psalmist was in God's face hoping, dreaming, asking. I love this.
Prayer is feisty. Cynicism, on the other hand, merely critiques. It is passive, cocooning itself from the passion of the great cosmic battle we are engaged in.
It is without hope. Paul Miller wrote that book and he says he battles with cynicism all the time. It's an us thing. We're all gonna battle with that.
We're all gonna face that. So what is our way out of cynicism? It's easy to point it out, right? What's our way out of it? How do we restore a spirit of hope that fuels a desire for prayer?
[27:50] Well, if looking at the world too long, like looking at the pallant tear stone, leaves you in cynical hopelessness, then shift where you spend most of your time looking. Fill your eyes with more of Jesus.

I'm so thankful what the counseling world has done for the church to help us grow in a deeper understanding of how brokenness runs, the various levels of our soul, how it can lurk there very easily and go unnoticed and undealt with and unaddressed and also how once it gets brought to the surface, how we can apply God's grace that brings healing to hidden places, those hidden places of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

our soul.
It's been so helpful. But it's often happened, good things can easily get manipulated into being unhelpful. You know, earlier generations made the mistake of they would ignore and suppress their sin and suffering, right?
Kind of like the, no, no, we just need to forget what lays behind like Paul said. But today, it seems that we've drifted into possibly another error that our sin and suffering is all we want to focus on.
And I am saying that as a staunch believer in the power of naming sin and suffering, we need to live in the light. That is very important. To live free, we have to do those things. Our forebearers who didn't do that, who suppressed these things, they developed a prickly moralism and legalism that lacked compassion and mercy.
[29:21] But I think we've drifted into a place of almost needing to have sin and suffering in our lives so we have something to even talk about. Now, I'm not saying we should stop doing that, but we need to balance that out with naming and noticing what God has done and what He's doing and to hope in His deliverance.

We need to hear how we experience, how people have experienced forgiveness and love and peace and restoration because of what God is doing in their life and after they've confessed sin and brought it into the light and have received grace and given mercy.
We need to see and celebrate the redemption of God that is happening all over the world. The church needs to see and celebrate battles being won to share in stories of deliverance and healing and renewal that is going on.
We need to cultivate hope again by filling our eyes with more of Jesus because when we do that we start to remember and realize it's not evil that is unstoppable, it is Jesus that is unstoppable.
That's all I got to say about that. This is the end of our prayer series, but let it be the early days of a new beginning for all of us.
[30:35] that together we'd become a praying people and together we'd become a praying church. We need a healthy heart, a renewed mind, full of God's truth that helps us to become more like Jesus but we also need healthy lungs, connecting with God, breathing Him in, full of His power and His presence.

Amen? As the band comes up and we look to respond, we're gonna take communion right now in a moment here and I just wanna say to you, if you're here you're not yet a follower of Jesus, communion isn't what you partake in right now, you come to Jesus.
You come to Him just as you are. He says, come to me all who are thirsty, all who are weak and He offers you bread and water without price. He offers you salvation.
He wants you to know that if you're coming and you're weary and you're worn out, if you're feeling guilty and ashamed because you know that you are a sinner, that you know that if you were to stand before God one day, it would not go well and He's offering you today, today is the day of salvation.
Believe in Him, believe that Jesus Christ died in your place for your sins. He bled and died on the cross for you. You can join Him in that death, dying to your old self but you know what, you get because you join, if you choose to join Him in His death, you get to join Him in His resurrection life too.
[31:58] The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead is at work in those who believe. Join Him in that. There's gonna be a prayer for you to pray if that is you. And for those of us in the room who are followers of Jesus, we get to come to communion and this is this wonderful invitation to come to feast on Christ.

We get to do it for free at no cost, at no price. And we remember that we get, because of this, we are with our King, we are with our Savior.
We are with our Heavenly Father. Like Otis pointed out at the beginning, that veil is torn. We get to, this is the adult table. All the benefits, all the blessings are there for us in Christ.
We have to do that. He's our manna from heaven. He's water from the rock. And we need His spiritual bread and we need a drink of Him to give us strength for the journey every single day.
So as you come to the table, come encouraged, come thankful that God gives Himself to us. He is always available. Always.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05

[33:08] Always. Always. Pray with me. Jesus, we are coming to your table right now and we thank you. We are not coming to a table that is empty.

Lord, we see that there's cups on there and there's bread to take, but also your presence is there. Just as your presence is in this room, and we thank you for that.
We thank you you are God with us. We thank you that you care and sustain us and give us everything that we need every moment of every day and help us to be like those wise Israelites wandering through the desert that would get up and go get the manna while it was there to take. Help us to feast on you every single day. Help us to enjoy you every single day. Help us to see how much we need you. Just a little more prayer because we need just a little more of you.
We are so desperate for you. Our boundary lines in you have truly fallen in pleasant places. In your presence is unending joy.
[34:17] At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Thank you Lord. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-03-11 21:43:05