

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
“Lord, Teach Us To Pray”
Taught by Rev. Ted Wood
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Don, why don't you, as Bruce says, take us to the throne of grace.

[MUSIC]

Because I'm going to be working through the “Daily Prayer, Scripture and Ancient,” let's open saying together the first prayer in the booklet. It's a very important, powerful opening prayer. Let us pray together:

Everyone: *“Almighty God unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no Secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name through Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

Okay, what I'm going to be doing is I'm going to be working through this booklet that I've put together. It's taken me several years. It's kind of evolving. Some of you have seen various parts of it. There's a worksheet thought goes along with it that's back there as well, so you ought to have both of those things.

Just before I get started, I would like to share with you something that happened to me yesterday evening. My daughter got engaged about four or five weeks ago. At the time, his father, the fiancé's father, had cancer, which is terminal cancer. This morning, he died at Passavant at about two in the morning. You know how it works. You have your work day planned out. I had mine planned out. I postponed and procrastinated and put a bunch of stuff on the table to be done yesterday, but of course, it didn't get done because we spent most of the time at his side in the hospital.

When we arrived yesterday morning, he was already no longer mentally with us and he was breathing very heavily. But I want to tell you, it was...I want to share with you my experience of that. Tom, I believed, by his testimony and by his life, died in Christ.

I once heard one of my favorite reformed teachers say, “The greatest acknowledgement to a person when they die, or a greatest recognition, is that they died in Christ,” and to be known in that way. Tom died in Christ. It's my belief.

As I hugged Mary Ann, his widow, as we left the room at Passavant, I told her I was privileged and honored to be there. Tom was there and his eyes were rolled back and he just was in a sense grabbing for air. You could tell his lungs were filling up with fluids. It was a privilege, not only because I was in the presence of a person, of a brother in Christ, who was dying in Christ, but also because I was in the presence of death. I know that in many of the Renaissance and Medieval paintings, it was not uncommon for the artist to write a short subscription at the bottom of the painting, and the words in Latin were “memento mori.” Remember death. The idea was as great as this painting is, as great as any accomplishment I have achieved, there it is, eyes rolled in the back of your head, grabbing for air, lungs filling with fluid. I thought it was a precious thing to be in that presence, and to be reminded of that.

I was so grateful for the number of young adults who were there to see that as well—to remember death—and that in the end, that's what we need to be thinking about. We're not going to live forever.

We're going to die. And then what? So, I was actually elated. I'm glad that Tom quit suffering this morning at around 2:00, but I was also delighted that that many people could see that and begin to think about that, because to think in their mind, "I'm going to be there someday, and then what?"

I was thinking also here about Romans 8:18, because his widow asked me, "May I ask you a Bible question?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I'm very disturbed by that passage." I had my Bible with me, but for the life of me, I could not find it. It's one of those things. I had a small pocket Bible without a concordance. She wanted to know about that passage. Remember where the question is put to Jesus about the woman who has seven husbands and Jesus says to the Sadducees, "You do not understand the Scriptures because in the age to come, there is neither marriage or giving in marriage." That was very disturbing to her. I'm afraid I didn't comfort her very well in my words because I said to her that compared to being in the presence of Jesus Christ, being in the presence of our loved ones and spouse will seem like a small thing.

Paul writes in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the present sufferings of this present time are not worthy comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us." It's almost like yes, I know that, especially maybe in other generations husbands and wives felt so strong, "I can just barely wait to be with them," but I tried to say, "You know, Mary Ann, Jesus in his lifetime, did he love anyone in particular more than another? Did he have any more greater affection for one than another? When you get into the age to come into glory, you're going to be like Jesus in your affections and you will love everybody absolutely as much as he loved everybody [UNCLEAR]." So I just, I said, "Mary Ann, that's not very comforting," and then after I got out of the room, I looked at my wife and I said, "Did I say the wrong thing?" and she said, "[UNCLEAR] you said the right thing," which is unusual. {LAUGHTER}

It was one of those kinds of experiences that was just very intense through the whole time, sitting hour after hour and the fella just gasping for air. You knew what was happening, because he was going to run out of oxygen, that's what was going to happen. The absorption level was going to go down. The ammonia level was going to up in the brain, and all these things that happen.

***Stanley:** I was thinking about what you were saying about will you be joined with your wife in heaven and a thought came to me that at least I know I'll miss two of the four, because they were Jewish. {LAUGHTER}*

That's an interesting attempt at humor. {LAUGHTER}

As I've shared with you before, and I've shared parts of this booklet before, I have struggled with prayer. I'm not a very good prayer person. I'm not a prayer warrior. I mean, I get down on my knees and I start to pray and my mind immediately goes someplace else. I say, "Lord, thank you for bringing me to this new day, and let me see, do I have that agenda done for the client meeting at 11:00. No, I'm sorry Lord, okay forgive me. My mind drifted away at that point. Now once again, Lord, thank you for all that you've done and who you are and doggone, that client, they just didn't..." My mind goes like that.

I needed discipline. In the Anglican tradition, a number of people take the Book of Common Prayer and go through morning prayer service every morning. I needed a discipline that was similar to that, and would collect both the scriptural verses that I thought were apropos and also some ancient prayers. That's what I've included here.

It's always right to pray Scripture. If you don't know what else to pray for, just pray the Scriptures. The Psalms are a great place to start and to plow through them. But it's also great to pray the prayers that

the church over the last 2,000 years has developed, because they've stood the test of time. There are a lot of prayers that go out, that I hear, that pastors will say or church leaders will say, that strike me as rather vacuous, without much substance. I'm not real crazy about starting a prayer by saying, Lord, thank you for the opportunity to gather here. It's like God is saying to us, "Okay, here's a chance. If you want to take advantage of it, good for you. If not, that's okay with me," kind of thing. It's kind of like he's offering an opportunity. I think that's a bad way to start with God.

I like much better this opening prayer, which is taken...Thomas Cramner, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote it in 1552. It's the beginning of the Holy Communion service. What it does is it starts off of by saying to God that "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom so secrets are hid." I'm kind of going into point number two here. I'm going to need to plow through this with a certain amount of speed.

What it starts off by saying is that before we say anything else to God, we say to him, "You know exactly what's going on in my life." There's no fooling around here. That's the bottom line. That is the bottom line we're starting from. I really like the 14th century English version of this, which is, the language Geoffrey Chaucer would have written it for the Canterbury tales, in like the 1350's. It's middle English. It's just a step before we get to modern English. He starts off the Canterbury tales [UNCLEAR]...and this when [UNCLEAR] with its sweet showers. I mean, he starts off that way, and you can pretty much pick it up, but this carries the same thing. It says, "God unto whom all the heart has been be open, and unto whom I will a speaketh and unto home no privy thing is hid." I love that. No private thing is hidden from you. God is saying, "You're not going to fool me," and that's a great place to start.

Therefore, since that's true, [UNCLEAR] we make a true statement about God, then you go on to the request. The request does not come first, the statement about God comes first, about his reality, his truth, and our standing before him. And then "cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, that I may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name."

Why do we need our hearts cleansed before God? Why do we need our hearts purified? After we've admitted to God that he sees everything? And what he sees is what? What do we need to purify? What does he see when he looks into our hearts?

Audience Member: *He sees his Son.*

Well, that's correct. Correct answer, Stanley. What else does he see?

Audience Member: *Sinful [UNCLEAR]...*

Sinful...yeah, he sees that we're desperately in need. He sees we're sinners. Our greatest need is to be purified in front of him, so that we can be holy as he is holy. Now we get that through the Son. That's exactly right, but that's what the request is. So this is where the prayer starts.

"¹³The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; ¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, ¹⁵he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds." (Psalm 33:13-19)

Of course, we know that passage from 1 Samuel 16, "The LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature...'" This is where Samuel is looking for God's anointed, which

is ultimately David in this the family of Jesse. “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him.” This is one of the sons of Jesse, “For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:6-7)

So therefore, when God looks on my heart, he not only sees Christ, but he sees in my daily life, my many failings, and therefore, I need to have my heart purified.

That’s where I start. In the morning, when I get on my knees, this is what start with. I don’t always use this booklet, but it’s a great discipline. I start off with this prayer, the Collect for Purity. It’s called a Collect because it collects the thoughts of a number of prayers. That’s what Cramner did. When Cramner was writing, editing the Book of Common Prayer in the mid-1500’s, what he did is he had all of these medieval prayers from the medieval Catholic church. They had a long series of opening prayers. He said, “This is too much. This is just word on word. This is redundancy.” So he collected them all into this one prayer. That’s why it called a Collect.

From there, it immediately goes, when God knows our hearts and he looks at us, we need to confess our sins. That’s the very next thing that happens. We confess. It promises in 1 John 1:19, “If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I found this section from Psalm 51 a great way to concentrate on confession of sin. What I’d like us to do is just to pray this together as you see there. So together let’s do this.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

(Psalm 51:1-12 ESV)

I find when I do this, in the morning, when I am on my knees and praying, I find that you can meditate on almost any one of those verses. They're just packed. Every one of those verses is heavily packed.

I tried to kind of, in the worksheet, number three, I tried to pull together some of the thoughts that Psalm 51 has, this confession has. The first thought that struck me is it talks about personal culpability, "I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me." Often, when I'm praying, I'm thinking...I come to that verse, and I say it again and again, "Lord, I know my transgressions and my sins are ever before me." My sins are ever before me. It says it again, I mean, these verses within Psalm 51 reinforce that, "Against you, and you only, have I sinned."

Before we've sinned against our children, or our friends or our family members, our wives, we've sinned against God. That's how serious the problem is. I've sinned against you and you only, and my sins are ever before me. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity. Not only am I sinning, but I have a deeper problem than that. I was brought forth seriously, fatally, eternally flawed, unless God does something about it. So behold, I was brought forth in iniquity. Therefore God, when you judge me, you are justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Anything that God says about me, in terms of his assessment of my walk with him and my thoughts, words and deeds, anything he says is absolutely true.

I remember I was going through a difficult period of my life. I had a friend who was an accountability partner. He said, "How are you doing, Ted?" I said, "I've been doing pretty well with this problem this week." He said, "Oh really? What about this, that happened last Thursday? And what about that, that happened last Saturday?" He had about three or four things. You know, what I wanted to say was, "No, that's not true!" Not because it wasn't true. I didn't want it to be true. I didn't want to face how badly messed up I was at that point. I had to say, "Yes." His judgments are justified and blameless.

Therefore you delight in truth in the inward being. Teach me wisdom in the secret heart. What that's all about is, "Lord, please instruct me. Don't let me reject your judgments on my heart. Let me see correctly. If you don't teach me, then I'm not going to know. I'm going to be in ignorance. I'm going to be in self-denial," in which most of us are involved in most of the time, saying it's really not true, it's not that bad. Oh yes it is that bad. In fact, it's much worse.

Sig: *When you were talking earlier about your friend that died, it just dawned on me, having a good friend of mine die over Christmas, that I began to think about Paul's statement in Romans, "the wages of sin is death." I never really thought about the weight or the seriousness of our sin, the fact that it does lead to death. I think about God's design, or his plan wasn't that you would die, but I mean, the weight of our actions leading to death, if I ponder on that and just slow down and stop and think about that, that's very heavy. Who else do I blame? Why did I live longer? I'm not sure what the point is other than the weight of that and the realization of that. Is that really the consequence...the day I die is a culmination of all of my sin, that I couldn't live any longer because the weight of my sin was just too...*

Interesting thought. I don't know if that's true, but it certainly comes out of the fact that we were born in sin, born in iniquity. We say that glibly. When you're watching a fella gasp for air and you can hear it, all of the stuff that's going on in his lungs, I mean, that's very sobering. But sobering in a good way. Thank you, Sig.

The confession of Psalm 51, it talks about personal culpability. It also talks about the consequences of the sin, but also the necessity of grace. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy." That's an interesting way to start the prayer, isn't it? It's not, "Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to get together." He's starting off by saying, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy. Purge me, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." That's what I need. That's the grace I need. I need to be purged and washed. Hide your face from my sins. I don't want you looking at my sins, Lord. Hide your face from them. Cast me not away and take not your Holy Spirit from me. I mean, we all ought...we have the assurance of salvation, but we also ought to be not glib or cavalier about it in the sense that there is possibility that at any moment, God could take his Holy Spirit from us, and then we'd be totally lost. There are consequences of our culpability, but also the necessity of grace.

Finally, in Psalm 51, it talks about, I would say, that great line in Revelation 7:10, it says, "Salvation belongs to our God." It's not that I've got myself in the right place, or I've cleaned up my act. Look at all these things. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right Spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Uphold me with a willing Spirit. Look at every one of those lines. It doesn't say, "I will create a clean heart within me." It does not say, "I will renew a right Spirit within me." It does not say, "I will restore the joy that I lost." It does not say, "I will uphold myself with a willing Spirit." It doesn't say any of that. All of these lines, all of these, the construction, sentence constructions, have to do with what God is doing. That, to me, is a great relief, that God would do that for me. That he would create in me a clean heart, renew a right Spirit within me, restore to me the joy of my salvation. In fact, John Piper talks about the greatest need for most Christians is that they need the joy of their salvation restored. They've lost the joy of their salvation. Restore the joy of your salvation. Uphold me with a willing Spirit.

When I'm praying this, I think, "Lord, that's what I need. I need a willing Spirit. I need to be willing to do this." Just not to do it, I need the will to do it. I need that will to do it. And you need to give it to me. I'm not going to create it; you're going to create it within me.

Of course, all of what I'm saying here goes back, all falls back to that great doctrine of the sovereignty of God. That's what Bruce keeps talking about, and that's one of the things we talk about here [UNCLEAR] very heavily on is that God is sovereign and he can do it and I cannot do it. He can, but I can't. It begins to shape your whole theology and the way you look at God. So you're no longer starting with "my" issues and "my" problems; you're starting with who God is. All my issues and problems are basically irrelevant compared to who God is and his character. That's why I need to be caught up in him in order to have the things I need. I need him and what he's going to do, so that he will uphold me, that he will renew me, he will restore me, he will let me hear joy and gladness, and that he will let the bones that he crushed, the bones that you have broken, I mean the Hebrew word there is crushed is kind of a sense of grinding of bones, the bones that you have broken rejoice.

I've been through a period in my life when I went through what I call my valley of the shadow of death period. I think many of us have been through that. We feel crushed by the weight of our own sins or the situations we find ourselves in, and we say, "Lord, please, let the bones that you have broken..." I mean, it's not just coincidental; they just don't happen to be crushed. He broke them. He's involved in it. He has his hands on it. I'm uncomfortable with this idea that kind of...God let's things happen. It's kind of like God sees something bad about to happen to you and he's off to the side kind of saying, "Well, should I intervene or not? I'm just kind of...I don't know, maybe I'll intervene this time and maybe I won't intervene..." God doesn't function that way. He has his hand...his fingerprints, his footprints, are all over every catastrophe you're in, any bad situation.

Tom: *Doesn't that then apply to when we go and ask for forgiveness of sins? We don't have to ask hoping he will, because we have been.*

Yes, we have been. We have been, and we know that unless he does it, there is no hope. Because he's the one who's doing it.

Audience Member: *I think of the song "prone to wander, Lord I feel it [UNCLEAR]..."*

Oh, that's right, isn't it.

Audience Member: *My heart is that part of me that likes my sins [UNCLEAR]...*

Yes.

Audience Member: *And then I think of this as a shepherd, you know, the brokenness, is sometimes [UNCLEAR]...it's not until I'm broken that I see my sin [UNCLEAR] and God breaks me, and then, God breaks me, like he, I guess [UNCLEAR] wandering sheep that kept wandering away, they break the legs, what I had heard.*

Wow! Yeah, good.

Audience Member: *[UNCLEAR] stop wandering and he would carry them around his neck, the shepherd. Sometimes the Lord, you know, he lets us wander off, but eventually, our sin will, I think, will break us, if we love it more than we love our Savior.*

Well, we do. Not if. We do. That's the horrible news. The situation is much worse than we think it is.

Audience Member: *My question is how do we prevent ourselves from getting broken [UNCLEAR] that sin before it's [UNCLEAR]?*

Audience Member: *I don't think you can prevent that. It says in Romans, Paul says, "I hate what I cannot do [UNCLEAR] flesh and I cannot handle being in my flesh, but I continue to sin and I don't know why. My mind is renewed of the Spirit and that's all that matters."*

Audience Member: *We can't help ourselves. As it says in Genesis [UNCLEAR] chapter 6 verse 5, "And the Lord saw the wickedness of man great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Again in...*

Wait a minute, it's not as bad as that. It's just, we're not as bad as that. {LAUGHTER} No, it's not continual. I mean, there are some good parts of me.

Audience Member: *This is one of those...the Holy Spirit had stopped restraining mankind and left us to ourselves, and so that's a picture of what we are in and of ourselves. That's what we [UNCLEAR]. That's what we really, by our flesh, that's what we want is to just do sin as much as we can. And if the Holy Spirit is not there restraining us from that, then we're going to go all in. Whether we like or not [UNCLEAR]...*

Do you find that...I like what you said. I agree with it. But do you find that disturbing, because it almost seems like we don't have responsibility. Is that what it sounds like?

Audience Member: *Read Romans again.*

I know. I understand. I'm just posing the question.

Audience Member: *I think of Psalm 139 if I may, "Oh Lord, you have examined my heart. You know everything about me. You tell me, oh Lord, you've seen my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit, you know when I stand. When far away, you know my every thought and you chart the path ahead of me. You tell me [UNCLEAR]." I mean, it's just, wow! Okay, so now we're out in the open here. It's my freedom...this is [UNCLEAR]. It goes on to where "you knit me in my mother's womb," and all of that. I just think it's awesome that it's out there. And you're doing all this, so you're the one that would call me back, so my deal is come get me. I'm over here. I'm far away. You know my every thought. You gotta come get me. Am I going to recognize when you come get me and all that.*

Audience Member: *I think what Shawn read, I think is a definitely a correct assessment of our hearts, and I think that when David said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me," I think that's the right response. Whenever we see who we are, we can be without hope or we can realize where our hope is found and go to the source of that hope. When he says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," he's acknowledging who he is and he's acknowledging God, just like the [UNCLEAR] we're reading right here.*

Right. God, by revealing the desperate condition also creates the desire. That's the key. It's just not that we, I mean, if you are aware of your desperate condition, and there is no desire for the new, then you commit suicide, because there is no hope. But you see that there is hope. Now, people find hope in a lot of things, and we're saying to people, "If you're desperate, here's the hope. Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the Savior of the world, he is the hope. That's the one to put your hope in."

"Well, I don't know, maybe he's not." "Well, okay, read the Scripture. You think about it. You think if that's not true or not. What other hope is there? Who else do we have in heaven, but You." So that's what we say.

Sig: *You have fate and destiny, Ted. Believe in destiny.*

Okay, if you find the idea of a force, an impersonal force who cares nothing for you, who has no interest in you, personally, then that's good. You go with fate and destiny. Or molecules, or whatever it is, the course of the universe or chance or whatever.

Let me move on here. Then we get...after we see the confession of sin, now we deal with the declaration of forgiveness. Together, let's pray this declaration of forgiveness from Psalm 103:

- ⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
- ¹⁴ For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.
- ¹⁷ But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

After going through that confession, I love this declaration of forgiveness. This is such a precious series of verses. It talks first about all...it has to do with God's attributes. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. "Lord, I have really screwed up. Lord, it's so messed up. I feel so awful about this. I feel so guilty." "Well, Ted, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." That is a great revival for me. Also, "as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him."

If we focus on God's attributes, we have this confidence in our forgiveness. And then on to the Lord's grace extended to and embraces...the Lord's grace extends to and embraces sinners. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion. He knows our frame. He remembers that we are but dust. As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

All of those items there, they deal with the fact that no matter how guilty and condemned you feel, this is the confidence. "Ted, I'm not going to deal with you according to what you deserve," he says. He says, "Remember, I am your father. Remember how your Heavenly Father had compassion on you. I have even more compassion on you than your own dad did. Ted, I know your frame. I know what you're made of. You're not strong enough. You're but dust. I already know that about you. Quit trying to be so strong and prove yourself to me because I already know you're but dust. Finally, what I'm going to do is as far as the east is from the west, that's how far I'm going to remove your sins from you."

After we go through our sins in repentance and the confession of sin, then we have this declaration of forgiveness.

Now after I do those things, I feel like I'm ready now to pray. What I do is I have two prayers, and I've shared this before with this group. I call it prayer for the saints. I call it prayer for the saints because that's what Colossians says, he's writing to the saints. This is the prayer that Bruce laid out for us. If you don't know how to pray for somebody who's a believer, these are the things you ought to pray for. I just encourage you...these are a great series of prayers. So therefore, I would say, perhaps about my wife, Dianna, I would say, "Lord, I've not ceased to pray for Diana, asking that she may be, first, filled with the knowledge of your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. That Diana may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord fully pleasing to him. That she may bear fruit in every good work. That she may increase in the knowledge of God. That she may be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy. And that she may give thanks to the father who has qualified her to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

Those six petitions are fantastic petitions. I go through every one of the people I'm praying for with this. Now sometimes, I will tell you, it gets a little irksome, because it's lengthy. It's a lot of praying for each person. But I will shorten it...that's why I've italicized a part...if you can't get the rest, do that. I think, Dick, you've committed this to memory. I've committed it to memory. What's been your experience of this as you do this daily?

Dick: *I was going to ask you the question because I perceive this prayer is that this prayer is really for the elect.*

Yes it is.

Dick: *And so therefore, when I'm praying for family members, I don't know if they're elect or not. Some I'm kind of sure that they're not elect. So I'm praying for God's grace of regeneration in their souls, and then these applications of this prayer to them and God's grace that they will be, that they are the elect and a calling will take place in their life. It's a reassuring prayer, because that's what you want for, especially for each of your family members, all of those situations.*

Right. And you don't know who the elect are. That's what I pray for the saints. If you turn the page, on the back, this is what I pray for those who I have no confidence that they know the Lord. This is a great prayer I stumbled on by Saint Anselm. After an Episcopal priest friend of mind said that Saint Anselm invented the doctrine of the atonement, which I thought was...golly day!! I mean, just crazy. I started to study Anselm and I found this prayer. This guy must have been a Calvinist because of the way he writes this prayer. Of course, he was 500 years before Calvin but...

Audience Member: *The idea is they're still out there.*

Sure they were, and Augustine and others, and in Scripture itself. This is what I would pray for someone who I want to come to know the Lord, but I have no confidence that they do. "Oh Lord our God, grant Bob grace to desire you with his whole heart, and so desiring you he may seek and find you, and so finding you may he love you, and loving you may hate those sins from which you have redeemed him for the glory of your name through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This Anselm got this thing. He nailed this whole idea because it starts off, "Oh Lord our God, grant him grace." Grant him grace. By grace are you saved through faith. That's all the action of God is grace. "God, before you do anything else, before you save him or give him help or heal him or whatever, grant him grace." That grace is for what purpose? "To desire you." Unless you desire the Lord, unless someone desires the Lord, there is no hope. They will never become a Christian. They may be scared of going to hell, they may want prosperity, they may want loved ones to come back, or whatever they want, but unless they desire God, there is no hope. "Grant him grace to desire you with his whole heart." That's what I want. I want to desire God with my whole heart. That's what I want.

"So desiring," here are the steps, "grant him grace to desire, and so desiring, he may seek and find you." I want him to find God, but where is he Lord? Please guide me. Let me seek and find you. "And finding you, may he love you, and loving you, may he hate the sins from which you have redeemed me. For the glory of your name through Jesus Christ our Lord." I love that prayer. It's an easy one to remember to memorize. I've got a number of people...I just say, "Oh Lord, our God, grant Bob grace to desire you with his whole heart, and so desiring you may seek and find you, and so finding you may he love you, and loving you may hate those sins from you have redeemed him." Beautiful. That's it! Person's saved. {LAUGHTER}

Audience Member: *Done deal.*

Done deal. I mean, really, if he's got all those things, no problem. Right.

Jim: *It's curious you don't have the Lord's Prayer on this card.*

It is. That's a good point, Jim, and you know what, this is evolving. That's why I put...

Jim: *I would think at a minimum, you would have it somewhere.*

I didn't do that. Isn't that interesting.

Jim: *You could do that right now.*

Mea culpa. Mea culpa. Mea maxima culpa. My sin, my sin, my great sin. No, that's true. Well stated, Jim. That would be a great way to do it. It needs to be there. You're exactly right.

Tom: *In one respect though, we misuse the Lord's Prayer. We recite it thinking we've done something good. Jesus didn't say repeat these words and you'll be a better person. He said, "When you pray, use this as your structure." And we don't. We just think there's magic in saying it.*

I feel exposed at this point. Jim, that's a good point.

Jim: *I love exposing you, Ted.*

I know you do. {LAUGHTER} It's your calling in life and thank you for it. You and my wife are in good... whatever.

I'm sorry for plowing through this. Prayer to desire God. I want people to desire God. If you desire God...what is John Piper's website called?

Audience Member: *Desiring God.*

Desiring God. He's got it. If you desire God, everything else will follow. That's right. The problem is that the unbeliever does not desire God. He may desire the blessings of God, but he does not desire God. That's a great difference.

Audience Member: *He may desire a god of his own making.*

That's correct. That's right. Then what I do is I have the prayer before reading God's Word. This is right out of John Piper. This is his devotion before he starts any reading of Scripture. So at this point, I've gotten through the opening collect, telling God I'm exposed. [UNCLEAR] was talking about Psalm 139. That's a perfect summary of that collect for purity.

Confession of sin. I get forgiveness. I start praying for people both the saved and the unsaved. Then I pray. Before reading God's Word, "Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain. Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. Unite my heart to fear your name. And satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love that I may rejoice and be glad all my days." It's IOUS. It's a great way to begin your Scripture reading.

At that point, I journal. I have a journal that I keep. I write down what's been going on in my life. Then I read a section of Scripture. I make a comment on what's jumped out to me in that verse. I may read three verses, I may read an entire chapter, however it strikes me at the moment. I don't try to over load

on reading Scripture. When you get into a text, you may have ten verses, you may have seen three precious things that jump right out and hit you. I usually just go three verses and do that one precious thing. Tomorrow I'm working through 2 Chronicles now, for instance, and there are some great things in there. I'm not really overly interested in all the names of the households of David and Solomon, but outside of that, I'm sure there's truth to be found in that as well.

That's a great series of prayer, "Incline my heart. You know, my heart's distracted—incline it. Open my eyes. I'm not seeing things. God, there are things in this word you want me to see. Open my eyes. Unite my heart." Piper says he has this in there because our hearts are scattered. They're fractured. They're going every which way. He says, "Unite my heart." This is the one I love at the end, "Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love." You know, we're all very unsatisfied. We want more. "Lord, just satisfy me. Satisfy me when I get up in the morning and spend time with you, with your steadfast love."

Then I finish off with a benediction. I would like to end our time with that benediction with all of us saying. I would tell you to do this, it takes me about half an hour to 45 minutes. I get up in the morning and I go into my office and I close the door. I usually say to my wife, "Is there anything you want to talk to me about before I go in my room?" She says, "I'm not awake yet." I go in there and then I have this time. I start off, I've formed the habit where I walk into that room first thing in the morning, my habit is I just naturally go directly to my chair and kneel down using the chair as kind of a like a prayer stall, so I'm kneeling there.

You may say, "Well, gee whiz, I have a hard time praying more than five or ten minutes." Hey, left on my own, I would, too. But you know what, I've got a lot of help here from the Scripture and from the great giants of the faith that can guide me through it. I would encourage you to do it. Take that time. It will take you a half an hour to 45 minutes to roll through this thing if you do all these parts. It will get you off, and you know you will have done your morning exercise at that point. And then you'll be justified by works. {LAUGHTER} Thank you for your patience with me this morning, and for sharing this. There are more copies over there if you want them.

Let's together close with the benediction from Hebrews 13:21-22. I love this section. I especially like that line that God will work in us what is pleasing in his sight. So together let's say:

Everyone: *May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good, that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Go in peace.