

The Ministry of Intercession
A Series on the Ministry of Prayer: Part 3 (Ronald Dunn)

This series of lectures was presented in October 1979 by Ronald Dunn (Lifestyle Ministries / Rondunn.com) at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary's Bueermann-Champion Lectureship. The series is notable for its emphasis on intercession.

Turn with me to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 11, the first ten verses:

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us focus our attention on a very important and specialized form of prayer. There are different varieties of prayer as we have seen and as you are well aware. But I think that we could say that perhaps the most strategic kind of prayer for us in carrying out our ministry and in ministering to others is the prayer ministry of intercession. Intercession involves three people: the person to whom we pray; the person praying, and important third party – the person for whom we are praying. Intercession is basically going to God on the behalf of someone else. I don't think I am being irreverent when I liken intercessory prayer to a secret weapon that the believer possesses.

I like to think of it as an intercontinental ballistic missile, that a believer can fire to any spot on the face of the earth. It travels at the speed of thought without detection and hits the target every time. One of the wonderful things about this weapon is that the devil hasn't been able to come up with an anti-prayer missile. Another marvelous feature is that it can be armed with a delayed detonator.

You remember the Gospel of John chapter 17 where Jesus is praying for His disciples. He said, "I pray not only for these but also for all those who believe in Me through their word." I believe that every time someone in 1979 is brought to Jesus Christ, that prayer of Jesus is answered all over again. Some day when we stand in the presence of our Lord and we know as we are known, we will discover that a great deal of our lives was blessed and perhaps we were delivered from many a disaster because of our loved ones who had prayed for us and those prayers were answered long after they had departed this earthly scene. I believe that you and I can pray through the lives, for instance, of our children, in anticipation of the needs that they have the problems they'll be confronting and long after we have left this earthly life, God will be answering our prayers on their behalf.

I have been thinking seriously about putting that in my will. I don't know exactly how that would go over, but I think it would be a great inheritance to leave your children – an inheritance of **answered prayer**. There is no limit to the scope intercession can embrace when you and I learn how to intercede. It seems to me that there is nothing that lies close to the heart of God and is at the very heart of redemption, other than intercession. When the Lord Jesus came, He came to make intercession.

Isaiah pictures Him as making intercession for the transgressors. We know that what He is doing right now is interceding for us in the presence of our Father. The Holy Spirit was given for the purpose of intercession. You and I are

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never closer to the heart of God and we are never any more true co-laborers with the Lord as when we are interceding. It is the ministry of intercession that lies at the very heart of the Gospel. As I have already mentioned, the longest prayer in the Bible, John chapter 17, is a prayer of intercession.

The fact that God has made us a kingdom of priests, I believe, emphasizes that fact that you and I are to be intercessors. If you ask the average Christian what it means to be a priest, and what the significance of the priesthood of the believer is, they will answer something like this (which is correct): "Well, it means in so many words that I have direct access to God, that I do not need an earthly priest to go to God on my behalf, but I can move into the presence of God on my own. I have direct access to God." That is true, but it is not all the truth. A priest is one who goes to God on the behalf of someone else. The priesthood of the believer is not given to us simply for our own satisfaction, or our own well-being. I believe it implies the fact that you and I do have responsibility.

I think Samuel voiced that when he said, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Paul in his letters was constantly asking the people to pray for him. He was involved in a consistent ministry of intercession. Constantly praying for those to whom he ministered, and those whom he had brought to Jesus Christ. I think one of the greatest illustrations of the power of intercession and the method of intercession is found in Exodus chapter 17.

You remember the nation of Israel as they were following the Lord, and they came to the valley of Rephadim. There is Amalek, and he says, "This is as far as you go." Moses gathers Joshua around him and says, "Now Joshua, here's what I want you to do. I want you to gather all the fighting men of Israel with you in the valley of Rephadim, and meet Amalek. I am going up yonder on that mountain and I will be up there." You know, I have always thought if I had been Joshua, I would have thought, "Moses, I've got a better idea. Why don't you go down and meet Amalek and let me get up yonder on the mountain." But Joshua did as he was told. You remember the story. Moses up yonder on the mount and the armies of Israel and Amalek engage in the valley below. When Moses would lift up his hand, Israel would prevail and when he would lower his hand, Amalek would prevail.

After a long while, Moses caught on that he had something there. You remember the two fellows that came on either side of him and supported his hands and held them up until the going down of the sun. The Bible says, (I think it's the greatest understatement in all the Scriptures) "Israel discomfited Amalek." Well, they did a lot more than discomfiting.

Let me ask you a question. Where was the victory won that day? Was it won in the valley? No sir, it was won on the mountain. I think that this is a principle of intercession, and an illustration of the power of intercession.

In a very real sense, Moses was interceding and the victory was won not because of the ability and the strength of Joshua in the valley, but it was because of the faithfulness of Moses on the mountain. I would submit to you the reason that we are not winning more victories in the valley of spiritual warfare is because there are not any Moses' on the mountain interceding for us, lifting us up.

The ministry of intercession, I believe, is that secret weapon that God has placed in the lives of every believer. One of the great tragedies of our days is that it lies rusting and unused. It is my prayer and one of great burdens of my own ministry that God would help us to rediscover this lost weapon. This morning I want us to just discuss what does it mean to intercede; what kind of prayer is intercessory prayer.

I think you have a good treatment of it here in this parable that Jesus tells of the friend who went at midnight begging for bread on the behalf of another. You have three people here: the intercessor, the friend who possesses the bread, and the one on his journey that stands in need. It is the picture of one going to another on the behalf of a third party. So, let's just examine this parable this morning. I think we can see in it some very interesting characteristics of intercession.

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The Meaning of Intercession

What does it mean to intercede? If I am going to learn to intercede, I think the first thing that we will notice is this, that true intercession always seems to be **characterized by boldness**, daring, audacity. There is a certain boldness in this man who goes out at midnight begging bread, and pounds on the door and even though it is midnight, and the friend says, "My children are with me in bed; it is too late; I am not going to get out of bed to give you what you want." Yet that man persists, stubbornly persists in his attempt to gain bread for the traveler. There is a certain boldness in that activity; there is an audacity, that a man would go out at midnight and wake up a friend, disturb him, and persist in that disturbance until he went away with the needed bread.

If you study the Bible, especially the Old Testament, you will find that this mark of boldness and daring characterized all of the great intercessors. Abraham, I think, qualifies as a daring intercessor when he is interceding yonder for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. I almost think at times it seems that Abraham forgets who he is talking to in that account in Genesis chapter 18 when he says, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right?" He says, "You mean to tell me that you are going to destroy the righteous with the unrighteous? Lord, be that far from Thee. Lord, you ought not to do that. You are the judge of all the earth. And you ought to do what's right." Now I submit to you that that's rather bold. Of course, Moses and his intercession bore this same characteristic when God said I have had it with these people, don't pray for them any longer; I am going to destroy them and start all over. Moses said, "You promised; you promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You promised that you would make of these people a great nation, and if you do what you are planning to do, you'll give the enemies of Israel cause to mock and they will say, "God has played a dirty trick on them and brought them out here in the desert so they could die.' You will be breaking your word." In effect that is exactly what he said.

The King James version says, "And the Lord repented of what He had intended to do." Now, you figure that out – I am not going to try to explain it. I know that the Bible is written in human language and terminology so that we can understand, and whatever that phrase involves, it does involve one thing – that Moses was bold and audacious in his intercession. There is a certain daring, a certain boldness that characterizes intercessory prayer.

I think, first of all, in this parable we see that intercessory praying must be bold and daring in the **size of the request**. You will notice that this man asked for three loaves of bread. William Barclay points out that in that day and age, one loaf of bread was usually a full day's supply. It was rather unusual for this man to go at midnight and begging for, not a single loaf of bread, but a three day's supply of bread.

There is an old hymn that we no longer sing, but it's a great one. One verse says, "Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with Thee bring, for His grace and power are such that none can ever ask too much." One of the great tragedies of our praying is that we usually pray as though God has just declared bankruptcy. There are people who believe that is a sign of humility if they don't ask for very much. Coming to the Lord, overwhelmed by their sins, very "humbly" and very "modestly" pray, "Dear Lord, if you could give me a few crumbs that fall from your table." May I say to you this morning, that you do not approach God as a beggar coming to a back door, but you approach Him as a son, as a joint heir with Jesus Christ, as an heir of God with all the rights that attend to that Sonship, and that you and I have the boldness to come to God and ask for all that we need and whatever those that are within the realm of our influence also, whatever they have need of.

I do not believe that God is honored by small praying. I believe that we come very close at times, to literally blaspheming the name of God because of the way we pray. We pray as though God can ill afford to give us very much. You cannot diminish His goodness. You cannot diminish His richness. I have an idea that God usually meets us at the level of our expectation.

Did you realize in one sense that God allows us to set the level and the limit of our own blessings? He really does.

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God allows us to set the level and limit of our own blessings. We sometimes pray, "Lord, bless me more." I think that if God were to speak to us, He would say, "Son, I am blessing you all you will let me." "Lord, use me more." The fact is that if God could use us anymore than He is, He would. You see, He allows us to set the level and the limit of our own blessing. The law of Christian living is "according to your faith so be it." He could not do many mighty works there. Why? Because of their unbelief. You will find phrases like this running throughout the Gospels: "with the same measure you mete out to others, it will be measured to you." "Give and it shall be given." "In the same measure that you give to others it shall be given to you." "Judge not that you be not judged." There is a very real sense in which God allows us to set the level and limit our own blessing.

I am reminded of that widow in the book of Kings whose husband died and the creditors were about to take away her sons. You know the story. Elisha said, "What have you got in your house?" She said, "Well, nothing. I have a little pot of oil, but that's not much." He said, "Well, you send your sons and tell them to go borrow vessels and borrow not a few." You know the story. They brought all the vessels that they had borrowed and took that little pot of oil and began to pour. And they filled all those vessels and after awhile she said, "Bring me another vessel." And the son said, "There are no more vessels." And the Scripture says, "And the oil stopped."

I have often imagined what if that woman had said, "Lord, give me more oil." The Lord would have said, "Woman, give Me more vessels." You see the flow of oil was not determined by God's ability to give – it was determined by the woman's capacity to receive. As long as there was space to fill, as long as there were vessels to fill, the oil flowed. But when the vessels were filled and there were no more, the oil stopped. God meets us at the level of our expectations and we must be bold and daring in the size of our requests.

There is something else about it. It is the stubbornness that is illustrated in this parable. I believe that is the key teaching in this particular parable and the same in Luke 18, the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. You will notice in verses 7 and 8, Jesus says, "And he from within will answer and say, 'Trouble me not; the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee.' And I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is a friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needth."

Now "importunity" is another one of those words that is almost untranslatable into English. I can take three or four different ways of to say it, but I think a good translation would be "stubborn persistence." It means the inability to be put to shame. There is nothing that will embarrass this fellow. He is so stubborn, he is so determined to get what he needs for his friend that even if it costs him losing a friend, he is going to hang in there and keep on banging on that door until the man gets up and gives him what he needs. Now that's stubbornness.

Stubbornness in Prayer

I want to tell you something. That is a quality, when it comes to this matter of prayer, that God highly prizes. Stubbornness in prayer. You notice he said, "My children are with me in bed." Literally, what he is saying is, "My children are packed about me in bed." That's the literal translation, "Packed about me in bed." I don't know how many kids that fellow had, but evidently they just had one bed per family. Now wouldn't that be a blessing? Here he is at night and his children are packed around him in bed. Any parent who has ever gone to bed with a little baby, trying to get the little thing to sleep, you know. You lay down because it won't go to sleep unless you lay down with it. If you have to get up, you know, any slight movement is going to cause that child to waken and start crying. You get the picture. There is this fellow with his children, literally packed about him, and he is not about to get up. Door is shut, the window is shut. You can hammer all night. If I get out of bed and give you that bread, all these kids are going to wake up and I will be up all night trying to get them back to sleep. Jesus says, "Though he will not rise and give him because he is a friend." There are two Greek words translated "friend" – one simply means "friend," the other means to "love as a brother." That's the word that Jesus uses here. It is a very strong word. He is saying though he loves him like a brother he will not rise and give him what he needs. Yet because of his stubborn persistence, because of his shameless persistence, he will do what? He will rise and give him as many as he needs.

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Stubbornness in prayer. It is the stubbornness of Jacob as he wrestles with that man and says, "I will not let you go until you bless me." Now you know there are a lot of things about that that I really don't understand. I am assuming, like most people, that that's the Angel of the Lord, a manifestation of God. Do you think that an angel could really get loose from Jacob if he wanted to? I have news for you folks, that fight was fixed. I really believe it was. I can't prove that, and it's just my feeling, but I have an idea that that angel was saying, "Let me go; but, I hope he doesn't." Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me."

I have an idea that many a time the Lord is just about to give us the blessing when we grow weary in well-doing. Jesus said, "Men always ought to pray and not faint, not lose heart, not give up." Stubbornness: that kind of persistence that believes that God our Father already knows of what we have need and He wants to give more than we want to receive. While I can't answer all the mysteries that are involved in persistent praying, yet I do know this that the Bible teaches that many a time for you to, and me to gain the blessing from God, it is going to require a stubborn persistence, a hanging onto the horns of the altar until God answers. You can check out Luke 18. You have the same emphasis there, that this widow, because of her persistence, gained a blessing that she sought from that unjust judge.

The "Sacrifice" of Intercessory Prayer

There is another characteristic of this audacity, this boldness in intercessory prayer. I believe that it is in the *sacrifice* that is involved. We must be bold and audacious in the sacrifice of our prayer. Now you say, "What sacrifice did this man have to make?" Well, I think it is the sacrifice of identification. Why didn't this man say when the traveler came at night on his journey, "Listen, you are hungry. I can tell you where you can find bread. I am not going to risk my friendship. After all, I have eaten and I am full and I'm not hungry. You are the one who is hungry; you go get bread." But it is remarkable that because of the custom of that day, he becomes the friend on his journey. He is the one that is hungry; he is one that is without bread, but the man who already has the bread, who is already filled, knows where he can obtain it. So he goes out and starts begging for bread as though he were the one that was hungry. You see, that is the sacrifice of identifying himself with the need.

Isn't that what Jesus did? Did not He identify Himself with sinners? Isn't that one of the great significances of his baptism, a baptism of repentance, identifying Himself with sinners? Didn't He become one of us? Didn't He take upon Himself the form of human flesh? Didn't Paul say to the Galatians, "I became as you were so that you might become as I am?" Isn't this what Moses was doing when God said, "I have had it with these people. I am going to start over with you"? And Moses said, "Lord, if You cannot forgive them, then blot me out of the book which Thou hast written." Whatever else that may mean, it means one thing: Moses was identifying himself with the need, with the sin of the people. When Nehemiah saw the sin of his people, he wept over it as though it were his sin. Isn't this what Paul was saying, when he said, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for the brethren's sake"? Wasn't he identifying himself with the needs of his own people? You see one of our great sins today is how you and I can minister with utter detachment.

We are like lifeguards that want to save people without getting wet. We are like firemen that don't want to get hot. We are like doctors that don't like to get near sick people. We are very happy to minister to the Lord as long as we can do it without any passion, as long as we can do it without any shedding of tears. One of the great curses of ministry today is passionless preaching and praying. The fact that we can, with cool detachment, handle these great things of the Word of God and stand and preach about men being lost forever and going to a devil's hell separated forever from the presence of God. And we can do it with absolute cool, cold detachment, and never know what it means to have a broken heart, because we have never sacrificed ourselves to the point where we are willing to identify ourselves with the needs of the people. There is a sacrifice involved in true intercession. It must be bold, audacious praying.

Specific Prayer

The second characteristic of intercessory prayer, not only is it to be bold praying, audacious praying, but it is also, I

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believe, to be definite praying, specific praying. You will notice the man specified exactly what he wanted. He said, "Lend me three loaves. Lend me three loaves." Now I don't think we will say any more about this except to mention just a few things, because we dealt with this previously and we need to discuss some other things, but let me say this, that I believe that the more serious we get in our praying, and the more real prayer becomes to us, the more specific we will become. I have an idea that the reason our praying is so vague and general is because we are not really aware of what prayer is. We are praying at the Lord instead of praying to Him. Prayer is yet an unnatural thing to us. It is just simply a religious exercise. Therefore, we are very general and we are not very specific and there is not that much of a burden on our hearts. You know, I find that when I become more and more aware that I am literally in the presence of my heavenly Father, I am simply a child speaking to my heavenly Father. As the burden of my heart is increasing day by day, I find myself being far more specific than I have ever been in my praying, saying, "Father, this is exactly where I hurt and this is exactly where my son hurts, and this is exactly what my church needs. Lord, this is the problem that my church is facing. Lord, this is the problem that my country is facing. This is what's happening right now in my community." Real intercessory praying is definite and specific praying. Most of our prayer aims at nothing and hits it every time.

You have often heard the illustration, I'm certain, of the way a child asks something from his father. My children never just say, "Father, bless me." When I leave (I got into the habit of this several years ago), I always bring some little trinket, souvenir little toy or something, when I come back, and it is very interesting how my children become very specific. They didn't used to be that way! When they were just little kids, you know they didn't care. But the older they got, do you realize how much more specific they became? My daughter now wants a Corvette. That's fairly specific, wouldn't you say? I don't know how I am going to get it in my suitcase, but the point that I am making is this that in the final analysis as I have already labored, that prayer is simply the act of a child coming to his Father. That is always done specifically, definitely. I would like to challenge you to go through the New Testament and notice how specific are the prayers of the New Testament. Jesus was very definite in His praying. The Bible tells us that we can pray for the healing of others. Paul instructs us to pray specifically for our leaders both secular and spiritual. We are to pray that the Spirit of the Lord will thrust laborers into His harvest. We are to pray for the growth and the spiritual development of other believers. On and on the list could go. The Bible teaches us to pray specifically and definitely.

"A Sense of Urgency..."

But, let me go on to the last characteristic that I want to share with you this morning. It is this. It seems to me that real intercession is prayer that is characterized by a **sense of urgency**, a sense of desperation. I believe this man in this parable was desperate. I believe he was not without a sense of urgency. I have often wondered if his wife gave him any excuses for not going out at midnight. After all, you know, they didn't have the late, late, late show in those days and everybody went to bed at dark-thirty. You didn't just go calling on friends at midnight. I wonder if his wife didn't caution him. I wonder if a thousand excuses didn't come to his mind as to why he ought not to go out at midnight. I mean it's midnight, so why can't this wait until morning? Well, here is a man who has come on his journey and it is the custom to take him and feed him. The very fact of the late hour and the inconvenience of the situation underlies the fact that here is the situation that calls for urgent conditions. There is a sense of urgency, a sense of desperation.

I will tell you this much. The "nonchalant" **will never make great intercessors**. Those who are at ease in Zion will never man the ramparts of intercession. Dr. Vance Havner in his way said, "One of the problems of our day is that the situation is desperate, but we are not." And may God pour out upon us a sense of desperation and urgency. Folks, I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but we are living in urgent, desperate times. It is time for us to stop fiddling and start getting serious about this business of seeking God's face. I would like to suggest to you three reasons why intercessory praying ought to be desperate and urgent.

The first one is because of our **inescapable responsibility**. You will notice in verse six the Scripture says, "For a friend of mine in his journey has come to me. He hasn't come to my neighbor. He didn't come to the pastor down the

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street. He came to me.” And the unwritten custom of that day said that if this happened, you were under obligation to take him in, to provide for him, because to turn him away might cost him his life. You see, he is my inescapable responsibility. I want to say to you this morning that you have people that have come to you in your journey, and they are your inescapable responsibility. You are responsible for them. I believe exactly what Paul was saying to the Ephesian elders, when he said, “I have not ceased day and night to warn you about a space of three years, to warn you and to preach and to pray.” And he did it with tears. He said, “I am clean from the blood of all men.”

I believe that when God puts us in a sphere of influence, a realm of ministry whether it is in school or whether it is in the local church or whatever it may be, there are people who become our inescapable responsibility. As I have said, I have been a pastor for a number of years and I suppose one of the things that I have had to face through the years happened some time ago when I went to visit a dear lady, a member of our church in the hospital. As I stood there beside her bed, talking with her, she began to say, “I want you to pray for my son. He’s seventeen years of age.” I hadn’t seen her son in quite some time. I hadn’t seen her in a very long time; she didn’t come much. Her husband came hardly at all. Come to find out the son was rebellious. He wouldn’t go to church and he was into some bad scenes. The she began to turn on the church and specifically the youth program. She began to point out how inadequate our youth program was and the fact that her son just really couldn’t identify with our youth director – had our church had a better youth program and had we had a more able youth director, then her son wouldn’t be in the fix that he was in today. Because the woman was lying on a hospital bed, I did not want to be harsh with her. I waited until later to tell her what I really believed. But I don’t find anywhere in the Bible, dear friends, where God delegates the responsibility of a parent to the youth director, or youth program. I believe the church of Jesus Christ ought to do all that it can to minister, but I want to tell you something, folks, your children are **your** inescapable responsibility. They are not **my** responsibility. You may be the only believer that unbelieving neighbor who lives next door actually comes into contact with. I have news for you, friend, he is your inescapable responsibility. That ought to make you desperate to pray and intercede. God gives you grace.

But not only because of our inescapable responsibility, but also because of our **inadequate resources**. Notice what the man says, “For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me.” Then those very plaintive words – “I have nothing to set before.” My dear friend, I do not see how a pastor, how a minister can ever, can ever keep off his knees in intercession when he realizes that Sunday, after Sunday, he must stand before those people and it is his responsibility to give them the word of God and yet he is conscious of his own inadequate resources. “I have nothing to set before him.”

I will never forget a few years ago when we had a black evangelist from the Sudan visit our church. We prayed together in my office before the service. I can hear him pray now. What he said in that prayer has stayed with me. He said, “Father, if You do not bless the pastor, the people will go away hungry.” Our inadequate resources. You see, the world is hungry for bread. What we have been doing that last few years is that we have been building huge bread boxes that are empty. The world has come to the door of the church seeking bread and we have nothing but fancy bread boxes. I want to tell you something. When a man gets hungry enough, a man will eat bread from a garbage can. The devil has been waiting outside the door of our empty bread boxes with his garbage can bread and that’s the reason you have excesses and extremes today. The evangelical church of Jesus Christ is much to blame for some of the excesses and extremes in Christianity today as anyone else. Why? Because we in our insipid and passionless preaching and praying are not meeting the spiritual needs of the people. They are hungry. They come seeking bread. I tell you, if there is anything at all to make us desperate and urgent in our praying, it is this: my inadequate resources. Lord, I have nothing, I have nothing to set before them.

The final word is this, we ought to be desperate in our praying because of his **inevitable reward**. I love that statement where He says, “Yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him.” How many? Did he give three loaves? I don’t have any idea, but I do know he got as many as he needed. God’s inevitable reward. There’s only one place in the world to get bread and that’s from the Father. As far as I know, there is only one way to get it and that’s to

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ask for it. But I do know this, nobody ever comes away from the Father's house empty handed. You go in with your need and you come out with His much more. God, my friend, is far more anxious to give than you are to receive. If we could just understand the problem. The problem is not in God's ability to give. It is not in God's ability to save. It is not in God's ability to bless. It is in our capacity to receive. We say, "Lord, give me more oil," and God is saying, "Give Me more vessels for there is plenty of oil."

His inevitable reward... I believe that is a picture of intercessory praying. I believe that God today wants to do something in this country. Now, anybody who believes the Bible has to be both a pessimist and an optimist at the same time. That's not easy to do. I am a pessimist in that I believe that this world is going to get worse and worse. I believe that the Devil is going to accelerate his campaign of evil. I believe that the love of many is going to wax cold. I believe that many, many are going to depart from the true faith. I believe that this world is going to get worse, but I believe that at the same time, the power of God is not diminished in any way.

I believe that we stand on the threshold of some of the greatest days for Jesus Christ that we have ever had and the opportunities are greater than ever before. But I am convinced beyond any shadow of doubt the key will be whether or not you and I as men and women of Jesus Christ learn how to get bread. Friend, I want to tell you something. The day is going to come in our country, I believe, when it's going to be absolutely essential to know how to get bread. I am not speaking only of physical bread, but of spiritual bread. The victory, the race will go to that individual who knows where to find bread. I tell you this much, when you leave this Seminary and you find yourself pastoring some church and you are wanting to know how to attract people, how to build a church, I tell you this much: in time of need, people will always come to where they can find bread. They will always come to where they can find bread, and there's plenty of it if you know how to get it.

Let us pray together. Our heavenly Father in Jesus name, we give Thee thanks today because of Thy goodness, because of Your abounding grace and overflowing mercy that's been so wonderfully displayed to each one of us. Father we are thankful that You have given us the Bread of Life and that we sit here today satisfied, having eaten that bread. O Lord, all of us, even at this very moment, can think of people who, in their journey, have come to us and they know nothing of this bread and they are starving. There are inescapable responsibilities. Father, I pray above everything else we learn this week in these sessions that You will teach us how to find bread so that we may feed those who, in their journey, have come to us. Bless this time we have had together today. Multiply it for Thy glory in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you.