

# Peter 8 of 10

## *I Have Prayed for You*

#0382

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 14, 1969

Let's begin our lesson this morning with Luke 22:31–32. The disciples are seated with Jesus in the upper room. It's the time of the last supper. Christ has been conversing with them. And now He speaks especially to Peter:

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” Luke 22:31–32.

Doubtless Peter was grieved at the thought that he needed a work of conversion. In fact, he responded immediately in the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse and said, “Lord, I am ready right now.” But Jesus told him further that he was going to deny Him that night.

Now, it is not the denial of Peter that I wish to study with you this morning. I want to study with you that wonderful statement of Jesus, “I have prayed for thee.”

Peter didn't appreciate it at that moment. There was something in his heart that rose up. He thought Christ didn't understand him. He thought that Christ's statement, “I have prayed for thee, Peter,” meant that Peter lacked something, he needed something. Which he did. And he thought he was ready, but he wasn't.

But the prayers of Jesus in the past, and that night, finally availed in Peter's behalf. As you read on in the story, you remember that they went out to the garden of Gethsemane, and there Christ asked Peter to pray for himself. Jesus was praying for him. But Peter went to sleep. And then, before the dawn, Peter, in the courtyard, there at the fire, had denied his Lord.

At the time of the last denial, it so happened in the providence of God that Peter turned and looked in the direction of where Jesus was standing there, before His judges, and Christ turned and looked upon Peter.

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly” Luke 22:61–62.

This was Peter's repentance. It was the prayers of Jesus that brought him to repentance. And Peter remembered in that dark hour of discouragement that Jesus had said, “Peter, I am praying for you.”

In the book *Education*, I read:

“When in the judgment hall the words of denial had been spoken; when Peter’s love and loyalty, awakened under the Saviour’s glance of pity and love and sorrow, had sent him forth to the garden where Christ had wept and prayed; when his tears of remorse dropped upon the sod that had been moistened with the blood drops of His agony—then the Saviour’s words, ‘I have prayed for thee... when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ were a stay to his soul. Christ, though foreseeing his sin, had not abandoned him to despair.

“If the look that Jesus cast upon him had spoken condemnation instead of pity; if in foretelling the sin He had failed of speaking hope, how dense would have been the darkness that encompassed Peter! how reckless the despair of that tortured soul! In that hour of anguish and self-aborrence, what could have held him back from the path trodden by Judas?” *Education*, page 89.

Judas was a suicide. Peter could have been. But there was something that kept him—the love of Jesus, the prayers of Jesus, the look of Jesus. That was the lifeline that was thrown out to him. And in his great hour of defeat, thank God, the prayers of Jesus held him.

Now, my dear friend, the message I bring you this morning is that Jesus has prayed for you as He prayed for Peter. I want to read this now. This is a wonderful statement. If you’ve never heard this one before, you’re going to value this. I trust you will. It’s worth a lot:

“Jesus pleaded, not for one only, but for all His disciples: ‘Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.’ His eye pierced the dark veil of the future and read the life history of every son and daughter of Adam” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, pages 529.

Are you a son or daughter of Adam? Then Jesus was praying for you.

“His eye pierced the dark veil of the future and read the life history of every son and daughter of Adam. He felt the burdens and sorrows of every tempest-tossed soul, and that earnest prayer included with His living disciples all His followers to the close of time. ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.’ Yes; that prayer of Christ embraces even us” *Ibid.*, pages 529–530.

It takes us in. Jesus is saying to you, my friend, as He said to Peter, “I have prayed for thee.” Oh, isn’t that wonderful that Jesus has prayed, and *is* praying for me, for you?

Now let's go to John 17:20 and read in the prayer of Jesus where you and I come in. This is the prayer of Christ shortly after this talk with Peter and the others in the upper room, just before Gethsemane. His whole prayer down through this chapter is for His disciples.

“Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” John 17:20.

So He was praying for those who would believe on Him through their word. Well, that's the way believers have believed down through the ages. We've believed in the testimony of others. All right then, this is for us.

Now going back to *Volume 4*:

“As the Prince of life, He had power with God and prevailed for His people. This Saviour, who prayed for those that felt no need of prayer, and wept for those that felt no need of tears, is now before the throne, to receive and present to His Father the petitions of those for whom He prayed on earth” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 528.

Then Jesus prayed for me when He was here on earth. But He's there in Heaven now praying for me, and ready to receive my prayers this morning. Isn't that a wonderful encouragement to us to pray?

We do not have to awaken in the Savior's heart an interest in us. We do not have to knock at the door in the hope we will get some attention. It's true we're told to knock. It's true we're told to pray. But we *know* that Somebody's waiting for our knock. We know that Somebody is listening for our prayers. We know that Somebody is praying for us with a far greater intensity than we have ever prayed for ourselves, a far greater intensity than we are capable of manifesting.

Notice, He prayed for Peter even when Peter felt no need himself. He has prayed for us when we felt no need. It says:

[He] prayed for those that felt no need of prayer, and wept for those that felt no need of tears” *Ibid.*

Ah, yes. Many a night while Peter and the other disciples were sleeping, Jesus was out on the mountain praying for them. Great tears of longing dropping from His eyes, as His heart went out in that tender, earnest plea to His Father for His disciples.

Oh, I'm thankful for the prayers of Jesus. What do you say? Who can measure? Who can measure the power of those prayers? Think of it. Reaching down to our time. Yes, that prayer of Christ embraces even us. Well, I'm glad this morning that Jesus is praying for me. That thought can sustain us all through the day.

Now, we in turn are to reach out in behalf of others. In the book *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 108, you will find that we are to pray for those that have no prayers for themselves, and we're to weep for those that have no tears for themselves. Jesus is sending us to be to others what He was to His disciples when He was here on earth.

Suppose we see someone who is careless. What shall we do? Pray for them. Love them. As Sister White tells us in *Ministry of Healing*, we should pray for our fellow workers and let them know that we do. Jesus told Peter that He prayed for him. And while Peter didn't appreciate it at the moment, he did later.

I wonder how it would affect us if some fellow worker would come to us and say, "Brother, I'm praying for you." Well, I hope we would appreciate it. We might, like Peter, rise up and say, "Well, thank you for your prayers, but I don't think I need them. I'm all right." We probably wouldn't say that, but we do need one another's prayers, don't we?

Sinners need our prayers. Discouraged souls need our prayers. The Lord will lay burdens on our hearts for certain ones. My point is, as there was power in the prayers of Jesus to help Peter as he went down into that dark hour of discouragement, so there can be power in the prayers that Jesus helps us to share with Him in behalf of others.

Prayer is the great means of soul-winning. Prayer is the method that everybody can use. Prayer is the method that we must use if any other method is to prove effectual. Without prayer, no other means of soul-winning will be successful.

So I ask again what I asked the other morning, do you have a prayer list? Are there some names that you are praying for day after day, pleading with God in their behalf? Are there some souls that you are *crying* to God for in the secret place? Are there some people who are so precious to you that you'd be willing to give your life for them?

Is that the way Jesus was? Was He so burdened in behalf of souls that He was willing to give His life for them? He did, didn't He? He gave His life for them. We're not called upon to die this morning, but we're called upon to give our lives not only in service, but in intercession, in love, and in earnest prayer.

"I have prayed for thee" Luke 22:32.

Now let's turn to Matthew 18:19 and see where this will lead us. A burden for souls will lead us not only to pray for individuals when we're alone with God, it will lead us to unite in little prayer bands with others, who like us, have a burden for souls.

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For

where two or three are gathered together in my name,  
there am I in the midst of them” Matthew 18:19–20.

Here we have a promise especially for two people who agree, and the next verse widens it to two or three.

Now, this verse is sometimes quoted with a word in it that isn’t in it at all. And that’s “even.” Where *even* “two or three are gathered together.” Some times in a prayer meeting where only a few people come, somebody will say, “Well, there’s a promise where even two or three are gathered together.” And I’ll not argue with that. I’ll simply point out that that isn’t what this says. This isn’t a promise for a whole group of people that finally dwindle to the place where there’re only two or three. It’s a promise specifically directed to two or three getting together and agreeing about a special object. And to show you that this is what it’s talking about, notice *Volume 7*:

“Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?”  
*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7, page 21.*

See?

Now, there’s an experience we can have alone with God. There’s an experience we can have in prayer at the family altar, or in a prayer meeting, or in the public worship of God on the Sabbath. But here is something different from all of those: two people, or three, getting together to claim this particular promise in Matthew 18:19–20.

They agree about something. What are they agreeing about? Well, there might be a number of things, but the specific point mentioned here in Volume 7 is agreeing to pray for a particular soul:

“Plead with God for the salvation of some special one,  
and then for still another” *Ibid.*

I have heard of and seen a good many prayer bands in the last 50 years, and I’ll tell you, friends, what I think kills most of them. One is, they’re too big. Another thing is, they have too many names on a list.

How many of you ever used a burning glass when you were boys or girls to burn a hole in a piece of paper? Ever do that? What does that magnifying glass do with the rays of the sun? That’s it. It focuses those rays on a given point. And the very rays, which scattered produce no effect, if focused, burn a hole in the paper.

This is the power of a prayer band, my friends, when two or three souls get together and unite to pray for a special soul. Notice as I read it again:

“Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three

meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?" *Ibid.*

So, I make an appointment with my brother. I say, "George, let's you and I meet together and claim this promise."

May I just tell you incidentally—not so incidentally, this is important. Do you know that's one of the hardest appointments to make and keep? It's a lot easier to get to a meeting than it is to have a prayer band with one soul. That may seem a strange thing mathematically, but it's easier to meet with 50 people than it is one person. If you've never tried it, you'll doubt it. Try it, and you'll understand what I mean. There'll be all sorts of things come up to interfere with it. But never mind. Press through.

So the servant of God says, "Why not do it?"

"Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?" *Ibid.*

So George and I meet together. We come to our appointed time. And friends, this little prayer band is not to have a sermon. It's not to have a long reading. It's not for a meeting. It's to do this particular thing: to plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another.

And so George and I read this promise, and I say, "Now, George, who's your special soul. Who's this special one that you're burdened for today?" George says, "I'm burdened for Harry." I say, "All right, I'm burdened for John."

So we get down, and George pours out his heart to God in behalf of Harry, and I unite with him. I say, "Amen." I join in that earnest intercession. We're not praying for *everything* all over the world. We're not praying, "Lord, bless the missionaries in the foreign fields, and the colporteurs," and all those trite quotations we've heard for years. No. It's all right to remember people, and there're times to do it. I'm talking about claiming this particular promise for a *specific* soul.

The thing that helped Peter was when Jesus said, "Peter, I have prayed for *you*." It wasn't just that Jesus had prayed, "Lord, bless all the missionaries and all the colporteurs, and all the church school teachers, and all the preachers," and Peter had said, "Well, somewhere in there I fit in." Oh, no. Jesus said, "Peter, I have prayed for *you*." There was something specific about that, that got hold of Peter's heart.

So, thank God, as George and I kneel down there, and he prays for Harry, I unite with him. And then I pour out my heart in behalf of John, this man that I am burdened for. And George unites with me in that. You see, we're sharing each other's burden for a special soul, a specific soul?

"Ah," but somebody says, "I am burdened about so many. I don't know which one to pick out."

Well, I want to tell you something, friends. If you're really burdened about many, you're burdened about one. And if you're not burdened about one, you're not really burdened about many. This is true. And you can pray when you're alone with God for just as many as your time, and your heart will allow.

But when you come together in a prayer band to claim this promise that we are reading here this morning, don't try to go over a long list of names. It'll kill your interest. Start with one. If later your heart enlarges, you and your prayer partner can pray for more, and still keep that focus, that *burning* focus. All right.

But remember, friends, you can't compass the world. Jesus is the only One Who can do that. He has an infinite heart. His eyes scanned the future and took in the life history of every son and daughter of Adam, and He prayed for *every one* personally. You and I can't do that. We're finite. We're limited.

So with our limited capacity, let's focus upon a few. What do you say? Isn't it better, friends, to focus on a few and get somebody, than just to pray for anything and everybody all over the world, and really not know whether we get any answers to our prayers or not? Prayer is to be a very specific thing, a focused thing. We are to pray for souls and believe.

Well, study that *Volume 7*, pages 21 and 22.

Now back again to our thought. Jesus said to Peter, "Peter, Satan's after you, and I know it. I am praying for you. When you are converted, strengthen your brethren." Did Peter get converted? Did he strengthen his brethren? Were the prayers of Jesus answered?

So this morning, we gather two precious thoughts. First, Jesus is praying for us individually. He prayed for us personally when He was here on earth. He saw us looking down the stream of time. He prayed for us on the mountainside and under the olive trees. That same Savior is praying for us at the mercy seat this morning. His uplifted hands have our names written on them, written with the marks of Calvary. Oh friends, let's come and pray for ourselves, joining our prayers with the One who is praying for us. What do you say?

Then the other precious thought: As Christ prayed for me, I can pray for others. Alone and in little prayer bands, I can join in praying for special souls.

Shall we pray together this morning? Whoever would like to pray, pour out your heart to God. Let us seek God.

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