

Science of Prayer 5 of 6

#0393

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 3, 1967

Before I turn to my text tonight, I would like to as a little preface read a statement or two. The first from *Ministry of Healing*, page 363:

“The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life’s problems”
Ministry of Healing, page 363.

Is the world getting more complex as far as problems? The Gospel needs to be made simple—more simple. As the Lord told Habakkuk, “Make it plain.” But note, friends, that it is the Gospel that is a wonderful simplifier of life’s problems.

There were never so many gadgets and gimmicks, literal and figurative, as today when it comes to the attempt to solving problems. You can get all sorts of advice and counsel in personal interviews or by mail, through courses or private tutorship all for the purpose of helping you find the solution to your problems. And yet strange to say, the problems are multiplying faster than the solutions are found. The reason is simple. Men are turning anywhere and everywhere except to the place where the answer is.

“The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life’s problems” *Ibid.*

In our last two studies, we were noting some very practical experiences in prayer that you and I can enter into in learning to find in prayer the solution to our problems. But merely to pray or at least to say prayers does not in itself solve any problems, friends. There are people who pray every morning when they get up and every night when they go to bed that have just as many problems as the people next door that don’t pray at all.

You say that shouldn’t be. Well, the point is, friends, prayer is a science. We read that from the book *Education*, you remember:

“In the prayer of faith there is a divine science...”
Education, page 257.

How many of you ladies have a cookbook, at least one, at home? May I see your hands? What about the rest of you? Do you know it all by heart? All right. Whether you follow a cookbook or whether by long experience, if you’ve arrived, in either case, you will agree with me that cooking is not only an art but a science. Am I correct?

I want to ask you another question. Did any of you ever try out a recipe and find out that it didn’t work? At least you didn’t work it. But if you were a good student, what did you do? Try it again, and if necessary, again. Did any of you ever

make a loaf of bread that looked more like a pancake? Did you conclude that bread won't rise, at least not for you? Oh, no.

My dear friends, why cannot we be as practical when it comes to learning the science of prayer? If we pray and we don't get answers, if we seek God over our problems and don't find solutions, why not seek to find out what it is in the recipe that we're not putting in.

Back to our bread; would it make any difference whether you put in the yeast or left it out? Would it? Well, there's not very much yeast in it, is there? How would you like bread that was half flour and half yeast? No, you wouldn't do it that way. But that little bit of yeast is very important.

But there are people who have forgotten to put certain ingredients into the prayer recipe—it's there in the recipe, but I mean in working it out—and so it falls flat. And they wonder why. That's why we're having this series of studies on Friday and Saturday evenings to learn how to pray in order to get our problems solved so that we can take on the problems of a weary world, friends. All around us are people full of problems—health problems, financial problems, home problems, depression problems, worry problems, every kind of problem. And:

“...prayer is the key in the hand of faith to...”

Do what?

"...unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence" *Steps to Christ*, page 94.

Oh friends, every one of your problems can be solved.

Tonight my subject is the problem that solves all problems. Now you may wonder why it is worded that way. How could a problem solve problems, but that's precisely the fact. That's what I want you to see. And to be truthful with you, my dear friends, until you have met and solved this problem that I want to study with you tonight, you can never fully and finally solve any other problem. But once you have met this problem, and solved it, you can solve any and every other problem.

The text is Matthew 26, where we turn to the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane:

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and said unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but

as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and said unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words” Matthew 26:36–44.

Now it is this prayer of Jesus that I would like you to notice this evening, for in this prayer we find the problem which, as I’ve said, is the solution to every other problem. Jesus was speaking here about the cup. He prayed to His Father something about that cup. What was it? That it might what? Pass. What did He mean by that, “that it might pass”? That He wouldn’t have to drink it. Now, did He drink it? He did. He drank the cup. But here three times He’s praying what? That He won’t have to.

Jesus is facing something. And He longs that He will not have to go through that experience. He called it what? The cup. What’s another name for it? The cross. That’s what He was talking about, wasn’t it? Oh, yes. There in Gethsemane, He went through a preview of Calvary. In fact, my dear friends, what killed Him on Calvary was killing Him in Gethsemane, the weight of the sins of the world:

“...the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all” Isaiah 53:6.

This was the mysterious cup which trembled in His hand. As He looked ahead through the shadows of Gethsemane, He could see that cross erected on Calvary, and He knew that there, as already in Gethsemane He was experiencing, He must endure the hiding of His Father’s face, the separation from God. His whole spirit longed to be kept from that separation. He longed that He would not have to drink that cup. He longed that He would not have to carry that cross and be uplifted on that cross.

So tonight, I would like to have you think of the cup, the cross and Jesus’ prayer, His earnest prayer. Ah, my friends, no human being ever prayed so earnestly to be delivered from something as Jesus prayed to be delivered from that cup, that cross. What happened?

Paul says in Hebrews that Jesus made...

“...supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” Hebrews 5:7.

Did His Father hear Him there in Gethsemane? Did His Father answer Him? Did His Father send an angel to strengthen Him, but not to take the cup? Not to take

the cup away. The answer was not to remove the cross; the answer was not to remove the cup. To remove the cross, to remove the cup would have meant what for you and me? Eternal loss.

I want to tell you something, friends, if the only thing that Jesus had said in His prayer that night (that thrice-repeated prayer) was the first part of the prayer, you and I wouldn't even be sitting here studying this subject. It's the last part of the prayer we need to focus on just now.

Let us go back to the 39th verse:

“...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” Matthew 26:39.

The 42nd verse:

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” Matthew 26:42.

This, my dear friends, is the great object of prayer—not to change God who is listening, but to change the petitioner who is pleading.

Christ, in His humanity, longed to be shielded from the wrath of a just God against sin. He longed that there might be some way found around the cross; some way to bypass that cross. And remember friends, it wasn't physical suffering that He shrank from. Here God, in man, was facing the great problem of eternity—the problem of the cross.

And thank God, Jesus while He pled that there might be some other way found, in meek submission, in glad harmony with His Father said, every time He prayed that there might be some other way, every time He added what? “Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

So when He went on to Calvary, He went through that terrible blackness. And when it seemed that He would never come through, when it seemed that if He died there on the cross that He would never live again, never see His Father again, He chose it, knowing it was the Father's will, and His will to save you and me. Is that right?

Let me make very clear that you and I can never experience all that Jesus experienced. We can never begin to enter into the sufferings of an infinite God. There in Gethsemane Christ's humanity united with divinity suffered all that a man could suffer multiplied by the capacity of the infinite God. I haven't time to develop that theme, but that's the truth, my dear friends. His humanity made it possible to suffer. His divinity made it possible to enter into a capacity for suffering such as you and I haven't the least idea of.

But my point is and do not miss this point, each one of us in our little sphere must face the problem that Jesus faced there in Gethsemane. We must face this problem of the cross. And in facing it, we must come to the place; while although we may cry earnestly for the cross to be removed that it looks like we must carry, where like Jesus we say:

“...nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” Matthew 26:39.

All those who journey soon or late
Must pass within the garden gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And wrestle with some fierce despair.

God pity those who cannot say,
Not mine, but Thine; who only pray,
Let this cup pass, and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.

Oh my dear friends, there are so many selfish prayers. And I do not mean, friends, to be irreverent or ridiculous, but there are prayers just like this, “Lord, I wish you’d stop that dog barking so I could go to sleep. I wish you’d give us a new cook so I could get what I like to eat. I wish you’d give us a new pastor; because the one we have, I don’t like the way he does this or that or the other thing”; so on and on and on and on and on. Too many prayers—and one would be too many—are concerned with getting what I want.

That’s why these men that pose as Christians, but who are in reality the emissaries of the Prince of Darkness, who offer to teach the masses how to pray so they can get money and positions and their own way, through the power of positive thinking or whatever other popular name they attach to it, this is why friends, that they’re so successful in getting the ears of the people and coining the money. If we’re not careful, it can slip right into the thinking of members of the remnant church. God save us from it, my friends.

Our business is not to learn how to win friends and influence people through the philosophy of this world. The place we need to learn to pray is not in some great temple in New York controlled by a spiritualist or reading his books. The place we need to learn to pray is in Gethsemane. And there we shall find not some moonlight and roses and music. We shall hear the moans and groans of our dying Lord as He wrestles with the powers of darkness, and faces this problem of the surrender of the will to the Father’s will.

Keep in mind, my dear friends, that what Jesus was wrestling with was not giving up something bad so He could be saved. It was giving up everything in the universe so others could be saved. This is the real purpose of prayer, to bring us to the point where no longer will we urge our own way, even in the work of God. Where no longer will we say, “Dear Father, unless this and this is done, I cannot go on.”

We may urge our requests, but if we are really learning to pray, we shall say with each request, “Father, as much as I want the thing I’m asking for, there’s

something else I want more. It's Your will, Father." And if we mean business, sometimes the best answer to our prayer can be the Father's refusing our good intentions—nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.

I want to ask you something, friends. Did Jesus go to the cross, did He bear the cross so that you and I would always have everything comfortable, everything convenient, everything the way we like it? Is that why He went to the cross? Some seem to think so. It's true that in eternity we're going to have everything the way we like it. But never think that a trip to Heaven is going to make us that way. Remember that the greatest riot of the ages took place, not in Newark or Detroit, but took place in Heaven—and not in 1967, but before the creation of this world. Am I right? What was the matter? Lucifer and one-third of the angels wanted their own way. Calvary shows that such an attitude would kill God in order to get its own way.

Oh, my dear friend, young or old, have you stopped to think that when you try to urge your own way, whether it's in a simple little thing, like what Sabbath School class you're going to be in or what kind of work you're going to do, or this, that, or the other thing. Have you ever stopped to think that if you persist in that spirit of wanting your own way and watching for your own interest, you will eventually be ready to murder your Creator?

You say, "I don't want anything bad. I don't want to drink beer."

My dear friends, selfishness can keep a man from drinking beer. It ought to, shouldn't it? Selfishness ought to keep a man from smoking something that'll give him lung cancer, shouldn't it? What we're dealing with is not that at all, my friends. I repeat, the struggle of Jesus in Gethsemane wasn't in coming to the place of being willing to give up something bad so He could be saved. The struggle was in giving up something good, everything, so others could be saved. This is the cross, my friends.

It was Jesus praying through to the point where He was willing to take that, that made your salvation possible. But listen, unless you and I take that cross and share it with Him, we shall never share the blessing that He died to make possible. As long as we think that He took the hard place so we could have the soft place, as long as we think He took all the sufferings so we could have everything convenient and comfortable and do as we please, oh friends, we've missed the whole point. For it is written:

"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow me" Matthew 16:24.

And so the cross isn't just something to put on a church or in a picture. The cross is some problem that you face in giving up your will, your way to the will of God. And when you come to Gethsemane, the problem is this, will you try to use prayer to try to get God to change His mind so you can get what you want, or will you recognize in prayer the opportunity to get your mind in shape so you can take the very cross that you have shrunk from? Oh, will you, my friends?

You will never do it without prayer. The disciples slept, though. Jesus wanted them to pray with Him. And so they couldn't take the cross. They couldn't see the cross. They ran from Jesus when they saw the problem He was in. But Jesus, watch the point, having prayed through the problem in Gethsemane, went forth to meet the mob and on to the judgment hall, to the farce of a trial with one and another and another, the scourgings, the buffetings, the abuse, the spiting, and the crucifixion. He went on in perfect peace solving every problem because He had already met and solved this problem:

“...not as I will, but as thou wilt” Matthew 26:39.

Oh friends, next time you want something and want it very much (and I hope that's tonight), remember the purpose of prayer is not to change God so He'll give you what you want. The purpose of prayer is to get you and me into harmony with God so that we can see and accept the cross of His choosing and lift it for Him.

May I share with you an interesting statement?

“It is never difficult to do what we love to do, but to take a course directly against our inclinations is lifting a cross”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 94.

What is it to lift the cross? To take a course directly against our inclinations.

May I be honest with you, my dear friends, as one who loves your souls? Most of the people sitting in this audience tonight belong to a generation who have never learned to obey. Most of you grew up in homes where children had more to say about how things were to be done than they should have had to say. Many of you young people have had your own way most of your life.

Oh, you may have had to pout for it, but you got it. You may have had to scheme for it, but you got it. You may have had to whine. Some of you learned to throw a tantrum when you were little and there on the floor, kick and scream until father and mother and aunts and uncles and grandparents all came around to help get you out of your problem, the easy way, your way. Ah, my friends, it's really cruelty to children, but it's happening all the time.

My point is that you will never know the meaning of Gethsemane, you will never know the meaning of the cross until you pick up now at the age of 15 or 20 or 25 or 30 or 35 or 40 or 45 or wherever you are, my friends, until you yourself take yourself to the place of prayer and say, “God, help me. I've been a selfish, spoiled child. I've gotten my way in the home. And I've tried to whine my way, or weep my way, or push my way, or pull my way, or this or that through life. Oh, I see, Lord, that what I need is to lift the cross instead of evading it.”

And my dear friends, when that sort of attitude that I have described becomes religious, it is all the more dangerous. May I repeat that? When that selfish attitude becomes religious, it is all the more dangerous.

May I read you a challenging statement here? It was written to some young people:

“Happiness is to be found only in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; for your heart is filled with rebellion; it breathes forth in your words”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, page 625.

Now listen:

“Your selfish prayers and religious forms may soothe the conscience, but they only increase your peril” *Ibid.*

Ah, my friends, it is bad enough to be a selfish worldling. But to be a selfish *religious* person, that is the greatest deception of all. That is the problem of Laodicea, my friends, and “knowest not.”

And so my dear friends, young and old, if you have thought of prayer as a way in which you can get God on your side so you can get your way, so you can get to go to the place you want to go and get the kind of work you want to do, and the pay you want, and get people to do this and that the way you want, if you’ve thought of prayer as a new vehicle on which you can ride, a new tool in which you can use to accomplish your purpose, then friends, I say to you, go to the gods of Egypt and Babylon. They’re ready to help you in that program.

But do not go to Jesus: For if you really meet Him, He’ll show you a cross. And it’ll be the cross that you have feared all your life, the cross that you have evaded, that you have schemed around, the cross that you have gotten other people perhaps to carry but have never carried yourself. There in Gethsemane, alone with Jesus, pray your way through that problem, and friends, every other problem will get settled. For it is written:

“The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries”
Great Controversy, page 652.

Tomorrow night at 6:00, we shall continue this subject.

May I ask you, friends, take the study tonight to the laboratory of the closet. Alone with God, before you sleep tonight (it’s early yet), alone with God pray these things over. Take these verses from Matthew 26. Ask God to illuminate them by His Holy Spirit. He may hurt you. He hurt Jesus. But the purpose is that He may grant your real desire. Selfishness can never truly satisfy.

Are there souls that you’d like to help? Pray through this problem, and you will have the power to help others learn the way to Heaven.

I would like to ask a question tonight. And I’d like to ask it of each of you singly as if you were the only one here. Let there be no thought of this being in mass. I speak to you alone. Is there somebody here to whose heart God has spoken tonight that you believe that this is your problem, and by God’s grace you’re

going to go with Jesus into the secret place of prayer and stay with Him until God gives you the spirit of full surrender so that you pray, not, "Lord take the cross away," but, "Lord, by Thy grace help me to carry it"?

If there's somebody to whom this meeting is such a revelation, and your heart responds in that way, I want you to stand all alone for Jesus and with Jesus. And we want to pray for you as we close this service. We want to pray for you for every devil in hell will try to keep you from this step and this experience.

Is there somebody that says: "Yes, Jesus has spoken to my heart tonight. This is my problem. By God's grace, I'm going to seek Him and have the experience of full surrender so that I will carry the cross instead of avoiding it, so I will share it with Jesus instead of leaving it all for Him, so that instead of evading self-sacrifice and giving up my own way, I will gladly, gladly accept the cross"?

You who are standing just remain standing with bowed heads while others think through the problem. Oh, my friends, what a wonderful thing that we can in this way, to at least some small degree, enter into the experience of Jesus.

"[Oh,] that [we] may know him and [not only] the power of his resurrection, [but] the fellowship of his sufferings; being made conformable unto his death" Philippians 3:10.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me..." Galatians 2:20.

"...to me to live is Christ..." Philippians 1:21.

"...God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross..." Galatians 6:14.

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ whereby the world is crucified and is become dead to me and I unto the world.

Is there another to whom the Holy Spirit has spoken tonight? And your heart says, "Yes, I must meet God in the shadows at Gethsemane. I must put away my selfish way and my selfish prayer. Oh, I must get beyond asking God to be a sort of a glorified Santa Claus to get all the things I want. I will enter into an experience of finding the cross that Jesus wants me to take, the cross that goes against my inclinations, against my natural feelings and desires, the cross that will crucify my selfishness."

Is there another one that says, "Yes, God's talking to me"? Ah friends, what a wonderful hour it is! What a wonderful hour! Oh, I'd rather enter in fully to this lesson tonight than anything I can think of. And I know God is hearing the earnest prayers of every heart.

May we kneel now together? And for a couple of moments, let us just quietly, silently each one make his own dedication to the Lord. And remember, after this meeting is dismissed, you're going alone and wrestle through with God. And if any

of us can help any of you with this, we'd be most glad to, friends, to pray with you and help you.

Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou Art the Potter;
I am the clay.

Mold me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.

Our Father, we thank Thee so much that Jesus took the cross instead of turning away from it. And tonight our souls are thankful that Thou hast kept pleading with us, working with us, seeking to show us our cross. And tonight, the best we know how to tell Thee, we're done with evading this cross. We're done with praying just simply, "Lord, take away the things we don't like." Tonight we're coming to ask Thee for an experience in which our greatest desire, our deepest longing is for Thy will to be done. Teach us that to save others, we ourselves must know the meaning of the cross. So tonight we're praying our Father, not for the cross to be removed, but for grace to carry it.

We're praying that Thou wilt lead us in secret prayer to the place where our will is perfectly aligned with Thy will, and we will rejoice to take the cup so that others can be saved. We know that this is the greatest joy of eternity that the Father and the Son all through the ages of the future will rejoice as the result of that sacrifice made in Gethsemane and at Calvary. And tonight, may we learn more of this experience so that we may share it with Thee and thus be truly satisfied, for Jesus' sake, amen.

Be seated. I have this closing suggestion. If you are taking notes, write it down. If you're not taking notes, you may want to write it down. I can't give you the reference, for I don't have the book with me, but this is word for word from the inspired pen:

"Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you" *Our High Calling*, page 130.

"Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you" *Ibid.*

Now to some of you, this one sentence will be worth as much as all that we studied last week. (John says, that is *Our High Calling*, page 130. Thank you very much.) Now, will you say it with me?

"Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you" *Ibid.*

Some people think secret prayer is silent prayer. It can be. But the most effective and effectual secret prayer is praying aloud. Notice it doesn't say loud. It just says aloud. If you will open your lips and talk to God, prayer can be much more

meaningful to you when you're talking to Him all alone. If you haven't tried it, do it tonight. When you find that your mind has trailed off, and you're no longer speaking, come right back and pick it up again and go on.

Tomorrow night, God willing, we'll study deeper into this wonderful science of prayer. And remember, friends, He loves you. He's right there with you. He's gone through everything. He's going to help you master this science of prayer.

God bless you everyone. You're dismissed.

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