

Powerful Prayer - Exodus 30:1-16

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. Welcome to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. Exodus chapter 30. As we continue through the book of Exodus line by line, verse by verse. You know, last week we ended looking at the lamb, the lamb that was to be offered in the morning and evening sacrifice.

As Moses is receiving instruction from the Lord on the mountain, after receiving the Ten Commandments with the people, he's now on the mountain. And on the mountain, God is kind of giving him further instruction.

He starts by expounding on the Ten Commandments, essentially saying, here's the application for them. If your ox gores a neighbor, you know, if a manservant is hurt, here's how you're going to apply this.

You know, here's how you're going to apply don't covet and all of that. And then he moves into the tabernacle where he says the whole point of this, Moses, is that I might meet with you. That you and I and all my people may have a place where we can meet together.

And that's the tabernacle. And we looked at all the different layout and furniture and construction of the tabernacle, which seemed confusing reading it, but in reality was pretty simple.

[0 : 59] It's a pretty simple, basic structure. Very specific, but pretty simple. And morning and evening, so they were to begin and end their day with the lamb, right?

The lamb allowed them to come into fellowship with God. The lamb allowed them to experience God's word, God's sanctification, his presence and his promise, because there would be the morning and evening sacrifice.

There would be the continual lamb. And we saw how the lamb was sacred. The lamb was a sacred offering unto God. It was considered clean because of the altar.

The altar made the lamb clean. Whatever touched the altar would become clean. Therefore, a lamb offered on the altar would be clean. And that whatever touched the lamb would become clean. And we saw 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There's nothing that can defile God.

There's nothing we can bring to him that will touch him in a way that is going to defile him or make him unclean. But whatever we bring him, he's able to cleanse. So a holy God in a holy tabernacle meets with unholy man, right?

[2 : 09] And so here's our plan view of the tabernacle. This is plan view. So if you're looking at a set of drawings, you have plan view. And then you have section view where you look at the side. And then you have elevation views. This would be a plan view where you look over the top of it.

Doesn't give you really anything except the layout and maybe dimensions away from each other. So here's our tabernacle. And God has laid this out. And if you remember when we started looking at the tabernacle, the first thing he did was here's the structure and here's the coverings of it.

And then he goes right to the heart of the tabernacle and he lays out the Ark of the Covenant. And from there he moves out to the veil. And then there's a table of showbread and a lampstand.

You say, well, wait, he passed the altar of incense. Yes, he did. And God doesn't do anything without a reason. Why did he lay it out this way? Why does he seem to jump around some? Well, I think because God is initiating this meeting place.

God is the one doing the initiation. And in doing so, God approaches man first by giving them a place to meet. The tabernacle, right? And then God does his part. And there's the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat and the word of God within it.

[3 : 12] There's the lampstand that gives the light of the world. There's the showbread, which gives the light, the bread of life. Those things are not things we do. That's God's part. God gives the light.

God gives the bread of life. God makes the place where we meet. And his is the at the mercy seat where his presence is, the Ark of the Covenant. And then he begins to lay out the rest of the structure.

And I think it's very much now as man approaches God. So as we come to God, as we come into this thing, what do we hit first? It's the courtyard. There's only one way in. There's only one door as we enter into the courtyard.

And we meet there what? A priest, a priest, one who can mediate between God and man. And he does so here. There's an altar of incense representing prayer. This is man's approach to God.

God's not praying to us. It's us who approach God by prayer. And then a bronze laver where we can be washing. We can be washed. What did I leave out? What did I leave out?

[4 : 12] The altar. In between all of this. So as God gives Moses, he says, here's the tabernacle and its coverings. Here's the Ark of the Covenant. Here's the lampstand. Here's the table of showbread. And here's the altar. And then now here's man's approach.

Courtyard, priesthood, altar of incense, and bronze laver. God has a plan in all of this. And that links the two where man approaches God and God approaches man is the altar. Place of the altar where the lamb is given day and night.

And so a holy God and a holy tabernacle has met with holy man. And today we're going to look at the altar of incense. And incense in scripture, as we're going to see, represents prayer. It's a type of prayer a lot.

And prayer is powerful. And there's powerful prayer that God wants us to enter into. So Exodus 30 is broken up. These are the sections of Exodus 30, the many things we'll be looking at.

We're only going to do the altar of incense and, Lord willing, the price of atonement today. But it covers then the bronze laver, where the priests would wash, and then the anointing oil, and the altar, and then the incense, which will go on the altar.

[5 : 11] So as we approach this, we're going to start with the altar of incense. And in scripture, prayer is very much linked with incense.

And we'll look at that eventually. But I think oftentimes we think prayer, prayer is a means by which I can kind of get God to do my will. Right? I can get God. I can come to God and say, God, would you please do whatever.

Prayer is not bending God to my will, but bringing my will into conformity with God's so that God's will may work in and through me.

See, prayer is ultimately the means by which God submits my will to his. So isn't that what the scripture does? Well, the scripture tells me God's will. The scripture says, hey, here's God's will.

Go do it. So, well, that's what the Holy Spirit does. He helps me. Yes, he does. The Holy Spirit's right there. He's right there to say, come on, let's go do this. Wonder how many times I've come up against something that God's word has led me to and the Holy Spirit's enabled me to do.

[6 : 13] And I've said, no. How many times have I been unwilling? How many times has my heart not been conformed to that? And it's like, yeah, I see God moving and I can understand what's what he wants.

And my heart just says, no, I don't want to do that. I don't think I can do that. That scares me or that's outside my comfort zone or whatever. But prayer is the means by which God then takes our will and he conforms it to his own.

Even Jesus, as he went and prayed in the garden, he kneeled down and he says, Father, if you be willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Even Jesus is saying, Father, I'm conforming my will to yours. What is your will? I want to conform mine to it. If Jesus prays, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Then how much more do I need to? So we jump in here to verse one in Exodus 30. As we see God laying out for Moses and Israel, a place where they can meet with God in prayer.

[7 : 17] We understand that it's not so they can come and twist God's arm in a sense to obtain their will, but instead to submit their will to his. So chapter 30, verse one, the Lord says to Moses, and you shall make an altar to burn incense upon it of acacia wood.

You shall make it. Okay, he's going to make an altar. That's pretty basic. Well, yes, but God doesn't, like we said, God doesn't do anything unnecessarily. In scripture here, the burning of incense very often represents prayer.

And God is making for his people a place where they can come and pray and where he will receive their prayers. Psalm 141, verse two says, let my prayer be set forth before you as incense and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

So many of these scriptures throughout the Bible, they come into a different context as we go through the laws. We look at the Old Testament and the Old Covenant and you see David reflect that. And then all the way forward, you see Jesus speaking of it.

Let my prayer be set before you as an incense, Lord. We know fast forwarding all the way to the end of the book in Revelation. Revelation 5, 8. And when he took the book, the four living creatures, when the lamb took the book out of the hand of him who sat on the throne, the four living creatures and four and 20 elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

[8 : 44] So God receives in a type. This is heaven's perspective on prayer. God sees it as man. That's like incense. That's like incense offered before me. Jump forward to Revelation chapter eight, verse three.

And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer. And there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

The smoke of the incense, which came up with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands. Well, what altar is that? What golden altar is that? Well, that's the golden altar of incense that's in heaven.

Because remember, Moses, he's told over and over. God tells him, Moses, be sure you make this like I told you to, because it's a pattern of what's in heaven. And I don't want you to. I want you to get this picture right so that for all time, my people can have this picture.

And so in heaven, there's an altar where our prayers are. Now, our prayers, interestingly, they're in the hands of an angel. They're in the hands of the 24 elders. They're offered before God.

[9 : 46] Well, maybe we should pray to saints. Maybe I should ask, you know, St. Lucia. Is that a saint or is that a place? I don't know. Anyway, you know, to offer my.

Now, we pray to God. We pray alone to God. We make intercession to him alone. Now, our prayers are offered before him as incense, but their prayers to God and to no one else.

But very specifically here, we have an altar that has a purpose. It was for incense. It was for burning. And yet neither could accomplish their purpose. Could they?

On their own. I mean, you could have a beautiful altar there. Wow. What do you do with that? I don't know, but it looks great in this space. You know, look at this Bible. It's brand new.

I've never touched it. You could have the incense. Don't we so often? There's a place that we can go with our prayers, but I don't. I'm like loaded with incense and I don't offer it.

[10 : 45] How often do I forgo praying and offering that to the Lord? And yet one other thing was required, wasn't it? I can have the altar and I could put the incense on it. But what else is needed? Fire.

Without that fire, there was nothing that was going to be accomplished. And fire in scripture very often is a type of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 311, John the Baptist says, I will indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.

But he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I'm not worthy to bear. So in that culture, only the lowest of the lowest of the lowest slaves would touch someone's feet. Not even the rabbis, the rabbi students, the one who was following him, they would do everything for him, but not even they would touch his shoes.

And John the Baptist says, I'm not even worthy as the least and the lowest servant to touch his shoes. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Essentially, he's saying, I baptize you with water into repentance, but it's not enough.

You got to finish the equation. It's not enough just to have the altar and to have the incense. You need the fire. It's not enough just to be baptized with water to repentance. You need the full equation. John says water for repentance.

[11 : 54] And then he says, hey, the Holy Spirit's like fire. And so he's got those two elements. You know, in Acts chapter two, when the church is birthed on the day of Pentecost, there appeared unto them a flame of fire, clove and tongues of fire.

It said, then it split one on each of them. Literally, the wording is there was a pillar of fire in the midst of them. These are all good Jewish men and women. They know their history. And what are they going to think of when they see a pillar of fire in their midst?

I think, man, God, God appeared to our fathers in the wilderness by night as a pillar of fire. And they say, God's presence is here. And then what does it do? It splits and goes to each one of them.

And now God's presence abides with each person individually, instead of having to come to the place of God's presence. And so, yes, there's an altar. God made an altar.

You shall make an altar and burn incense upon it. Seems basics. But if you don't follow through with the ingredients he's given you, nothing's going to happen. Verse two, in a cubit, 18 inches, shall be the length thereof.

[12 : 54] In a cubit, 18 inches, the breadth thereof. So 18 by 18. And it shall be two cubits tall or 36 inches tall, three feet. The height of it. The horns thereof shall be the same.

So they'll make this altar. The place of prayer was made accessible to man. Notice it doesn't say it's 10 feet tall. It's 10 feet tall. Go offer prayers there.

How do I do that? God made it accessible. He made it. There it is. It's accessible to man. In verse three, you shall overlay it with pure gold. The top thereof and the sides thereof round about and the horns thereof.

And you shall make unto it a crown of gold round about it. So it shall be overlaid with gold, just like everything else within the tabernacle. The walls were gold. The table of showbread was of gold.

All of the instruments used to use the candlestick, which was made of gold. Everything reflected the light that was there. So you shall overlay it with gold and the top thereof and the sides thereof.

[13 : 54] And you shall make a crown of gold on it. The place of prayer was to be a pure place of gold. Gold has to be refined. Gold has to be tested and tried. It has to be beaten to essentially sheets of gold overlaid over this.

It has to be pure and it has to be valuable. It's a valuable place, this altar that God is setting up. And two golden rings shall you make it under the crown of it by the two corners thereof.

Upon the two sides of it shall you make it. This is just like he did with the table of showbread and the altar. Essentially, it's so you can stick the sticks in it and carry the thing.

And they shall be for places for the staves to bear it. And you shall make the staves of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. So the place of prayer was to be accessible to man.

It was to be pure and valuable. But it was also intended to go with God's people. It was to travel with them. This place of prayer wasn't just like you had to go to it. Well, we got to go back to the holy mountain.

[14 : 59] We have to go back to the holy place. We have to go back to the holy synagogue or the holy cathedral. Well, the only place you can pray is to go. No, it was meant to travel with them. Wherever they went, this place where God was to receive their incense was to be with them.

And you shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you. So as you come into the tabernacle, you have the table of showbread on your right.

On your left, the lampstand with the seven golden lampsticks. In front of you, you have the altar of incense and then the veil. The closest thing that came to God's presence was what?

The altar of incense. Yes, the candlestick was close. And yes, the table of showbread was close. The closest place that man could come because of the veil, essentially, the priest could come day by day was at the altar of incense.

That's the place that God designed to be the closest without going into the veil. And as the priest would offer their incense on that, and it would go up as like a smoke and a smell, there's the veil there.

[16 : 10] And there'd be along the top, remember, we read about how it's those rings of silver that it hangs on. There'd be a gap. And so that you'd see that incense arise and it would go over the top of the veil.

So in the tabernacle on earth, under the old covenant, the prayers of God's people would go over the veil. But today for you and I in the heavenly tabernacle, our prayers go through the veil. That veil's been torn.

When we come to this altar, we're not looking at a veil. We're looking at the very presence of God because the veil has been torn. In Hebrew, the mercy seat, where we read in English mercy seat in verse six, it literally is the same word for atonement.

It is the place of atonement. And you shall put the altar of incense before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony before the place of atonement. And that place of atonement, it sits where?

Over the testimony. It sits upon the word. Our ability to meet with God in prayer, it's based upon the word and it's based upon atonement. Interesting, if you look at the wording in verse six, there's an order here that we're brought into God's presence.

[17:15] He says there's the altar of incense. There's a veil. There's the ark, the mercy seat, the word, God's presence. Each one of those steps us closer and closer and closer into God's presence. For you and I, we come to the altar of incense.

We come to pray. The veil has been removed. The ark of the testimony, Jesus representing God's very presence at the place of atonement.

Based upon the word. So Moses says, this is where you're going to put it. This is what it's going to look like. And here's what you're going to do with it. In verse seven. And Aaron shall burn there on sweet incense every morning.

When he dresses the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. You got to love the old King James dresses the lamps. I wonder what outfit he puts on. To dress means just to make good.

When he makes it good, it means to make good, pleasing, joyful. So every morning, the one who brings the light will come in. Do you know what the name Aaron means? There's two Aaron's in this place.

[18:15] It means light bringer. Every morning, the bringer of light, the high priest, shall bring light into this space. And he shall tend the lights. And he shall make them good every morning.

Morning by morning, he makes it good. Lamentations 3.22 says, it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning.

Morning by morning by morning. The one who bears the light in our life. He makes it good every morning. They are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness. Love it there.

The Lord's mercies, they were not. It's the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. And in the picture of what we're looking at here, you know that a lamp that fuels being consumed has to be replenished and consumed, replenished, consumed.

We don't ever have to worry about being consumed. Our source is sure. We will never be consumed. His mercies, his compassions, morning by morning, they do not fail.

[19:14] Verse 8, you're going to do the same thing at night. Moses, tell your brother, the high priest, he's going to do the same thing at night. And when Aaron lights the lamps at evening, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.

So every evening, there'll be light. The light bringer shall bring light into the darkness for every evening in the lives of his people here as they march through the wilderness.

In our lives, every evening, every hour of darkness that comes into our lives, the light bringer is still there just as faithfully to bring light into that darkness. We're never left without a light.

Psalms 18, verse 28, David writes, for you will light my candle. The Lord will lighten my darkness. We would say, Lord, you will flip on the lights. You will lighten the room.

You will lighten my darkness. God is the one who brings the light. There's no darkness that he can't light up. And whenever he does, it's for what purpose?

[20 : 16] It's to be in his presence. It's not just to go, poof, there's all the cockroaches and scare the heck out of it, right? No, it's so that we can be in his presence. Ephesians 5, 8 tells us we were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light. We don't have to worry about the source. You see, represented here is Aaron, the high priest who's going in, a representative of our high priest.

We see in Revelation that he walks among the candlesticks, that he's tending his church, that he's keeping it lit. Not only does he light our candle, that he now makes us light. Remarkably, he says to us, we are the light of the world.

Really? Lord, I don't know if I can be the light. He says, don't worry about it. Let me tend you. Let me dress you. Let me supply. I'll take care of it morning and evening.

I got this. So last week we saw morning and evening a lamb. This week we see morning and evening prayer. They were to begin and end their day with prayer. We begin and we end our day with the lamb.

[21 : 19] We begin and we end our day with prayer. Coming to that altar of incense. What type of prayer is it to be? It's been one of my favorite words lately. I like alliteration and P words are great to alliterate.

Perpetual is a great word. I like perpetual. He shall burn incense upon a perpetual incense. I mean, you could just go off forever with that. Perpetual, powerful, perfect incense.

Perpetual. A perpetual prayer. It means unending. It means they don't get a break. It means like, well, you know, I, God, I've been praying every day for about a year straight. So we're not going to light the incense today.

We'll do it tomorrow. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. He says, rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Look what he couches prayer in between. Rejoicing and giving thanks. Hmm. Well, Lord, where's my needs?

[22 : 19] I don't know about in there praying for myself. What about what about what I need, Lord? How do I pray about? Can I pray about that? Yes. But make sure that it's included with rejoicing evermore.

Don't cease praying. And in everything give thanks. So God, what's your will for me? This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Ephesians chapter 6 tells us that we are to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.

And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Yes, we're to pray. Yes, we're to supplicate. We're to ask. But it's where? In the spirit. Not in the flesh.

Not in my own effort. Not in my own desire and will. It's in the spirit. Praying always with all prayer and supplication. And ultimately, man, my prayers should primarily be focused on not me.

But like my high priest. As for others. Jesus wasn't praying, Father, not my will but yours be done for himself. He was doing it for you and me. So praying without ceasing is very much then to reflect the ministry of the high priest.

[23 : 30] The high priest is to under the old covenant. He's to go in perpetually day by day and offer this prayer on the altar of incense. We in the new covenant, we are to pray without ceasing to reflect the ministry of our high priest.

Hebrews 7.25 says that he, Jesus, is able to save them to the uttermost. Completely, fully, wholly, in every way, shape, or form. That come unto God by him.

Seeing he, Jesus, ever lives to make intercession for them. Our high priest is offering that perpetual prayer before God. As we pray always.

Praying without ceasing. We're just simply reflecting the ministry of our high priest. We're just following along in what he has laid down for us. So prayer is powerful, but prayer's power, very specifically, lies in its object, doesn't it?

I can pray to a big stone idol all I want. I can pray powerfully. I can pray passionately, perpetually. See all those Ps? They just flow, man. Ps are great ones.

[24 : 36] I can pray all I want. Doesn't really do anything. Because it's the object, right? But if your object is this almighty father, right?

Think of the little child that comes to you. Is your response to him based on how powerful that child is? How strong his prayer is? How strong his desire is? Sometimes he's whiny.

I'm hungry. All right, I'll get you something to eat. Prayer's power lies in its object. So our object has to be a powerful one. But it also lies ultimately in participation.

We can have a powerful object. We can have powerful prayers to pray. But if we never pray them, if we don't participate, then those prayers of power, they're like that unoffered incense.

They just kind of sit there, you know? I got a whole store of incense in my closet. Would you ever burn it? No. But it's there. So prayer, according to the scriptures, is something God takes very seriously.

[25 : 44] It's on his heart. It's something he listens to. It's something he, in a sense, stoops down to. Matthew 6, 6, Jesus says, When you pray, enter into your closet.

When you shut the door, pray to your father, which is in secret. And your father, which is in secret, shall reward you openly. You say, Pastor, you just said we don't have to go to a specific place to prayer. Now I got to have a closet.

I mean, I can't fit any more clothes in my closet, let alone me going in my closet. You know, what is he saying here? He's not pointing out a specific place. He's pointing out God's heart in this.

You see, God, it's not about if you pray in a group. It's not about who hears your prayers. The point Jesus is making is the only thing that matters is the father hears your prayers. You can go into a closet.

You can close the door and not one other person knows you're praying or what you're doing in there, but your father, which sees in secret, he'll reward you openly. You don't need to worry about if anybody knows you pray or not.

[26 : 39] They'll know because of the effect God's going to have in your life and your father rewards you openly. It's not about where we go. It's about who hears us. Essentially, prayer is personal. All prayer is personal.

You know, I can pray for you and then I can pray for your needs. I can pray along with you. But your prayer between you and God, it's got to come from you. It's personal. You have to offer that incense.

Prayer is also private. Well, there goes corporate prayer. No one's going to show up Wednesday. It's private that even if we pray in a group, God's not hearing me any more or less because everybody's here.

It's private in that it's a relationship that is between me and him alone. My relationship alone with God is the fact that God will hear me. Not because, man, I got some powerful prayers with me.

You know, no, I got a powerful God who hears prayer. He hears the prayer of the most weak. So, yes, our prayer is to be perpetual.

[27 : 35] When Aaron lights that lamp morning and evening, this shall be a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Generation to generation. You know what I love about the Lord and about his word and the things he lays down?

It doesn't change. I love he's the same yesterday, today and forever because it takes me yesterday, today and forever to figure it out. And to come to a point where it's like, you know, I've looked at that for like how many years and it's not making sense to me now.

You know, when God put on my heart to step out and plant a church, it was a time in my life where the Lord is doing a work. And in all of the things in my own life and shortcomings and hangups that I know I have and still have that I felt, well, God can only use me this far because people he uses that far.

They don't have those shortfalls, hangups and problems. And the Lord is just doing a work where he's saying, my grace is sufficient. Can you accept that? Can you accept I can use you however I want despite your shortcomings, failures and hangups?

I'm like, Lord, if you want to use me as introverted and weird as I am, use me however you want to. And it was like in that moment. And I guess it was in prayer because it was in talking to the Lord. It wasn't in some, you know, I'm going to sit and pray.

[28 : 44] It was just in conversation with the Lord as I was reading this book and it was just speaking to me. And I'm like, all right, Lord, you want to use me any way you want and allow the Lord to conform my will. It was like he was waiting, like finally.

And into my mind instantly, he's like, I want you to pastor a church. And I was like, no, how can I do that, Lord? He's like, I want you to step out and do that and I'll take care of the rest. And he has. I've watched him do that.

But, you know, the routines that we find in scripture, the patterns we see, God's rhythmic nature that he built into creation. I think sometimes we fight against them because we think there's nothing powerful happening in my life.

There's nothing new. I'm not moving. I don't, you know, we were just at a pastors and leadership conference and they were showing some of like the clips from the old Jesus movement, you know, showing Pastor Chuck with the hippies and like being baptized in hundreds of people in the coast in California.

And all these things like God, do it again. I don't want to just hear about it. I want to live it. I want to experience it. And we can think sometimes God isn't moving powerfully because we don't have that sense of newness.

[29 : 52] And God's like, but I'm the same yesterday, today and forever. I want you to perpetually pray. I want you to spend every morning and evening with the Lord, every morning and evening with prayer.

That is powerful. That is powerful because it gives God access to me, to something in my life that I need to touch for from him. So, God who seems so, he's just laying out these instructions here.

His plans are so much greater. He says here in verse nine, on this altar, though, you shall not offer strange incense thereon. That's going to be a big problem later for a couple of Aaron's boys, his two oldest.

Two oldest boys get smoked. Boom. Then it goes on to the next one. Uh, Nadav and Abihu will come and offer strange incense to the Lord. And God says, you know what?

No, not just that God is the same yesterday and today and forever, but God has a reason. God has a reason for the patterns and pictures because they, they point so perfectly to Jesus. You shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering.

[31 : 01] Neither shall you pour a drink offering thereon. So this isn't like the bronze altar, the one out in the courtyard. This isn't a place of sacrifice. Prayer is sacred, but it's not something that we use to obtain salvation.

It's not something like, well, this is a place where the offering is made. No, prayer is because of salvation. Prayer is because the offering's been made. I can now come and offer prayers. It's not a place that we're going to make atonement.

It's not a place that we're going to offer our meat offerings and our drink offerings. It is very sacred, but it's not something man can modify. It's not something we can just choose how we want to participate in.

It is for man, but it is from God. God is the one who gives this. He is the one who determines how this altar is to be used. We also don't need to fear prayer.

I think there's a part in here where you're like, oh my word. What if I offer the wrong thing? What if I do something wrong? I think we think that sometimes with prayer. Oh God, I don't want to pray the wrong thing.

[32 : 00] You know, I'm not very good at prayer. What if I say the wrong thing? What if I do the wrong thing? Well, we don't need to fear praying wrong. We don't need to fear we're going to offer the wrong thing. Paul would write in Romans chapter eight and verse 26, speaking of praying and speaking of the Holy Spirit and how they work together.

He says, likewise, the spirit also helps our infirmities. Thank you, Lord. I have a lot of infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Like that's not an option.

Paul didn't say some of you guys don't know how to pray for as you ought. He says, for we, he's including himself. We don't know how we should pray for as we ought. But the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered.

Man, that's so true. Sometimes it's like, Lord, Lord, Lord. And the Holy Spirit is like, oh, that incense. I'm going to take that to the throne.

And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Notice it's not the Holy Spirit making intercession for the saints.

[33 : 07] He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit. Who's searching the hearts? I think it's talking about Jesus there. He knows what is the mind of the spirit because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

So you have the son and the spirit working together. You see, when we pray, we have the promise that the spirit of God will direct us into the will of God.

I don't have to fear that my prayers are, you know, God, I really want a million dollars so I can serve you. Well, I don't think that prayer is right. But guess what?

The Holy Spirit will direct that prayer into the will of God. I can pray the wrong thing. And the Holy Spirit is there interceding along with me, the one who searches the hearts making intercessions to God saying, Father, I know he said this, but what he really means is he's just worried about how you're going to provide.

He just wants to know that you're there, Lord. Just just provide. Don't give him a million dollars. Let's do ten dollars and just show him you're faithful in that.

[34 : 08] And that'll be enough. You know, God, you're so good. You provided for that. You'll provide for the rest. In Luke chapter 11, Jesus is praying.

I think Jesus prayed a lot. You know, many times he went off and prayed all night. And 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.

Lord, you didn't finish our education. Maybe we should go back to John. He taught his disciples to pray. And he said unto them, OK, well, when you pray, say, Our Father, recognize your relationship first.

Who are you praying to? It's your Father. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be your name. It's your Father. Where is he? He's in heaven. But you have access to that.

And his name is holy. You're not praying about your name. Our Father, which in heaven, help me. Hallowed be my name. No, it's his name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

[35 : 05] As in heaven, so in earth. You see, when we pray, we have that promise. The Spirit of God will direct us into the will of God. Because we pray according to that. Lord, Lord, your will be done. Lord, I'm praying this about this brother or this sister, about my situation.

But I always want to end with, Lord, but your will be done. And conform me to that. Jesus would tell us in Matthew 21, verse 22. He says, All things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

Yes. Well, wait. That's in light of Luke 11. That's in light of Jesus who said, this is how you pray. All things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. All things you ask in prayer, according to your Father in heaven, whose name is hallowed.

According to his will being done on heaven and his earth, on earth. Yeah, you'll receive them when you pray according to his will. We don't have to fear that God won't hear. I don't have to fear that my prayers will go wrong.

Verse 10. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements. Once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations.

[36 : 11] It is most holy unto the Lord. So he's talking about here is on the day of atonement. After he's sacrificed the offering for atonement, he'll bring it in and he'll make an offering. He'll put blood upon the four horns of the altar of incense.

And then he'll go into the veil, through the veil, right? And he'll sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat there once a year. So for the rest of that year, perpetually, day by day, morning and evening, when they come to offer incense at this altar, what is their incense being offered in the presence of?

Blood. Their incense is surrounded by blood. Horns means power, means authority. So they pray under the authority of blood of the atonement. Intercession comes by way of atonement.

That is what we stand upon. Atonement to cover, to purge, to make reconciliation, to pacify. So every time this incense is offered up to God, God looks and he receives it because he's been pacified, because sin has been pacified, because man has been reconciled.

Here are Romans chapter 8. Again, Romans 8 is so good. At the end of the chapter in verse 31 says, what shall we say to these things? If God before us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all for the purpose of atonement.

[37 : 32] How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It's God that justifies. Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

There's blood on the altar. There's blood on the horns. You can't lay anything to my charge. It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that's risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

God is there because of the atonement. Jesus is there offering intercession on our behalf because of the atonement. So every time the high priest would offer incense, he would see the blood upon the horns of the altar. Every time our high priest offers that incense to heaven, offers up intercession for us, it's because of the blood, because he's been accepted.

And now we're going to move into this price of atonement or the ransom for the soul. As the Lord sticks this in the middle here between the altar of incense, the price of atonement and then the bronze laver.

And it makes sense why the Lord does this. He says in verse 11, And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Okay, when you take the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall you give every man or then shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord.

[38 : 54] When you number them. Why? That there be no plague among them. Literally, that word means no fatal blow or striking. When you number them. So there'd be a census when they would count them.

How often was Israel counted? I don't know. As far as I know, there's only like three times. Once at the beginning of their wilderness wanderings, once at the end, and then one time when David decides to. That doesn't go too well.

Joab says, David, don't sin against the Lord. And listen, if you have a Joab in your life, he's a man who lives by the sword and by the flesh. If he's telling you what you're doing is not in line with the Lord, well, you should probably listen.

Because he's not one to care too much about the Lord's will. But he says, David, don't do this. And David does. And then there is a fatal blow. There is a plague. Why? Why is that? Well, because in ancient cultures, counting, taking a census, it signified ownership.

If you would count the people, the monarch was essentially saying, these are my people. I own them. I've counted them. And you would count them primarily for war. Like this is my strength. So that's the reason why the kings of Israel were not permitted to count the people.

[40 : 00] Who do they belong to? They belong to God. They're his alone to count. The men then who were to belong to God, they were to be men who were under atonement. God said, all of those who will be counted is mine.

Their souls must be ransomed. Their souls must be under atonement. If not, an unatoned soul receives what? A fatal blow. A striking.

There comes a point in every life where every soul must answer for itself. Every man here must answer for himself. Everyone would have to pay his own price for this ransom to be under atonement.

You know, it's not exactly a one-to-one analogy and cross-reference, but I love in 1 Timothy where Paul is talking about being put into the ministry. And he uses the word counted.

He says, I thank Jesus Christ, our Lord, who's enabled me that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. He counted me as one of his. It wasn't like, it wasn't because I was faithful.

[41 : 01] He counted me among the faithful. He said, Paul, I'm going to put you over here with my faithful. I'm going to count you and you. And okay, Paul, you too. Right? He counted us among the faithful. And then he says, and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

God's grace is exceeding abundant so that we might come under atonement, so that we might have an atonement for the soul. We might not be an unatoned soul. And that God might bring us out from under that fatal blow.

So each of these men would have to do that. And this is what they shall give in verse 13 and 14. Everyone that passes among them that are numbered, they shall give half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary.

And if you want to know what a shekel is, it's 20 geras. A half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. You don't know what a shekel is. It's funny when you read, they don't really know how much this represented. They just know it was silver.

In the New Testament, we'll see that there's a temple tax. Remember when they go to Peter and they say, doesn't your master pay tax? It's not tax to Caesar they're talking about.

[42 : 01] It's the temple tax. And Jesus said, yes, Peter, we do. And Peter said, okay, I don't remember doing that. That's when he says, go and catch a fish. And when you open his mouth, you're going to find the money. Peter, the fisherman, had caught many fish, but never one like that.

And so that is what this temple tax is or this tax at the time. There's no temple, but the shekel is however much it actually would have been worth. In verse 14, everyone that passes among them that are numbered from 20 years old and above, they shall give an offering unto the Lord.

So God says, all of the men who are 20 years and above. But notice who the offering, whose it is. It's the Lord's. This is the Lord's offering. You know, when we offer something to God, we're simply returning to him what belongs to him already.

I mean, where did they get the silver? When they left Egypt, Moses said, hey, God's doing a miraculous work here. Go and plunder your neighbors. Now you need to know for sure the Lord's telling you to do that before you go and do that.

We said, go and plunder the Egyptians. So they're loaded. And now you see why God's like, I'm going to use that not to spend upon yourself, but for the service of the Lord in his tabernacle. So it's the Lord's offering.

[43 : 09] We simply give back to him that which already belongs to him. Romans 12, 12, 12, 12, 1. Beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him, which is your reasonable service.

The price of atonement very specifically, though, spoke to man something. It spoke to these men. It speaks to us. We who need to be atoned for. We who have to have our souls under atonement. Because if we are an unatoned soul, a soul that has not been covered, purged and made appeased, then we have a fatal blow hanging over us.

But it speaks a few things to us. The price of atonement declares that man owed God. Simply says that we have an obligation and a debt that we owe to God that must be paid.

It tells us that we are obligated to God. That we cannot escape that. Well, I don't worship that God. It doesn't matter. It tells us that man was under a judgment of death.

If they did not pay the price of atonement, then they would be under death. And ultimately, that man was to trust that the payment was sufficient. I don't know if this is going to be enough. Is this going to be enough to atone?

[44 : 20] 20 years old and above, it says. You know, in our culture, it's like 18. Yeah, I'm 18. And 21, you can drive. You can go off and fight in a war. But 20 years old and above.

You know, God who created man. He is not interested in societal norms or customs. God who created man is the one who gets to recognize when a man is a man.

And he gets to recognize what a man is. Doesn't matter what a society says. Doesn't matter what the culture says. This is not what a man is. And this is not what a woman is. No, God's the one who decides that.

God is the one who decides when a man is a man. Verse 15. The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel. When they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.

A person's position or situation. It will not enhance or diminish. This offering for their soul. The atonement of the soul. Doesn't matter if you're rich or if you're poor.

[45 : 20] The price of atonement for each soul is the same. It's the same price that has to be paid. Psalm 49 verse 6 says. They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.

None of them can by any means redeem his brother. Nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious. Idea being you can't pay the price.

You can't do it. It's not enough. And you shall take verse 16. The atonement money of the children of Israel. And you shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

That it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord. To make an atonement for your souls. You shall take the atonement money. You shall take the price. The price of atonement.

Was paid in silver. And used for service of the entire congregation. So, hey, you're going to take that price and you're going to use it. You're going to appoint it for service in the tabernacle of the congregation. This isn't just to go to the priest's family to make him rich.

[46 : 21] This isn't. This is specifically for the ministry. This is to serve the entire congregation. And that price, that price of atonement would result in man having a place to meet with God.

That they would then be able to come and meet with God. As the silver would be used for all those sockets. And all of those links. And all those different things we saw that silver was going to be used for. In the tabernacle. Well, you know, the price of atonement for our souls.

It was paid in blood. But silver was involved. There was a price paid in silver. For our atonement. Matthew 26, verse 14.

Judas Iscariot. He comes to the chief priest and he said, Hey, what will you give me? If I betray Jesus. That's not good. What will you give me?

If I betray Jesus. I've never asked that question to God. But I betrayed Jesus. For a lot less than 30 pieces of silver.

[47 : 24] And they covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver. And from that time, he sought opportunity to betray him. I think verse 16 is there because of the Lord saying he had opportunity to repent from that time.

But that price of silver, those 30 pieces, we read about that in Exodus 29. When God is giving to Moses, essentially the application of the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 21.

I'm not sorry. Not 29. In Exodus 21, verse 32. It says that if an ox shall push a man servant or maid servant, a male or female slave. He shall give unto their master 30 shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned.

The Pharisees here and the priests, the chief priests, the ones who represent God to people and people to God. The ones who are supposed to be doing all of this so that man could meet with God.

They said, we'll give you the price of a slave for Jesus. That's what we'll give you. The price of atonement was paid in silver so that the price of atonement for our souls could be paid in blood.

[48 : 30] But God says here to Moses, the price of atonement was also to be memorialized for all generations. This is a memorial. It's to be memorialized. God desired Israel to remember atonement in a very specific way.

And don't we do the same thing? Paul says, I've delivered unto you that which I've also received. We take communion. We memorialize atonement in a very specific way. God is very, very interested in the state of our souls.

Are our souls bought and paid for? Are they under atonement? Have they been brought out from under that place of? What was the word?

I can't remember the wording now. Well, you know what it was. The plague. In Job chapter 33, tucked away in the book of Job. Elihu is writing, is speaking to Job.

Speaking of God. And he said, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit and his life shall see the light to bring back his soul from the pit to be enlightened with the light of the living.

[49 : 31] God is very interested in the state of our souls. God desires our souls to be brought back from the pit, to be given light and to be in the place of the living. God is very interested in our souls. Peter would tell us in 1 Peter that our souls have been bought with something much more precious than silver.

1 Peter chapter 1 verses 18 and 19. For as much as you know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold. Yes, under the old covenant, there is a price in silver that they paid, pointing forward to the price that was paid.

Not in silver and gold. From your empty lifestyles. Your vain conversation. Received by tradition from your fathers. Those traditions that you received, they weren't going to cut it.

But with the precious blood of Christ. As of a lamb, without blemish and without spot. So that every time we come to meet with the Lord, he sees the blood of the atonement.

For us today, the price has been paid in blood. Not in silver. Atoning price. And because of atonement, our souls are no longer under the fatal blow.

[50 : 39] That was the word. Fatal blow. We're not under that fatal blow. We're not under judgment. It's been removed from that. The price of atonement has secured for us a meeting place with God. Where we can now come and meet with God.

Wherefore, he's able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. We can now come to God by him. And in doing so, he ever lives to make intercession for us. As the high priest, Jesus faithfully continues in that role.

So that we have a meeting place with God. We come to the Lord and we meet him at that altar of prayer. We come because the blood has atoned for our souls. Philippians chapter 4 tells us how we should come.

It says, be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and supplication. With thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God. We come to God.

Not because we think, I don't know how this is going to turn out. We come because we already know how it's going to turn out. We already know our father in heaven has heard our prayers. We already know he's working on our behalf.

[51 : 42] We already know the price has been paid. And the peace of God because of the atonement. Which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The question today is not, can we meet with God?

We can meet with God. The question today is, will we meet with God? Powerful prayer. Powerful prayer is based on the power of the atonement. And I have the freedom now to come and meet with God.

You know, you've heard maybe people say that prayer moves the heart of God. And when we pray, it moves God's heart. Prayer doesn't move the heart of God. It doesn't. God's heart's already been moved.

God's heart was moved on the cross. God's heart is already moved towards you. You don't need to move God's heart. God needs to move my heart. I don't need to move his heart. Prayer gives God access to my life.

So then my life might be a means for him to accomplish his will in this world. You see, when I don't pray, I'm just wasted potential in a sense. I'm that incense that's just sitting there and God's like, I want to use that.

[52 : 46] Give me access. I'm not giving God any access to my life. So I'm not allowing him to conform my will to his. I don't have to worry about God move as your heart moved towards me. It is.

It is moved towards us. He wants to move our hearts towards him. Our father, which art in heaven, your will be done.

Your will be done. Prayer allows God to move my heart to come into line with his. Right? I have this idea. I have this thought. I have this plan. And then I pray and God brings me in line with his heart.

He says, hey, here's my heart. As the disciples said to Jesus, Lord, teach us to pray. They didn't say how to pray.

They said, teach us to pray. Just pray. You know, what's 100% guaranteed? It's 100% guaranteed that you won't pray if you don't pray.

[53 : 46] I won't pray if I don't pray. It's not going to happen. You know, I can't think of one spot in scripture. Maybe it's happened. But I can't think of one where prayer just happened.

That it wasn't initiated by the choice of the people who prayed. There's other places where people were healed. Just happened. The spirit came on people and they spoke in tongues. But I don't know anywhere where people prayed to God without initiating it.

It's 100% guaranteed that I'm not going to pray if I don't pray. So today we're going to pray. I ended a little early. We're going to pray.

You know, prayer is powerful. It's also personal and private. Not private in the sense of like, you can't pray with me. But God wants to hear your voice. He wants to hear your prayers.

You know, you come here and we pray. We pray for one another. I pray. I pray before service, after. We pray. But you need to pray. And you can do so with confidence.

[54 : 48] 100% confidence. You don't have to worry about how to pray. Just pray. The Holy Spirit is with us. Jesus praying for us. And the Father receiving it.

It's like the dream team of prayer on our side. Like, man, I just don't know how to pray. Holy Spirit is sitting there like, well, I could help you. And Jesus is like, I'm already praying for you.

And the Father's like, I'm just waiting to receive it. And like, yeah, no, I just don't know about that. God loves prayer. And he receives prayer. It has a sweet and beautiful aroma to him.

Right? Comes up before him as incense. Psalm 102. David literally says a psalm of prayer for when he is in great distress.

He says, hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto you. And essentially the Lord says, yes, I've heard you. I love verse 17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer.

[55 : 47] Maybe you feel destitute this morning. Maybe your prayers are destitute. I don't know what to pray. They just seem so dry. And it's okay. God won't despise those prayers. Maybe you feel destitute because of a situation or because you need to remember that you're under the atonement and the blood has been applied to your life.

The Spirit also helps our infirmities. He's right there with us. So we're just going to take a little bit to pray. Husbands, pray with your wives. Families, pray together. If you pray alone, that's great.

If you don't want to pray alone, I'll be sitting up front. You can just pray. But God wants to hear your voice and he wants access to your heart. And right outside the veil, the thing closest to the presence of God that the priests could get day by day was prayer.

The closest we can get to God day by day is prayer. And as we stand there at that altar, the veil's torn and we look right in and we see the face of Jesus. We see the blood on the horns of the altar.

We see the blood on the mercy seat and God's presence receives us. So let's just take five or ten minutes and just pray. Amen? Amen. Father, as I lead us off, Lord, we're just going to sit alone and maybe pray with each other.

[57 : 01] Maybe just pray alone. But Lord, we're going to give you access to our hearts, Lord. Lord, I want my will conformed to yours. Lord, I know your heart's been moved.

Father, I know your heart was moved in the garden when Jesus' sweat drops of blood. And he said, not my will, but your will be done. And Father, I know your heart was moved in atonement when Jesus hung on the cross and the blood of the everlasting covenant was accepted.

And Lord, I know that your heart has been moved by all those that are under judgment. You would bring them under atonement. And now, Lord, you've placed before us this beautiful opportunity to come not to an altar of sacrifice, but an altar of fellowship.

And Lord, the altar's there. The fire is there. And all I need to do is bring the incense, Lord. You'll set it on fire. I don't need to worry about that. That's the Holy Spirit's job. So, Lord, I pray now as we pray that you would move in our midst.

We know you're here, Lord. Move in our hearts. And Lord, no matter how destitute we feel our prayers are, thank you that you receive them. Amen. Amen. You know, one of the interesting things about the joy and privilege of teaching God's Word, the truths and principles that God brings out in His Word, you can't teach them in a vacuum.

[58 : 27] You have to live them. And for me, it's usually after the fact. I'll teach, you know, spend a week preparing. I'll teach it. And then it's after the fact. The next week, it's like, Lord, this totally applies.

But this week is definitely before. There's this, just late in the week, just, I felt like the Lord was like, hey, I want you to pray about something.

And He took me to Ezra, where in Ezra it says that there they sat by the river and fasted and prayed. And like, if I'm not great at praying, I'm really not good at fasting.

I think in my mind, I think it's so something, you know, 40 days and 40 nights. And the Lord just kind of spoke to me.

He's like, it was in the morning. He's like, hey, I was about to, you know, I'm going to go grab something to eat in the kitchen. He's like, why don't you just put that off and just sit with me and take some time to pray.

[59 : 27] And then eat lunch. You know, it was like, really? Okay. Yeah, it's allowed. And the Lord is so good.

And I just prayed as bumbly as I could. And then I saw Him respond later that day and something. I'm like, Lord, that was when I was praying. You were doing something.

And it wasn't a million dollars, but it was \$10. Thank you. Right? The Lord knows what we need. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you.

The Lord be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace. God bless you.