

Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

[Singing 00:01:14]. Everyone sing it, lift it up now! [Singing 00:01:57].

Thank God for the message of that song and for what he is doing in our midst in these days. In just a minute, I want us to have a silent time of prayer to pray for ourselves and to pray for one another. I want you to pray this way too. Not only for this service, but for the service that's to follow when we bring the message on Jesus Christ Superstar, or Bright Morning Star. And pray for the adults as well. Let's pray there'd be a great moving of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of young people and adults. We thank the Lord for what he's been doing. There were decisions yesterday, not only during the service, but we heard of some coming to Christ after the service yesterday. We just pray that God will give us a time we'll never forget now. And just the closing hours of this conference now this morning, but tonight. So let's just have a time of silent prayer altogether.

[Silence 00:02:53]

And we thank you oh Lord, for what You're going to do, in Jesus' name, amen. "I met God in the morning when my day was at its best and His presence came like sunrise, like a glory in my breast. All-day long His presence lingered, all-day-long He stayed with me, and we sailed with perfect calmness o'er a very troubled sea. Now I think I found the secret found on many a troubled way. You must meet Him in the morning if you want Him through the day." I remember one time we had a Professor in the school where I attended, Tennessee Temple in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Who left the school and became a pastor out in Texas. And he came back during the summer school to bring a message in chapel. And he got up there before all the students and the faculty members and said, "I just want to tell you this."

"The Lord Jesus has changed my life since I left school. Something has happened to my life that has revolutionized it, my relationship to God. And I want to tell you what it was." He said, "I found out the importance of a daily closet time, a daily devotional time with God." And he says, "My whole attitude has changed." And as I've studied the biographies of great men of God, I found that every one of them cherished that first part of the day that they've spent with God. And I believe if we're ever going to have a revival among the young people and among the adults. We have to realize the value of systematically, in a disciplined way, getting into the word of God and gleaning from it, something for our lives. Not to teach somebody else, not to preach, but something for our own hearts. Now what I want us to do is take our Bibles this morning and look at a few men in the Bible who found it important to meet God in the morning. Let's start in the book of Genesis, chapter 19. All right, everyone over to the book of Genesis.

[Silence 00:04:56]

In the 19th chapter of the book of Genesis, we find the man whom God chose to bless in a very single way, in a great way. And his name was Abraham. His name means the father of a multitude. And it's in this chapter that God tells him that He is going to bless him in a very special way, and He tells him why. The Bible says in verse 27, "Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord. And he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain and beheld and low the smoke of the country went up as a smoke of a furnace."

Sodom and Gomorrah are being destroyed. Abraham gets up early in the morning and he has a very special place, a place where he stands before God. And he takes that place and he looks out and he sees the judgment of God. But as he stands there, he's also mindful of the grace and mercy and love of God

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that's been extended to him. Abraham knew the value of getting up early in the morning and taking his place before God.

Jacob knew the same, in Genesis chapter 28. If you'll turn over there. The 28th chapter of the book of Genesis, another great chapter, Jacob's life has changed. And in the 18th verse, the Bible says, "Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he put for his pillows and set it for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel. Here old Jacob gets up and he's just gone through a time of wrestling, and God putting the ladder going up into heaven. And God manifesting himself to him and Jacob gets up early in the morning. And he had been sleeping on a stone and he takes that, that had been his pillow on. He makes it his pillar and he worships his God. And as soon as our heads leave our pillows, we ought to find time every morning to take our place before the same God that Jacob had. Then look at Moses and Exodus, chapter 34. Exodus 34 verses 2-4. The Lord is speaking in verse two to Moses.

He wants to give him the 10 commandments. And He says to Moses in verse two, "Be ready in the morning." Isn't that a challenge for all of us? Every one of us ought to be ready in the morning, "Come out in the morning in the Mount Sinai and present thy self there to Me in the top of the mount.", he said, "Moses, I've got a job for you to do." And he said, "I want you to get up early in the morning and be ready and present yourself to Me so you can do the job." And if we're going to do the job at school, and if we're going to do the job with the gang at church, and if we're going to do the job in the home, wherever we are. We've got to be in the morning and present ourselves to God.

And so verse four, "God hewed two tables of stone like under the first And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up onto Mount Sinai. As the Lord had commanded him and took in his hand, the two tables are stone". Look at Joshua in chapter three, verse one. It says Joshua rose early in the morning. And they've removed from Shittim and came to Jordan. He and all the children of Israel lodged there before they passed over another job to do. And old Joshua got up early in the morning so he could do it. Look at David, the man after God's own heart, Psalm chapter 57.

57th Psalm. Verse two, David said, "I will cry unto God most high. Unto God that performeth all things for me." When are you going to cry, David? Look at verse eight, "Awake up my glory, awake, sultry and harp. I myself will awake early." He said, "I'm going to cry unto God". And he said, "I'm going to do it early." And yet, as we've looked at these men Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David. There is one other man. A man who said in first Peter 2:21, "Is given for our example that we should follow in the steps". And it's not other than the Lord Jesus.

Look at him in Mark chapter one verse 35. It's talking in the first chapter about our Lord and the 35th verse it says, "In the morning, rising up a great wild before day. He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed." I think it's very interesting that Simon and they that were with him followed after him, and when they found him they said unto him, "All men seek for thee." You know what the disciples are saying? They said, "What in the world are you doing out here? Don't you know that there are men that are seeking for you? And men who want you to touch them and to enter into their lives? And here you are by yourself."

Jesus said unto them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also for therefore came I forth."

He said, "That's why I'm out here." He said, "I've got a job to do." And he said, "I can't do the job unless I get alone and meet my father." And if the Lord Jesus had to get alone and meet the Father before he could do the work that the Father had for him, how in the world do we think we can? We can get excited about it. That's why I like to work with young people. It's the enthusiasm. For we all need enthusiasm for Christ. We need to be excited for Christ, but that won't win the day. Enthusiasm will give

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out. We'll lose our vigor perhaps, but brother when we take time to meet God and have the spirit of God within us. To do it through us. Then He can use that enthusiasm. He can use that optimism for His honor and His glory. Jesus got aside, so he can do the job.

Now, there are three things that he teaches us in this verse. First of all, he teaches us to pay the period for the daily devotional time. Secondly, it tells us about the place. And thirdly, I'd like to add to it, the procedure or the plan for having a daily devotional time. The first thing that we learn is the period. What is the best time of the day to have your daily devotions? Well, the Bible says Jesus had them in the morning.

Now I remember before I got saved, I used to pray at night. And after I got saved, I would pray at night and read my Bible some.

But up really thought it's better to have a daily devotional time at night than to not have one at all. The best time is in the morning. Let me illustrate. Here's a soldier. He's in bed, he's in his PJs, the General or the Sergeant, or the Lieutenant, whoever it is, comes running in. And he says, 'Come on gang. It's time to get up. We got to go off the fight.' And so let's say they're over in Vietnam and they jump out of their beds and they hit the floor and they line up and they go out to the front lines and they fight the Viet-Cong and the North Vietnamese. And they fight out there, all day long. And here's this guy and he got up out of bed and all he did was fell in line and went out to the front and he's still in his PJs.

And he stands out there in the front line and he fights in his PJs all day long. And he doesn't have a gun, and he doesn't have a knife, and he doesn't have a bayonet, and doesn't have a hand grenade. All he has is just his PJs. And he comes home that night and he gets ready to go to bed. He's been fighting out there all day long in his PJs. And he comes and he is ready to go to bed, then before he goes to bed he takes his pants and he puts them on and he takes his shirt and he puts it on. And then he puts his socks on. He takes his combat boots and he pulls them up. Then he gets his helmet and he fixes it in place. Then he gets his gun and he checks for his ammunition. Then he fixes his bayonet and he straps his hand grenades around him. And he puts that gun over his shoulder. And then he jumps in bed and pulls the covers up over his head and goes to sleep.

Oh, you say, Paul, that's just ridiculous. I mean, that's the craziest story? Who in the world would do something like that? What about us?

Get up in the morning and rush out into the day and have the war against the World and the flesh and the Devil. And we're still in the energy of the flesh. We haven't taken time to put on the whole armor of God, as it speaks about in Ephesians chapter six. And we're out there fighting in the energy of the flesh and all we have on is our PJs. Then we come home that night, we get ready to go to bed. We start reading our Bibles, praying, getting ready for the battle and the battles already over. You don't fight many battles at night. You fight your battles in the day.

Get up about 15 minutes earlier than you've been getting up. If you live out in the farm set the rooster up early. If you got an alarm clock, just turn it up. I'm not talking about spending an hour with God. I'm not talking about spending 30 minutes with God. I challenge you to spend 15 minutes with God every morning. And you get up early and you go ahead and take care of your choirs and so forth. You wash your face and you just get aside and you're awake now, and you're going to have your time with the Lord. The period, the very best time of the day is in the morning for your daily devotions. What about the place? Notice that the Bible says, "In the morning, rising up a great while before day. Christ went out and departed into a solitary place.

Now, there are times when you need to read the Bible and pray with your family. There are times when you need to read the Bible and pray with your friends, but there are also times when you need to just read the Bible and pray by yourself. You just get away from everybody else. You just get in someplace in

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the house and you just spend that time, it's just you and your God, get in a solitary place. Now, if you've got about 15 brothers and sisters, that may be tough. I don't know where you're going to find a quiet place or a solitary place, but you find someplace where you can just have your time with God. But the main thing I think you're concerned about is, how? Let me say to the preachers who are here. And I know a few of them came in for this session. Men, too long have we been telling people to do things that they don't know how to do? We tell people to win souls and they don't know how to win souls.

You can get them coming down the aisles. "I want to be a soul-winner!" Great. Then put them back there on the front line and they don't have any security. They don't have any assurance that they actually know how to win the soul of Jesus Christ. If you haven't read Evangelist Explosion by Kennedy, you ought to read it. And it's the same way with the daily devotions. We tell people, "Have daily devotions." But how?

I'm thankful that when I got saved in Cincinnati, Ohio, under the Ministry of Pastor Mitchell Siber, he put two things in my hand. Number one was a little booklet called B-rations from The Navigators in Colorado Springs, Colorado. That told me as a new Christian, I ought to start memorizing the word of God. Here I was, senior in high school, I had never read the Bible. I had never read a single book of the Bible. I didn't know anything about the Bible and this told me I ought to start memorizing the Bible. Verses on assurance, verses on forgiveness, verses on provision, verses on assurance over temptation. Started memorizing the word. Second thing he put in my hand was a little book called The Quiet Time by Good News Publishers.

And it told me that I'll have a daily time with God. Then as I went off to college, I started picking up, from other men, young fellas. Let me say this gang. One of the thrills of being in a Christian school is not only what the Administrators contribute to your life. And what the faculty members contribute to your life, and what the visiting speakers and the chapel and so forth will contribute to your life. But what your fellow buddies will mean to you. The young men and the young ladies that God will bring into your life in a Christian school.

And God started bringing young men, Walden Butts from Pensacola, Florida brought him into my life. Very disciplined young man, a young man who's here today. Elden Hall from North Carolina and some others. And God I gleaned from them. I didn't really come across the thing that helped me the most till I got out of school. I was in a meeting in Wisconsin and a Pastor walked up to me. We were just visiting him and he handed me a little booklet and says, "I give this to everyone who visits me and I want you to read it." It was a ten-cent Moody booklet called Mana in the Morning by Steven Olfort. That book changed my daily devotional time. I want to share it with you, basically what it said. Okay? All right. All you need is a Bible. Hey listen, get you a good Bible.

A good one. Save up for a good Bible with good print and a good cover and something you'll be proud to carry. And you can read, save up for it, make it yours. It's better even to buy it yourself than someone to give it to you. You save up for a gun or you save up for golf clubs. You save up for a new ball glove, fishing rod, save up for a Bible. All right? Get you a Bible, a pen, and a notebook. 15 cent, 25 cent notebook. All right, you're going to have your daily devotional time.

You're in your room or wherever that solitary place is. You're up, you've already splashed water on your face. You're about half awake. You're trying to stay awake. All right, now you're going to read your Bible. Where are you going to start? Don't start in the middle of a book. Don't start in the Old Testament and don't start in Matthew. Start in a small book in the New Testament. Philippians Colossians. First or Second Thessalonians, one of the Timothy's. One of the small books. I'll tell you what, you get bogged down in a big book and you get discouraged. Starting a small book so you can finish it in the psychology of it. Hey, I went all the way through a single book of the Bible this way. It'll encourage you, starting a small book.

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Open it up. All right. Let's just say we're going to start in the book of Colossians. All right. It's our first morning. We're going to start tomorrow morning. Book of Colossians let's turn over there. Book of Colossians, chapter one.

All right, we got our Bibles open. God's going to speak to us through the book of Colossians. Before we even start reading, we're going to bow our heads for a very short prayer and basically say, "Lord, I need your help. You wrote this book. You said the natural man cannot understand it. And the only way I can understand is if you help me. So by your spirit, you open my heart. You open my mind, you open my eyes.", and ask God to help you now, just a short prayer. And then read the first chapter of the book of Colossians not now. The [inaudible 00:20:54]. Then go back and divide it up. Take three, four, five verses, no more. Read, let's say the first five verses again.

Let's say you're going to divide it there. Then go back and read it one more time. The first five verses and ask this question. What does that say to me? What do those first five verses say to me, right? Then you meditate on and think about it. What's that say to me? Then you take your notebook and you write Colossians 1:1-5, put down the date over here.

And then in two or three or four sentences, write down what that says to you. Next day, you come back, you open up to the first chapter, Colossians again. Read the same chapter, but then you go back and you take up where you left off. You start with verse six, take three or four or five more verses. And again, what does that say to me? Colossians 1:6-10, and write it down.

What that says to you, then you have your prayer time. And again, this doesn't have to take a long time, just a time where you talk with the Lord and you pray for others and you pray for yourself and you confess sin and you thank God for who He is and you praise God for His blessings and make that time a very precious time. You commit the day unto Him and you've met the Lord in the morning. And perhaps during the day, you'll reflect back upon what you've written in that notebook. Now, this is very simple. You know what gang I found out? I found out that the greatest thing in life. They're all simple. We're all looking for the profound. When in reality, we just need to apply to simple. Second Corinthians is 11:3. Great verse. "I fear less any man, I fear."

The Bible says, "Has Satan got you away, corrupted your minds from the simplicity that is in Christ." Salvation simple, God's plan will for our life as everything in Christ is simple. Let's apply these simple things about the daily devotional time to our lives. "It came to my heart with the lesson as the day was beginning to dawn. As the day with its cares and trials and its blessings was drawing on, how Jesus the World's redeemer arose before it was day and feeling His human weakness found in secret place to pray. Not even the three disciples who followed the Lord the best were there in a sanctuary. They slumbered as did the rest and only the stars of heaven with perchance the silvery moon looked down upon their creator who would suffer and die so soon. If Jesus, the King of Glory, Commander of Hosts on High, must petition for daily suchor. What about such a one as I?

"I rest at ease in the morning before me a puzzling day. I know not how I shall meet it, but my savior arose to pray. How foolish our human blindness, how hard are our hearts of stone, why rise we not in the morning and pray to our God alone? There's help for the daily duties and spiritual strength and power, there's victory for the conflict to be gained in the morning hour. If we walk in the master's footsteps and follow the path He trod, we must find in the early morning, a quiet place with God. We must pour out our heart before Him and let Him into the life, if we ever shall be the winner of victory in thistime." Now Lord seal these things to our hearts and help us to apply them to our lives. Bless us we go into this next service for Jesus's sake. Amen.

Speaker 2:

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Amen.